

THE INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF VAN ASWEGEN'S (1998) MODEL OF CRITICAL
THINKING, WITHIN A NURSING PROGRAMME, TO PROMOTE CRITICAL REFLECTIVE
PRACTICE

BY

MAUREEN HARRIS

Thesis submitted in full compliance with the requirements for the Doctoral Degree in Technology:
Nursing, Department of Postgraduate Nursing Studies, Durban Institute of Technology.

Date of submission: 22 March, 2006

I, Maureen Harris declare that this is my own work and has never previously been submitted for a degree elsewhere.

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Signature of student

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Date of signature

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Signature of supervisor
R.N., R.M., C.H.N., B.Soc.Sci.
Nursing (Hons), D.N.Ed, PhD.

.....

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I thought that at the start, this journey would be a lonely one for at this level, I thought to be following my own star. To my surprise, the sky filled with the stars of others to light my way. What a feeling. What a joy!

Abstract

An educational course for post-basic multi-cultural South African nurses, based on a model for critical reflective practice, forms the case study for a participatory action research paradigm that frames this qualitative study.

Health care organisations in South Africa are faced by enormous challenges and in order to be competitive and responsive to the needs of the market, must employ health care workers who can think creatively and make appropriate decisions that do not necessarily fit into theory learned within a formal educational system.

In the main, this three year study, which took place in the Department of Postgraduate Nursing Studies at the Durban Institute for Technology in KwaZulu Natal, focuses on the learning course of three different groups of students (N=75) whose ages ranged from 28 to 56. Approximately 70% were black African while English was the mother tongue of the remaining Indian, coloured and white students and the medium of instruction for all. All but one were part-time students, working as registered nurses in a variety of health care services ranging from deep rural to urban settings. They were also mothers, wives and many had strong community commitments. Although many had been exposed to more traditional forms of teaching that historically rated proficiency in the *tasks* of nursing above that of *knowing* nursing, these were underpinned by the diverse range of students' personal and professional nursing experiences.

This study arose out of the need for a nursing education department to respond to the limitations presented by these student demographics and to the needs of the South African health services. The challenge was to offer a course that was meaningful to students, incorporating their current

practice by promoting a continuous means of engaging in learning where the workplace was seen as their primary learning setting and where classroom contact was used to facilitate this process. Van Aswegen's (1998) broad, conceptual model of critical reflective practice framed the research project which comprised the detailed design and implementation of a nursing management course that would facilitate transformatory learning. Utilisation of the model required openness to this approach to learning. The intention of the model was to promote students' ability to think and learn critically and reflectively, drawing on different environments as learning resources. The teaching and learning approach was multilayered and integrated. It focused on process, student-centred learning with a conceptualised, thematic approach to management activities relevant to and functioning within the students' workplace. The facilitator-learner relationship was built on negotiation and mutual respect and key teaching techniques were informed by adult learning principles and by a constructivist approach to learning. This reality-based learning was enhanced by a variety of critical reflective learning strategies including theory derived from practice, learning contracts, work-based mentors, critical thinking techniques, reflective journaling, Socratic questioning, group discussions, reflective tutorials, web-based learning, work-based tasks and assignments, continuous evaluation and a focus on adult, problem-based learning. While these strategies individually are not new, the way in which they have been implemented in an integrated and holistic manner, provides educators and learners with a fresh perspective on curriculum development.

The resultant course was monitored in terms of the research objectives and van Aswegen's model. This was based on numerous data sets derived from various sources to triangulate the findings. These included students' reflective journals, student and staff questionnaires, interviews, a focus group, reports and the researcher's reflexive journal. Non-probability, purposive sampling was

used. Because critical reflective practice as an integrated holistic course approach is a relatively new area of research, it was important to capture the experiences of those involved in the process.

A broad overview of the value and limitations of journaling were obtained from 71 students. Reflective journaling as a medium can be a liberating tool and a means to self-discovery and growth. Inclusion within a multicultural course does not limit its value, but does temper the process with the realisation that the process can also be an obstacle in the quest for learning, particularly if multi-lingual, multi-cultural considerations are not taken into account. It takes particular note of the current South African context and bears in mind the ensuing repercussion for the offering of this type of learning course. Feedback in the form of an empathetic critique is particularly valuable, as is the role of the empathetic-critiquer.

For an in-depth perspective, the rich data yielded from 8 student reflective journals was particularly useful as it not only focuses more fully on issues relevant to nursing in South Africa, but provides a theoretical framework which can be used for 'interpreting' reflective journals. The value of these narratives is that they represent the everyday lives as witnessed by these nurses and allows their nursing practice to be made visible. It enables a viewing of issues current at a point in time and shows where practitioners and health care managers make mistakes, thereby allowing opportunities to improve on practice. If used appropriately, these narratives can inform social policy or organisational change. They allow all students to have a 'voice' and for the educator, they allow a focus on managing diversity through understanding.

The reflective tutorials demonstrate that active and open participation of students in the process does appear to have encouraged a greater depth of understanding of issues, particularly when

linked to other vehicles of learning, such as the reflective journals and class discussions. Reflective learning is a cyclical process and opportunities to explore issues on multi-dimensional forums enhance the process, particularly for students who are more comfortable with oral rather than written mediums

Seemingly, theory and practice do converge in this open, flexible, creative and dynamic framework and it is hoped that value can be seen in the soundness of the educational processes supporting transformatory learning. The structure is stable, incorporating agreed norms and standards, but is dynamic, because it is based on a philosophy, rather than on content. This allows for flexibility in usage and accommodates nurses working within different health contexts, who learn at different rates. While this approach is not the panacea for all teaching and learning (it works under certain conditions and is not the answer for all learners), this study clearly indicates that it does support critical reflective practice and provides both learners and educators a structure for implementation in other areas of learning. The growth is personal, academic, professional and occupational and is ideal for the life-long learner.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. THE IDEA

This is a case study of a course in nursing management seen through the lens of a participatory action research design. The different components of a framework of critical reflective practice embedded in the course are revealed as it unfolds and changes over a three-year period. The purpose and outcome of the research lie within the students' journey along a path leading the way to learning and practice. This chapter spells out the reasons for the study and what guided me to undertake the research.

I am a nurse educator at the Durban Institute of Technology (DIT), a university of technology, and teach a post-basic course in nursing management. The students are already professional nurse practitioners who have completed at least a three or four year undergraduate nursing diploma. They are registered with the South African Nursing Council (SANC), working in a variety of health care settings, who return to enrol in additional programmes for further study. There were a number of factors motivating the study, but mainly I was concerned about connecting with nurses working in our problematic health care system and facilitating their learning in a way that would prove meaningful and valuable to their practice. I think that South African nurses face challenges seldom confronted by nurses elsewhere, particularly in health systems in the better resourced western world. I see many of our nurses working in survival mode, facing increasing work burdens in environments where their help is often only palliative, resulting at times in a mechanistic approach to nursing. This often seems to culminate in a feeling of helplessness and a sense of alienation, preventing nurses from truly

connecting with their patients or finding the space to question their practice. This in turn, I believe, prevents them from understanding who they are and what their purpose in the bigger picture really is.

So this first chapter paints the context for the study. It is about nursing and the health care system and nursing education in South Africa, the key influences of the 'why' of their journey of learning. These influences in turn provide the reason for introducing a course that through the implementation and adaptation of a model of critical reflective practice, I believed would and did make a difference.

This chapter outlines the beginnings of this venture, indicating the purpose of the research, its aims and objectives and concludes with the implications of this study for nursing practice.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In a health system faced by enormous challenges and increasingly affected by an exodus of both nursing and medical staff, it is essential that those nurses who work in the South African health care system are able to meet and cope with these demands, if we wish to avert a sense of chaos (Lehmann and Sanders, 2002). In most health systems the infrastructure and systems regulate practice, but even in these well-regulated systems, the operationalisation of the services is dependent on critical reflective practitioners. I believe that health care organisations, in order to be competitive and responsive to the needs of the market, must prioritise flexibility and receptiveness. This means that they must employ health care workers who can think creatively and make appropriate decisions that do not necessarily fit into theory learned within a formal system (Ankiewicz, Adam, de Swardt, & Gross, 2001).

Massification of education for South Africans is a clearly identified strategy by the African National

Congress (ANC) led government as part of the transformation process towards a more accessible, equitable and effective educational system (Norris, 2001). This strategy comes at a time when there is a decline in student numbers in higher education institutions (HEI), spiralling costs, increased global competition, shrinking resources and cuts in student subsidy (Nkopodi, 2002). This is compounded by the increasing awareness of students and employing bodies of limitations inherent in curricula of higher education institutions that are too content-based, prescriptive, outmoded, ungrounded and delivered in inaccessible formats and time frames (Johnson, in Chabeli, 2002:5). Together with the concomitant reduction in state subsidies, this has had a major effect on the planning for human resources in the health care market (Brunyee, 2001). It is growing harder to provide facilities for full time students requiring traditional didactic teaching and it is becoming increasingly more difficult for adult learners to attend institutions of higher education on this basis. Services, especially health services, do not have the capacity to release their workforce on a full time learning basis, because they are chronically understaffed (Gwele, 2003). As a result, there is a strong move away from the traditional transmission approach in contact sessions to independent and learner centred techniques – especially for adult learners in higher education (Chabeli, 2001).

This study arises out of the need for a nursing education department to respond to the limitations imposed by the educational frames of reference of post-basic nurse practitioner students, many of whom originated from the more traditional educational backgrounds that historically rated proficiency in the *tasks* of nursing above that of *knowing* nursing (Radebe, 2000; O'Shea, 2003).

Departments of nursing at South African universities of technology (previously technikons) traditionally offered post-basic and graduate nursing programmes within selected fields of nursing, specifically community, occupational health and primary health care, where frameworks of nursing

encapsulated the values implicit in the primary health care context. Our students were all already registered as professional nurse practitioners, mostly having undergone at least a three-year diploma level 'training' at various colleges of nursing, all of which had been attached to hospitals that had formed the training ground for the nurses' courses. Our graduate programmes consist of one full academic year of study (or two years part-time) that builds upon the nursing diploma qualifications.

The following section places these programmes in context by describing simply the difference between

- (a) college- based undergraduate nursing education and (b) university-based undergraduate nursing education;
- (c) universities of technology e.g. DIT and (d) traditional universities;
- (e) DIT undergraduate preparation for full-time students in disciplines other than nursing and (f) college-based nursing undergraduate preparation

(a) College- based nursing education: In the South African system, the student nurses studying diploma programmes at colleges of nursing have traditionally formed the hospital labour force pool where the needs of the hospital or other community based health services superseded students' learning needs (Strachan & Clarke, 2001). Students were not afforded the luxury of being supernumery and so formal teaching was piecemeal, with students attending college for two or three months at a time and then returning to the hospital wards ostensibly to learn, but invariably as labour force (Mekwa, 2000).

Simelane, Kunene and Mhlongo,(1997) cite and support Mashaba's (1986) findings that teaching in nursing colleges has tended to be didactic, with a concentration on lecturing as a method, and note

that there is a deficiency in independent learning and studying skills amongst undergraduate nursing students, due, they suggest, to a lack of preparation in high schools, for independent learning. This lack of scholarship preparation is supported by Cornes (2004). Glasgow Caledonian University and Medunsa University undertook a needs-analysis on a college nursing staff educators and confirmed the need for leadership and scholarship development raised by the Department of Health's (1999) strategy document as well as those of the Human Resources for health.

I discussed the crude differentiation between students having undergone a nursing college education and a university education with two colleagues, Dr Heidi Brookes and Nokuthula Sibiyi, both nurse educators with many years experience. Although this is a somewhat crude comparison between college-based training and a university education, it does provide some understanding of the educational background of many of the students within this study.

According to Sibiyi (2004) the nursing college students' world tended to be limited to the hospital and the college and their colleagues were all nurses, although the younger students who had passed through the comprehensive nursing diploma had wider exposure.

(b) University-based undergraduate nursing education: This scenario was very different for students undergoing a university-based undergraduate nursing education. They did have supernumerary status. They were full-time students and, on the whole, their forays into the health care sector were for the express purpose of integrating theory with practice (Brookes, 2004). Their learning focus was broad, and concentrated on 'deep learning'. Simply put, the purpose of their education was to teach these students to think critically. (This is not to say that their learning was devoid of barriers – on the contrary. The university based education programmes have frequently been criticised for the lack of

clinical or experiential exposure). Generally, the university was literally and figuratively speaking, distanced from the hospital, and so these nurses were allowed to become immersed in study, often surrounded by students from many other disciplines who could influence their thinking and broaden their perspectives (Brookes, 2004; Sibiya, 2004).

(d) Universities of technology and (c) traditional universities: Universities of technology (previously known as technikons), while preparing their students for the labour market, have a different focus but equal status to that of traditional universities (d'Almaine, Manhire, and Atte, 1997). The apparent distinction between the two is that the universities of technology (in terms of the 1996 National Commission on Higher Education) are more practically focused with a strong component on experiential learning. Learning is career and work-place oriented, with an emphasis on “product related” research. Traditional universities are more process focused on professional education and research is both basic and applied (d'Almaine et al.1997).

(e) DIT undergraduate preparation for full-time students in disciplines other than nursing and (f) College-based nursing undergraduate preparation: The nursing department at DIT does not offer undergraduate nursing programmes. As mentioned, the students who enter our programmes have generally received their undergraduate qualifications at nursing colleges. However, there is also a distinction between undergraduate preparation of the general student population at DIT and the preparation of nursing students at nursing colleges. The difference between the general undergraduate student at DIT (for example, in engineering or radiography) and the part-time nursing students, who enter our nursing programmes at post-diploma level in order to earn their degree, is that the underpinnings of their nursing diplomas have been within the nursing college/hospital context where they have not had the educational advantages, such as full-time study or the breadth of

resources, afforded full-time degree students (Sibiya, 2004). We have not been able to make the same assumptions about under-graduate learning that our colleagues in other departments at DIT have generally been able to make about their Bachelor of Technology students, for example, in engineering or radiography. Our problem, put simply, is that we cannot assume that our students are autonomous learners. Our proposed solution? Critical thinking linked with reflective practice is seen as a means of empowering practitioners and leading to more autonomous practice.

Nursing education is dynamic. Its shape shifts and changes with constant exposure to a variety of influences, some of which are as follows: The post-apartheid government wrought changes to both the fields of health care and education, forcing constant re-examination of philosophy and programme offerings. The traditional Eurocentric focus changed to that of Afrocentricism, encompassing the multi-South African cultures. The changing role of the nurse and the limitations and stresses produced by an ailing health system impacted on nursing care, seemingly resulting in a focus on tasks and client numbers rather than on sensitive care for the individual patient. There were outcries from the public and so the caring notion of *Ubuntu*, embraced within the Patients' Rights Charter and the concept of *Batho Pele*, meaning 'people first' was reintroduced and highlighted (Malaene, 2002; S.A. 2004 Health Bill; South African Government Information: Health).

I believe that committed educators question their practice and evolve a clear and integrated philosophy on teaching and learning that underpins and frames this practice. Through this study I hope to make explicit the framework within which my educational philosophy is grounded.

Historically, nurse education has been strongly influenced by both American and British nursing epistemologies, and nursing frameworks have moved from the illness-centred medical model of the

early seventies to preventive and promotive health models espoused in primary health care philosophy. Although experimentation has taken place, in South Africa nursing theories have tended to be of academic interest, rather than central to teaching (Kyriacos and van den Heever, 1999). The South African Nursing Council (SANC) has never espoused the 'single theory fits all' principle, and has tended to focus rather on cornerstone principles inherent in nursing education, thereby providing space for the various nursing education institutions to adapt or to develop their own frameworks, reflecting these values (SANC Circular 5/2001).

The essential purpose of this study is on the development of a framework for nursing education, based on critical reflective practice, within a South African tertiary institution through the academic work and lens's of the participating students.

1.2 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT IN TERMS OF THE HEALTH SYSTEM, NURSING AND EDUCATION

Major transformation processes taking place internationally and in South Africa as a result of political, technological and educational reform have characterized the past decade. Some of them have already been mentioned in the preceding section. Together, they have a profound influence upon nursing and the education of nurses. Those that are important for this study are discussed in more detail in this section and are depicted in Figure 1.1.

1.2.1 The South African Health System

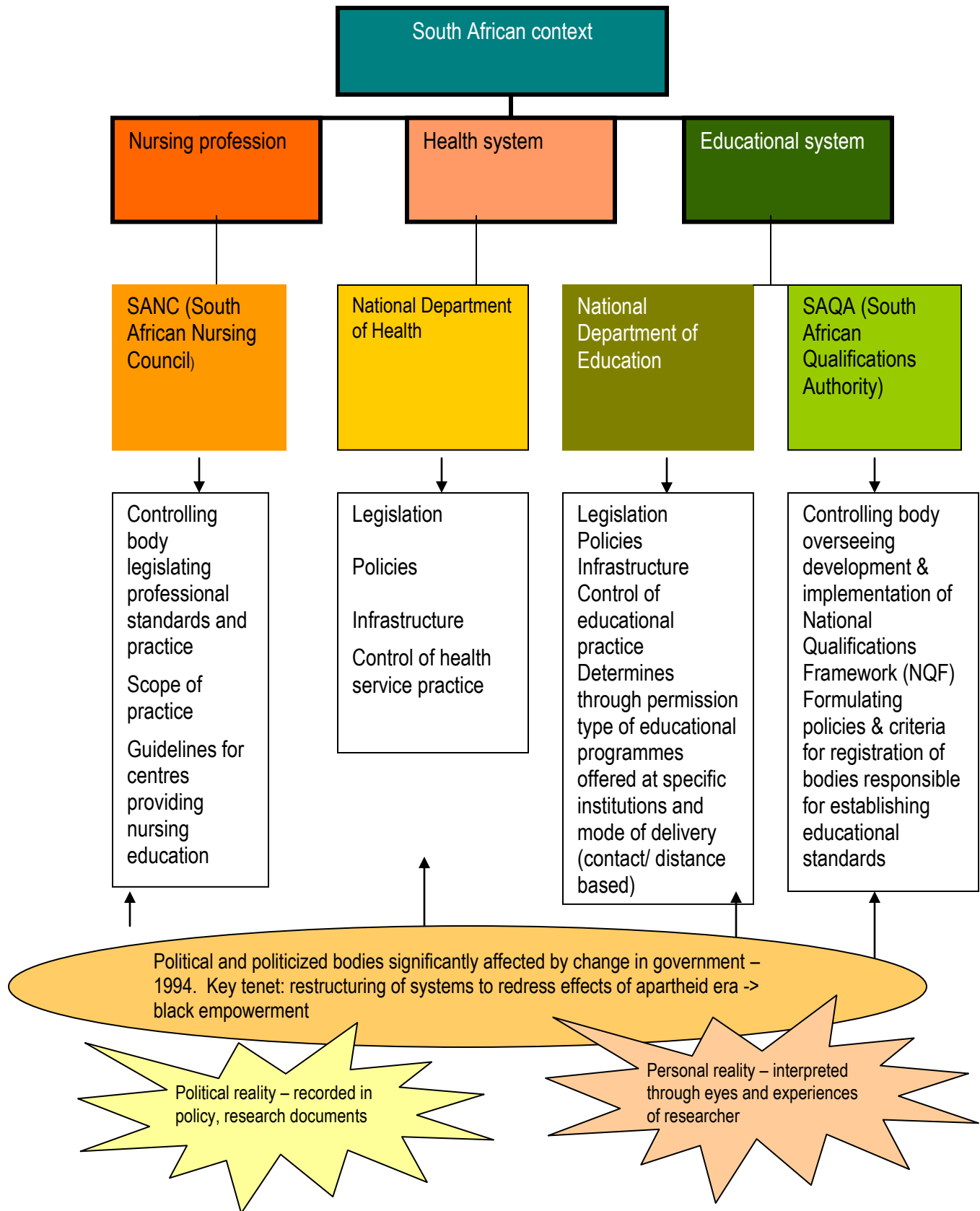


Figure 1.1: South African context in terms of nursing and education

Since the first democratic elections in 1994, the Department of Health has been faced with huge challenges as it restructures and establishes the framework for a more equitable national health system. It inherited a hospital centred and fragmented health care system, where the focus of care was concentrated in the urban sector, leaving major portions of the rural areas under-serviced and disadvantaged. The transformation of the health system has been severely compromised by the AIDS epidemic, and according to the 2002 South African Health Review, the system continues to be overwhelmed by issues such as lack of resources and support systems, diminishing public sector funding and an exodus of health care workers (HST, 2002). The 2004 South African Health Review reports that the “health of the nation is characterised by a quadruple burden of disease, with the impact of HIV/AIDS adding to the combination of a high injury burden, conditions related to underdevelopment and chronic diseases” (Press Release: HST, 2004).

Inadequate staffing and poor working conditions are closely linked with a poor organisational climate and excessive work loads (Wren and Michie, 2002; WHO, 2003 as cited in Gwele, 2003). The low staffing levels in turn creates a sense of disillusionment, dissatisfaction and a feeling of helplessness follows (Gwele, 2003). This, allied to the low salaries, is manifest in the current staff exodus (Padarath, Chamberlain, McCoy, Ntuli, Rowson, and Loewenson, 2003). Clearly, creative management strategies are required for an ailing health system.

1.2.2 Delivery of health care

South Africa’s health system comprises a public health care system that caters for over 80% of the population served by less than 20% of available health care workers, and a much smaller private health care system, which attracts the services of a disproportionately large number of health care

workers (Hartley, 2002). The focus of health care in the public sector has changed to a concern for the underprivileged, through a district health delivery system using the principles of primary health care (PHC) of 'availability, affordability, sustainability, accessibility and acceptability' as well as the philosophy and essential elements of PHC as a framework of health care. PHC services became free for mothers and for children under 6 years in 1995 and then for all people in 1996 (Geyer, 1999).

Over 50% of the health care workers in SA are nurses (SA 2004 Health Bill) and the level of their authority and scope of practice is often determined by where they work. For example, in many rural areas, there are no doctors or other health care workers available at the primary level for the public sector. This means that the nurse takes on the mantle of comprehensive health care for the community, whereas in better resourced urban areas in both public and private sector, they have a more limited role.

1.3 NURSING IN SOUTH AFRICA

1.3.1 Challenges to nurses affected by the transition from pre to post 1994

The introduction of the district health system and the community-based PHC approach affected nurses in a number of ways: their role and function changed dramatically, from one of mainly caring for the patient at the bedside to a much wider, more demanding role. Unlike their counterparts from the United States, South African nurses were expected to provide comprehensive health services after completing only their basic nursing education (Uys, Gwele, McInerney, van Rhyn and Tanga, 2004). This free health care brought patients requiring diagnostic and curative clinical skills to the clinics in increasing numbers. Unfortunately, states Geyer (1999:3)

“this free primary health care increased the case load that nurses have to handle at the clinic without the health budgets increasing to make provision for the increased

patient load. These changes have placed a tremendous burden on the clinic nurse.

Some nurses were transferred to the clinics without the relevant training and education to deliver the services at clinic level. “

Legislation has not keep up with the demands made on nurses, leaving them extremely vulnerable, as they were not fully prepared clinically or educationally to treat patients requiring these skills (Geyer, Naude and Sithole, 2002).

While it would seem that nurses themselves have been placed in an ambivalent situation where in effect they frequently lack the support to carry out their practice, the work still needs to be done and therefore the health context within which they work must be addressed. Geyer et al. (2002) note that with the bulk of health care resting squarely on the shoulders of nurses, and considering the rapidly changing work environments within which nurses work, nursing educators are being strongly challenged to provide the type of learning that will enable nurses to cope with the demands of the health sector. As a result, our nursing education department at the DIT is faced with having to provide meaning, context and the wherewithal to work effectively in a very complicated system and looked for some of the answers within this study.

1.3.2 Trends in community health/ public health impacting on nursing

According to Dennill (1999), in 1974, the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Expert Committee met to reconcile the role of nurses in relation to an improvement in the health status of communities. It became fairly clear that a fundamental change in nursing education was needed i.e. the change from a focus on health and not on disease. As a result of these pronouncements, community health nursing, with its emphasis on preventive and promotive health care, was integrated into the four year integrated undergraduate nursing diploma programme as well as a number of other nursing degree

programmes in the country by the 1980's. The goal was to ensure education of nurses became more comprehensive and community oriented. Dennill (1999:5) argues that although this is the intent, in actuality this is not really happening as nurse educators and nurse leaders, while providing an appropriate knowledge base for nursing students, are not preparing them adequately to meet the health needs of the country or the role that they have to play. She maintains they have not tried to

“establish an environment in which the nurse is allowed to be an independent practitioner who is able to work as a leader within the community health care team.

Indeed the nurse gets more and more academic input but is still expected to function as the handmaiden of the doctor. She is expected to take over tasks, that have until recently been assigned only to the medical profession, but she is expected to do so only under certain conditions where it suits the public services and where doctors are unable to cope.”

As noted in 1.2.3.1, this situation has not been helped by the fact that much of the legislation that should enable nurses to function in the areas that they are being asked to function, has been pending for a number of years (the new Nursing Bill, the Medicines and Substance Control Bill and the new Health Act), leaving the nurses in the practice setting, vulnerable (Geyer, Naude and Sithole, 2002; Forman, Pillay and Sait, 2004).

1.3.3 Organisations influencing nursing education programmes

It would be appropriate at this stage to place nursing education in context. According to Strachan and Clarke (2001) nursing education at post-basic and postgraduate levels is affected by a number of organisations:

- The Department of Health (DOH) inasmuch as the decision on national priorities, the philosophy for health care practice, the formulation and implementation of policies for health care delivery,

emanate from this organisation. It is the umbrella body governing health in South Africa and the largest employing body of health care delivery in the country. The practical or experiential components of nursing educational programmes are largely undertaken in DOH services.

- Academic institutions in the form of universities of technology, universities (both controlled by the National Department of Education) and nursing colleges. The latter are mainly controlled by the Provincial DOH authorities, but there are also those privately run nursing colleges where different contexts, different philosophies and different interests influence the educational programmes. Each of these academic institutions has a specific role to play in education. The former two types of institutions are theoretically autonomous. However, as regards the nursing profession, this is limited to some extent in that, in order to offer programmes that will allow for the registration of their nursing students, the education facility must comply with the SANC's minimum requirements.
- The SANC controls standards for the profession and provides broad guidelines for the programmes in the different fields of nursing. The SANC's educational policies now fall in line with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) national educational policies (see Figure 1.1). This has required a major change in thinking in all role players, with all the concomitant problems attached to change.

Additionally, nursing education does not fall under one government department. This split in control between the Department of Education and the Department of Health in terms of nurse education is problematic: the former is primarily concerned with the education of students and the latter, with

meeting the human resource needs for our health services. While the concepts of health care delivery and education are not mutually exclusive, they are also not compatible when the interest of one overrides the other. It should seem clear that the underpinning of nursing education and autonomy in teaching and practice is heavily dependent on these role players, their needs and their perception of health, nursing and nursing education needs. It is in relation to this context that the model for critical thinking and reflective practice was implemented, and the study undertaken.

1.3.4 Health service needs with respect to nursing management skills

Health service needs analysis indicates that registered nurses should display competency in the cost-effective management of a health service and the practical implementation of leadership skills necessary to increase productivity. The Minister of National Health concurs:

“South Africa needs managers both in the private and public sectors who are able to transform the health care system. Our managers must be astute as they should be change agents and individuals who are committed to the transformation of our country. We need health managers who are visionaries and who understand the diversity of health care delivery. Good managers are those who understand the historical and critical need to bridge the gaps between the rich and the poor and between rural and urban as an important element in the process of improving the quality of life of our people” (Shabalala-Msimang, 2003:15).

The current health system in South Africa does not identify profession-dominated managers, e.g. nurse managers or physician managers but rather uses the generic term ‘health care workers’ or health managers. Accordingly

“Schaay, Heywood and Lehmann, recommended in 1998 that “training across traditional sector boundaries should be encouraged, a competency based approach to management training should be pursued, and that the training should encourage a ‘reflective and self-directed’ approach to learning. In addition, the particular skills required by health workers to manage a transforming health system – at every level within the public health service –should serve to guide the development of the content of the evolving health management programme in South Africa” (Lehmann and Sanders, 2002:127)

The need to strengthen health service management and in fact, to transform health service management to complement the decentralized district health system is supported by the South African National Health Plan (Schaay et al., 1998; Nkonzo-Mthembu, 2001). While health service needs indicate that competent nurse practitioners are required across the board, I have singled out health service management needs because of the locus of the research, i.e. the nursing management course.

1.3.5 The need for critical reflective thinking in nursing

"Nursing is a profession which calls for commitment, maturity, and an ability to assess and synthesize a great deal of information quickly and accurately." (WHO Expert Committee, 1996). The development of higher order thinking should be an essential component of nurse education (SANC, 1993:6; SANC, 1996:14; Allison, 1997, Chabeli, 2001 and Ramadi, 2001).

1. International developments

Since 1989 the United States has viewed the development of higher order thinking as an integral component of nurse education and for programmes to receive accreditation from the National League

of Nurses, the curricula must provide evidence that they include the fostering of critical reflective thinking, decision making and independent judgement. Project 2000 developed in the United Kingdom in 1986 also required that programmes be developed to enable students to think analytically and flexibly (Allison, 1997).

2. South African developments

In South Africa, the SANC, the controlling body for professional nurses, published a discussion document establishing that the aim of nursing education should be to enable nurses to meet the health needs of the country and that “all nurses should be equipped to practice nursing independently as members of the health team” (SANC, 1996:2). An independent nurse practitioner is a nurse registered with the South African Nursing Council “who, without supervision, can practice independently within his/her scope of practice. Such a person is accountable for evaluating a patient situation on the basis of knowledge and skills, taking decisions with discretion and acting in accordance with such decisions” (SANC, 1996:14). The 2004 proposed new scope of nursing practice supports this notion (SANC, 2004).

An earlier policy document supported critical thinking in its definition of the purpose of nursing education. “The development of the ability for analytical, critically-evaluative and creative thinking and the continuing stimulation of the capacity to interpret scientific data for nursing actions, to draw conclusions and to exercise independent judgement, are of the utmost importance” (SANC, 1993:6). According to Ramadi (2001), in her address as the deputy registrar of the SANC, nurses form the “backbone” of the South African health care system and therefore “need an education system that makes them accountable and flexible generalists”.

1.4 HIGHER EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION

1.4.1 Mergers

Higher education has been and is in the process of undergoing change (Luckett, 2001; Chabeli, 2002). According to McKenna (2004:1), these changes have been wrought by the filtering down of “the shifts at macro level... to all aspects of South African life and includes a redefining and repositioning of higher education (and) technikons”. The sharing of expertise, knowledge and resources through a process of mergers, coalitions or alliances between or amongst institutions of higher learning, has been a post-apartheid government strategy. The idea has been to reduce the fragmentation and duplication of educational programmes (Brunyee, 2001; Mohohlo, 2003). The impact of the merger between my institution, Natal Technikon and M.L. Sultan campus, has had a major impact on the psyche and character of the new institution, DIT, with all the concomitant ramifications normally wrought by any major merger.

The two major effects I have noted, mainly resulting from severe tightening of the financial belt in an attempt to recover from financial losses incurred, have from a departmental perspective, been on staff morale and staff frustration with the seemingly inflexible bureaucratic system. Much of the departmental autonomy and creative functioning has been buried under a welterweight of paperwork and policies, and contingency responses requiring quick action, new equipment or additional support, have been severely hampered by draconian measures affected through the institutions’ administrative sections. This slow, but inevitable merger process, which started in 1996, to result in an official merger in 2002, took place against a national backdrop of transformation, where affirmative action policies seemed interwoven with the concept of diversity management (Norris, 2001). Figure 1.2 illustrates the institutional factors that impacted on the course.

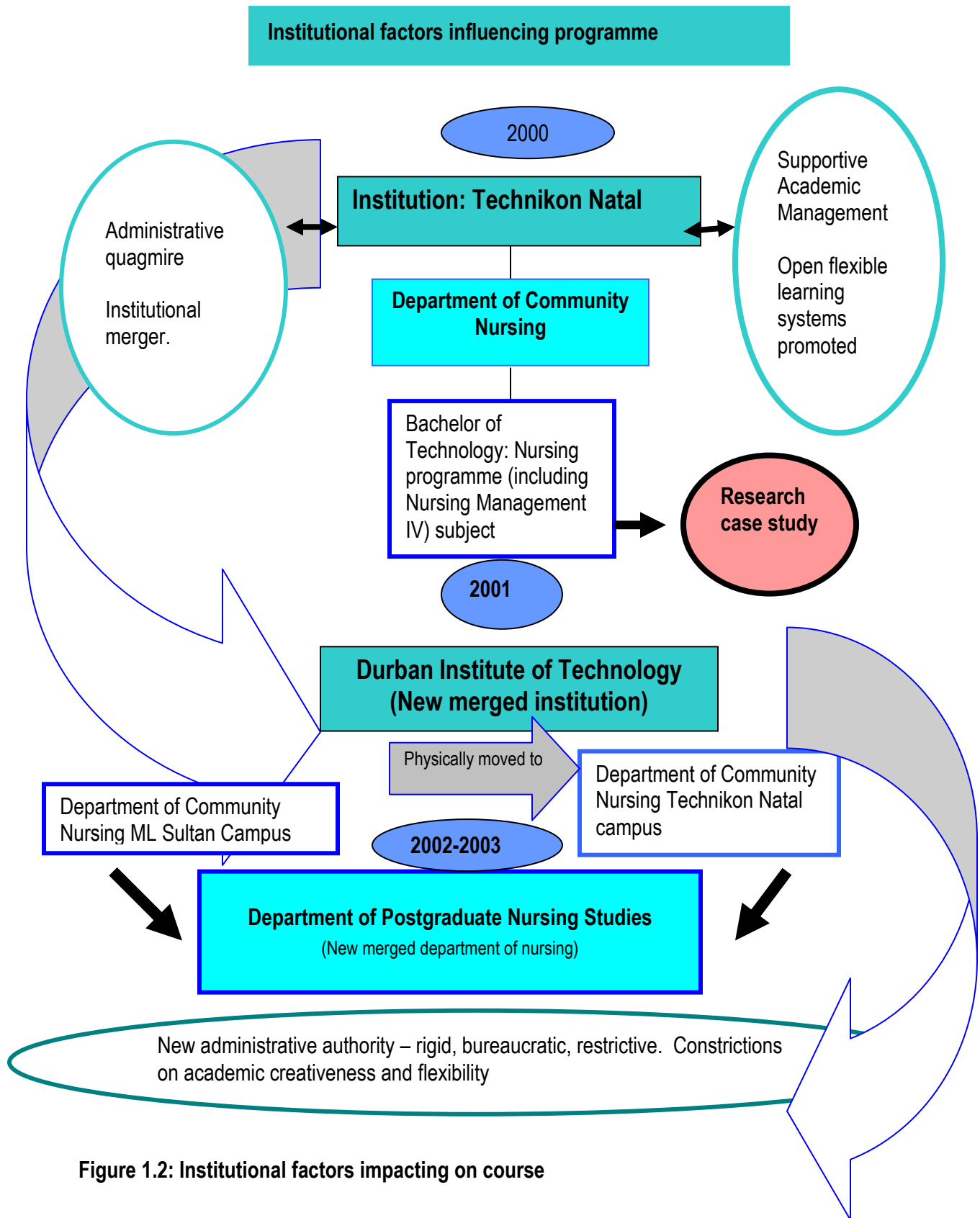


Figure 1.2: Institutional factors impacting on course

1.4.2 Outcomes-based education

One of the challenges for the Department of Education has been to change the emphasis of education from didactic teaching to a focus on educational outcomes and to address those difficult areas affected by our history (SAQA, 2000:2; Beekman, 2000:1).

Beekman (2000:1) notes "Outcome-based education focuses on outputs, on what the learner knows and can do, rather than on how long it takes to complete a programme of learning". Outcomes based education has therefore placed a new emphasis on the development of thinking skills, problem solving and decision-making. Previously, curricula were more content-based and prescriptive. The outcomes based curriculum places an emphasis on learning how to learn, a dual involvement of the teacher/learner in the learning process "and a concern with achieving excellence and high performance, and concrete experience and skills valued as highly as knowledge" (Beekman 2000:2). In other words, it is the application of knowledge as opposed to the acquisition of knowledge, which becomes relevant in outcomes based education.

1.4.3 Limited student/educator contact at Durban Institute of Technology (DIT)

Student/educator contact within the Department of Postgraduate Nursing at DIT is limited and, as with most post-basic nursing programmes, students are invariably full time employees and only part-time students. Health services are understaffed and underfinanced, influencing their ability to support students' studies, especially post-basic nursing students (Gwele, 2003). This has resulted in the departmental staff having to accommodate to the needs of both the services and the students. This accommodation has taken the form of reducing formal contact time with students as well as consolidating the contact time so that students can travel the distances to the institution and spend a longer period of time in the department. This is to minimise the impact on the health service and

make it easier for students to obtain permission to study. Staff members recognize the reality of the situation and are aware of the negative impact of reduced contact time with the student, on student learning.

This factor challenges both students and staff members, as it is much easier to commit to and learn where education is the primary focus. It is also important to remember that it takes time to change paradigms of teaching and learning, and time in the researcher's educational context, is limited. The intention of the study was to use the model of critical reflective practice in an attempt to address this challenge.

1.4.4 Organisational factors influencing students' learning styles

Often critical thinking is by-passed in favour of students having to learn or do things in a way specified by the educational system i.e. the "right way". This then has a limiting effect on the creative energies students might bring to a situation, and if this is squelched frequently enough, the student is discouraged from this form of thinking (Miller and Malcolm, 1990). This is particularly noticeable in the practice settings where often procedures rather than principles guide practice.

1.4.5 A different learning option

Bearing in mind all the issues and limitations mentioned in the sections described in 1.2.4 on higher education transformation, I think there is a need for a different way of presenting materials and learning about the concepts of health care, particularly in the form of reality-based education (in other words, learning that is grounded in real life processes rather than theory linked to hypothetical situations).

1.4.6 Schön – Reflection-in-action: An alternative epistemology

While there are a number of proponents of reflection as a means of learning, for example (Boud and Walker, 1994; Boud and Walker, 2000; Burton, 2000; Boud and Knights, 2001; Richardson and Maltby, 1995; Grey and Fitzgibbon, 1998; Cotton, 2001; Lyon and Brew, 2003; Taylor, 2003), I have chosen to Schön to introduce the concept as he is considered a seminal authority. Schön (1983) in his book, *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action* examines professional knowledge, professional contexts and reflection-in-action. He discusses the move from technical rationality to reflection-in-action and examines the process involved in various instances of professional judgement.

Schön (1983: vii-viii) states that

“I have become convinced that universities are not devoted to the production and distribution of fundamental knowledge in general. They are institutions committed, for the most part, to a *particular* epistemology, a view of knowledge that fosters selective inattention to practical competence and professional artistry... We are in need of an inquiry into the epistemology of practice. What is the kind of knowing in which competent practitioners engage? How is professional knowing like and unlike the kinds of knowledge presented in academic textbooks, scientific papers, and learned journals? In what sense, if any, is there intellectual rigor in professional practice?”

Schön (1983: vii) in analysing vignettes of different professionals engaged in practice, specifically a senior practitioner attempting to teach a junior how to learn elements of the practice, begins with an assumption that

“...competent practitioners usually know more than they say they can. They exhibit a kind of knowing-in-practice, most of which is tacit. Nevertheless, starting with protocols of actual performance, it is possible to construct and test models of knowing. Indeed, practitioners themselves often reveal a capacity for reflection on their intuitive knowing in the midst of action and sometimes use this capacity to cope with the unique, uncertain, and conflicted situations of practice.”

Schön (1983:ix) explains that this is an analysis of “...the distinctive structure of reflection-in-action.” He suggests that it has a kind of rigour both similar and dissimilar to that of academic research. He questions its limits “some of which derive from myths about the relation of thought to action, while others are grounded to powerful features of the interpersonal and institutional contexts that we create for ourselves.”

The whole basis for this approach lies in the recognition that “professions have become essential to the very functioning of our society....we look to professionals for the definition and solution of our problems, and it is through them that we strive for progress”. He believes that professionals both claim and are given “extraordinary knowledge in matters of great social importance” and that society responds in kind by giving them “extraordinary rights and privileges” Schön, 1983:3). Be that as it may, Schön (1983:4) at the same time suggests that professionals are going through a crisis. There is

“...misused autonomy... Professionally designed solutions to public problems have had unanticipated consequences, sometimes worse than the problems they were designed to solve...”

Nonetheless, Schön (1983:6) notes the growing demand for professionals and suggests that professionals themselves have delivered widely disparate and conflicting recommendations concerning problems of national importance, including those to which professional “social needs for technical expertise were growing and that, as a cause and consequence of this growth, a professional knowledge industry had come into being”. This is particularly relevant in the case of nursing, where nurses are a diminishing resource, therefore requiring even more that those remaining are capable of managing societal health care demands. According to Schön (1983:10)

“The concept of the ‘technological fix’ came into bad odor. Indeed, some of the solutions advocated by professional experts were seen as having created problems as bad or worse than those they had been designed to solve. Just as urban renewal had emerged in the early sixties as a destroyer of neighborhoods, its unexpected consequences attributed by critics like William Alonso to the weakness of its underlying theory, so in fields as diverse as housing, criminal justice, social services, welfare, and transportation, the most promising solutions, painstakingly worked out and advocated by the experts, came to be seen as problematic. They were ineffective, they created new problems, they were derived from theories which had been shown to be fragile and incomplete.”

Issues Schön uses to illustrate his contentions in 1983 can just as easily be espoused in South Africa in 2005. Health status statistics of this province do not reflect kindly on the abilities of health professionals. As Schön (1983:14) notes, the crisis of confidence in the professions has been interpreted by professionals who have given serious thought in their own fields to the adequacy of professional knowledge. On the whole, “...their assessment is that professional knowledge is mismatched to the changing characteristics of the situations of the practice – the complexity,

uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflicts which are increasingly perceived as central to the world of professional practice” (14).

But, states Schön (1983:15)

“even if professional knowledge were to catch up with the new demands of professional practice, the improvement in professional performance would be transitory. The situations of practice are inherently unstable mainly because of the unprecedented needs for flexibility demanded by the generation and management of constant change.”

As already noted, the role of the nurse has changed significantly since 1994 and will continue to change with the movement in health philosophy towards a primary health care model, and the change in the delivery of health care in the form of the district health system. There are many other shifts that are being made in this post – apartheid era. For example, concepts such as affirmative action have brought about a significant shift in power from white to black dominated health care delivery; there has been a fundamental shift in resource allocation in the delivery of health care from a hospital base to a community clinic base. Nurses, who had been comfortable in their dependent / interdependent roles at the hospital bedsides, now have to shift and accumulate new clinical skills and a greater understanding of the demands facing the patients at home. No longer do hospitals have the financial resources to accommodate three week hospital stays. The onset of HIV/AIDS has presented challenges that have entirely changed the practice of nursing and as Schön (1983:15) notes “as the tasks change, so will the demands for usable knowledge, and the patterns of task and knowledge are inherently unstable.”

Previously nurses were taught to manage the medical condition and the bio-medical model was used as the frame of reference (Cutcliffe and McKenna, 2004). Some of my colleagues and I no longer view the bio-medical model as particularly useful and Kelly (1998) in fact suggests that this model has a potentially potent role in disempowering nurses. She believes that in their desire to make medical decisions, these nurses in fact overlook and devalue the very powerful role of the nurse. As educators, we now provide nurses with a number of theoretical models to help them understand the client as an individual, as a family member and as part of our broader society. Nursing, we are taught, is 'holistic (Duffy, 2001; Fagerberg, 2004). What this means to the general nurse, is that we can no longer isolate problems or just deal with the specified condition. For example, the client who has contracted cholera, is likely to be living in an unhygienic environment, conducive to the breeding of the disease-causing organism. The client is probably living in and perpetuating this environment because of a multiplicity of factors, not the least being poverty due to unemployment. Other challenges to move beyond the singular would include clients' inability to change the environment because of political issues and the lack of power, cultural passivity, lack of knowledge, lack of support and so on. The system is complex and the changing problems interact and affect other predicaments, so that there is no clearly defined dilemma or specified outcome (Lehmann & Saunders, 2002). This, I have observed, is a typical environment within which nurses' practice and I don't believe that technical training and piecemeal management of issues is the way to effectively solve the inherent complexity of the problems. Schön (1983:16) notes that "the situations of practice are characterized by unique events." Many of the problems we deal with are unique, either because of the setting, the character of the problem, the nature of the client or the caregiver. This often makes it impossible to apply a standard approach to the problem, with a clearly defined outcome. Schön (1983:17) maintains that the individual case requires the "art of practice" which "might be taught, if it were constant and known, but it is not constant".

This lack of constancy in the practice setting challenges the essence of nursing.

Nursing is inherently a moral profession and the strength of the profession lies in its commitment to the norms, values, responsibilities and obligations that arise from the practice of nursing (Pera, 1996). Van Aswegen (1998:122-123) points out that being a nurse practitioner implies that one is responsible and accountable for one's actions and supports the notion that such a practitioner has a moral as well as an organizational responsibility for one's practice. She identifies a number of characteristics required for the professional nurse practitioner such as moral reasoning, self-restraint, critical conscience, altruism, autonomy, rationality, courage, commitment, strength of will, a sense of agency which "requires oneself as having that control, and the moral responsibility."

Nurses are taught at an early stage of their education that theirs is a profession of caring, requiring them to be advocates of their clients, to respect human life and dignity and to behave with discipline and with a deep sense of moral consciousness (Pera, 1996).

However, as van Aswegen (1998) realises, the ability for nurses to behave with moral rectitude or a sense of agency and use the principles of critical thinking and reflective thought in terms of ethical judgment and moral reasoning, is very dependent on the situational context. There are great risks involved in this process in an environment that shifts and changes and that is not conducive to questioning and experimentation, and so very often nurses are left feeling helpless and vulnerable because of the processes within the social settings. Ethical decision-making and moral reasoning and development are usually best understood by modeling and engagement and reflection. Attitudes and values are not easily taught in the abstract, and because of the limited time contact between lecturers and students within the Department of Post-Graduate Nursing Studies, an

investigation and implementation of this model on critical reflective practice, becomes increasingly more relevant and important.

1.5 PERSONALISING THE PROBLEM

I have worked in the Department of Postgraduate Nursing Studies (formerly, the Department of Community Nursing) at DIT for about 17 years in the capacity of that of an educator (See Figures 1.2 and 1.3). In addition, I am a registered nurse, midwife, community health nurse, psychiatric nurse, nurse educator, maternal and child health specialist and nurse manager and have practice experience as a nurse.

As a nurse educator for post-basic courses to adult nurse learners, I entered teaching at a stage where the nursing curriculum was so comprehensively prescribed that it seemed as if each lecture period was precisely defined and detailed. I became overwhelmed by content teaching and worried far more about getting through the teaching material than with what students had learned. I found it difficult to reconcile the needs and frustrations of students with course requirements.

Minutiae threatened to overwhelm me, and if students failed, the failure was theirs, not mine. After all, I had covered the material, hadn't I? As confidence and understanding developed, with this came realizations and questions. Was there a standardised solution to all questions and was prescribed theory the answer? More and more, as I learned to listen to the students, many of whom had many years experience in their particular practice of nursing, I realised that as often as not, they were the teachers, and I the co-learner. If I had a significant place, it was in how I could facilitate their learning through questions, understanding, material provision, structuring, and support. As I fought the prescriptive, pedantic curriculum and the resulting detailed study guide, hating the feeling of being

constrained, and resenting being told what to teach, how to teach and what to think, thereby limiting flexibility and creativity, I moved from one extreme to another. I liked to teach by the 'seat of my pants.' In a sense, this required that the students place themselves in my hands as far as the learning process, was concerned. I had the map, the broad outline of which was shared with the students. They had access to the texts and readings. This was 'true' learning, I thought. It was discussion-based and was controlled by the narratives emanating from the students' experiences in their workplace, and the questions that were asked. No longer did I feel limited by content. But still some of the students were not happy. They felt unsafe despite my reassurances, because the concept of uncertainty existed, even though from my perspective, uncertainty is an enabling condition. For me, the learning was in the inquiry, the process, the destabilisation of comfort zones. But for some of these students, their security, normally supported by familiar teaching approaches, theories, set structures, organised notes and tests based on explicit content, was shaken. Although enlightenment and acceptance eventually did occur, for some it seemed too late, leaving them feeling unsettled and insecure.

Since the post-apartheid 1994 elections, the learners studying with the department have changed from being predominantly first language English speaking students, whose educational reference is essentially Eurocentric, to mainly Zulu speaking students whose second language is English and whose cultural background is Afrocentric and very different to my own. While good nursing practice is generic, the choices and the manner of practice are dependent on a multiplicity of factors. I realised through experience, that simply imposing my own framework of practice without understanding the context and culture of my students and the clients they served, would be artificial at best, and harmful, at worst. It is easy to teach theory and have students learn by rote for examinations purposes. But the proof of true and worthwhile learning lies, I believe, in how students contextualise

the learning, engage with and integrate their learning in a way that has meaning for them and connects with the value they place on the learning. I grew to understand the need to match what was *needed* in their real world of health care provision with an understanding of the students' actual nursing practice. This then, became the starting point for the planning of the teaching process. Unwittingly, I became a proponent of outcomes based education. I found a model of critical reflective practice (van Aswegen, 1998) that appeared to support this process and enable students to become transformative nurse practitioners in their own right. It seemed that this would facilitate the move from autopilot nurses to autonomous, thinking nurse practitioners, while at the same time, enlightening me about the realities of their specific nursing context, values and practice.

1.6 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY SETTING

Our nursing department is fairly unique. It offers programmes that must fall in line with both professional requirements (SANC) and with national education requirements. These are offered using an integrated approach, from staff members who have a similar philosophical perspective, even if their personalities and teaching styles are so different. Agreement is reached on core elements and a spirit of co-operation pervades functioning. As a member of staff, I am involved in the regular departmental discussions that take place with regards to the gaps in academic knowledge and practice, particularly with respect to higher order learning (See Figure 1.3). Most staff members spend much time and effort supporting students in bridging the gap between previous learning at educational systems that appear to provide appropriate training. The problem appears to lie with the selectivity of skills being focused upon and how cognitive, affective and psycho-motor skills were developed and integrated. This appears to result in a focus on enabling nursing students to work according to policies and procedures, rather than on focusing on their ability to think independently, creatively and autonomously.

Departmental support takes place through creating a positive learning environment, physically through dedicated classrooms, that are appropriately equipped and where learning needs are considered in terms of reasonable seating comfort, a quiet and cool environment. The support includes access and usage of appropriate and user-friendly institutional facilities e.g. library and on-line computer laboratory. Each programme is managed by a programme co-ordinator and the courses are supported by both full-time and part-time staff members, who are committed to excellence in teaching. This is fostered by ongoing staff development and liaising with health service providers to promote congruence between health service needs and learning needs. Staff members are fairly autonomous, and in general, can make independent decisions regarding the management and teaching within the programmes. In general, teaching is student focused and teamwork is promoted to ensure that theory is taught in an integrated manner compatible with OBE. Figure 1.3 depicts the essential features of the department, as explained above.



Figure 1.3: Departmental influences on learning outcomes

1.7 CHALLENGES RELATED TO OFFERING THE COURSE

As explained in 1.1, our students, already registered nurse practitioners, enrol for a two-year part-time Bachelor of Technology degree in nursing in one of the nursing specialties of occupational, community, primary health care, management or advanced midwifery and neonatal nursing. The degree programmes comprise four courses. One of the courses, Nursing Management IV, is generic to all specialties and it is this course that forms the focus of this study.

The questions that were asked within the department on a regular and frequent basis were:

- How do we ensure that nurses are being educated and not just trained?
- Are students able to cross the theory-practice divide?
- Are our programmes effective in inculcating the desire to learn that will accommodate the needs of the learner and the community they serve?
- Are our programmes relevant in terms of the current South African context, and what can we do to ensure appropriateness, relevance and acceptability?

The problems faced were:

- Limited contact sessions with students (32 contact days),
- Limited studying time for students due to work, family and civic commitments,
- Distance and learning experience factors as students were dispersed across a wide variety of health services, had different learning experiences, and were practicing in different nursing disciplines.

The challenge was to offer a course that was meaningful to these students, incorporating their current practice by promoting a continuous means of engaging in learning where the workplace is seen as their primary learning setting and where classroom contact is used to facilitate and support this process. The research study is about how the challenges could be met through the development of such a course.

1.8 THE MODEL

The intention of this research was to find an educationally based answer to empowering nurses, by means of critical reflective practice, so that they could practice at a level expected of a professional nurse and meet the demands of a fragile and often problematic health system.

In searching for a means of attempting to resolve some of the department's educational concerns, I came upon a model for critical thinking and reflective practice – that of van Aswegen, which was developed in 1998. The questions resulting were:

- Could such a model be used within a programme specific context i.e. the educational programmes in the Department of Postgraduate Nursing Studies at DIT, and then, more specifically, one programme context, namely a management course for nurses being developed by the researcher?
- Could such a model, involving selecting strategies such as reflective diaries and the Socratic Questioning and Discussion method as well as certain critical thinking techniques, be used to enhance critical reflective practice?

Although the model had been conceptualised and developed, the author indicated that there was a need to implement it in order to assess its suitability for use (van Aswegen, 1998:436). I subsequently adopted and implemented the model, to try and answer the research question: Will this model enhance nursing students' critical thinking and reflective practice?

Critical reflective practice is seen as a means of empowering practitioners and leading to more autonomous practice (van Aswegen, 1998:112; Owens, Francis and Tollefson, 1998). Critical reflective practice is the ability of the practitioner, i.e., the nurse practitioner, to both literally and figuratively step back from her own practice of nursing and think about what she is doing in light of what she thinks or believes or knows she ought to be doing (van Aswegen, 1998). This thinking or believing or knowing is supported by reason, experience, evidence, analysis and logic. The value in this approach lies in the recognition that many situations are both complex and problematic, for which there is no simple or single solution. The critical reflective process, however, enables the practitioner to make explicit that which is implicit and to focus on deciding what to do in order to improve practice.

Some nurse education programmes have used strategies to encourage critical thinking and reflection in practice. However, this model is novel in that it consists of a holistic educational approach that encompasses multiple strategies to promote critical reflective practice. As already stated, it is van Aswegen's 1998 Model for Critical Reflective Practice, developed by a South African nurse and built as a result of an extensive literature review, is based on accepted concepts of critical thinking and reflection. The model was chosen after considering various other models, primarily because it is holistic and incorporated those concepts that fit into the researcher's world-view. It is a conceptual model, both flexible and comprehensive in that it will allow for the inclusion of other theories within it.

For example, theories about adult learning are accommodated within it. Furthermore, it is generic by being suitable for the use across disciplines and cultures.

It is necessary for nursing models to be tested in order to revise, reject or accept them or even to further develop them into formal theory. In addition, the South African nursing situation is unique and while there are a number of aspects generic to nursing and education internationally, there are sufficient differences in context which make the development of nursing models and theories essential for the growth of the discipline of nursing in South Africa.

Van Aswegen's (1998) model is philosophical and conceptual in nature and as in most theoretical approaches to education, the model comprised the basic elements: the facilitator (an educator who supports the students by providing the freedom to pursue self-discovered learning activities), the learner, the learning environment, the teaching process and learning that results from the integration of these factors. Most studies focus on one or more educational strategies for learning, or describe models for practice. However, this study has implemented a broadly constructed, philosophical model in practical terms through combining the number of educational strategies in a nursing management course.

My interpretation and utilisation of the model required that students were already working in the 'real' world and that the learning programme would meet their workplace learning needs. It required both students and staff who were open to this approach in learning and were willing to develop partnerships in learning. The research was qualitative in nature, involving a case study of a learning course within a programme of nursing.

The uniqueness of this study is that it includes an educational programme that has been developed holistically to promote critical reflective practice for nurses within a tertiary institution of higher learning in South Africa. It does not concentrate on one single strategy, but a range of approaches that are complementary to and derive from the programme as it develops.

1.9 RESEARCH PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the study was to monitor the integration and evaluation of van Aswegen's (1998) model within a post-basic nursing education programme at DIT to enhance critical reflective practice with a view to further development of the model.

The research question was: Does the implementation of van Aswegen's (1998) model within a programme of nursing enhance nursing students' critical thinking and reflective practice?

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Trace the development of students' critical reflective thought within a context of a learning course of an educational programme.
2. Analyse the development of the student's critical reflective thought in the light of van Aswegen's (1998) model in order to test, refine and adapt the model.
3. Identify enabling and inhibiting factors within a department of a higher education institution that would support or limit the use of such a model for the development of critical reflective practice.
4. Monitor the process involved in reflective thinking evidenced from learning diaries; tutorial groups and staff reflections and whether reflective thought has an effect on the resulting perceived attitudes and behaviours of post-basic nursing students related to health care practice.

1.10 STRUCTURING OF THE THESIS

1.10.1. Chapter Flow

There are twelve chapters. The first provides an overview of the study, the context, the aim and objectives and the approach to writing. Chapter Two provides an overview of van Aswegen's 1998 model, the framework for the study. Chapter 3 reviews the literature in a fairly narrow context as findings related to the various sources of data are also supported by the literature in the related chapters. Chapter Four explains the research methodologies used in this research study: however, it should be noted that Chapters Six to Eleven, which deal with data analysis, also have a brief introductory methodology section. This is because there are diverse sources of data, managed in different ways and requiring different methodological treatments. So therefore it seemed more appropriate to introduce these sections with a methodological explanation. Chapter Five illustrates the chronological sequencing of the research study as it incorporates the project, and explains the planning and rationale for the structuring of the course, Nursing Management IV. Chapter Six deliberates on the application and implementation of the model by considering the course, Nursing Management IV as a case study, using multiple data sources during different stages of the process, to plan and evaluate the course. This chapter addresses all four of the research objectives. Chapter Seven focuses on the broad areas of reflective journaling and comprises three elements, reflective writing and students' perceptions of the value of the process; the critiquing process and finally, communication and the second language student. This chapter addresses all four of the research objectives. Chapter's Eight and Nine consider complementarities, Chapter Eight through student focused reflective tutorial discussion groups and Chapter Nine, another view of the learning and teaching process as evidenced through the lecturing staff in the nursing department. These chapters mainly address the last two of the research objectives. Chapter Ten introduces the framework underpinning the analysis of the reflective journals and Chapter Eleven aligns with Chapter Ten, by

narrowing the previously broader focus of the earlier chapters in order to follow the growth and development of eight students through their reflective journals. This chapter addresses all four of the research objectives. Chapter Twelve concentrates on theory building, drawing on evidence identified in the earlier chapters to support the further refinement of van Aswegen's (1998) model. Van Aswegen's theoretical statements are used to anchor and evaluate the further implementation of the model.

1.10.2 Chronology

This research project has in effect, taken almost five years to complete. The first year was spent in 'growing' the research - a highly reflective, satisfying but unsettling year. It consisted of my thinking, reading, debating, discussing and reflecting on the project ahead. It also entailed the initial development of the project for implementation purposes and the learning of a number of new skills. The next three years saw the process repeated – reflection, implementation, monitoring, reflection, refinement and then again, reflection, implementation, monitoring, reflection and refinement. The final year went beyond the project and was devoted to transcribing, reflecting, analysing, reflecting and writing. The chronology of this process has been summarised in Chapter Five in shaded textboxes within the analysis of the various stages of the project.

1.10.3 Style (voices and narratives)

There is a strong autobiographical narrative style that courses through this journey and I have borrowed from Wickham's (2003) account of her own thesis to help describe some of the similarities of style, particularly with regards to the 'voices' along the way. There are a number of narratives and voices in this thesis. Except in the case of the critical readers and me, pseudonyms are used but the voices themselves are authentic. These are indicated below:

The stories of the students (the participants) engaged in a field of study: Their voices are reflected through different mediums - open-ended questionnaires; a focus group; tutorial based discussion groups, and then, their written journey within their reflective journals.

The participants and their stories: The stories are told by staff members within the Department of Postgraduate Nursing Studies, through their interviews. The commentaries of educational experts outside of the department such as the moderators and staff from a quality assurance unit in the institution are identified through their reports.

Researchers' stories: Enmeshed within the participants' narratives are the voices of other researchers, whose own discoveries conveyed through literature, have enabled me to contextualise my own understanding and interpretation of findings within a more global perspective. Their voices run throughout this thesis and are not only confined to the literature review chapter.

Fictional writers: The same applies to authors or poets who are not researchers in the academic sense, but whose keen eye, ear and mind lend an acuteness of understanding, particularly of the human psyche. I have used their voices to interpret rather than to provide correlating or refuting evidence.

Critical readers: Chapter Eight introduces the three main critical readers, Mari Pete, Sarah Levoipiere and Jane Tarr, who ultimately have a far greater role than was originally envisaged. Their voices complement, support and challenge my own as our interpretation and analysis of the eight student journals is interwoven through our construal of elements of van Aswegen's model and

other connecting frameworks. (Jane Tarr 's voice is briefly introduced in Chapter Eight, as she occupies a similar role in the tutorial analysis). My sister, Pat, initiated the process and offered support and advice for the critical reader's frame of reference. Her 'voice' was the spur for continuing with the students' narratives.

Silent, but ever present voices: Just as the students have needed an 'empathetic critiquer' to share their reflections, this journey has been challenged and illuminated by my supervisors, one of whom was Linda Grainger. Their voices have been constantly in my head, querying and smoothing the way.

My story: Intermingled amongst these voices is my narrative voice, where I introduce the participants, provide them with a context and "paint an authentic picture" (Wickham, 2003). I narrate their stories, using extracts from their stories to illustrate my interpretation. Wickham's position reflects much of my own: "The descriptions relayed in this voice were influenced by my additional roles of teacher and teacher educator since the classroom practice I observed was filtered through these lenses and interpreted in relation to my own previous teaching experiences and preferences." This is a highly subjective process, as I am integral to the research process, in terms of observing my own practice. I have endeavoured to add body and further legitimacy to the research study by the concurrent introduction of the voices of the critical readers, the literature, and other measures to support trustworthiness.

My narrative, through my reflexive journal, parallels the journey of the students within my course and the voices within this narrative reflect my own as educator and researcher, and sometimes these are so interwoven, it is difficult to differentiate which is which. The voice of the researcher takes on a more formal, academic style, which is present, in most part, throughout the thesis. It is the analytical

voice of a researcher, and this is particularly prevalent in the chapters on methodology, the literature review and the chapters on the research findings.

I have tried to distinguish between the “I” of myself and the “I”, the researcher by visual cues. For example, excerpts extracted from my reflexive journal have been boxed, typed in italics and colour coded in green. But even here, the differentiation is not clear. A further voice to the “I” myself and the “I” of the analyst and interpreter, is “I”, the author of the thesis. The research journey has taken place in a project spanning three years within which it was planned, implemented, evaluated, refined and the cycle then repeated. The author “I” brings this together within a cohesive pattern, choosing what to include and what to omit, with an eye on the research process, but also an eye on you, the reader.

Sometimes, other voices emerge through my reflexive journal – my voice as mother and sister; a more personal voice reflecting my own dreams and foibles. These then become blended with the voices of my supervisors, which I differentiate in my reflexive journal through the use of colour. Reflexivity has depended so much on the opportunities to discuss, debate and share these thoughts and have them returned orally or in text. They have often provided the cues to further thoughts, just as sometimes, my responses to students’ journals, in the guise of the empathetic-critiquer, has provided a catalyst.

The poet, John Donne (1926) writes that no man is an island. I could no more claim this research to be totally mine and nor would I want to. The value of this study is because of the qualitative road taken, where the individuals influence the outcome and although many journeys may have similar characteristics, each journey is unique purely because the people within it are unique.

Wickham (2003) in her consideration of the value of the four voices located within her own research, provides a rationality for mine:

“I believe that a successful blending of each of the voices described here is vital in working towards a richer notion of rationality. The researcher’s voice deconstructs the interpretations of the analytical voice. The teachers’ voices reported in the descriptive voice are seen to be partially constituted by the researcher’s voice as well as being key features in the constructions presented in the analytical voice. The thesis voice structures the other voices, sometimes interrupting them in order to facilitate a clearer rendering of the complexities involved in reporting the case studies. The use of these different voices also highlights the craft required in both the analytical and writing processes. Where these four voices do not blend easily, the dissonant moment is itself of value.”

1.10.4 Approach

I have seen this project as a journey: For the students, this has been a learning journey where far more than information has been absorbed. It has been a journey into the self; a revelation of the various levels of identity experienced by these students on this journey.

“Until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness.

Concerning all acts of initiative or creation there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too.... Whatever you can do or

dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now”

Goethe (Goethe Society of North America, 2001-2004).

This is a parallel journey, undertaken by myself as educator and as researcher, the purpose of the research being to improve my practice. Living in a country where democracy is highly prized and which has arrived after centuries of struggle, I cannot but appreciate that this gift is not easily donned. Powerlessness has and still does exist at all levels and nursing is no exception.

If I can learn to tread softly, carefully, mindfully and learn to understand the students I work with and the contexts that they work within; if I can at all help to enable them to draw on the mantle of professionalism with pride and understanding – but more importantly, to, as Goethe states ‘take action’ and move beyond the limitations created by and for the autopilot nurse; and if I can support the student to becoming an autonomous nurse practitioner, the manager of her own destiny and the chooser of her own path, - then I too, will have learned to have become the ‘transformatory educator’ so prized in the van Aswegen model.

1.11 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The rationale for the study is provided by the explanation of its benefits. This project benefits those who teach and those who are taught; it benefits health services requiring the skills taught as well as the institutions that provide the teaching and the profession of nursing itself.

1.11.1 For those who teach

- A strategy has been created through careful and thorough documentation of the programme, on how to facilitate critical reflective practice. These same principles can be translated across disciplines

and professions. This study informs educators on how to enable students to work between theory and practice and because the philosophy and principles are general to learning, they could therefore be extrapolated and used in other disciplines.

- This study finds synergy between student learning and SAQA critical outcomes. According to Luckett (2001:50) critical outcomes are “a list of general transferable skills (see Government Gazette 28 March, 1998 No. 18787:8)”. These can be “taught generically and then unproblematically transferred from one domain to another.” Luckett argues that many of these require context specific domains within the discipline, particularly the more complex skills such as “communication and interpersonal skills, problem-solving and reasoning skills”. These, she notes, “require high levels of ‘transferring’ ability, such as flexibility, adaptability, context sensitivity, meta-cognition, meta-knowledge and epistemic cognition before learners can successfully transfer them from the familiar contexts in which they were learnt to new unfamiliar contexts” (Luckett, 2001:50).

- Already as a result of findings from 2002, new strategies have been adopted in our department. These include behavioural changes from departmental teaching staff; a focus on the restructuring of the orientation process and an enhanced usage of virtual classrooms and internet based journal entries.

- A model of critical reflective practice has been sufficiently well implemented and evaluated to provide an argument for its inclusion as a framework for nursing, both within my own department, and beyond.

1.11.2 For those who are taught

- The purpose of this project is to equip nurses to be better health care managers. The approach to teaching and learning should result in the empowerment of students as individuals, as nurses and as managers within their discipline of nursing.
- For those who are taught, the programme provides far more than just the content of a course; it provides a means to on-going self-directed learning, with an appreciation of the value of critical reflective practice. These impacts on self-growth and self-esteem and because of the integration of the constructivist approach to learning, the learner becomes self-motivated and empowered.
- The intent of the project was to support outcomes based education and remove the focus of the responsibility of learning from the lecturer to the student. It promotes an open learning environment and encourages a process of life-long learning. Learning needs and learning styles vary and this study provides a strategy to meet some of these needs.
- Indirectly, the students were exposed to the process of qualitative research in that (a) they were part of the process and (b) that my reflexive diary documenting the process of the research was available to the students on their virtual classroom website.
- This study specifically takes into account the needs of second language learners and attempts to identify a method of appreciating values inherent within different cultures, impacting on nursing practice.

- The SANC has indicated that South African nurses will at some stage be following their international counterparts, namely Britain and the U.S.A., in having to maintain or improve their levels of professional competency by means of continuing professional development (CPD points). This is already occurring in the medical profession. The focus of this educational programme has been a portfolio of nurses' professional development, work-based experiences and reflections. It therefore, can be used as evidence, by the students, for professional recognition.

1.11.3 The teaching institution

- The approaches and processes used within this course are not specific to just the profession of nursing. They are generic, just as principles of management are, and so can be used in other programmes across disciplines and professions.

1.11.4 The profession of nursing itself

- The focus of the research is to improve nursing practice.
- This learning course uses specific strategies such as experiential learning and mentoring, where there are mutual benefits for the health service employing the mentor, the mentor herself, as well as the student as the mentee.
- There are clear indications that the management of health services in SA are in need of support and there is a national focus on the training of health service managers. Additionally, National Government has made dramatic changes within the management hierarchy of the health care system in the post-apartheid era. Traditionally, management posts were made available, in general, to

doctors and administrators. The field of health care management is now wide open and is accessible to a variety of health care personnel from all disciplines, depending on their managerial skills and competencies. Unless nurses are engaged in effective management training programmes, these doors are likely to remain closed to them or they will have difficulties in meeting the work requirements. This project focuses on addressing in part, this situation.

1.12 KEY TERMS

In the normal course of events, a section on key terms would be provided at the beginning of the study. However, because of the length and complexity of the study resulting in numerous key terms and also because the requisite terms are clearly outlined in Chapter Two, this section is omitted.

1.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an introduction to the thinking that prefaced the research study on the development of a transformatory framework of nursing education, aimed at enhancing critical reflective practice, within a South African tertiary institution.



CHAPTER TWO

VAN ASWEGEN'S (1998) MODEL FOR FACILITATION OF CRITICAL REFLECTIVE PRACTICE – AN OVERVIEW

2. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the model and argument along with other relevant literature to support van Aswegen's assertions. The chapter will also address the need for the model to be implemented so that it can be further developed or refined, if necessary. The accompanying diagrams representing the figures depicting the model have been adapted, but the essence and wording remains intact. With permission, I have relied heavily on quotations from van Aswegen's thesis, as I wanted to be sure that I did not misinterpret her meaning. This is her model and inevitably, she explains it best.

2.1 WHAT IS A MODEL?

Simply speaking, a model is a very broad, global representation of interrelated phenomena. It organizes concepts into a theme and is a formal representation of the image of the phenomena. It can be represented in the form of a conceptual map such as the one in Figure 2.1 that provides a visual representation of these phenomena that is precise and fairly easy to understand. Concepts are often fairly abstract, and by providing a model or framework, the key features and the interrelationship between concepts are made clear (Polit & Hungler, 1997; van Aswegen, 1998).

Van Aswegen (1998:384) cites Fawcett (1984) who notes that propositions of models are fairly general and very abstract and because they are not directly observable or limited to specific groups or situations, "they are not amenable to direct empirical testing". Generally speaking, a conceptual

model precedes theory and presents a “specific frame of reference for members of a discipline, telling them what to look at and to speculate about. A conceptual model determines how the world is viewed and what aspects of the world are to be taken into account” van Aswegen (1998:386). Because it was a model, this had implications for the methodology of the study, which will be discussed in Chapter Four (Section 4.4).

2.2 SUMMARY OF THE MODEL

Van Aswegen (1998) suggests that the composition of model gives form to the conceptual relationships developed within and from critical reflective practice. This form, she suggests, characterizes how I as the enquirer and educator would view the appropriate conditions, methods and required educational outcomes needed in order to engage in facilitating critical reflective practice in a learning programme.

The central focus of the model is

“a ***transformative intellectual*** (prerequisite i), who within a ***critical reflective external environment*** (prerequisite ii) enables conscious use of ***guided critical reflective techniques*** (prerequisite iii), thus stimulating a ***conscious subjective internal environment*** (prerequisite iv) in learners/ practitioners. The effect of the interaction between the four prerequisites in ***critical reflective learning*** and ***creative synthesis***, resulting in ***change/ transformation*** which enables fulfilment of the main purpose of the model, namely ***lifelong critical reflective learning and practice (praxis)*** – and a ***transformative intellectual (critical reflective practitioner)*** who takes responsibility for ***empowerment*** of others to become critical reflective and creative practitioners”(van Aswegen, 1998: 392-393). The model is shown in Figure 2.1.

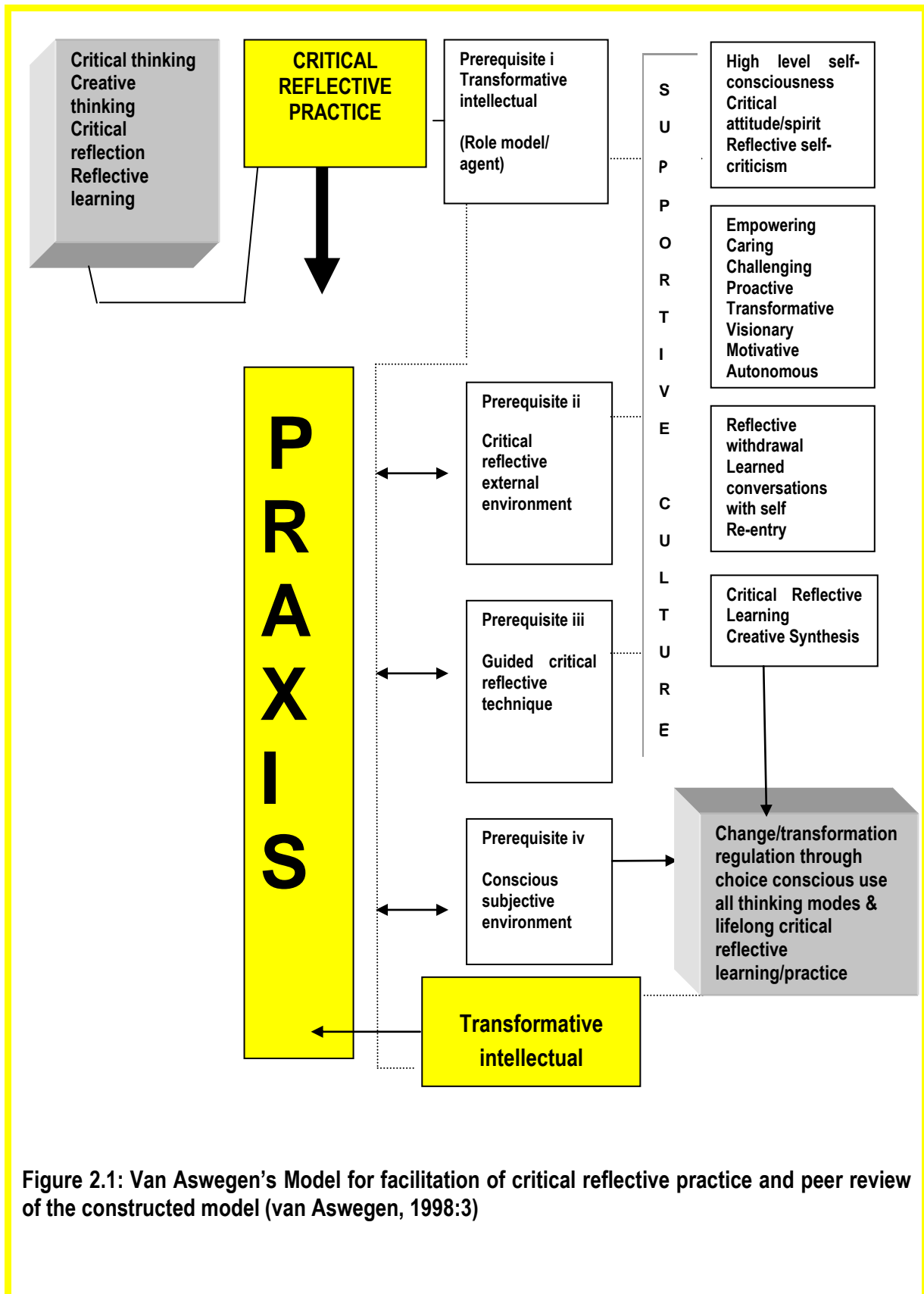


Figure 2.1: Van Aswegen's Model for facilitation of critical reflective practice and peer review of the constructed model (van Aswegen, 1998:3)

2.3 CLARIFICATION OF THE MAJOR THEMES, DEFINITIONS, CONCEPTS AND INTERRELATIONSHIPS OF VAN ASWEGEN'S MODEL

2.3.1 Main Concept: Critical Reflective Practice

Van Aswegen (1998:393) defines this as the ability to “consciously and purposefully” step back from one’s practice or a specific situation and retrospectively contemplate what has happened and the effects and implications thereof. Schön (1983) refers to this as ‘reflection-on-action’ in what Boyd and Fales (1983) as cited in Rolfe (1998:41) suggests result in “changed conceptual perspective”. Rolfe (1998:41) further suggests that by changing the conceptual view of the nurse, the “process of reflection-on-action turns clinical experience into personal and experiential knowledge. It is largely irrelevant how much experience a nurse has; if she does not reflect and learn from that experience it will never help her to improve her practice.” Van Aswegen (1998:393) recognises that

“critical reflective practice is characterized by habitual inquisitiveness; well-informed and multilogical (dialectical) reasoning; open-mindedness; proactive thought; fairminded evaluation; honest self-evaluation; focused inquiry; persistence; empathy with diverse opposing points of view; devotion to truth against self-interest; willingness to take risks; deliberate and principled thinking about the thinking processes; insight into social construction of the situation; creative synthesis; autonomous, responsible and informed action, and reflective learning. Critical reflective practice is portrayed by self-regulation, imagination, innovation, insight, moral integrity, courage and perseverance.”

Van Aswegen states that it is not enough to just think about one’s practice. The practitioner must analyse the experience in terms of future learning and translation into better practice. Because the critical reflective practitioner is constantly measuring her practice in terms of theory and potential for future practice, an amalgamation of experience, theory and reflection will generally provide the practitioner with the best option of choice for potential action. Rolfe (1998) suggests that by reflecting

on our actions through the keeping of a reflective journal, we can examine our personal experiences and try to make sense of them in the same way a researcher tries to make sense of her data. “Critical reflective thinking as praxis, requires action, involvement and risk taking” (van Aswegen, 1998:393). In this way it can be seen that critical reflective practice results from four processes, namely critical thinking, critical reflection, creative thinking and reflective learning, as shown in Figure 2.2. Each of these concepts will be explained hereafter.

Components of critical reflective practice:

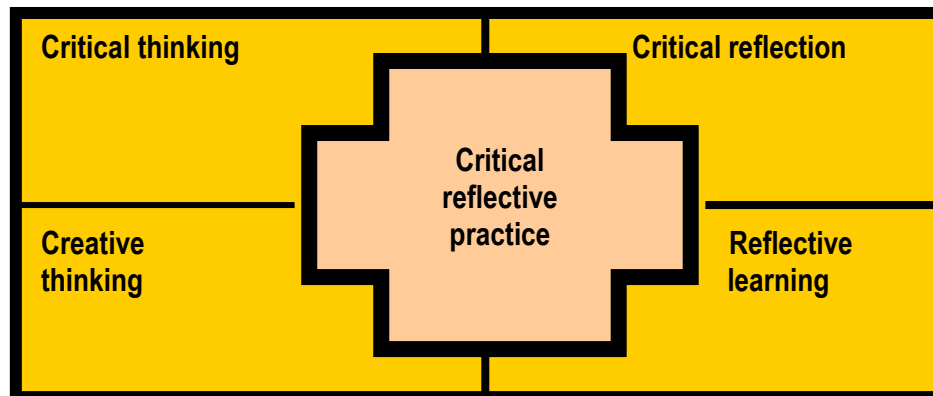


Figure 2.2: Building blocks (bins) for main concept, critical reflective practice (van Aswegen, 1998:394)

2.3.1.1 Critical thinking

Van Aswegen (1998:394) cites the American Philosophical Association’s (1990:3) definition of the ideal critical thinker as

“being habitually inquisitive, well-informed, trustful of reason, open-minded, flexible, fair-minded in evaluation, honest in facing personal bias, prudent in making judgements, willing to reconsider, clear about issues, orderly in complex matters, diligent in seeking relevant information, reasonable in selection of criteria, focused

on inquiry, and persistent in seeking results that are as precise as the subject and the circumstances of inquiry permit.”

Ennis (1987) cited in Allison (1997:59) defined critical thinking as “reasonable reflective thinking that is focussed on deciding what to believe or do and on a purposeful mental activity that helps to formulate or solve problems, make decisions, or fulfil a desire to understand”. Allison (1997:59) sees critical thinking as a framework into which complex cognitive processes such as problem solving, decision making, critical thinking and creative thinking, all of which require the use of multiple basic thinking skills, overlap and interrelate with each other. Allison (1997:63) supports the notion that it includes higher order thinking skills as listed in Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy of analysis, synthesis and evaluation, and that “critical thinking involves creative elements which permit the production of ideas and alternatives and provides examples of these which include formulating hypotheses, asking questions, viewing a problem in different ways, suggesting possible solutions and devising plans for investigation.”

2.3.1.2 Creative thinking

Van Aswegen (1998:395) relates the concept of creativity to critical reflective practice by explaining it as

“the ability to sense gaps or problems within known information, ability to see many relationships among elements, flexibility in thinking and reorganisation of understanding to produce innovative ideas and solutions, testing ideas and modifying those ideas in a unique way, and communicating the results. Creativity within critical reflective practice conjures up several abilities rather than a single characteristic. It involves curiosity, imagination, discovery, innovation, invention, and balance between divergent and convergent thinking, intuitive processes and contemplation of abstract philosophical issues.”

2.3.1.3 Critical reflection

Van Aswegen (1998:395) suggests that the person engaged in critical reflection “challenges the validity of previous learning, questions the premises on which problems are posed or defined” and is more concerned with the questions that call for explanations and consequences rather than the process of the action. The critical thinker accepts that there is likely to be more than one answer or one probability and looks beyond the surface or the superficial to develop insights that “reveal the underlying assumptions constraining open discourse as well as autonomous and responsible action”. She accepts that the critical reflective practitioner is one who is willing to take risks and to challenge accepted norms in order to obtain enlightenment and a different perspective on the given information.

2.3.1.4 Reflective learning

Van Aswegen (1998:399) defines reflective learning as the

“process of making a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience to guide subsequent understandings, appreciation and action. It involves critical analysis and interpretation of an experience, openness to new information, acceptance of self-reality, a change in personal meaning, structure, resolution, review of past values in relation to the changed perspective and examination of the implications for future behaviour and others.”

2.3.2 Supporting main concepts

2.3.2.1 Transformative intellectual (Role model/ agent)

This is the person in pursuit of truth using critical reflective practice as an approach. This is a person who eschews conventional practise for the sake of form and espouses a critical approach to knowledge acquisition and utilisation within a context of rational possibilities and probabilities.

Van Aswegen (1998:396) suggests that such a person is one who functions in an integrated, open and holistic manner and who follows the process of critical reflective practice in a search for “self-regulated, independent, empowered and caring practices.” This results in an enervating and enriching journey towards autonomy and independence of thought and practice.

“The transformative intellectual as an agent, is a critical reflective practitioner and role model of professional maturity in that he/she shows strong commitment to improve practice and learning. Such an agent engages in continuous observation, critical thinking and reflection in order to challenge preconceived ideas. The transformative intellectual is a change agent. The agent of critical reflective practice establishes his/her credibility through role modelling competence, objectivity, high ethical standards and critical reflective ability. The transformative intellectual is a catalyst who accepts responsibility for management of change activities. The transformative intellectual is self-empowered through critical reflective processes (ability) and is therefore, willing to empower others to discover and use their unique skills, knowledge, experience and creativity” (van Aswegen 1998:396).

2.3.2.2 Critical reflective external environment

The environment van Aswegen speaks of is the context within which critical reflective learning is facilitated. It lies outside of the critical nurse practitioner and includes the myriad of factors that comprise political, psycho-social, occupational, financial, legal and institutional features. Van Aswegen (1998:397) suggests that our current climate is one requiring change or transformation in terms of a different culture of nursing. Health care practitioners should re-examine existing norms and values as well as current practices and standards of care. This is necessary to support the changing South African society where concepts and behaviour befitting the ideals are inherent in the

notions of “democracy, transparency, transformation, empowerment, human rights and accountability”. However, this environment needs to be created and supported. Takase, Kershaw and Burt (2001) recognise that a non-conducive and non-supportive environment frequently leads to job dissatisfaction and a concomitant reduction in job performance. Kelly (1998) and Freshwater (2000) both appreciate the disempowering elements fraught within non-supportive environments and suggest that because nursing is a moral activity, it is important that the process of nursing as a caring activity is supported within a caring, enabling environment so that the nurse practitioner can “look and listen to the self and others, and is energized to transform from auto-pilot functioning to critical reflective functioning” (van Aswegen, 1998:397).

2.3.2.3 Guided critical reflective techniques

Van Aswegen supports the use of guidance on reflection to enable reflective learning. She identifies this as a mixture of methods that will allow the learners to purposefully and in a goal-directed way reflect upon their experiences, both personal and workplace related in order to improve their practice. This process allows the learner to both use her own experience as a learning tool and be guided in a safe and supportive manner. The guided critical reflective techniques van Aswegen (1998:398) speaks of “include all strategies which enable learners/practitioners to reflect with other people and discover meaning with others”. This mutually enabling process results in

“dialogue and revelation of the self to one another. It enables the learner/practitioner to become conscious of and keep an ongoing record of ...her actions, feedback, beliefs, assumptions and theories...It begins with the goal of reconstructing individual and social experiences as a basis for understanding the attitudes and emotions which shape the present knowledge of practice...incorporating new ideas and information.”

The process starts with a description of the experience or issue, and with guidance, the learner moves to explore the essence of the development through the route of “conscious reflective

withdrawal and reentry” (van Aswegen, 1998:398). This then leads to self-understanding and appreciation, motivating further learning and action.

2.3.2.4 Conscious subjective environment (internal environment)

This is the inner being, the inner consciousness of the practitioner. It includes personal thoughts and feelings that constitute inner awareness, and comprise all that the individual is or thinks of as the self. It is a subjective awareness and the centre of experience and the determiner of values, beliefs, attitudes, understanding and commitment to action.

2.3.2.5 Critical reflective learning and creative synthesis

Van Aswegen (1998:399) sees this as the amalgamation of learning. Through synthesis, it provides a revision or new interpretation of the meaning of the experience “to guide subsequent understanding, appreciation and action. It involves critical analysis and interpretation of an experience, openness to new information (and) acceptance of self-reality.” This results in a new understanding modifying personal meaning and influencing a further re-examination of personal philosophy with respect to the altered viewpoint. The key characteristic of critical reflective learning that separates it from other types of cognitive processes, such as problem solving or analysis, is that the problem is seen and defined in relation to the self. The creative synthesis, van Aswegen (1998:399) says, is consistency in thought and action. After due considerations of the implications, all of this becomes integrated into the very “fabric” of the person’s being. Figure 2.3 is a reflection of this process.

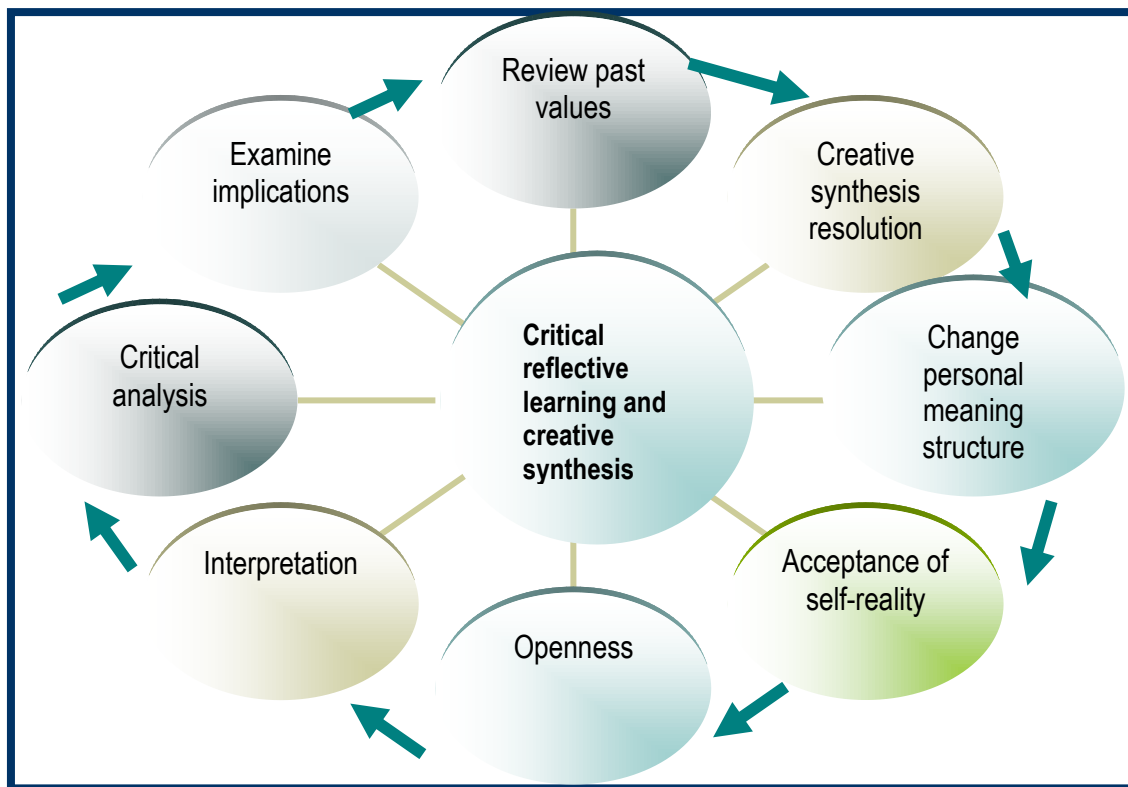


Figure 2.3: Critical reflective learning and creative synthesis (van Aswegen, 1998:400)

2.3.2.6 Praxis

Praxis is synchronous reflection on- and- in thought and action. Van Aswegen (1998:400-4001) explains with the help of Figure 2.4 that “action is informed by reflection and reflection is informed by action”. Praxis moves beyond “critical thinking as problem solving, to critical thinking as a process in which knowledge and action are dialectically related through the process of critical reflection.”

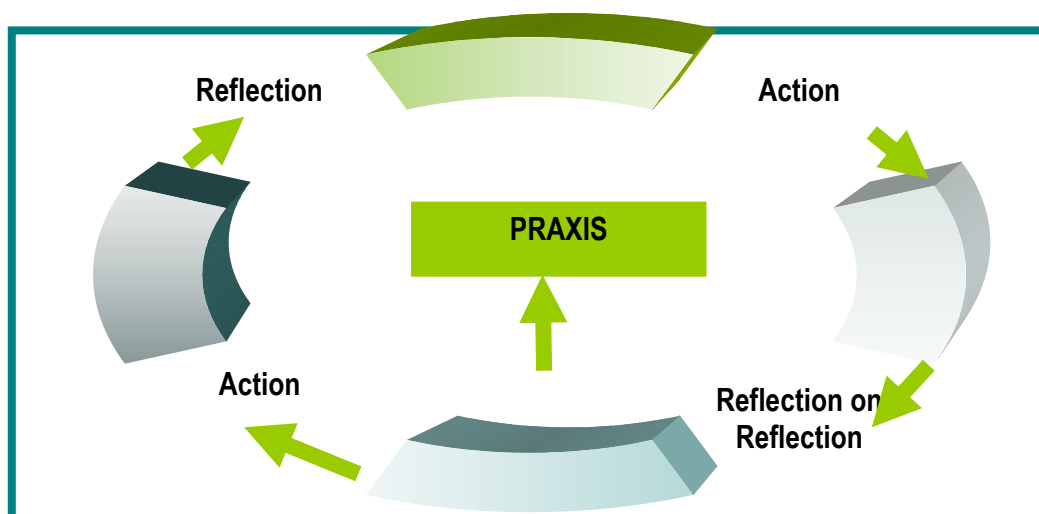


Figure 2.4: Praxis (van Aswegen, 1998:401)

2.3.2.7 (Self) Conscious awareness

The 'self' is the critical centre of critical thinking and reflective thought impacting on reflective practice. An individual's behaviour, perspectives and emotions are contained within the concept of the 'self'. Van Aswegen (1998:402) divides the self into subsystems of the "metacognitive, cognitive and affective aspects" with the 'self' driving and controlling the processes of information gathering, processing, decision-making and directing behaviour.

Consciousness, she says, is awareness; an experience and understanding of "how thought, consciousness and mind work together". This higher level of awareness is important as it is key in enabling a more objective view of issues and promotes a better grasp on reality. Van Aswegen (1998:402) believes that the self-aware practitioner, who has a positive sense of self, is more likely to engage with new ideas that may be contrary to a current belief system leading to a process of "reflective self-criticism". This enables a means to self-detachment. Self-consciousness, she notes, "results in (the) integration of the aspects of one's being, commitment to the choices and authentic relationships". This synthesis is highlighted in Figure 2.5.

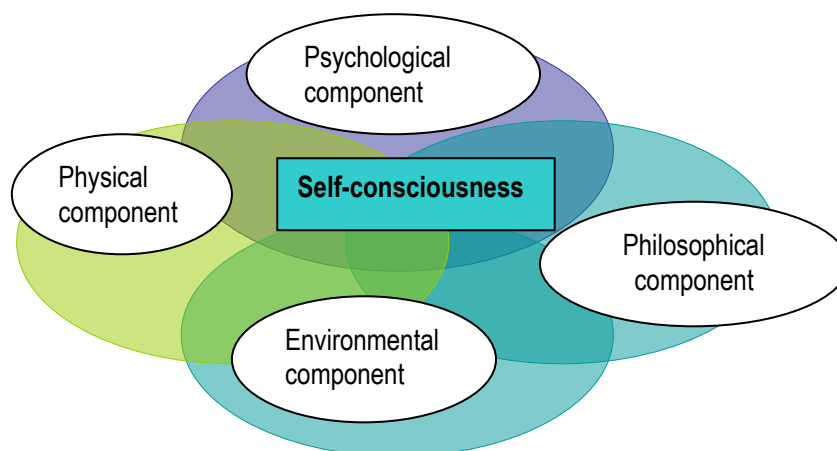


Figure 2.5: Interconnected components of self-consciousness

2.3.2.8 Critical reflective attitude/spirit

A critical reflective attitude/spirit is the willingness with which the practitioner/ learner links judgment and practice with principle.

2.3.2.9 Reflective (self) criticism

The rationale for self-criticism is the desire on the part of the practitioner to move away from the ties of conventional thinking that promotes conditioned habitual thought. This is an introspective process that forces the individual to depersonalize or move away, at least, momentarily, from the personal perspective, to consciously and reflectively consider alternative points of view in light of the 'truth'.

2.3.3 Relating concepts

These are not the main concepts; nonetheless their place in the model provides for the uniqueness of the model. They connect the elements of the model in order to provide a holistic association between the elements.

2.3.3.1 Empowerment

Empowerment is a process of increasing learners' access to independent thought and creating an environment to allow the empowered learner or as van Aswegen (1998:404) describes the practitioner, the "transformative intellectual", to experience the thrill and autonomy of the effects of independent thought.

2.3.3.2 Caring

Caring is a fundamental concept in nursing. It forms part of the affective component of the art and science of nursing. It is an attitude of concern for others. It is a shift from self-concern and self-involvement to the conscious awareness of and respect for the perspectives and thoughts and needs of others.

2.3.3.3 Challenging

In order for the transformative process to occur, the learning environment itself must be one that challenges the reflective practitioner to reject the untested, invalid statements and practices that are inherent to a situation or context.

2.3.3.4 Proactive

An environment that promotes critical reflective thinking is conducive to fostering a proactive practitioner. Such a practitioner does not wait for events to occur, but has the courage and foresight to anticipate events and take the appropriate action.

2.3.3.5 Transformative

To create a transformative environment is to promote activities that are goal directed and deliberate. The purpose is to enable the transformation of the individual in a manner that challenges the various cognitive, affective, physical, social, spiritual aspects within the individual in the striving for self-growth and self-development, both personally and professionally.

2.3.3.6 Visionary

A vision is a mental illustration of a situation or the projection of the possibility of a potential situation. Just as in leadership, the ability to visualize a possibility based on a sound analysis is a necessary part of the critical thinking process.

2.3.3.7 Motivative

An environment conducive to inculcating critical reflective learning is one that motivates and encourages this development. It creates a sense of awareness and a state of arousal that fosters a desire to engage in and maintain this process.

2.3.3.8 Autonomy

Van Aswegen (1998:407) has built into her model the concept of intellectual autonomy which she says “entails a commitment of analyzing and evaluating beliefs on the basis of reason and evidence, to question when it is rational to question, to believe when it is rational to believe and to confirm when it is rational to confirm.”

2.3.3.9 Reflective withdrawal

This is the process whereby the individual takes ‘time out’ and figuratively withdraws from the situation in order to obtain an objective perspective from a distance as it were.

2.3.3.10 Learned conversation with self

This type of internal conversation frees the individual from the usual norms and boundaries created by the various institutions in our society as well as the individual’s own personal fetters that prevent clarity of vision and personal autonomy. This freedom allows a shift in perspective and often a change in personal assumptions that can affect relationships and behavioural practices in a related manner.

2.3.3.11 Re-entry

Re-entry is the stage whereby the individual experiences a realization of a truth, or greater clarity of thought resulting in a decision that the individual is comfortable with. It could be likened to an ‘aha’ experience or a moment of serendipity or the development of insight into and of the self.

2.3.3.12 Conscious use of all modes of thinking

This model incorporates conscious awareness of all modes of thinking and the ability to reflect critically upon them, when appropriate.

2.3.3.13 Regulation through choice

Critical reflective practitioners see themselves as regulators of their own thoughts and practices. They decide on their goals and the methods of achieving them.

2.3.3.14 Supportive culture

Van Aswegen 1998:410) indicates that a culture that supports this process is “empowering, caring, challenging, transformative, motivative, visionary, imaginative, proactive, creative and autonomous in nature..(and) thus energizes regulation through choice”. This is illustrated in Figure 2.6.

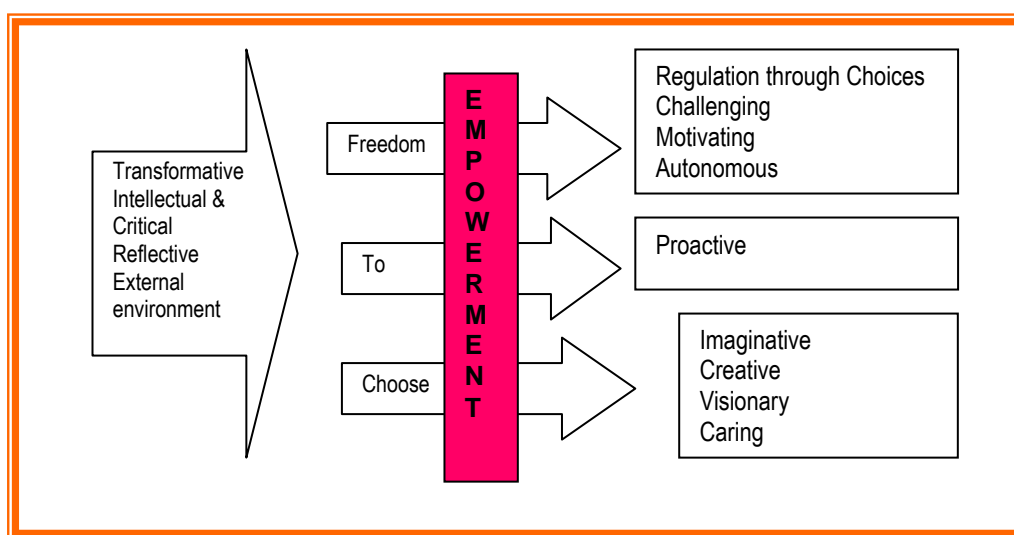


Figure 2.6: Characteristics of a supportive culture for critical reflective practice (van Aswegen, 1998:410)

2.3.4 Relational statements

These are meaningful configurations of a set of developed associated theoretical statements indicating the constructs for the conceptual framework of critical reflective practice. Because the following relational statements were used as a basis for evaluation of the implementation of the model by both the critical readers and myself, they are taken verbatim from the model (van Aswegen, 1998:411-414).

2.3.4.1 “Statements for the registered nurse practitioner as transformative intellectual (role-model/agent of critical reflective practice)”

The registered nurse practitioner as transformational intellectual

- Has the necessary self-knowledge, skill and experience to practice as an independent clinical practitioner, manager of nursing, transformational leader and innovator
- Role models the behaviour patterns of critical reflective practice, thus empowering developing nurse practitioners and others to become conscious of the need for critical reflective and creative thinking
- Is supportive of a nurturing external environment which characterizes growth, autonomy and self-actualization

2.3.4.2 Statements for the educator as transformative intellectual (role model/agent of critical reflective practice)

The educator as transformative intellectual sees critical reflection during teaching and learning as a significant step towards developing an antidote for auto-pilot functioning and reliance on others

- Strives to develop a positive self-concept in learners, as learners with a positive self-concept are more likely to engage in critical and reflective learning
- Allows learners to search for ideas, manipulate knowledge and experience, try various approaches and break rules occasionally
- Encourages self-responsibility and self-critique in learners by questioning self-limiting beliefs (habits of mind)

- Encourages reflective withdrawal through use of guided critical reflective techniques, thus, enabling learners to re-enter a situation with improved understanding
- Consciously provides a supportive environment which energizes critical reflective thinking.

2.3.4.3 Statements for the recipients of critical reflective practice

The recipient as receiver of the activity:

- Develops a critical reflective spirit/ attitude with the guidance and support of the transformative intellectual
- Continuously clarifies personal behaviour, needs and goals with the transformative intellectual
- Participates willingly in meaningful dialogue, critical reflective thinking, creative thought and risk-taking
- Learns to value reflective self-criticism, principles thinking, reflective scepticism and regulation through choice.

2.3.4.4 Statements for the context of critical reflective practice

- The context (framework) in which critical reflective practice takes place is a complex of extraneous and internal factors. Thus,
- Critical reflective practice is influenced by each individual's external and internal (subjective) environment. Transformative, critical reflective practice requires conscious recognition of both the external and internal environment.
- Interaction between the external and internal environment is dynamic, dialogical and complex

2.3.4.5 Statements regarding the energy source (dynamics) for critical reflective practice

In the model the dynamics (or energy sources) for critical reflective practice are the motivating factors. The transformative intellectual is motivated by the knowledge that he/she can:

- Create vision in learners/practitioners/others
- Empower others to become transformative intellectuals
- Create meaning through critical thinking and reflective process
- The transformative intellectual's energy source for critical reflective practice lies in:
 - Recognition of the importance of intellectual humility, intellectual courage, intellectual empathy, intellectual integrity, intellectual perseverance, faith in reason and an intellectual sense of justice.
 - Concern for and emotional involvement in care for, growth of, and empowerment of others
 - The ethical norms and values of the nursing profession
 - Recognition of the need for expert nursing practice

2.3.4.6 Statements regarding the protocol (guiding procedure/activity) for critical reflective practice

The procedure for facilitation of critical reflective practice includes the implementation of specific behaviour (by transformative intellectual) and supportive, guided critical reflective techniques. The transformative intellectual intentionally creates a context (critical reflective external environment and conscious subjective (internal) environment) constructive for facilitation of critical reflective learning and practice. The behaviour needed includes self-conscious/ awareness, building trust through communication, developing vision and

empowerment. Components crucial for facilitation of a context enabling critical reflective thinking, learning and practice include:

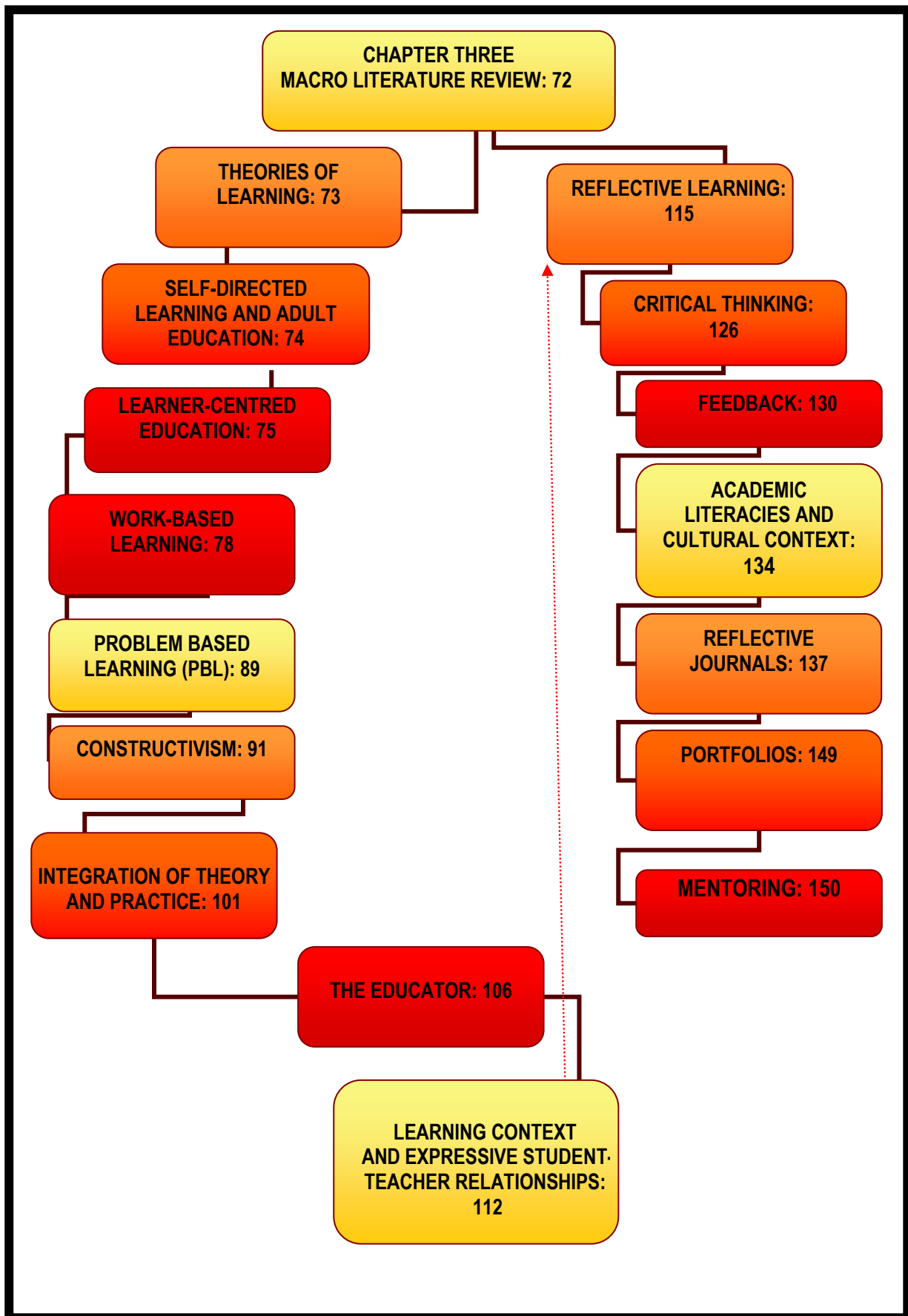
- Modelling of the traits of mind characterizing critical reflective thinking.
- Empathetic listening by the transformed intellectual, involving listening with the intent to understand the developing nurse practitioner' uniqueness,
- Trust, to share ideas, thoughts and feelings
- Deliberate support, counteracting the risks of being critical reflective and creative thinker
- Intentional use of deep learning approaches as the cognitive and affective skills needed to engage in critical reflective process which must be taught, practiced, refined and reinforced "(van Aswegen, 1998:411-414).

2.4 CONCLUSION

As a nurse educator serious about my practice, I needed to have a global view of how to approach the teaching and learning process required for the educational outcomes envisaged for the course in Nursing Management IV. As with any practice where people are involved, I had no doubt that all would not go according to plan or schedule. The serendipitous or unforeseen moments in the learning process are often all the more exciting when they are spontaneous for they provide the spice, the mysterious essence of the quest for knowledge. It is also true that despite best intentions and planning, life tends to throw up obstacles. This is no different in the educational scenario, and as I write, new policies for national education are being written for implementation. However, strategic planning, which includes contingency planning, can certainly prevent certain disasters. Van Aswegen's model, while making no promises, does provide the way forwards in a way that is congruent with my own personal philosophy as an educator and Chapters Five and Six provides a description and analysis of my implementation of this model.

It seems only fitting to allow van Aswegen (1998: ii) the final words to summarize her model, thus drawing the sections in Chapter Two together:

“The model for the facilitation of critical reflective practice postulates that practitioners have the inherent potential to change from auto-pilot practice to critical reflective practice. The purpose of the model is to consciously meet community needs and expectations. The desired outcome is transformative intellectuals who will strive to empower others to become critical reflective learners and practitioners.”



CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW – FRAMING THE PROCESS

3. INTRODUCTION

The literature review forms a link between the research study and the knowledge and contextual framework, and as such is core to establishing a foundation for the understanding of the project and the approach taken. The purpose of the literature review is to show how I developed the programme and applied the literature in the process. It provides a strategy for evaluating the programme and analysing the data. It allows me opportunities to make linkages between the different constructs and concepts related to learning, some of which shared similar elements. A broad, superficial sweep of the literature informed the design and approach to the study, including the programme, and the generation and analysis of the data provided the impetus for further, more in-depth reviews of the literature.

3.1.1 THEORIES OF LEARNING

Van Aswegen's model of critical reflective practice is a framework for promoting learning. The planning for implementation of this model through the Nursing Management IV course includes a mapping out of the theories of learning underpinning the structure. Although Burton (2000) points out that no single theory can account for the learning required or used by adult learners because of multiple individual idiosyncrasies, she identifies the three commonly accepted main theories traditionally framing adult learning - behavioural, cognitive and humanistic. The various constructs discussed in this chapter fall within the umbrella of these theories which, in turn, are embraced by the model and support the philosophical stances adopted within this chapter.

3.2 SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING AND ADULT EDUCATION

Self-directed learning is learning that focuses on self-responsibility and self-control in terms of the planning, implementing and evaluation of own work and is based on adult-education principles (O'Shea, 2003). Iwasiw (1987) in O'Shea (2003) characterises self-directed learning as learning where students identify and determine their own learning needs and objectives, decide on what learning resources and strategies they need to use, and participate in the measurement of the learning outcome. Kortenbout (1995:63) views self-directed learning as fundamental to critical thinking. It is closely linked to androgogy, a "philosophy of adult education, and defined as an organised and sustained effort to assist adults to learn in a way that enhances their capability to function as self-directed learners". Kortenbout (1995:64) observes that adults learn when they are motivated and when learning meets their needs and interests (relevancy oriented); that learning is more effective when it is life-centred rather than content oriented (practically oriented in the form of problem solving); that "experience is the richest resource for adults learning, therefore the analysis of experience is the core methodology of choice"; and that adult learners should be more self-directed. Therefore the role of the teacher should be one of supporting self-enquiry. Learners are different and use different approaches, styles, pace and techniques in learning and a good learning programme should accommodate these differences, hence the different theories of learning (Section 3.1). Knowles (1983), a seminal authority on adult education, recognised the key principles in adult learning to be based on the diverse range of experiences with which the adult enters the learning environment so that the learning the adult engages in is life-centred, task centred or problem oriented. Readiness to learn is influenced by the need to know or accomplish something (goal oriented). In addition, adults are motivated by self-esteem needs, the need for recognition and self-actualization, and by the desire for a better quality of life. Therefore, by

recognising and understanding the students with whom I work as described in Chapter One, Section 1.3, I was better able to plan for their specific learning needs.

3.3 LEARNER-CENTRED EDUCATION

Learner-centred education is education that embraces the learner's needs, interests and preferences and not those of the educator, learning institution or subject material. It focuses on individual learners from their perspectives, backgrounds, interests, abilities, needs and teaching practices that effectively support motivation, learning and achievement. Accordingly, the learning environment is structured for the individual perspectives of the learner i.e. their learning history, environment, goals, beliefs and ways of thinking. These need attention and respect in order to involve learners in the process of independent thinking. Woelfel (2003:18) supports this understanding through the following premises:

- All learners have unique characteristics including "individual abilities, talents, emotional states of mind, learning rates, learning styles, stages of development, and feelings of efficacy."
- Learning works best when students are actively involved in the process, where learning is relevant and meaningful and learners create their own knowledge and understanding by connecting the learning to prior knowledge and experience.
- A positive learning environment that supports positive interpersonal relationships and whereby the learner feels valued, appreciated, respected and accepted promotes optimal learning.
- Learning is a natural phenomenon: Learners are "naturally curious and have an interest in learning about and mastering their world" (Woelfel, 2003:18).

He further notes that "cognitive theory, including metacognition, motivational, and affective factors; development and social attributes; and individual differences" should also be considered in the support of the learner-centered approach (Woelfel, 2003:19).

3.3.1 Strategies to support student-centered learning

Woelfel (2003:23) uses McCombs and Whistler's characteristics of learner-centered classrooms as a checklist for a framework to support learner-centered learning. Some of the strategies they have used that resonate with the Management IV course include:

- Curriculum perspective: Learners as key players in curriculum development are actively involved in feedback.
- Assessment system perspective: Students provide input into assessment strategies, criteria development, design strategies and timing.
- Student learning strategies: Recognition of the diversity of students and the representation of student knowledge is part of the process.

3.3.2 Difficulties in establishing student-centred learning

I encountered some of the major difficulties recognised by Diekelmann and Lampe (2004) when describing the challenge of initiating a course with a focus on student-centered learning, specifically the traditional assumptions held by some students and teachers that the educator's role is to plan, deliver and assess learning activities; or the assumptions commonly held by educators that students lack the abilities, experience and motivation to devise their own learning activities or contribute meaningfully to learning courses. Diekelmann et al.'s (2004) study reflects similar

experiences to my own, namely as I became involved in a new way of teaching, my thinking changed – not necessarily because of the new strategies but because of the informed thinking.

The first of my challenges was that the course formed one of the formal subjects in the SAQA accredited B.Tech. Nursing programme that was 'outcomes-based'. This is education that essentially focuses on what the intended outcome of a learning programme should be. This then enables the educator to focus and organize the learning system, which includes the curriculum, the process of teaching and the evaluation strategies, around what students should successfully achieve at the end of the process (Daziell and Gourvenec, 2003). If one looks at the specific term, however, it seemingly contradicts the notion that learning is student-centred as it would presuppose that the outcome is teacher-selected. The exit level outcome of the course required that students be able to manage a health service at unit level. I would suggest that the students actually registered for the course because it was the outcome, but that it was sufficiently broad-based to allow for flexibility in the manner of *reaching* the outcome. Although educators have to follow the dual requirements for the nursing educational programme, established by both the SANC and the Department of National Education (discussed in Chapter One, Section 1.3.3), the specific outcomes, which comprise the '*how*' of reaching the exit level outcome, are still very open to interpretation.

The second difficulty I had to overcome was the common perception held by both teachers and students "that the teacher's role is to design, deliver, and evaluate learning activities that will prepare students for practice. Further, the extent to which a course is (or is not) compelling is assumed to be the teacher's responsibility" (Diekelmann et al., 2004:245). This particular problem

is also addressed in Section 3.6.3 where I suggest that a combined approach, where there is dual responsibility for learning, would be appropriate.

3.4 WORK-BASED LEARNING

Carkhuff (1996) indicates that instead of formalizing learning in the classroom settings, that the idea of work as learning is a valued concept. The work environment as a learning environment, allows for participation, and thus learning through action is a key learning principle. Therefore, in work-based learning, the workplace rather than an academic classroom is the fulcrum for learning, so that learning was derived from experiences within the work-place and outside of the accrediting and responsible academic institution at a geographical distance away from the monitoring and control mechanisms. Work-based learning was a key approach to the offering of the Nursing Management IV course for post-basic nursing students, mainly because all students were only part-time learners, but full-time working nurse practitioners. Management is a generic course and can be offered across professions and disciplines within professions as well as across contexts. The challenge was to offer a course that was meaningful to these nursing students, incorporating their current practice by promoting a continuous means of engaging in learning where the workplace was seen as their primary learning setting and where classroom contact was used to facilitate this process. Work-based learning was selected as a strategy because it is based on effective adult learning principles.

Lehman and Sanders (2002) observe that successful health service management development occurs within the context of practice. For Harris, Simons and Edwards (1998), the workplace “acted as a site for consolidating the learning” that had taken place in the formal academic setting and, more importantly, it “provided a site for refining skills and learning more about self and relationships

with other people”. Their study, although related to the policing profession, identified important reasons for workplace learning that resonate with nursing. They are applicable in the Nursing Management IV course and are illustrated accordingly:

- Financial constraints. Nursing is not regarded as a well-paid profession, particularly in South Africa and nurses and health services are not sufficiently well resourced to enable nursing students to engage in full-time studies (Gwele, 2003).
- Changing trends in teaching and learning. Harris et al. (1998) note, students are “no longer content with traditional 'chalk and talk' methods of facilitating learning.” In my experience, this applies to students who have been exposed to more innovative methodologies and outcomes and who have made the necessary shift in thinking. However, there are still those students who prefer the didactic method as it removes much of the effort and responsibility for learning.
- Nursing is essentially a ‘doing’ profession and the classroom context has “limitations in terms of realism and direct application to an increasingly diverse work environment” (Harris et al., 1998).
- Workplace learning allows for effective transfer of learning from the classroom to the site of actual practice.
- The worksite allows for actual demonstration of role competency.
- Each workplace has its own ethos, and learning within the actual context of this ethos, allows students to better understand and affect and be affected by the ethos of their organisation in terms of attitudes, behaviours and standards. Senge (1990) in Carkhuff (1996:209-210) “discusses the ability to articulate and pursue a personal vision as

personal mastery, and states this triggers learning for individuals and assists them in their goal setting.”

3.4.1 Professional development versus training

Owen (2000) echoes my concerns that the students in my course are professional nurses not requiring training but rather professional development. Training focuses on skills development; it is segmental and can be compartmentalized, organized and measured. Professional development on the other hand, is value laden, often personal and obscure and cannot easily be measured on a rating scale.

Owen’s (2000:1) field of study was the virtual learning environment and he found that traditional ways of teaching technology “are often based on the efficient transmission of ‘new knowledge’ ” to learners who lack that knowledge. However learning to be better at a job is not the same thing as learning a new skill.

Out of his experience came the realisation that previous models, specifically “rational curriculum design or managed learning” are open to criticism. Owen (2000:2) characterises this type of model as one which includes “writing a list of things that a trainee can do at the end of a period of training (often specified in behavioural terms) and then reducing that list to ever finer and finer concepts or actions until it becomes ‘teachable’ ”. The idea is to reduce the final behaviour into small teachable units and link those to a relevant teaching strategy. This system has been used for web-based programmes and is frequently used for ‘training’ purposes.

However, there is a considerable difference in the approach needed for professional development as opposed to that of skills training. Owen (2000:3) cites Bevis et al. (1990) in their comparison of the approaches and notes “professional education requires judgment rather than answers” hence my focus on the development of critical thinking skills as opposed to rote learning. The following table provides this comparison and should be seen in the light of clinical nurse education:

Table 3.1: The Technical and Professional Models (from Bevis and Watson, 1990) in Owen (2000:3)

Technical model	Professional model
The only learning worth evaluating can be seen as behavioural change.	Worthwhile learning is often personal, obscure and private. Only some learning appears as behavioural changes.
Everything that exists, exists in some quantity, and therefore can be counted and measured.	Many things that exist are not externally verifiable
The teacher selected goals are the important ones, therefore the evaluated ones. Both teacher and student selected. Important, therefore the evaluated ones.	Both teacher and student selected goals are important, as is learning attained without goals.
Comparing behaviours to some objectively held criteria or comparing to the progress of other students determine how well something is learned.	Educative learning cannot be rated on a scale. Most learning cannot be compared either to some “objectively” conceived criteria or to the progress of other students.
The teacher-student relationship is hierarchical and the teachers assign student by how well they have met specific criteria.	The teacher-student relationship is egalitarian. Learning requires a process of trusting grades to exploration among expert and novice learners and thrives on constructive criticism.
The quality of rigour of a course can be determined by how well it helps its students meet the discipline requirements as reflected by test scores, attainment of behavioural objectives, and accreditation requirements, since these reflect the agreed upon discipline content.	The quality of rigour of a course can be determined by how well it helps students collect paradigm experiences, develop insights, see patterns, find meanings in ideas and experiences, explore creative modes of enquiry, examine assumptions, form values and ethics in keeping with the moral ideal of the caring scholar-clinician, respond to social needs, live fully and advance the profession.

This model was used by Owen (2000) in the search for a tool to help in the analysis and appraisal of learning and training experiences and to design a learning environment using the web and Internet technologies based on “collaborative, creative and reflexive activities”.

When one scrutinizes the work of professional practitioners, it is apparent that professionalism is about the integration of theory within constantly evolving contexts. “This does not deny the need for knowledge of specific ‘factual’ knowledge, however, in many professions career does not derive from professional knowledge but professional practice. The knowledge base is not valued unless it is contextualised” Owen (2000:3).

Professional development is complicated, requiring a shift from a focus on the individual to a different level, addressing the cognitive, affective and motor skill development needed for professional practice. Its concern is with uncertain and rapidly changing environments, and supports the development of skills that are transferable to a number of settings. These are skills that will enable the promotion of self-directed initiatives, collaborative working relations, clear communication, risk taking, informed judgements and assertive and responsible behaviour. “These are the characteristics of empowered human beings and the way professionals are expected to act” (Spouse, 2001:15).

Spouse (2001:15-16) observes that practical judgement has always been the defining factor in professional practice. She suggests, as does Benner (1984), that experienced nurses develop sets of ‘schema’ of practices, which during times of stressful situations (excessive workload, situations requiring instantaneous decisions), they will “bypass questioning and problematising practice” and flip through, very much like a proverbial recipe book, and choose the one most likely to help

manage the situation. As a result, she notes, experienced nurses may only call on practical judgement when situations are unfamiliar or need additional problem-solving skills. However, it is this very problematising of practice that enables nurses to move beyond the mechanical to “person centredness” and to improving practice.

3.4.2 The role of the health services with respect to student learning

Spouse (2001:12) notes that a successful work-based learning programme requires that organisations invest in their staff and their staffing structures so as to free them up to work and learn together collaboratively. Organisations need to create an environment where learning is prized and where it depends on the creation of a “climate of trust; a climate where investigation and speculation are fostered and where time is protected for engaging in discussions about practice.”

The difficulty that I, and ultimately the students, experienced is that in general, staff development, particularly in line with post-basic programmes such as those offered at DIT, was disconnected from work-based settings and relied on the students themselves to direct their own learning within their respective health care services.

While on the one hand, Management was both aware and supportive of the student’s further learning as it would have a direct impact on their work output; on the other hand, their responsibility often ended with administrative support such as negotiated study leave. The student was, in effect, on her own, to negotiate her own workplace learning needs. The advantage, however, of having a distanced, uninvolved management is that the nursing student was able to develop a more critical stance on work and organisational change.

An additional concern lies with those institutions who do promote staff development, which is necessary and admirable, but the danger lies in their understanding of education. It is very easy for staff development to slide into *training* rather than furthering educational growth. “Organizing work related learning is more than just seeking to adjust people to their work situation, it also means empowering them to strengthen their own professional and work development” (Poell, Chivers, van der Krogt and Wildermeersch, 2000). I would agree and suggest that health care organisations work closely with those whose business is education when considering staff development issues.

3.4.3 Life-long learning

Workplace learning is closely correlated with the concept of life-long learning. Carkhuff (1996:209) maintains that our healthcare environment is in a continuous process of change and upheaval and that the normal means of learning through classroom lectures, skills practice in laboratory settings and self-study modules is no longer viable. In order to cope in this complex, turbulent health care environment, we need to enable nurses to learn beyond adaptive learning i.e. surviving or coping.

Nurses need “generative” learning which is learning to be creative and is ongoing or lifelong learning. This is particularly relevant in South Africa where we face the constraints and challenges outlined in Section 1.2. Spouse (2001:14) argues that nurses need to develop attitudes and skills to both problem-solve and “negotiate their work environments”. This requires understanding of the work environment and how it functions, which Marsick and Watkins (1999) in Spouse (2001:14) call “intellectual capital.” They suggest that such ‘capital’ is an economic resource with concomitant financial benefits, often taking years to establish. This type of learning is developmental and holistic in nature as it focuses on the personal growth of the individual. It crosses work boundaries to other areas of the individual’s life. Spouse (2001:14-15) identifies this integration of interpersonal and

personal skills in the form of networking, communication, problem-solving, creativity and efficiency as a holistic form of learning. Spouse (2001) contends that nursing is a dynamic profession requiring continuous and continual development where it can take up to ten years to become 'expert', and that because of the complexity of the health care framework, nurses require post-qualification support and development to reach their potential. The notion of time and shift and learning development from 'novice to expert' finds echo with a number of educational proponents and is also discussed in Section 3.6.7.

3.4.4 Learning 'space' within the contextual learning milieu

Contemporary thinking suggests effective learning in work-settings is complex in that it contextualizes prior knowledge and moulds it according to the demands of the situations (Spouse, 2001). Harris et al. (1998) highlight the potential impact of work-placed learning as a means of eliciting both cultural and structural change, particularly with regards to attitude change in the way practitioners view learning and its relationship to their practice in the work setting. Watkins and Marsick's (1993) in Carkhuff (1996:210) support this notion of teaching by viewing the workplace as contextual learning milieu that can provide the space for learners to challenge their prejudices to make way for new beliefs. If the workplace supports learning, it provides the nurse with "more space" to learn and is effective as a learning site. It can provide opportunities for learners to think "abstractly and conceptually" and so develop ideas and theories. Because of the limited contact I have with my students, probably the greatest value of the workplace is that it can give the students what Carkhuff (1996:210) describes as "more 'room' to act and to think."

The idea of 'space' is a fundamental component of reflective thought. Carkhuff (1996) argues that adult learners benefit from the interaction of knowledge and experience. If this experience involves

their particular interest, learning is greater, as interest or desire are strong motivators to learning. Siegler (1983) in Carkhuff (1996:210) indicates that the most profound learning occurs when existing rules or norms are contradicted by an individual's own life experiences and that adults tend to learn for future application when challenged by something new, creative or experimental. Implicit with the concept of space and reflection, is the notion of silence and contemplation. Alerby and Eli'do'ttir (2003:46) make a strong case for this: "Reflection needs to be given space to breathe and emerge and for that needs space for silence, and space and media for representation." One of the ways to accommodate limited student contact is to provide that space in the form of reflective journaling, which, suggest Alerby and Eli'do'ttir (2003) because it is a much slower process than talking, frees up the mind for periods of silence and the introspective moments can allow thoughts to take shape.

3.4.5 Difficulties with work-based learning: Negotiating the landscape

Spouse (2001:16) believes that the practitioner who is unfamiliar with the "environmental landscape" of her practice is unable to clearly differentiate the boundaries, activities, roles and behaviours between nursing practices that are routine and commonplace and those that are extraordinary and taxing. In her study the nursing students were novices in viewing their "environmental landscape" through the lens of the nurse manager. They were comfortable in their role as nurse practitioner, but in order to understand the "environmental landscape" from the management perspective, they needed help with "exposure to difference, exposure to power (of disruption) and exposure to alternative discourse" (Spouse, 2001:16). Through negotiating these difficulties and making 'practical judgements', nurse practitioners arrived at new ways of knowing and working, which then become integral to their personal structure of understanding.

This understanding can be further supported and enhanced, indicates Spouse (2001:17) “through strategies such as debriefing, questioning, project work or journal keeping.” The reflective process of learning is particularly suitable for this as new information is aligned with prior knowledge, and through reflection, and as further opportunities for supported practice arise, it becomes incorporated into a new ‘schema’. Reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action allows the practitioner to discern those experiences worthy of problematising and investigation, supporting the notion that learning is derived from practice, as well as from theory and research (Spouse, 2001).

3.4.6 Learning within the workplace (informal and incidental)

Although it could be argued that there are a number of different types of learning within the workplace, it is worth considering the two types described by Spouse (2001:17): informal and incidental, both of which are important for the nurse practitioner. The incidental learning derived from the casual conversations on work issues or shared problems with colleagues during tea or hand-over, leads to new understanding. The informal learning is structured but takes place outside of the formal teaching environment and is planned and designed to meet the learner’s specific needs. Although it is informal, it frequently draws on teaching support for strategies usually used within the more formal educational setting, such as in journal analysis or learner discussions. “Learning to recognise the saliency of formal, theorized information is challenging and often requires guidance from more knowledgeable practitioners” (Spouse, 2001:17). This then becomes transformed into formal knowledge as the learners start to question the limits of their understanding, focus on the effects of this limitation on their practice and try to find answers to these questions. “By modifying formal knowledge that has been decontextualised to the situation-at-hand informal learning can be supported “(Spouse, 2001:17).

Both informal and incidental learning acquired in the workplace are valuable sources for learning, particularly within the context of students constructing their own learning experiences to facilitate learning in their formal academic programmes.

It is worth taking into consideration Harris's (1999) recognition of workplace learning behaviours implicit in incidental and informal learning, one of which is aligned with task completion in an environment where there are differentials in status between health care workers, where remuneration for services rendered is a factor and where a problem usually initiates the learning. The type of cognitive processes used in this learning, he suggests, is very different to those employed in the formal academic setting. He suggests that in small business learning (and I would class this with those health care situations where there is an absence of a nurse educator) is often on a one-to-one basis, unplanned and spontaneous, usually in reaction to a crisis. More importantly, the colleague may not have the skills or requisite knowledge to support the learning. Accordingly, Harris (1999) supports Spouse's (2001) contention earlier in this Section 3.4.6, that opportunities for debriefing with someone experienced and knowledgeable become very important. Mentors help, but the nurse educator needs to be careful in the reviewing of tasks, assignments, journals, classroom and tutorial conversations. Just because the nursing student follows the social constructivist approach to learning, does not mean the educator can abrogate responsibility for the success of the learning (Gravett and Peterson, 2000). This issue was introduced in Section 3.3.2 and further refined in Section 3.6.2.

Work as a base for learning, therefore, can be viewed as an appropriate holistic learning environment, particularly for the more advanced practitioner, but much depends on the resources

and opportunities available as well as the debriefing that should follow in the formal academic arrangement to ensure concomitant understanding.

3.5 PROBLEM BASED LEARNING (PBL)

Morales-Mann and Kaitell (2001:13) define PBL as a way of learning where true-to-life problems are used to motivate students to learn problem-solving skills and acquire knowledge of the core information needed to understand and work through the issues. Given that adult learners are motivated if learning is purposeful and contributes to fulfilling previous needs and educational goals, PBL can be very effective providing the problems selected are relevant. The educator does not dominate. The emphasis is upon the process of learning (University of Western Australia, 1996; Taylor, 1997; Price, 2001; Ngeow and Kong, 2001). Student-led group discussions are facilitated, but the facilitator or promoter does not provide specific content information. De Graaf (2001:3) includes the additional characteristics of the PBL curriculum as the “integration of disciplines and skills, curriculum structure with thematic blocks, learning oriented work in small groups (and) self-directed learning.”

These characteristics, which were relevant for my study, are illustrated by the study by Morales-Mann et al. (2001:13-19) on PBL. They describe PBL as being initiated by McMaster University School of Medicine in the 1960's. As a result of the benefits of this approach (increased student involvement in their own learning, more self-directed learning, greater satisfaction in the learning process, improvement in student attitude and class attendance, positive responses of faculty staff; more opportunities for critical analytical thinking, problem solving, reflection and motivation for continuing learning) the authors initiated a study using PBL in a second year course in the University of Ottawa School of Nursing's Generic Program.

Although PBL is not markedly dissimilar to the intent of my project, the educational methodology in particular is specific and different. The main differences appears to lie in PBL's group learning approach: the intensive preparation in preparing the problems (5 for the year) to meet the curriculum outcomes; the non-provision of content information (the student search for information is part of the learning process); and the preparation of the facilitators as well as the students for the specific structuring and functioning of the approach.

3.5.1 Comparison between a PBL and traditional learning course

Interestingly, Morales-Mann et al. (2001:14) cite Berkson (1993) who, on review of the different curriculum, note that there is no difference in the formal results between the graduates of traditional curriculum and those engaging in the PBL based curriculum. However the difference became more apparent in PBL graduates' greater engagement in learning, their ability to be more self-directive and their resultant higher levels of satisfaction. If the results were the same, one might ask, why change the curriculum? But the results were not exactly the same. Perhaps the examination results might indicate parity, but I would claim that a change in attitude and approach to learning are arguably even more valuable than achievement of the formally stated academic objectives. A student who derives satisfaction from the process of learning and who is able to engage in learning without the support or direction of others, is probably able to engage in the 'life-long' learning process more deeply and more easily, as the already developed inner resources will probably generate their own learning impetus.

Uys et al. (2004) undertook a similar study but focused on four PBL programmes and three conventional programmes in one year. Their findings indicated comparability of the groups at the

lower levels of functioning (Benner's five levels of practice ranging from novice to expert), but it was in the higher levels of functioning that PBL graduates demonstrated an increased tendency.

If motivation for and commitment to PBL is to be maintained, every facilitator must appreciate its advantages such as the encouragement of greater student participation and responsibility, and the development of group membership and leadership skills (Morales-Mann et al. , 2001:15).

3.6 CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivist learning is a “creative, active process in which information and experience are framed, meaning is constructed and which is a continuous lifelong process facilitated by open-mindedness, discussion and a stimulating environment” (Cochrane, Mahoney, Bone and Johnson, 1999:2). Wellard (1996:1079) suggests that this knowledge construction is different from positivist knowing that derives its source and its authority from written text “that hides the relationship between author and text” so that knowledge is seen as “authoritative and certain”. The ability to reflect, Wellard (1996) suggests, exposes this relationship resulting in “emancipatory knowledge construction”. Constructed knowing is the integration of the subjective and the procedural levels to arrive at a constructed knowledge stage which allows for thinking to occur in a very flexible and sophisticated way allowing the practitioner to speak in an informed, passionate and assertive voice (Johns, 2002). Intuitive hunches are integrated with rational and complex thinking. Students understand that ‘truth’ or ‘knowledge’ is continuously ‘under construction’. Knowledge becomes contextualised and students recognise themselves as creators of their own knowledge through their experiences, and that their understanding and knowledge gained is ‘constructed’ of and through these connected experiences. The constructed knower integrates all parts of the self in knowing (Johns, 2002). Constructivist learning therefore draws on the four theories of learning

described in Section 3.1. For example, the behaviourist theories recognise that interactions with the environment are positively rewarded, so that as students explore their virtual classroom and the internet and are 'rewarded' with needed information, this stimulates further explorations and a 'constructing' of a knowledge base. The humanist theories recognise the uniqueness and specialness of the individual and this valuing of the person is a fundamental principle of adult education. This theory also connects with Constructivism as it is focused to a great extent on learning as required by and for the individual learner. Cognitive theories focus on critical thinking, and the intention of Constructivism is knowledge construction.

I would tend to agree with Reagan (2003:123) in that the way we as educators think about knowledge construction and "what it means to know are directly and necessarily linked to all aspects of how we teach". Ernst von Glasserfield, a recognised advocate of constructivist epistemology, in Reagan (2003:121) intimates that Constructivism, instead of professing to have made momentous discoveries in the field of education, merely professes to provide a solid conceptual framework for those exceptional educators, who, up until this point, have not had an appropriate theoretical framework as a basis for their teaching.

Fosnot in Reagan (2003:124) identifies Constructivism fundamentally as a theory of learning, not teaching:

"Drawing on a synthesis of current work in cognitive psychology, philosophy, and anthropology, the theory defines knowledge as temporary, developmental, socially and culturally mediated, and thus, non-objective. Learning from this perspective is understood as a self-regulated process of resolving inner cognitive conflicts that often become apparent through concrete experience, collaborative discourse and reflection."

3.6.1 Forms of constructivism: Radical and Social Constructivism

Reagan (2003:125) identifies two forms of constructivism, the first being radical constructivism. This is based on the belief that the student's reality is not a 'true' reality, but rather a "construction of the world that she or he experiences. In other words, knowledge is not something that could be passively received by the learner; it is, rather, the result of active mental work on the part of the learner." The second, social constructivism, does take into account the notion that the individual constructs his or her own reality, but also recognises that learning takes place in a socio-cultural context which inevitably means that learning is to some degree, socially constructed. Reagan (2003:125) sees both these forms of the theory as being compatible in practical terms and suggests that knowledge is "socially mitigated but personally constructed".

An essential element of this theory is the need for students to engage in issues and values that face them in the real world, and Reagan (2003) intimates that if we wish for students to 'own' their knowledge, they must be empowered to do so.

3.6.2 Should constructivism be student-determined?

An important lesson that I needed to reflect on, is that although constructivism is student-centred, it does not necessarily mean that it should be student determined and although it is a theory of learning, part of that process includes the facilitator (or educator or teacher). Student participation in the learning process is key, but the facilitator still has a fundamental responsibility for the outcome of the process.

This does not mean that the student does not take responsibility for his/her own learning, rather the content and skills, instructional and learning outcomes, need to be determined by the facilitator, but in agreement with the students. The main reason for this is that just as the student can and should construct his or her own knowledge, they can also "misconstruct knowledge" (Reagan, 2003:131). The educator needs to take responsibility in ensuring the meeting of standards and criteria. This concept fits with Reagan's (2003) learning in a socio-cultural context. Cochrane et al. (1999) address this issue in a study in which the programme constructors used the constructivist approach to learning as a basis for teaching. The responsibility for learning was placed on the students. It was up to students to find meaning and make sense of their world, and it was up to the teachers to enable this construction to take place. This didn't mean that the provision of information, the traditional role and function of the teacher, was dispensed with. Rather, this process was integrated within the process of "meaning-making". The effects of this support Case and Gunstone's (2001) contention that student-directed approaches to 'deep' learning, with the intention of understanding, have been shown to lead to more sophisticated learning outcomes than surface approaches, which are associated with the absence of an intention to understand .

3.6.3 The student-educator relationship

Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (1997) believe that the facilitation or teaching role cannot be seen as a neutral position, but rather one where both teacher and students "bring their positions in the hierarchies that order the world, including those based on race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and disability". These power positions, they suggest, "will reproduce the power structures that privilege some, silence some, and deny the existence of other learners." For instance, Johnson-Bailey et al. (1997) refer to McIntosh's (1995) use of 'white privilege' as a power relationship affecting lives both within and outside the classroom and note that this privilege is "an 'invisible

weightless knapsack ... of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes compass, emergency gear, and blank checks' that can be used in any situation in people's everyday lives." This view, they suggest, requires that we see learners and teachers "not as generic individuals but rather as people who have differential capacities to act (our definition of power) based on their place in the hierarchies of our social world." They suggest that if learning is to be successful, these power positions need to be successfully negotiated. To do this requires that learners are seen in the context of their "environmental baggage". This view suggests that our learning experiences cannot be separated out from our experiences within the larger society. In other words, as a facilitator, I would need to recognise that both students and I come from a specific social context to enter into another, that of learning, where it isn't possible to discard the baggage that includes the power structures which determine our being. But we need somewhere to place the baggage so that it doesn't get in the way of learning. It is because I subscribe to this notion that I have tried to check in my baggage through the use of a reflexive journal, and through the students' reflective journals, their conversations and stories during discussions, where we try to understand each others' differential capacities to act. I use the word 'try' advisedly as each person within the educational context is positioned by their baggage, which ultimately affects perceptions, attitudes and behaviour. The resulting view is somewhat 'fuzzy'.

3.6.4 Constructivism in relation to the Subjectivist-Objectivist continuum

The dialectical argument underpinning the subjective-objective relationship which ultimately provides for *constructivism* is concerned with an understanding of the notions of truth and reality. According to Tam (2000), Objectivists perceive knowledge and truth as entities existing *outside* of the individual, while Subjectivists believe knowledge and truth to be a construction of and by the individual, existing within the human mind. I have been aware of the subjective nature of this

approach to teaching and learning, but have realised that if students do not personally connect to the learning process and to making theory 'real' in the lived sense of the word, that theory would remain theory, a paper exercise for the most part. In fact, its subjective nature is what gives it value, according to Cochrane et al. (1999:4). They note that conceptual approaches to learning can be located on a continuum called the Objectivist-Subjectivist continuum. It provides a "bridging construct linking a continuum of recognised learning theories with the objectivist-subjectivist framework." On the one end of the continuum is Subjectivism, where learning within the Constructivist framework in which meaning is "created by the learner" and not "imposed" through didactic means, is placed. The learner is central to the process of learning, unlike the positioning of the learner in the "Objectivist tradition (positivist science)". In the Constructivist approach, experiences form the basis for learning from which meaning is derived and therefore is an active process (Bednar et al., 1992 in Cochrane et al, 1999). "The emphasis is on the manner in which humans interpret their world and make sense of it through sharing personal perspectives that are built on experience" Cochrane et al. (1999:4). Work-based learning seems to link with this as well.

Cochrane et al. (1999:4) intimate that at the objectivist end of the continuum, teaching is valued when there is a transfer of skills, attitudes and knowledge in the most efficient way possible. I can connect this with the notion of 'training'. Freire (1972: 45-46) explains this with his famous banking analogy:

"Narration (with the teacher as a narrator) leads the students to memorise mechanically the narrated content. Worse still, it turns them into "containers", into receptacles to be filled by the teacher. The more completely he fills the receptacles, the better a teacher he is. Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are depositors and the teacher the depositor. Instead of communication,

the teacher issues communiqués, and ‘makes a deposit’, which the students patiently receive, memorise, and repeat. This is the ‘banking’ concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits.”

Cochrane et al. (1999) suggest that this concept of learning is still prevalent.

I do not however, wish to imply that any teaching approach that is located at the Objective end of the continuum is poor. Indeed, if I follow the concept of Benner’s (1984) ‘novice to expert’ shift, there is a definite place for this type of teaching, and I use the word *teaching* advisedly in the *novice* phase of learning. It is when learning does not move from this end of the continuum, particularly at a stage of their work experience where nurses are expected to be independent practitioners, that this becomes problematic. My assumption is that many of our students are graduates of this form of teaching, and much of my approach to facilitating learning is accepting this assumption for some of the students, and accommodating this by giving them ‘permission’ to be independent thinkers and facilitating the constructivist approach.

3.6.5 Praxis and the Subjectivist/ Objectivist approach

Cochrane et al. (1999:5) describe praxis as an amalgam between theory and action, where neither predominates but both are important. They suggest that an important aspect of praxis is the dual development of two forms of reasoning, inductive reasoning “when moving from action to theory,” and “deductive reasoning when developing action from theory.” They agree that praxis is central to the curriculum and that the praxis approach to learning is a fundamental aspect of experiential learning. Cochrane et al. (1999:5), when considering praxis

in relation to the Subjectivist/ Objectivist continuum, note that Objectivists tend to view praxis as a task related activity which has very little relationship to personal 'meaning-making'.

“This emerges through the emphasis they place on understanding the external world. Constructivists, on the other hand, will ask questions about the meaning of the task, how it fits in with the existing conceptions, and how these conceptions differ from others. Often this is achieved through dialogue in which there is continual reassessment of the meaning of an issue.”

They suggest that if Constructivism is the learning framework, and praxis is central to this, then students should be motivated to reflect on their experiences and make judgements based on these experiences and the derived meanings rather than relying on the views of experts. In some ways, this does allow for some ambivalence: on the one hand, students are encouraged to base their practice on evidence (and this includes the use of 'expert' texts based on research) and on the other, we suggest that they use their own experience. It is not easy for students to appreciate that this experience is research in the 'rough' as it were, and that they themselves, have a level of expertise that is accepted and recognised. I would suggest that the important issue is how they interpret this experience, using a specific filter and knowledge base.

3.6.6 Capability-approach versus Constructivist-approach

Cochrane et al. (1999:6) cite Stephenson's (1995) description of capability as "having justified confidence in your ability to (1) take appropriate and effective action, (2) communicate effectively, (3) collaborate with others, (4) learn from experience, within familiar and unfamiliar circumstances". Thus learning is concerned with personal and interpersonal development and education, with a focus on the workplace setting i.e. experiential learning.

As clarified in Chapter One, Section 1.1, one of the criticisms of university education historically had been the preponderance of an academic as opposed to a capability-approach to learning. The opposite criticism has been levelled at universities of technology. Strictly speaking, nursing at universities does not appear to fit within these parameters because of its strong clinical component, and with the introduction of degrees at universities of technology, the academic basis has become more pronounced. Nonetheless, because this course in Management IV claims to be service-oriented, it is worth identifying the basis underpinning these claims in terms of the Constructivist approach and the capability approach.

Cochrane et al. (1999:7) believe that Constructivism and a capability-based programme are congruent and that although the subjectivist-objectivist divide seems wide, it is possible to bridge this by means of a capability-based portfolio. This would allow students a mechanism to integrate knowledge from various modules and study bases.

3.6.7 Model of Knowledge Acquisition (concept of novice to expert shift)

Cochrane et al. (1999:8) used Jonassen et al.'s (1993) model of knowledge acquisition. In accordance with Jonassen, they argue that an environment promoting constructivist learning is conducive for the stage of advanced knowledge acquisition, as outlined in the model. This is essentially similar to Benner's Novice to Expert theory (Benner, 1984).

Jonassen et al.'s (1993) model consists of a continuum of stages of knowledge acquisition (see Figure 3.1). In the initial stage of introductory learning where learners have minimal knowledge about the content or skill required, the domain of learning is well structured and is primarily skills based.

Knowledge building takes place through practice and appropriate feedback.

The second stage is advanced knowledge acquisition with knowledge built on prior knowledge and skills. The concept of apprenticeship and coaching is the means of mastering an ill-structured learning domain, and learning becomes knowledge as opposed to the development of a motor skill. The final stage is that of expertise, where learning becomes an ongoing, lifelong process facilitated by an open and dynamic learning environment and through shared perspectives. Learning and functioning takes place within elaborate structures and schematic patterns frame interconnected learning. This notion appears to draw on Piaget's concepts of *assimilation* and *schema*.

From this integrative process, meaning relevant to the learner is derived.

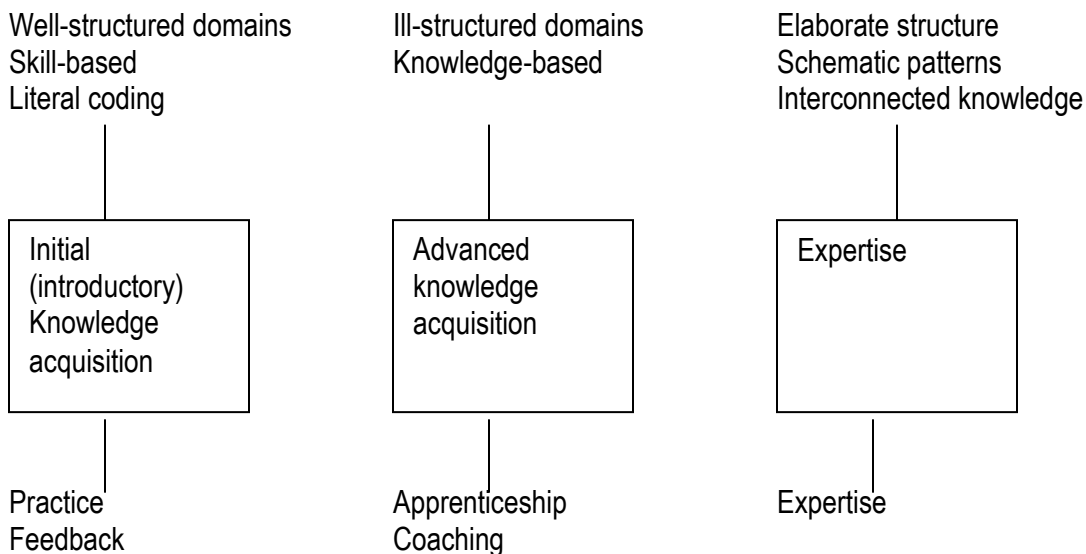


Figure 3.1: Three stages of knowledge acquisition (Jonassen et al., 1993, cited in Cochrane, Mahoney, Bone and Johnson, 1999:8)

Learners need to acquire advanced knowledge for working with context specific, complex problems to move towards deeper learning. Supportive scaffolding techniques such as mentoring, can promote this deeper learning and mastery of the student's own work context. Cochrane et al. (1999) believed that central to the constructivist/capability approach to learning was the need for students to construct their own frames of reference and their own knowledge through social interaction and activity. They believed that this could best be achieved by engaging in "real-world" experience. This concept resonates with the notion that real-world experience lies in the students' own place of work, namely work-based learning.

Cochrane et al. (1999) found that learning from experience contributed to 'know-how' or 'practical knowledge'. Trusting this know-how requires courage on behalf of the learner because it requires a shift from reliance on text-based authorities to formulate abstract, analytical rule-based thinking, to thinking based on own clinical reasoning using past concrete experiences. This resonates with Wellard's (1996) reasoning in Section 3.6. The ability to do this signifies the move towards being an expert practitioner. The expert nurse is thus not 'just a nurse with a lot of experience', but a practitioner who can freely move between the two types of knowledge and is able to select and transform knowledge appropriate to the situation.

Spouse (2001) in Section 3.4.1 acknowledges the role of professional judgement in defining professional practice. Both Schön (1983, 1987) and Benner's (1984) writings confirm that it is this ability to move between theory and practice that ultimately results in professional growth of the practitioner. This is corroborated by an earlier reference by Owen (2003) in Section 3.4.1.

3.7 INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE AS A MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION

Although the argument against the separation of theory and practice is no longer being fought with vigour on the educational battleground, Brown, Collins and Duguid's (1989) article on situation cognition and the culture of learning is useful in that they explain how the experience and the situations they take place in are integral to understanding and learning. Knowledge acquisition per se means that tools are acquired for learning. However, when people use these tools actively, they are able to fabricate a valuable awareness of their learning environment with and through the use of these tools. As a result, this awareness of both their environment and the tools shifts constantly as a result of this interactivity, demonstrating that learning is both a "continuous, life-long process resulting from acting in situations" (Brown et al., 1989:32-42).

The concept of learning being continuous and resulting from interactions within and through situations gives credence to the concept of change, which is inevitable. Why is it that in one situation, we take definitive moral positions, but with the passing of time and changes in circumstances, these positions change? It doesn't necessarily mean that as individuals, we change with the wind, but rather those concepts, as they evolve

"with each new occasion of use, because new situations, negotiations, and activities inevitably recast it in a new, more densely textured form. So a concept, like the meaning of a word, is always under construction. This would also appear to be true of apparently well-defined, abstract technical concepts. Even these are not wholly definable and defy categorical description; part of their meaning is always inherited from the context of use" (Brown et al., 1989:32-42).

3.7.1 Integration of knowledge acquisition within the culture of nursing

The changeable nature of the meaning of concepts links in very clearly to the culture or discipline of the profession of nursing. If I am going to have to facilitate student learning, I need to understand and recognise that the profession is linked together by strands of beliefs that form the basis of the culture of nursing. Each time students apply knowledge tools to their discipline; the concept becomes integrated, shaped and absorbed to perhaps emerge in a different form that is representative of the culture of nursing. This means that every interchange involving this concept reshapes or consolidates the essential form of the concept and so to truly use the tools of learning, according to Brown et al. (1989) one needs to enter the community of the profession and become acculturated. This is an inextricable relationship: to understand the concept and to understand nursing, one needs to enter into that world, that culture, because the concept and the profession define each other. There is both a uniqueness and a universal aspect to nursing (I assume this applies to most professions). It is perfectly possible for me to enter a hospital ward in the deep rural area and a ward in a sophisticated international hospital and find some comfort zone, some area of operation whereby I can still speak the same 'language' of nursing. At the same time, there is much that is not revealed to me, perhaps because of my different culture or language, even though I am a nurse. I do believe that there are essential components of both these aspects, which through this study, allow me to experience and relate aspects of both the universal and the particular. In essence, this permits me to think about communities of practice by connecting the familiar and the unfamiliar together.

3.7.1.1 Complexity of the enculturation process

Brown et al. (1989:32-42) highlight the enculturation process in describing it as "recondite and complex" but suggest that the ease with which students are able to integrate within this culture

believes the complexity of the activities and systems implicit in the culture and “the immense importance of the process and obscures the fact that what they pick up is a product of the ambient culture rather than of explicit teaching”. This again emphasizes the importance of facilitation of learning rather than attempting to entertain the notion that learning results from classroom activities.

3.7.1.2 Negotiating meaning within the culture of nursing

Brown et al. (1989:32-42) suggest that in the formal educational setting, we provide structured, well-defined problems requiring structured, well-defined solutions from a structured theoretical base, that often have little to do with the reality of life practices. It is only in these types of fuzzy situations that people learn to “negotiate meaning and construct understanding. The issues and problems that they face arise out of, are defined by, and are resolved within the constraints of the activity they are pursuing”. Brown et al. (1989:32-42) write about a “cognitive apprenticeship” which supports the integration of students within the culture (reality based education) through authentic experiences and relationships. These then provide meaning within the context, to the student.

3.7.1.3 Scaffolding the learning process between the classroom and the profession

Simply speaking, I believe that teaching is in some ways, very like being a mentor: the intent is to promote the development of independence or autonomy and as a mentor, one supports, or as Brown et al. (1989:32-42) describe it, one provides a scaffold, from the initial coaching or modelling that takes place in the classroom through to autonomous learning in the field. These steps are promoted as more and more independence and confidence is gained. The movement, then, is coaching -> provision of authentic activities -> collaborative learning where there is conscious participation in the culture. This collaboration leads to reflection and discussion of strategies. Here

the learning concept is processed within the situation, and further reflection of core knowledge and utilization within the social and cultural network of the system, leads to insight and further development of conceptual knowledge. To some degree, this is what I am attempting to do. The difference lies in that students already form part of the cultural network. They have learned the language and nuances of their practice in an almost intuitive manner. They participate in the culture. I, and others, provide them with the building blocks and the focus and questions of and for their practice and they put it together in a meaningful way that has legitimacy for them and the system within which they operate. Collaboration with peers, colleagues, mentors within the workplace or in discussions are the scaffolding meant to lead to insight and further development of conceptual knowledge.

3.7.1.4 Educator and students: Learning and understanding through peripheral participation

Another useful insight provided by Brown et al. (1989:32-42) is that of “legitimate peripheral participation” whereby those not directly engaged in an activity can provide meaningful insights about the position or role of the student through discussion and narrative. They suggest that presentation of knowledge does not have to be declarative and direct, but that through others’ legitimate position on the outskirts of the situation, richness can be lent to the understanding of the issues, through discussion. This formed an important rationale for my inclusion of work-based mentors as a scaffolding strategy.

3.7.1.5 ‘Constructing’ learning experiences: Role of student and educator

Hanley (1994) suggests that students enter the learning environment with their own experiences and cognitive structure determined by these experiences. These structures may be valid, or not,

complete or not. These structures will change only if new information or experiences can be linked in a meaningful way to original understanding or experiences. This process has to be actively 'constructed' by the student in order for the new idea to become integrated into memory. Memorized facts not connected to prior learning are quickly forgotten. Hanley (1994) suggests that the role of the facilitator is to engage the student by organising material "around conceptual clusters of problems, questions and discrepant situations" and to enable students to develop insights linked to prior knowledge. Ideas are presented as broad concepts and then deconstructed into smaller parts and students are encouraged to question, analyze and form their own conclusions.

3.8 THE EDUCATOR

As an educator, I know who I am. I know what I do and what I am trying to achieve. However, my confusion is contained within the plethora of terms that explain my function and purpose, not the least because of the overlap of these within the various domains of the terms denoting the 'educator'.

The role and description of the educator of adults is broadly established by the perceived role and the philosophical underpinnings of adult education, and seems to be largely determined by the goals of adult education and how educators themselves view their roles. The roles could "range from the liberal to the technical/functional to the more radical" but generally include a social purpose (Imel, 1999). The terms derived from the literature are those of "teacher, instructor, helper, facilitator, consultant, broker, change agent, and mentor" (Imel, 1999). Boud et al. (1998) have also used the term 'animator'.

3.8.1 Power and the educator

Power is a dominant theme underpinning this research and is explored in depth in Chapters 1.2.4.5, 1.6, 4.3, and 4.6.3. Pendlebury (1998:347) warns against careless interpretation of the South African policy embracement of learner-centered education particularly when it is linked with a similarly careless interpretation of learner constructed knowledge in that “it undermines or ignores the teacher’s pedagogical authority. Yet authority of some sort is among the enabling conditions for teaching to accomplish its ends and sustain its goods.” The relationship between the learner and the teacher can never be power-free and I recognise that part of this power comes from determining the sequencing and choice of learning materials influencing the educational outcome. The point of departure between my responsibility and that of the students lies in the negotiations around the process of learning and I subscribe to Pendlebury’s (1998:347) realisation that “learner-centred education thus requires teachers with a deep and imaginative understanding both of what and who they teach.”

3.8.2 The teacher

An important question relates to the role of the teacher. Who or what is this person? The term for the person who works with students to foster learning cannot clearly be said to be that of ‘teacher’, hence the array of terms in Section 3.8. My understanding of a ‘teacher’ is someone with a sound knowledge-base, or at least, a knowledge level higher than that of the student in the area being taught. I have always understood the process to be didactic in nature, and even when I explored the value of the ‘power’ relationship and much that this entails, it seemed clear that power was a defining concept in the relationship between teacher and student (Leyshon, 2002:468).

3.8.3 The facilitator

A facilitator, on the other hand, is “a teacher who does not teach” de Graaf (2001). In other words, she or he is someone who supports a learning process where the focus is on learning and not on teaching. Rather than providing answers, the process is facilitated through a questioning method where the responsibility and choices for learning lie with the learners. The facilitator is not expected to be the font of all knowledge or correct students’ choices, as students are expected to learn through independent study activities and consult widely (Abdal-Haqq, 1998; and de Graaf, 2001). De Graaf (2001) says that a “facilitator needs to know just enough about the subject that is studied in order to understand the discussions and to know when to intervene.” Scanlan, Care and Udod (2002:136) see the change of role from teacher, the transmitter of knowledge, to that of facilitator, “who draws on the experiences of the learner.”

Both Murphy (1997) and Hanley (1994) suggest that the role of the facilitator is to engage the student by organising material around questions, problems clusters, and contrary situations and to enable students to develop insights linked to prior knowledge. Ideas are presented as broad concepts and then deconstructed into smaller parts and students are encouraged to question, analyze and form their own conclusions.

Harvey, Loftus-Hills, Rycroft-Malone, Titchen, Kitson, McCormack, and Seers (2002:577) provide a concept analysis of the term facilitator, and suggest that facilitation is an enabling process and can be represented on a continuum, the purpose ranging from distinct task-oriented activities to a more comprehensive “process of enabling individuals, teams and organizations to change”. They note a number of characteristic traits that identify the facilitator, for example, interpersonal and communication skills, but suggest that the skills required depend on the situation. In that case, the

facilitator needs a “tool kit of skills and personal attributes”, one of the most important being the ability to be flexible and recognise what is required in a given situation, and respond appropriately (Harvey et al., 2002:585).

3.8.4 The animator

Concepts are imbued with meaning, and although a concept may carry the same name, it is possible and probable that it is interpreted differently depending on context, experience and understanding of each individual. Perhaps because educators form part and parcel of our everyday lives, a narrow meaning of ‘educator’ is commonly accepted. It is the nuances of the meaning, however, that are not readily apparent and so we try to find terms that will render these clear. For example, Boud et al. (1998) tried to refine the concept of the ‘facilitator’ by invoking the concept of the ‘animator’. Learner-centred education forms the basis for the appreciation of this concept. Boud et al. (1998) cite “Freire’s ‘teacher’ (1972), Tough’s ‘ideal helper’ (1979) and the ‘facilitator’ described by both Brookfield (1986) and Heron (1989) as roles for the person who works with learners, the inter-relationships of which are based on the concept of adult education. Boud et al. (1998), however, felt that none of these role-connotations dealt adequately with the complexities of the role required of one who worked with adult learners in the current learning environment.

3.8.4.1.1 Conflicting philosophies in theories of learning influencing the development of the term ‘animator’

Boud et al. (1998) identified two conflicting philosophies impacting on the development of theories of learning: The first is based on the humanistic psychological approach introduced earlier in the chapter (3.1), which lent much to the fields of adult education, human resource management and counselling. The second emanates from “collective social movement and political action” (Boud et

al., 1998). This approach features the importance of the group and social structures and constructs such as power, oppression, and experience. Many of the studies on black-empowerment and feminism as well as the features of participatory research are based upon this approach (Boud et al., 1998; Leyshon, 2002). This group approach is in contrast to that focusing on the psychology of the individual.

Boud et al. (1998) note that much of the educational literature has dealt with the polarization between these two philosophies rather than a deeper appreciation of the synthesis of these two approaches needed in a post-modern world, and so, their development of the notion of animation. "Animation may be viewed simultaneously as an individual and collective enterprise involving mind and body, taking account of cognitive and affective elements of learning, and situated within the spheres of the personal, the cultural and the political." Essentially, this means that those working with learners appreciate and are sensitive to the psycho-social, technological and political dimensions of the learning environment.

Boud et al. (1998) refer "to the process of working with the experience of others as 'animation', and to the person who works to promote others' learning as an 'animator' ". The term 'animate' was used because of the action connotation "such as to give life to, to quicken, to vivify, to enliven, to inspire, to encourage, to activate or to put in motion." Boud et al.'s (1998) view of animators reflected those who work with learners "in situations where learning is an aspect of what is occurring, to assist them to work with their experience."

3.8.4.2 The theory of animation and the environment

Clearly, the theory of animation takes into account the way in which learners and animators interact and are influenced by the environment of learning. According to Boud et al. (1998), the main concerns to be answered by this theory relate to:

- the interpersonal relationships between learners and the animator;
- the value of the affective;
- “context and discourse”;
- power relationships; and
- respect for diversity.

Boud et al. (1998) do not see the application of this theory as a new role to replace that of the teacher or the facilitator, but rather, a specific way of viewing educational practice. Because none of the other role terms quite carry the meaning meant by Boud et al. (1998) the concept of this role in terms of this view is labeled ‘animator’.

3.8.4.3 Theory of animation, context and identity

To appreciate the value of the theory of animation, Boud and Miller (1998) have identified the following as key for consideration:

Context: this takes into account the intricate and rich context within which learning takes place. It defines the boundaries within which thinking occurs and therefore, the ways in which we think. Most of these boundaries are not easily identified by those within them. Boud et al. (1998) do not say that we may not think outside of these boundaries, but if we as animators do not take them into account, we “may inadvertently perpetuate existing patterns which can control and limit learning.

Context needs to be problematised, confronted, subverted or accepted if learning is to take place". Our students, although all in the field of nursing, are working in diverse sectors. It would be irresponsible of me not to recognise the diverse and complex work environments, lifestyles, cultures, learning backgrounds that influence each student. These are responsible for the richness in outlook that students bring to the learning context.

Identity: I recognise that as an animator as described in Boud et al. (1998), I too have developed an identity. The way I teach, how I view myself as a teacher and a nurse is shaped by a multitude of experiences. These include my socialization, the operating environment of the institution within which I work, my colleagues, my home, my experience *within* and understanding *of* my discipline as well as many other undefined influences. According to Boud et al. (1998), this can affect my actions far more than anything to do with the learner.

3.8.4.4 Animation and reflection

The use of a self-reflective diary (reflexive and reflective) would certainly assist understanding of context and identity and "unpack the way in which people construct themselves and which illuminate diverse and shifting identities may form part of this critical process" (Boud et al. 1998).

Boud et al. (1998) describe a similar project to mine in which students were required to reflect on their experiences. This was done in order for the students to analyze their own identities in relation to the subject matter of their course and then to actively reconstruct their identities as their skills developed, therefore recognising the shift in their own abilities and learning from novice to expert. This shift in understanding is fundamental to the analysis of the reflective journals and the concept of identity forms a key category in my data analysis.

3.9 LEARNING CONTEXT AND EXPRESSIVE STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS

The framing for learning is often dependent on the context for learning, the theoretical position taken by the educator and the concomitant teaching style. My orientation is clear and if my intent is emancipatory learning focusing on social and personal consciousness, an understanding and appreciation of the contexts within which the students operate is essential. The student-teacher relationship facilitating this process is expressive, requiring sensitivity and analysis.

Experiential learning addresses issues derived from the social and political context of the learner and in order to work with and learn from these issues, the different reality constructions need to be considered (Dirkx and Lavin, 1991). This speaks to my view that context is essential to the role of learning, and that within this orientation, learning and experience are not neutral and that experience and the social relationships are interconnected. Dirkx et al. (1991) in their understanding of the orientation which emerges from the writings of Freire, Carr and Kemmis and Mezirow, suggest analysis “often focuses on the relationship of various social structures to the distribution of power among groups. The aim of facilitators working from this perspective is the transformation of meaning perspectives and/or the development of critical consciousness among their learners.”

Within the nursing management course, I am very aware of the need to move beyond content learning to focusing on the social environments within which the students practice, to providing opportunities and space in a psychologically safe manner so that students can explore what Johnson-Bailey et al. (1997) call their “differential capacities to act”.

(Dirkx and Lavin, 1991) encapsulate the role of facilitator, particularly in the tutorial sessions where the need to be mindful and conscious of the sensibilities and emotions of individual students is so important as the 'conversations' are not pre-determined or planned, for

"in facilitation practitioner-client relationships often become the context for the expression of powerful emotional forces. These forces sometimes express themselves in symbolic ways. These symbols can be used as a means to access the deeper parts of ourselves and our relationships with others. Thus, these different components can all be manifest within the context of a particular life experience, such as facilitation. The components are also transactional, in that one form of coming to know from experience often influences others" (Dirkx et al., 1991).

Hughes (2000) also addresses this Rogerian relationship in terms of what he calls the "humanist facilitator" and suggests that in this approach, the facilitator is committed to the interests of the learner and views the learner, respectfully and with love, in a holistic context. He suggests that the level of responsibility is high, where support may be given even without the explicit consent of the learner, and cites the confrontational and liberating interventions of Heron (1990)

"Confronting is about consciousness raising, about waking people up to what it is they are not aware of in themselves that is critical for their own well-being and the well-being of others. This makes confronting interventions presumptuous: I presume to judge what it is that you are not aware of; I presume to judge that it would be in your interests to become aware of it; and then on an unsolicited basis I presume to appoint myself as the one to raise your consciousness about the matter" (Hughes, 2000:7).

Harvey et al. (2002:588) believe that this consciousness-raising is part of the process students need to explore, so that by “dealing with psychological defensiveness and challenging cultural norms” they are then able to change aspects or beliefs about themselves, others or their practice.

Both these and the Hughes’ (2000) facilitation process in the mode of critical pedagogy and social action, resonate with my thinking. This second tradition, Hughes (2000) describes as one that focuses on the political, socio-cultural contexts of learning, the purpose of which is to empower students to move beyond the limitations faced in their everyday world. This is a particularly relevant approach in management and is facilitated through critical, open discussions and debate between and with learners. It builds on critical thinking and critique. In both these approaches, the need for external intervention, be it in the form of facilitation or engagement with texts that challenge the status quo, is evident.

3.10 REFLECTIVE LEARNING

Reflection is a key strategy in van Aswegen’s model of critical reflective practice and is discussed in Chapter Two, Sections 2.3.1.3 and 2.3.1.4 mainly in the form of defining reflective learning and the complementary accompanying concepts. Chapter Two deals mainly with the broad, philosophical guidelines that frame an educational model of critical reflective practice, as well as the structuring of the requisite elements. This section has been included here because it focuses on the literature that examines contemporary thinking and practice related to reflective learning.

"Reflective education aims to help students take each client encounter as unique and constantly arrive at a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience" (Wong, Kember, Chung, and Yan 1995:49). Kuiper and Pesut (2004:382-383) suggest that “reflective thinking is

metacognition or a level of consciousness that exists through executive cognitive control and self-communication about experiences.” According to Boud et al. (1985:19), reflection is “an important human activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it”. Although experience alone does not always produce learning, together experience and reflection do seem to transform the learning into knowledge. Pierson (1998) observes that while many authors of reflective models view reflection as introspective thinking triggered by a problem, the German philosopher, Heidegger, has a different take on reflection, and observes that reflection is thinking about anything that interests us.

The domains of theory and practice can be bridged by means of a reflective practicum, argues Schön (1991) in Van Horn (2000). Reflection enables students to learn about their own reality which in turn would help them link learned theory to clinical experience. Carkhuff (1996) believes that reflective learning takes place when reasons are sought and meanings are explored in trying to understand issues or problems involving people as individuals or groups in order to arrive at new or clearer understanding and appreciation and consciousness of ideas.

3.10.1 Reflection as an emancipatory construct

Carkhuff (1996:210) writes about ‘action technology’ which helps to explain how we learn. She says it is an “emancipatory” construct, the purpose of which is to offer an explanation for the anomalies and contradictions implicit in our daily interactions. We behave in a particular way in order to achieve an end and we make sense of our work environment “by constructing meanings, which in turn, guide actions...In this context, behaviour is evaluated for consistency and validity against those internalized beliefs and meaning systems that individuals hold” (Carkhuff 1996:210). This is important because it means that if we want to learn from practice, we need to think or reflect

on practice. She notes that those students, who have been exposed to different situations or alternative viewpoints of others, develop a richer base to interpret their own practice. This leads me to another supporting concept - double-loop learning explained in Chapter Four, Section 4.6.4.2.1. Carkhuff (1996:211) notes that double loop learning is of a “win/win orientation, using dialogue to examine values behind choices, and sharing responsibilities for the outcome.” Both student and facilitator value and share control and the responsibilities for the learning processes and outcomes. The values implicit in this relationship are “valid information, free and informed choice, and internal commitment” Carkhuff (1996:211). This relationship works because of the support of and interest in each individual’s views and interests.

3.10.2 Stages, skills and learning techniques supporting the reflective learning process

3.10.2.1 Stages in the reflective learning process

Carkhuff (1996:211) refers to Atkins and Murphy’s (1993) stages in the reflective learning process:

First stage: this is initiated by a conscious awareness of feelings and thoughts provoking discomfort;

Second stage: the situation is then analysed in a critical manner; and

Third stage: the ‘aha’ experience or the new perspective results, noting that while the stages provide an understanding of learning, it is critical that the cognitive and affective skills required to process these stages are used. Key traits required to affect this process are open-mindedness and motivation in reflection.

3.10.2.2 Skills needed for the reflective process

The skills needed for reflection identified by Murphy (1993) in Carkhuff (1996:211-212) are:

- **Self-awareness:** this is a process of self-examination, clearly and honestly identifying thoughts, feelings and behaviours related to situations or interpersonal contacts.
- **Description:** this is the ability to accurately identify and recount key factors in an experience. It is not enough to feel uncomfortable. To reflect, one needs to be able to describe these feelings in order to learn through reflection.
- **Critical analysis:** this means looking at the whole picture and deconstructing the picture in such a way that the known can be identified and assumptions can be challenged. The relevancy of the information is checked and concepts such as validity and reliability form criteria for assessment.
- **Synthesis:** this is the process of combining previously known information with new information in order to arrive at a fresh perspective.
- **Evaluation:** this is where judgements are made based on proven or legitimate criteria in order to solve problems or make predictions.

3.10.2.3 Techniques supporting the reflective process

In Carkhuff's (1996:213-214) discussion of the role of the staff development educator, she states that the educator can enable nurses to take more responsibility for their own learning by becoming more aware of their own knowledge base. She suggests that techniques that will facilitate this include reflective journal writing; small group reflections; reflecting with a partner or discussions. She acknowledges the need for a 'safe' learning environment

“to process and critically analyze events, provide feedback, and test assumptions leading to new action, concepts and ideals...Modeling the technique of reframing problems, posing problems, and testing assumptions by using real-life problems or

cases in practice will also facilitate the reflective process. The reflection-on-action technique will provide the basis for learners to test their assumptions, investigate meaning schemes, and change approach or understanding regarding a decision that signifies change, or in essence, learning.”

3.10.3 Narrative pedagogy (stories)

Rogge (2001) used a reflective process called Narrative pedagogy based on a narrative centred curriculum. Narratives, such as journal writing, critical incidents, case studies, relevant anecdotes are used by lecturers to establish dialogue, and thereby, a relationship with their students. The purpose is to foster scholarship and life-long learning. Rogge (2001) states that this approach encourages reading, writing, thinking and dialogue and so, can promote learning. Students’ stories or narratives in reflective journals can therefore provide a spring-board for discussions, problem-solving and debate.

3.10.4 Bridging theory and practice through reflective strategies

Schön (1987:29) indicates that by observing and reflecting on our own actions and then by considering, questioning and describing this process to restructure ways of doing things, understanding the issues or reframing problems becomes ‘knowing-in-action’ and is a construction of knowledge. Wellard (1996) believes that nurses view this ‘knowing-in-action’ as a means of reducing the theory-practice dividing line where practice or experiential learning is viewed as the main source of knowledge. She therefore sees that this practice lends itself to theorising. Journals are an effective means of documenting these reflections.

3.10.5 Barriers to reflective learning

Barriers can prevent reflection so that learning does not take place (Mezirow, 1991). While van Aswegen does not incorporate barriers in her model, she refers to them indirectly by stressing the need for supportive environments to assist critical reflective practice. Van Horn (2000: Chapter 2) cites Boud and Walker's definitions of barriers as "those factors which inhibit or block learners' preparedness for the experience, their active engagement in it, and their ability to reflect rationally on it with a view to learning from it." These barriers, she notes

"can limit the learners' awareness of the learning environment, can cause them to fail to focus on the knowledge that is needed in the problem-solving process, or can paralyze the learner to even actively perform in the situation. Barriers can be external such as people, hostile environments, culture, or written expectations; or internal such as negative emotions (anxiety, anger or fear), lack of awareness or unconscious oppressed behaviors (Boud and Walker, 1993)."

Burton (2000) too highlights barriers to reflection as:

- Insufficient time to reflect, which is compounded by a lack of knowledge and skills to reflect. This is often further affected by a demanding and unsupportive work environment, thereby making it difficult for nurses to have the space, time and energy to engage in anything but superficial reflection.
- Accuracy of recall: People don't always do what they think. Perhaps this is because it is mediated by the intervening time delay or through bias resulting from hindsight or misperception resulting from an extreme emotional state of mind. These factors could then affect their practice as the value of the reflection in terms of improving practice may be questionable.

- Ethical issues: The reading of personal material in students' reflective journals could be seen as intrusive, placing the student in a vulnerable position, which could be open to abuse.

These are important issues. For example, the concept of time resonates with the difficulties experienced by my students. Knowing that most of my students have very little 'spare' time available, does this mean that I omit reflective journaling as a teaching and learning strategy? Or should those factors such as ethical and emotional difficulties should prevent implementation of the strategy? I would instead suggest that knowledge of these potential barriers be used in attempting to circumvent the barriers and tailor my course accordingly. For example, I have placed an enormous value on reflective journaling as a critical strategy to promote critical, reflective practice to ensure that students appreciate the framework supporting their learning. I did this by returning time and again to the reflective learning strategy and named the thinking processes they were involved in. I made reflection a key feature in their learning programme and found time to routinely discuss and share their reflections. As a nurse, I understand the concepts of confidentiality and ethics and trust and built on these concepts within the course of the learning process. Although Burton (2000) identifies accuracy of recollection as a barrier, I didn't see it as an immutable barrier, particularly in my course, Management IV, where memory of the event was not an issue, but rather, understood that an understanding of the *described* event or incident was required. It might be different if immediacy of action is required to respond to the situation, but not where it becomes an academic exercise or learning experience for future action. Just as case studies are recognised as accepted learning strategies, so are students' narratives, flawed as they may be.

Newton (1996) makes some telling arguments in her consideration of the following barriers:

- Feelings and emotions hindering reflection. Newton (1996) recognises that there are times where one just doesn't want to deal with feelings, as the evoking responses may just be too uncomfortable or painful. It may also be too difficult if one is uncertain of the end result.
- Personal awareness as a barrier. Newton (1996) clearly found reflection difficult and wondered about the purpose of the process. She saw herself as "practical" and that formal reflecting "wasn't in my nature." Her awareness of her dislike of the process was limiting.
- The environment as a barrier. Some environments just don't seem to be conducive to the process of reflection. Space and quietness may not be the most important of motivators – the place seems to be dependent on the individual.
- Difficulty in initiating the process. Newton (1996) believes that this may be because of previous negative experiences and also because of the limiting demands required in academic writing, which formed the basis for previous writing experiences.

3.10.6 Poor educational practice and reflection

Boud and Miller's (1998) critique of some of the problems attached to poor educational practice with respect to reflection is salutary. Classroom activities including reflective journals, debriefing after experiential activities and the sharing of life experiences are not of themselves problematic but only in terms of the *manner* in which they are introduced, and they warn against the following:

3.10.6.1 Recipe-like approach

While Boud et al. (1998:192) have no caveat with question prompts or guiding frameworks for reflection, their concern lies with the requirements of reflecting 'on demand' and the expectation of

a ritualistic approach to reflection without due concern for the introspection required for the process and

“without reference to context or outcomes. This leads to false expectation of what reflection is (it is linear, about external knowledge and unproblematic) and what learning outcomes can be expected of reflective activities (those which can be found in course statements and competency standards). When combined with a teacher- rather than a learner-centred approach to education, rule following turns ‘reflection’ into a process to be memorised and applied unthinkingly.”

3.10.6.2 Belief by the educator that reflection can be contained

Boud et al. (1998) echo my sentiments that reflection should not be contained within a framework delineated for the “comfort zone” of the educator. The very nature of reflection sees the process directed by the students’ questioning which can and usually does lead into areas unforeseen by both student and educator. This may throw up issues that are disturbing to either or both. Boud et al. (1998) suggest that if these explorations are forced into a narrow confined direction and the divergent thinking and resultant feelings are not accepted and supported, this can lead to untold damage for some students.

3.10.6.3 Incompatibility of formal assessment and reflection

Boud et al. (1998) describes the dangers of formal assessment and reflection, which is discussed in Chapter 7, Section 7.2.4 in terms of the reflective journal. They reiterate their concern and indicate that if reflective writing be evaluated, it should be done in terms of criteria for reflective writing and not for academic style purposes. Whitehead (2002:499) defines academic style as

those processes associated with academic writing which are “systematically imposed and prescriptively defined” and comprise the component parts of reading, writing, dialogue and thinking ascribed to a scholarly style.

3.10.6.4 Intellectualising reflection

Boud et al. (1998) go to the heart of academic thinking. Education is focused around critical thinking and cognitive processes. But reflection includes the very necessary component of emotion. It is easy, they suggest, for educators to downplay the importance of the affective component of reflection, particularly when they themselves find it difficult to cope with the consequences of these feelings. Creating an environment of a trust relationship is integral to the process, and unless the educator is prepared for the outcomes and can protect the student, the process can be dangerous.

“One of the most common outcomes of intellectualising reflection is, ironically, that of leaving students in emotional disarray. Denying the power and influence of emotion leaves staff with no strategies for dealing with it when it inevitably arises. Of course, allowing for emotional disclosure creates its own challenges” (Boud et al. 1998:195).

3.10.6.5 Inappropriate disclosure

As noted, permission to reflect freely can present challenges. Students may reveal confidences that are deeply personal or of matters such that the reader worries about what to do with the information. If the educator decides to open up Pandora’s Box, he or she better be prepared for how to manage the revelations, while keeping the student safe. Each of the journals used as case studies in Chapter Eleven in this research provide examples of these kinds of revelations.

3.10.6.6 Uncritical acceptance of experience

Reflection is part of the learning experience, and as such, needs to be questioned, and at times, challenged. There are those who would suggest that the reflection is the student's "truth" (which I can accept) but, they go a step further and believe that as 'the truth' it needs to be reified and would be negatively affected by question or challenge. However, states Boud et al. (1998:196)

“While sensations and feelings provide important data for learning, they do not provide unambiguous messages, they are always influenced by our presuppositions, framed by theory—be it formal or informal—and subject to multiple interpretations. As Bryant *et al* (1996) argue, experience cannot be separated from knowledge, it needs to be interpreted as a social practice; it is neither coherent, complete or masterable.”

Taylor (2003) is highly critical of unconditional acceptance of reflective practice as *the* most valued means of learning, and finds that many reflective practitioners suggest that “reflective accounts are inherently superior in that they access hidden concerns and offer a deeper understanding of practice, and thereby produce more authentic ways of knowing/telling the ‘case’. Certainly, from a sociological perspective, this is a dangerous assumption to make” (Taylor, 2003:249). Reflective practice, she suggests, tends towards “a naive or romantic realist position and fails to acknowledge the ways in which reflective accounts construct the world of practice” (Taylor, 2003:244).

3.10.6.7 Going beyond the expertise of the teacher

One of the staff members in my department had indicated her discomfort with some of the students' revelations. This is not unusual and it was appropriate that she had the insight to understand her limitations and referred accordingly (there was a staff of trained counselors available on campus to support students). Boud et al. (1998) suggests that if one can anticipate

these possibilities, some of these difficulties can be avoided by designing the activities and facilitating further staff development of skills needed. I would agree with Boud et al. (1998) that staff members make the distinction clear between themselves as educators, and their referral role to students, to prevent unnecessary expectations.

3.10.6.8 Excessive use of teacher power

Boud et al. (1998) reflect my concerns about the use and potential misuse of power, a theme predominant in this study. Exposing their personal selves through reflection does enable the educator to get to 'know' the learner in a deeper way that can in fact enhance the reflective process. But it also places the learner in a vulnerable position, which requires a great deal of maturity on the part of the educator, to ensure that the process is used in an ethical manner. Boud et al. (1998:203) suggests that excessive use of power "arises from many aspects of the context and it may be related as much to teachers' own perceived powerlessness in an institution as from their failure to recognise the primacy of the learner."

3.11 CRITICAL THINKING

Huff (2000) explains the concept of critical thinking as the careful scrutiny and appraisal of beliefs and actions. It is a process of reasoning, creating, considering alternative points of view, and evaluating knowledge. Facione and Facione (1996:15) contend that critical thinking is the process of

“ purposeful, self-regulatory judgement which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that

judgment is based. CT is essential as a tool of inquiry. As such, CT is a liberating force in education and a powerful resource in one's personal and civic life..."

Critical thinking is seen not as a linear process, but as a circular, interactive process. These skills are used when we make judgements and are transferred to new contexts and issues. It also comprises some of the elements that formulate reflective thinking (as described in Section 3.10.1).

3.11.1 Rationale for critical thinking

Brookfield (1990) contends that critical thinking is an intellectual function that should characterise adulthood as it is during this period of time that one starts to doubt universal truths and explore the relationship between context and experience. Critical thinking is essential for personal survival and focuses on critically exploring our personal relationships. It is vital in a democratic society where we are responsible for the election of officials, and therefore both the process and outcome must be carefully evaluated. Brookfield (1990:21) states: "Helping learners acquire a critically alert cast of mind; one that is skeptical of claims to final truths or ultimate solutions to problems is the quintessential education process".

3.11.2 Attributes of the critical thinker

Facione and Facione (1996) suggest that certain attributes contribute towards critical thinking modes. These include:

- open-mindedness;
- inquisitiveness;
- cognitive maturity;
- truth-seeking;
- the ability to be analytical; and
- critical thinking self-confidence.

Huff (2000) suggests that these “habits of mind” can be fostered in the classroom using techniques such as “modeling critical thinking, skills, rewarding good and challenging poor critical thinking skills, creating an environment of inquiry, engaging students in critical thinking, and diversifying contexts.”

3.11.3 Teaching critical thinking – an example with connections to the Management IV course

Thompson (1999) undertook a study focusing on how to teach critical thinking at tertiary level in a class of English for Academic Purposes.

3.11.3.1 Different socio-cultural learning environment

For many of the international students, studying at an Australian university, both at undergraduate and post-graduate level, it was the first time that they had experienced learning in a different socio-cultural learning environment. A number of our students would be in a similar position, in that for many, their undergraduate studies would have taken place in a college of nursing, catering mainly for nurses, and prior to 1994, nurses of a similar culture.

3.11.3.2 Adjustments to student status

Thompson (1999:1) notes that many of these students would have had to make adjustments in terms of education, language, social, cultural and often economic status. Again, this would, to a degree, apply to our students. During undergraduate training, South African students have been paid for their studies as part of the ‘package’ of their being a nurse in training. For the first time for many, their position in the practice setting became supernumerary, and with a few exceptions,

most paid for their own education at DIT. This resulted in financial adjustments, as many were mothers and contributors to a household income.

3.11.3.3 Shift from didactic forms of teaching

Thompson (1999:1) noted that for a considerable number of her students, the concept of 'critical thinking' might have been encountered for the first time. Many made the shift from the didactic forms of teaching and learning "to conceptualising learning as a constantly evolving process of discovery, questioning and reformulating of hypothesis", a difficult and confusing experience. This finding resonated with me, as it was not dissimilar to my own experiences with nursing students.

3.11.4 Defining critical thinking within a socio-political context

Thompson (1999) sought to define 'critical thinking' and decided that rather than defining it as a skill or competency or an easily understood concrete concept which could be taught, she made the connection of critical thinking to social practice, which is not easily defined by users. She, however, refined the concept by citing Benensch (1993) who described it as "a democratic learning process examining power relations and social inequities" (Thompson, 1999:1). She argues that critical thinking, social practice and political action are interconnected and believes that teaching methodologies and choice of learning materials are strongly influenced by our socio-economic and political context, that extend beyond the classroom walls. Thompson, (1999:1) validates her stance by citing Pennycook, (1989) who argues "To deny the political nature of language education," can be equated with "articulating an ideological position in favour of the status quo"

I would argue that this same political context is relevant to our nursing students, and if the intent is to educate our nurses so as to enable them to become autonomous and critically thinking

practitioners, their context is their practice and the political influences on a global, national and local level, are their frames of reference. To attempt to learn nursing theory in isolation is both idealistic and foolish. If nurses do not learn to question critically the status quo, they will remain disempowered and part of the silent mass, choosing to leave the country in protest rather than work from within with understanding (See Chapter One, Sections 1.1 and 1.2.2).

3.11.5 What constitutes critical thinking at university level?

Thompson (1999:2) accepts Gieve's notion of what constitutes critical thinking at university level. Students there were required to scrutinize their own knowledge, beliefs and actions and were expected to be able to both question and defend these in themselves, their classmates, teachers, texts and figures of authority and expertise, both verbally and in writing. This was quite a challenge for our students, many of whom appeared to accept as 'gospel,' words that appeared in print or were pronounced as fact by experts. It takes a leap of faith to realise that not only is this scrutiny and challenge permissible, but that in fact, it is required. To move past the invisible boundary that lies between expert and student, and to reposition themselves by using taught techniques to challenge these parameters, is not easy, but strangely liberating. This is evidenced in the movement of students from the position of being 'passive recipients' to one where they actively participated and debated the issues.

3.12 EDUCATOR FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS ON WORK SUBMITTED

The Management IV course is a legitimately curriculated course within the SAQA framework (Chapter 1, Section 1.3.3). Although van Aswegen's model focuses on critical reflective practice where evaluation of learning takes the form of heightened self-awareness for promotion of life-long learning, formal programmes require academically structured and recognised forms of evaluation

and relevant feedback. This is referred to in Chapter 5, Sections 5.4.2.11, Chapter 6, Sections 6.1.12, 6.2.8, 6.2.12, 6.2.13 and Chapter 7, Section 7.2.4. Bailey and Vardley (1999), in undertaking a study describing a lecturer's attempt at getting students to pay attention to feedback, learn from it and act on it, have provided useful guidelines for my role as educator. Bailey et al. (1999:1) suggest that writing for academic literacy is more than just becoming proficient in the technical sense. This concept "emphasises that literacies are social practices which need to be adapted in new settings; a much broader concept than a skills-based, deficit model of student writing (Lea and Street, 1998)". Traditionally accepted practice in many tertiary institutions is for students to complete work and have it returned with a mark and written feedback, if the student is fortunate. There is usually no recourse to improving on the work, and learning is meant to take place as a result of this evaluation. The 'cause' of the work's strengths or weaknesses is noted, but there is no assurance that this has been interpreted correctly or internalised, a specific value of iterative feedback.

3.12.1 Formative feedback

Bailey et al. (1999:2) note that students are seldom given formative feedback on their work, although research indicates that students generally improve on receiving feedback. They believed that this formative feedback would enable students to improve upon their writing skills, research and critical thinking. Bailey set out in 1997 to test this assumption. He used a third year group of 18 students and his aim was to "develop a set of assessments that would enable students to receive iterative feedback and hence improve their marks as the semester progresses". This process required three drafts, with objectives for each draft and each draft being allocated a specific mark. He used a marking guide, along with annotations in the margin and at the end of the student's work.

He used the first draft to deal with issues of research and focus, as well as issues related to writing technique and the student's ability to synthesise information logically. The second draft focused on "coherence, clarity of explanation, continuity of argument, and appropriate depth of coverage and use of evidence, as well as the mechanics of formal essay writing" (Bailey et al., 1999:4). The final draft was to allow students to respond to the feedback, as well as any further thoughts they might have, as a result of reflection.

Bailey et al.'s. (1999) findings indicate that there was marked improvement in the students' work as a result of the iterative feedback. This was identified through the links identified in analysis between feedback and resultant changes, in both content and structure. Bailey et al. (1999:12) cite Sitko (1993) who notes that students, who want and ask for feedback, are more successful than those who don't. Bailey et al. found that the staging of marks was a motivating factor for students to use the given feedback. Of specific interest, was the finding that students who performed at the lower end of the scale (fail and pass levels) improved significantly in light of the feedback, in contrast to those who were already achieving high marks. From this it would appear that not all students need iterative feedback. "Through engagement with this "feedback and rewriting" process, it becomes clear that students can only experience the true meaning of the feedback they receive by engaging with it in a rewrite" Bailey et al. (1999:13). This argument, they suggest, provides a sound rationale for feedback that is both iterative and formative.

3.12.2 Feedback to support critical reflective writing

Weisberg's (1999) study focuses on writing strategies that cross the boundaries between the personal and the professional in order to break the lock on the convention generally taken in writing

by law students. In a sense, I am trying to achieve the same thing by trying to get students to write, and therefore, engage in their practice, without being bound by the formalised language of nursing and education. Weisberg (1999) indicates that frequent and immediate feedback is one of these strategies and uses his experience to identify useful feedback. This strategy, in part, echoes mine (see Chapter 6.6.1.15). In the beginning, he says, he thought that the most useful form of feedback would be constructive feedback, noting what was wrong, and correcting the mistakes. He suggests that in a culture where good exam results indicate success, and where mistakes indicate failure, it is highly unlikely that students will take risks and attempt to cross boundaries in an effort to learn. Exams, in fact, discourage this exploration. Free writing, on the other hand, encourages students to explore and to know and trust themselves, and he suggests that for this to happen, the writer or student needs to listen to herself, to reflect. To be able to do this, Weisberg (1999:33) moved away from 'normative evaluation' where he would tell the student what he thought about their writing, to 'descriptive feedback' where he would respond to the student in terms of how he had experienced the writing rather than according to measures of 'good' or 'bad', indicating judgement of the student's writing. I find myself doing a bit of both, as discussed in Chapter 7, Section 7.2.4. I also find myself responding in terms of how the writing affects me, even when my intention is to just question. I leave these comments in because I try to imagine how I would feel and what I think would be most encouraging. Weisberg (1999:33) writes

"I stopped characterizing them and began letting them know more about me as a reader. For a label I substituted information, information about what happened to me as I read, which is information a writer can use in deciding whether and how to revise."

He notes that his students started feeling listened to, taken seriously and not judged. I remember when I introduced the concept of reflective writing (in terms of the reflective journals) to students,

mentioning that this was surely the one time in their professional lives where their opinions mattered and where their thoughts counted. I wasn't interested in what the norm was or what the research stated as relevant practice: I wanted to know what they thought and what they did and why they made their choices. Weisberg (1999:33) supports this as he saw that as he took his students seriously, and as they observed him taking them seriously, they realised that if a professor could take them seriously, they had permission to do this for themselves. They became more interested in what their professor was saying and more interested in what they themselves were saying.

I need, however, to address the issue of uncritical acceptance, which, philosophically, was quite problematic for me. Reflective writing needs space and freedom to reflect. I subscribe to Weisberg's (1999) approach and appreciate that valuing the student and their contributions would have a positive outcome. The question, however, is: If the intended outcome is the promotion of critical, reflective thought and practice, how am I guiding students, yet still subscribing to the notion of unconditional acceptance? This is where self-evaluation by the student, the self-evaluation checklist and the accompanying two-page justification of the self-evaluation comes into play (these are discussed in Chapter 7, Section 7.2.4).

3.13 ACADEMIC LITERACIES AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Academic literacies are complex social practices underpinned by a fusion of linguistic, psychological and social behaviours that are affected by the social, political and cultural contexts that predominate within a society (McKenna, 2004). Literacies in general are understood as "social action through language use that develops us as agents inside a larger culture" (Shor, 1999 in McKenna, 2004: 19). It "encompasses the strategies language users use to engage with texts and

takes into account the ways previous experiences with text influence these strategies” (Boughey, 1999 in McKenna, 2004:21).

Whitehead (2002) wrote on the academic writing experiences of a group of student nurses in a phenomenological study, which was helpful in addressing some of these questions in the previous section, 3.12.2. Whitehead (2002:498) noted that the profession of nursing lost many of its intended group as a result of the rigours of the academic demands made upon nursing students. His study supported the need for a revision of the curricula and programmes in the way that “they approach and deliver the demands of an academic style of writing with their students”.

He cites a number of authors who support McKenna’s (2002) contention that in tertiary education, learning academic writing skills is imperative for the formal progression of students to the next level. Whitehead (2002:498) indicates that writing is a critical skill for thinking nurses, integral to our self-concept and to what we think. It is the way for nurses to communicate and to reflect on their professional knowledge base. It also allows us to pursue and promote our professional base and demonstrate scholarship by allowing us the means to justify evidence-based changes in nursing practice.

The findings of Whitehead’s (2002) study on academic writing experiences indicate the profession of nursing is in a dynamic phase of knowledge development, increasingly requiring higher-order thinking skills from its practitioners. Academic writing forms part of this process. Whitehead (2002:503) points out that many nursing students find that writing academic assignments is both difficult and arduous, and for many students, there is an overwhelming fear of failure. This concept is relevant in the consideration of the students with whom I work, who do not necessarily enter

nursing because of academic aspirations. Writing is also a skill not highly valued in a primarily clinically-based profession.

For some students in Whitehead's study simply 'scraping through' was the internalized measure of success. The experience of academic writing as an obstacle to overcome clearly emerged from the 'acquiring the skill' theme. In some cases, the academic style itself became the over-riding obstacle rather than the content of the assignment. Whitehead (2002:503) elaborates on this by noting that while it is commonly accepted that those aspects of writing linked to critical thinking are most problematic for students, this could probably be resolved by encouraging students to write original and creative pieces that only "generally" and not precisely conform to the accepted academic writing guidelines. This allows for the focus to lie on the formative thought processes rather than on the 'technique' of writing. (This in part echoes Boud et al's. (1998) earlier expressed sentiment in Section 3.6 where he describes his concern with the linkage of assessment and reflective writing). This should help to nullify the problem identified by Cust (1995) cited in Whitehead, (2002:503) who "states that the developmental process of a written assignment for many students is that of a descriptive, 'knowledge-telling' narrative rather than the development of 'knowledge-transformation'".

Whitehead (2000) supports McKenna's (2002) notion that academics do not necessarily understand or fully appreciate the processes required for academic literacy, but suggests that this is because they do not fully understand what this comprises or because they themselves lack some of these skills. Whitehead (2000:504) cites Edwards-Beckett (1990) who

"states that academic writing may not be perceived as a legitimate part of clinical nursing practice. Alternatively Sorrell and Metcalf (1998, p. 28) state that the process

of writing academic-related work is 'designed to integrate life experiences with the development of clinical knowledge and professional expectations.' Similarly, Hegyvary (2000) suggests that the integration of scholarship into clinical practice enhances the health of all people."

These are valid points and form part of the rationale for this study. Whitehead's study identifies problems related to academic literacy with respect to a lack of emphasis, lack of integration and subject development, lack of support and the lack of application to practice that these students have experienced. If, according to Mulhall (1997), nursing continues to be defined increasingly by the processes of academia, including academic styles of writing, then students will need to be nurtured and developed accordingly (Whitehead 2000:504). They will need very clear guidelines on what constitutes academic literacy.

3.14 REFLECTIVE JOURNALS

Conway (1999) places reflective journaling in the post-modern paradigm because of the "possibility" of multiple perspectives. She views its potential as a powerful tool, offering a "voice and the chance to value its power". Students need to be critical of their learning experiences and evaluate these, particularly in the context of their nursing practice. Reflective journals have been identified within the Critical Reflective Practice Model (van Aswegen, 1998) as a strategy to enable students to do this. These journals are in a sense, a portfolio of their experiences. The manner in which the strategy was used in the research project is highlighted in Chapter Six.

3.14.1 Purpose of journal writing

Kerka (1996) indicates that journaling is not new to the field of health care as a means of developing reflective practice. She cites Fitzgerald and Weidner (1995:7-8) who suggest that

journals are “an intentional pause in their often technologically orientated studies” and are a means of allowing students to examine and clarify their values on patient care. Holt (1994), in Kerka, (1996:3), indicates examples of cognitive activities promoted by this type of journaling. They include “observation, speculation, doubt, questioning, self-awareness, problem stating, problem solving, emoting, and ideation.” Kerka (1996:2) also includes Paterson’s (1995) discussion of students’ reflective journals being a means of learning and practicing new ways of seeing issues and responding to situations. In this way, “they empower students to challenge the status quo and disagree with teachers, giving them a safe place in which to try out and defend their ideas.”

Kerka (1996) discusses journal or diary writing as a tool for adult learning and cites various sources, in her literature review, in support of this process. Journals and diaries (and these terms are frequently used synonymously) have long been well recognised as a means of self-expression. Their value in adult education is a means of ‘coming to voice’, of developing the potential for critical reflective thought, and ‘making meaning’.

Jordan (2000:462) via an extensive literature review, identifies the purposes of the diary and the corresponding author as follows:

- **A chronological record varying in detail and depth** (Burgess, 1981).
- **A means of detailing a time of life transition** for example, pregnancy (Verbrugge and Balbain, 1989), the diagnosis of a disease such as cancer (Mages and Mendelsohn 1979), or learning (Fulwiler and Young 1982).
- **A form of documentation in the research process**, similar to that of the reflexive diary (Lacey 1970, Hammersley 1990).

- **A journal for reflection** (Cameron and Mitchell 1993, Morgan, 1994).
- **A means of therapeutic management** (Craig, 1983).
- **A means of learning, understanding, recording and the development of academic literacy** (Carswell, 1988). This data provides a source of 'rich data', far more so than the normal instantaneous responses to questionnaires, ensuring that journals and diaries are dependable and reliable data collecting instruments (Roghamann & Haggerty 1972; Verbrugge, 1980; Richardson 1994).

Other purposes of journaling identified in the literature include the following:

- **A means of programme evaluation within academic programmes** (Jordan, 1998).
- **An appropriate vehicle for articulating thoughts and feelings.** It supports clearer thinking and improved learning (Hahnemann, 1986).
- **A means of providing evidence of the link between theory and practice** (Hahnemann, 1986). "This allows a personal emphasis in the selection of cases and feedback designed to develop scholarship by individualizing instruction in the material most relevant to each student's workplace" (Fulwiler, 1987; Carswell and Jordan, 1997). Abegglen and Conger (1997:452-458)

“ used journaling as a tool for critical thinking in a community-health nursing course. They had to change their criteria so that students would reflect and apply community-health nursing concepts and principles to practice. For them, journaling is not just a mere retelling of the experience. At the end of the quarter

they had the students give a self-assessment after they reread their journals.

The students discovered for themselves how much learning and thinking had taken place”.

- **A vehicle for developing themes or situations.** Case studies as course assignments may be effective strategies for learning and applying classroom theory, but they carry inherent dangers. The pedagogical interpretation of any case study may inadvertently reify patients into units of assessment or cases (Hunter, 1991; Jordan, 1997). Although the aim is to modify practice, the use of case studies for assignments might modify practice in an overly selective manner, at the expense of clinical needs unrelated to the course. By combining a detailed account of practice with the students’ reflections, this allows these important issues to emerge.
- **A reader-response journal or literature log.** Perham, (1992) in Kerka (1996) describes a ‘reader response journal’ or ‘literature log’. In this type of journal, which can be used at all levels of adult education, the writers review or discuss the literature in their own voice, placing themselves in relation to the text and discovering what it means to themselves. In time, the journal forms a primary source of information and self-reflection. These entries can then be shared with their fellow students and be used as a basis for discussion. In this way, the journal becomes a means of collecting information for self-analysis and reflection.
- **A means of promoting metacognitive development.** Van Horn (2000) describes her own experience of the use of journals:

“Self-reports can be a rich source of information about students' metacognitive reflection as well as their interpretations, evaluations, and analysis. Student journals structured around questions that call for reasons as well as opinions and explanation as well as description can provide qualitative self-report data. . . They (journals) invite students to engage in some metacognitive reflection about their own thinking and provide some evidence of both their critical thinking skills, and their habits of mind. (pp. 50, 51).”

The metacognitive development is supported by Van Horn's (2000) reference to Degazon and Lunney (1995). This development occurs as part of the reflections on the thought processes ensue. The writing process forms a sounding board for the writer, who is then able to undertake a form of self-analysis and adaptation. “Thus, much of what occurs in practice remains unspoken and unheard. Journals are a means through which nurses can speak and listen to the voice of practice” (Holmes, 1997:491). The writing and the interchange of ideas with others then allows for an increased pool of ideas for alternative thought. Also, writing soon after an event occurs facilitates accuracy in recognising, interpreting and assessing processes that occur in relation to the situation.

- **A means of professional conversation.** McAlpine, (1992:23) notes that the value of the journal is not that it is a personal private document, but that it provides a means of professional conversation between the writer and the trainer (or in my students' case, the educator who critiques). This, she says, allows opportunities for the student to raise issues, questions or concerns about their experiences and through dialogue, the educator is able to help in the integration of learning and frame “mechanisms for deriving meaning from the practical experience.” She sees the relationship between the staff member and

student as that of mentoring whereby the mentor elucidates the vision and provides challenge and support to the student. The vision enables the mentor and student to see where the student is going and can be provided in the form of modelling or demonstrating new ways of thinking. The challenge

“represents the ability to create cognitive dissonance in the learner to push the learner to greater knowledge and awareness. Examples would be engaging in discussion on outcomes of tasks and how they can be generalized to other settings pushing the learner to contextual thinking to seeing the ‘real’ as only portion of the possible, and setting high standards” (McAlpine, 1992:23).

The support would be in the form of continuing positive reinforcement, psychologically reaffirming the learner’s self-worth. This would be exemplified through active listening, positing constructive expectations and providing frameworks within which to function.

- **A means of engaging the second-language older student.** Of particular relevance to this study is the use of journals for older, English as a second language, students. According to Grennan (1989) in Kerka (1996:3), journals allow the second-language and older, re-entry students to approach writing in a less formal, non-threatening manner and to write in a style that is more reflective of the way they normally speak, and perhaps wouldn’t speak in class. She also cites Shneider (1994) who describes the writing in journals as being very close to natural speech and that in this way, it can flow uninhibited.
- **A medium for more fearful students.** Van Horn (2000) cites Seschachari (1994) who notes that journals enable students to overcome a fear of writing; think more critically;

write more easily and fluidly and thus, lift the level of their written thoughts which should ultimately impact on their grades.

3.14.2 Structuring of journals for learner application

The structuring of the journals can vary depending on the objectives of the course and the degree to which students are self-directed. Journals can take the form of personal journals where the individual writes to and for the self. Class journals and co-operative journals are journals whereby students as a group, share ideas with each other and the facilitator. Kerka (1996) cites examples of the range of learner applications and levels from Schatzberg-Smith (1989) and Clarke (1994). These include study processes and attitudes towards learning; dialogue between student and lecturer, whereby they can receive support and direction; insight and feedback as well as learning “to connect the abstract and the concrete; and develop metacognitive strategies” according to Kerka (1996:2).

Other applications include communal discourse through group dialogue on the web furthering the aims of experiential learning. Clayton et al. (2000) used the research diary in maternity care in part, as a series of interviews, during the period of their study. This took the form of a semi-structured diary. The value of this enabled detailed accounts of nominated experiences i.e. each episode of care soon after the event, thereby limiting distortion when recalling events in retrospect.

3.14.3 Structuring of journaling process

McAlpine (1992) suggests that journal writing allows both systematic and intentional expression of thoughts and impressions about the world of professional practice. Students will read, write and

reread what they have written, thereby allowing them to reflect upon their practice and arrive at a better understanding of how their thoughts and behaviour can be integrated into coherent practice.

3.14.3.1 Trust relationship between writer and reader

Patterson (1995) indicates that a trusting relationship between writer and reader be established and that there should be specific guidelines structuring the format of journals for students. This is highlighted in Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.6.2 and 7.2.6.3.

3.14.3.2 Privacy and relationships

Privacy and the learner-teacher relationship is another issue identified by Jenkinson (1994), Paterson, (1995), Kerka (1996) and van Aswegen (2002). This problem relates to potential power imbalances between teacher and learner, both actual and perceived and is highlighted in Chapter Four, Section 4.6.3.

3.14.3.3 Pointers on journal writing

Practical pointers on journal writing provided by McAlpine, (1992:24), in addition to those which are implemented and discussed in Chapter Seven, Section 7.1.3 and 7.1.4, are as follows

- Students should be given an explanation on how journaling helps with professional development
- Writing should be free-flowing and should include descriptive, reflective and cathartic modes
- Writing should be as if to a friend or peer
- Problems, frustrations, 'highs' and 'lows' should be expressed

- Writing should be spontaneous, written as soon after the event as possible
- Writing should not be reworked or rewritten
- Write in any format but should be double spaced and legible
- Write on loose leaf page so that it can be inserted into binder kept by the lecturer (and so writing can be continuous)
- Preferably no mark for the journal but forms part of the course requirement
- Opportunities should be taken to raise questions or issues not dealt with elsewhere on the course and students should feel free to respond to comments
- Students should re-read their journals at various stages throughout the process to provide a renewed awareness of what has been learned or experienced
- If students are not sure how to start, provide them with a list of questions
- Respondent (critiquer) should respond in different colour pen (not red, because of connotations) to that the communication is prominent.

McAlpine (1992) notes that through journaling, the student is able to retain substantial control over the process, format and content of the communication and also have private access to the lecturer (reader).

3.14.4 Sequencing of approach to journaling

3.14.4.1 Stages of entries

Kerka (1996:3) identified a study by Surbeck, Han and Mayer (1991), that categorised journal entries by student teachers into three stages: reaction/ response, elaboration and contemplation. They noted, however, that few entries reached the last reflective phase. (This factor proves quite

significant in the findings that will be addressed in Chapter Eleven). From these findings, Kerka (1996) suggests that in order for journaling to be successful, the key lies in “proficiency in reflection.”

3.14.4.2 Types of entries

Kerka (1996:2) expounds on a study undertaken by Clarke (1994) on gerontology students to describe some of the types of entries observed, three of which are observed in the students' diaries:

- observational notes, mainly descriptive in nature;
- theoretical notes analysing their experiences; and
- “methodological notes..... on which to post metacognitive reminders about the learning process”.

3.14.4.3 Categories of writing modes for professional practice – descriptive, cathartic and reflective

McAlpine (1992) describes the writing of professional practice as taking three forms: descriptive writing, cathartic writing and reflective writing

- Descriptive writing is the individual's perception of how events transpired.
- Cathartic writing is the reliving of these events in terms of personal feelings or emotions or the associated feelings in relation to the events.
- Reflective writing is the ability to look back or look within in order to analyze and understand the effect of the events on professional practice. (I would imagine that this also applies to personal life).

It is helpful to identify categories of writing modes because obviously the mode used will indicate the intent of the student and the resultant effect. If I think on the students' entries, frequently the writing will include something of each of these three modes, with one mode predominating. The descriptive mode usually forms the basis, from which other modes emerge.

3.14.5 Limitations of journal writing

While journaling is a powerful tool supporting critical, reflective thinking, it cannot be accepted unconditionally for all students and all circumstances.

3.14.5.1 Not effective for all students

It is important to note that although journals can be an effective learning tool, they are not effective for all people. In fact, Wellard and Bethune (1996) conducted a study whereby units in a graduate diploma course in nursing in Australia were taught using reflective journaling in an effort to correlate theory and practice. This was done over a 2-year period and both researchers were discouraged by their findings.

3.14.5.2 Limitation of time and opportunity as well as difficulty in writing reflectively

They also found that the course was intense and therefore creating time and opportunity for reflection and value clarification was problematic. They found that students brought "a rich and strongly embedded practice view coupled with a passive resistance to engaging in the process of exploring their nursing practice" (Wellard and Bethune, 1996:3). Additionally, they found that the students were reluctant to challenge and question the basis of their knowledge to a level whereby reflection would give their practice meaning and significance in terms of the "social construction of their 'lived experiences' as practitioners" (Wellard and Bethune 1996:3).

They found that students were able to voice their concern and anger over the direction taken in their nursing institution, but when challenged, would not engage in discussion. Out of their own reflections on their own experiences and readings based on critical theory and post-structuralism, the researchers identified that in order for students to come to terms with re-evaluating and replacing their current 'world-view', they would need to be given space to undertake this process. (The theme of 'space' was identified earlier in Section 3.4.4 and 3.9). They also noted "the context of the practice environment needs to be explored, not only in student writing but in discussion. Idealised notions of nursing can only be deconstructed where students are supported in confronting the political reality of their practice world" (Wellard and Bethune, 1996:8).

Kerka (1996:3) cites the following studies where reflective journaling was not successful:

3.14.5.3 Inappropriate guidance

Holt (1994) in Kerka (1996) found that 6 of 10 adult educators, who kept diaries, found them unhelpful and that they saw the diaries more as a means of keeping records than as a tool for learning. Consequently, he believed that the guided questions given the students were ineffective, in that either they did not motivate the students, or students did not know how to write reflectively. Other problems identified in Kerka's literature review related to open-ended assignments without clear guidelines. (Somner, 1989; Grennan, 1989; Miller et al.1994). Students found it very difficult to know what to write about.

3.14.5.4 Student resistance

Fitzgerald and Weidner (1995), Miller et al. (1994) and Paterson, (1995) found that the students wrote more descriptively than analytically; some were resistant to writing as they found this to be “*busy work*”, or, that after the initial enthusiasm, energy to write, diminished

3.14.5.5 Intensive engagement required by critiquer

Diaries are expensive and difficult to analyze or work with administratively, especially if the contents comprise free flowing text (Carswell, 1988). I can certainly vouch for the last factor in my personal involvement as a researcher and educator, having worked with diaries for almost six years. However, the results vindicate the usage of the free flowing format.

3.15 PORTFOLIOS

Panitz (2000) describes portfolios as collections of student's work demonstrating the effort and achievement of that work. It allows both readers and the writers to reflect upon the body of work. As a product, a portfolio is a collection of student work that exhibits the writer's efforts and achievements. As a process, portfolio writing permits both writers and readers to reflect on the writer's body of work. This cumulative collection and collation of work, if properly done, in a comprehensive, integrated, sequential manner allows for a holistic viewing and understanding of the work, unlike the usual piecemeal slices. Because the work is comprehensive, the assessment is more likely to be based upon a realistic perception of the work entailed. Additionally, it also provides for an understanding of the effort involved and is a means of integrating learning. It should and also does link to specific outcomes and assessment criteria. (Haggis, 2003:92) agrees and extends the concept further by citing Johnston (2001:83) “The design of assessment instruments

that measure how students understand rather than how well they can reproduce knowledge *will* encourage a deep approach to learning”.

Panitz (2000) notes that there are two types of portfolios: formative or summative, or a combination of the two. Formative portfolios deal with work in progress and therefore need to be responded to at progressive stages. The value of this approach is that they permit students to discuss and test their ideas without being penalized. Summative portfolios are summaries or products. Panitz (2000) suggests that for successful portfolio organisation, the purpose of the project must be seen within the broader course objectives. Consideration of the audience for the portfolio, the type of portfolio (summative or formative), the contents and the criteria for evaluation of the portfolio in terms of course outcomes need to be made. Students need to be made aware of the criteria for success and the methods of evaluation at the initial stages. Checkpoints need to be built into the structure of the portfolio and the project needs to be integrated within the course activities.

3.16 MENTORING

3.16.1 Rationale for mentoring as a learning strategy

According to East (1995), if nursing is to claim the title of profession, then the novice nurse must be prepared for a role that incorporates and encourages autonomy. Mentoring programmes need to encompass not only the development of competent clinical nurses, but also the development of an individual's ability to become self-directing and thoughtful – the reflective practitioner. Mentoring programmes offer opportunities, founded on the concepts of adult learning, to enable newer entrants to the specified field of nursing, to make a smoother transition from novice to knowledgeable practitioner.

Barnard (2002) suggests that they also help the mentee navigate the political landscape of the work environment by making introductions to key personnel and opening previously closed doors to and within the system. I think that this is particularly valuable in nursing, which is generally a highly structured, hierarchical profession with specific norms and arrangements for operating within the culture of that profession. I also believe that the informal association made outside of the hierarchical context is more conducive to developing the relationship and Zey (1984,) in Sarnier (2000) supports this by suggesting that the process is likely to be high jacked in a rigid hierarchical organisation because of the need to conform to the hidden norms implicit in the culture of the hierarchy, such as those established mores, habits and systems that are unsupportive of the concept of mentoring.

3.16.2 Mentoring as a bridging process

East (1995) believes that mentoring is a bridging process between theory and practice which goes beyond induction and training to continuing professional development for practitioners and managers. The stronger the bridge, the more confident the mentoring pair and the more frequent the journeys across the bridge, backwards and forwards, from not knowing to knowing, from not understanding to understanding, in an ongoing process until eventually theory becomes integrated into practice. The purpose of this process is to enable the mentee to become an autonomous professional who is both self-reflective and self-directing.

3.16.3 The role of the mentor

A mentor is a trusted and friendly advisor or guide, especially of someone new to a particular role. In classical terms, the mentor becomes involved in a powerful interpersonal relationship with a less

experienced, normally younger person. Darwin (2000:197) however suggests that this is a narrow, functionalist perspective and should not apply to this study's situation where a more "critical or Radical humanist" perspective is valued, as it is one that prevents unequal and sometimes exploitative power relationships.

In the case of many of the Management IV students, the mentees were less experienced in the specific specialty, but were not necessarily younger, and certainly not inexperienced in nursing per se and so this means that career-age rather than chronological age becomes more relevant in this context (Darwin, 2000). The mentor usually represents knowledge, reflection, insight, understanding good advice, determination and planning - qualities which cannot easily be mastered alone. Using the metaphor of a journey, the mentor acts as a travelling companion who is more of a trusted guide than a tour director.

3.16.4. Successful mentoring relationship

The mentor protects, urges forward, explains mysteries, points the way, leaves the mentee alone when necessary, translates codes, clears obstacles and encourages – always encourages – helping the mentee find the courage within herself to go on. This is a relationship between two people and what distinguishes fine mentors is their ability to care, suggests East (1995). The mentor engenders trust, issues challenges, offers vision, and alternatively supports and challenges the mentee. Allen (2002:440) identifies three key aspects in a successful mentoring relationship: mutual respect and trust between mentor and mentee; a facilitative environment of "understanding, empathy, and cooperation; and mutual sharing of information through good communication skills." Beyene, Anglin, Sanchez and Ballou (2002) also stress the importance of this relationship and their study underpins my interest in and focus on the mentor-mentee relationship where I was

concerned with the notion of establishing what Darwin (2000:2007) identifies as the “horizontal relationship” where a climate of risk-taking and dialogue is established to create new knowledge so that mentoring becomes

“a collaborative, dynamic, and creative partnership of coequals, founded on openness, vulnerability, and the ability of both parties to take risks with one another beyond their professional roles. Relationships become opportunities for dialogue, and the *expert* and *learner* become arbitrary delineations...(so that) the relationship becomes adult-like and interdependent. The concept of colearning suggests that individuals transcend roles (or create different roles) and interact as colleagues” (Darwin, 2000:2007).

3.16.5 The role of the mentee

This would assume that the mentee has an important role to play in this relationship and Greene and Peutzer (2002) believe that it is the mentees’ responsibility to be open to receiving help; to be open to learning and caring; to be committed to their profession, inculcate a desire for competence and demonstrate initiative and a strong sense of self. The mentees also need to understand their health service and the barriers to learning within their work context. Barnard (2002) clarifies their organisational role in this relationship as one where they are responsible for their own development, where they set their own agendas and organise the meetings with their mentors. They are also required to have a personal plan, ask for honest feedback and be committed to the relationship.

3.16.6 ‘Letting go’

The mentor eventually needs to ‘let go’ of the mentee and good mentors ensure that their mentees can recognise that authority has its uses but is limited and that the task of becoming independent

involves separation from the authoritative concept and taking on one's own authority. Grey and Smith (2000) identify the value of mentoring, but also focus on the very natural gradual distancing which occurs over the process of time and the learning which results in changes in the relationship. Traditional patterns of mentoring recognise the separation phase, but this is connected to the original concept of mentoring of young men by older, more experienced men and does not take into account the type of relationships engaged in by women. Darwin (2000:2006) cites Gilligan's 1982 research which "suggests a fusion of identity and intimacy for women, rather than identity preceding intimacy. Developmental theory has established men's experience and competence as a baseline against which everyone's development is judged, often to the detriment or misreading of women..." So, I do not see separation as necessarily meaning a physical and emotional distancing, but rather a reshaping and readapting to a new, perhaps more intimate friendship.

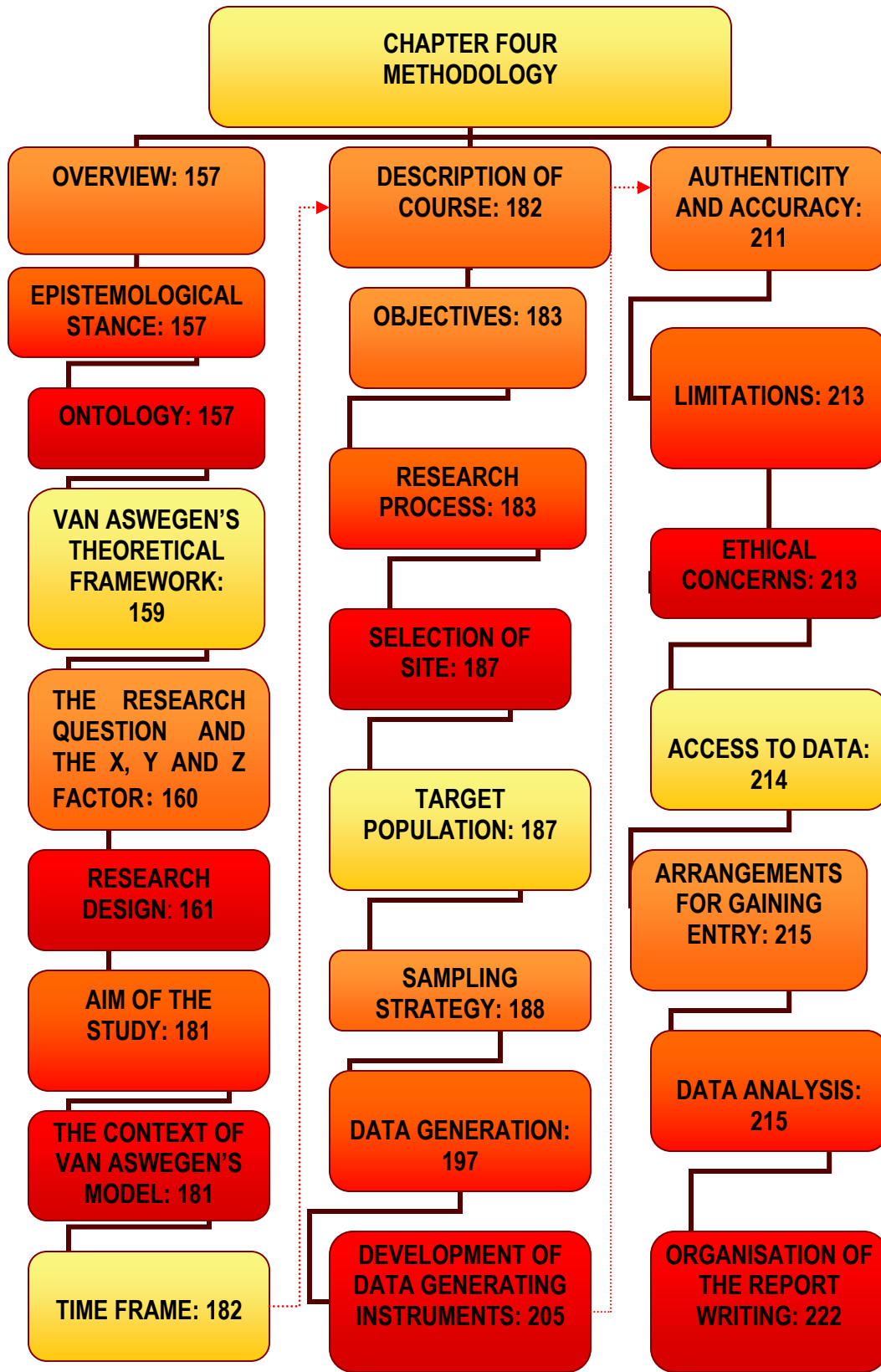
True mentoring of a classical nature is the holistic support for the individual in the development of a new and complex professional role.

3.17 CONCLUSION

This literature review focuses on key concepts within the study, but because the study is located in teaching and learning, a very large topic, it does not purport to cover the range and depth of the processes brought to bear on my teaching practice or learning range within the course of Nursing Management IV. Instead, I have tried to develop an argument for my choice of practice by framing the study with literature pertaining to concepts emanating from critical reflective learning and practice.

The chapter starts with an overview of theories of learning guiding this practice and then discusses the relating concepts of self-directed learning, adult education and learner-centred education. The context of work-based learning and the approaches of problem-based learning and constructivism are problematised and contextualised, supporting the notion of the theory-practice amalgam. The concept of the educator is then debated, which naturally leads on to the learning context and the student-educator relationship supportive of critical reflective practice. The supportive role of the mentor is discussed and the central premises underlying the study, critical reflective thinking and learning, are scrutinised. The next sections deal with feedback, academic literacies and cultural context and reflective journal writing. The chapter concludes with a brief explanation of portfolios.

As noted, this is not a comprehensive review of the literature, and some of the concepts in this chapter and other new concepts relevant to the study, but specific to the findings, are dealt with in later sections where it seemed more appropriate to place them within the immediacy of the different 'cases'.



CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter deals with the theoretical underpinning of the study, which in turn determined the research design and methods. The theoretical framework reflects my philosophy of knowledge and my view of reality, and the importance I attach to both. The choices I have made methodologically speaking are determined by my positioning within this research study. I begin the chapter with my worldview and then provide an overview of the two predominant research genres influencing the methodology, the Interpretive and the Critical genre. The methodological frameworks used in this study are not discrete. Because there are a number of philosophical ideas and methods underpinning the study, which are intertwined with the multiple methods for generating and analyzing the data, there is no one specific paradigm that underscores this research study. Given my philosophy, I constructed a design which has been largely classified as participatory action research, but which was also a case study, although it draws on a number of research traditions. I then go on to describe the case study method within which the research was developed and analysed, and the participatory action research paradigm used to frame my study. From there, I then move on to a detailed discussion of the multiple methods of data generation and analysis used in Chapters Five to Eight.

4.2 EPISTEMOLOGICAL STANCE

The research genre and methods used in this study are informed by the epistemology that influences my thinking. The philosophical reasoning about knowledge and the grounds for drawing on the knowledge informing this study is derived from multiple assumptions, which are discussed during the various stages of the thesis, and which fall within the Interpretivist and Critical Science

genre. Firstly, I do not believe that the production of knowledge or what constitutes knowledge is inviolable. There is information that constitutes knowledge but how this information is understood, interpreted or used is frequently mutable and should, in my view, be open to question. Context becomes paramount, but because it is ambiguous, knowledge is constructed on the process of understanding, or 'negotiated meaning,' if you will, and is aligned with the interpretive perspective (Connole, 1998). We construct our own realities in a holistic way and therefore these realities are not one-dimensional but also change according to time and condition. I therefore subscribe to a non-reductionist perspective. My knowledge interest is to develop a deeper understanding of the research participants and the situation, based on the premise that the better I understand the situation, the more informed are my choices. It is a subjective, empathetic encounter (Janse van Rensburg, 2001). From the critical perspective, another element is added – the recognition that the possibility for understanding human action can be distorted (Connole, 1998). Those who claim to 'own' knowledge or who propound to be the only experts, particularly if their use of this ownership is oppressive, are critiqued and challenged. Knowledge itself, then becomes a form of liberation for those oppressed. Therefore, I subscribe to the perspective that knowledge is closely linked with power, but that in the pursuit of this, careful attention must be paid to not imposing self-interests in the name of emancipation. In this sense, knowledge is incomplete, transitory and is in process. My knowledge interest, as informed by the critical science tradition, is to bring about change through sharing and critiquing accepted knowledge so that it becomes meaningful and useful.

4.3 ONTOLOGY

I recognise that the reality I have is just one of many possible realities and that these realities are fluid, shifting according to circumstances and positioning. I do not believe that reality can be clearly resolved through generating more data or be reduced to and by technical-rational processes,

particularly when it comes to dealing with dynamic entities, such as human action. Communication can easily be distorted and understanding can therefore be problematic (Connole, 1998). Realities are subjective, as people, according to Hegel, see the world as it appears to them and not as it actually 'is' (Janse van Rensburg, 2001).

In terms of this research, my philosophical understanding of reality does not claim that power resides in the 'system' or that all individuals are disenfranchised. In other words, I reject the concept of determinism. On the contrary: I believe that individual change can come about when individuals become aware of the world around them and make a conscious decision to change the way that they respond to the environment. This does not mean that I am unaware of the powerful influence and ideological impact of the socio-political environment or the fact that there are limits to the changes individuals can bring about. Nonetheless, there are choices to be made which can only come about through understanding and tapping in on personal courage. Clearly, in this view, the research process, by promoting reflection and action, cannot be value-free.

4.4 VAN ASWEGEN'S THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In addition to the stances taken above, a major influence on this study has been van Aswegen's Model of Critical Reflective Practice (1998), as described in Chapter Two. Therefore I am also using this framework which has guided the study. Her framework gave me an additional educational (and nursing) theoretical perspective and is based on the assumption that nurses have the inherent potential to change from a mechanistic approach to nursing to critical reflective practice. The purpose of the model is to support the heightened development of self-insight to enable nurses to become transformative nurse practitioners, who can respond meaningfully and appropriately to the demands of the health service, and who in turn can support others to become

critical reflective nurse practitioners. The means to experiential learning, she notes, is critical reflective practice and transformatory learning, where nurses are empowered by making that which is implicit, explicit in the form of theoretical propositions. To enable learners to become self-sufficient, the idea is to be able to help them to stand back, as it were, from their own beliefs and values, in order to develop new perceptions and entertain different perspectives (van Aswegen, 1998). These views accord with the epistemological stance taken in this study.

4.5 THE RESEARCH QUESTION AND THE X, Y AND Z FACTOR THEORY

In order to clarify the nature of the enquiry, I have tried to simplify what I was trying to achieve in and through the study. The research process started with the research question:

Does the implementation of van Aswegen's (1998) model within a programme of nursing, enhance nursing students' critical thinking and reflective practice?

In considering the research question, I had to consider whether the implementation of **X** (the strategy made up of the techniques used to encourage critical thinking and reflective practice) would result in **Y** (critical reflective thought) by individuals in a specific, small setting with respect to what they are learning in order to manage a health care unit. **Z** (The question) was: how would I know that they were thinking critically and that **X** was working? I recognised that it could not be measured in the 'true' sense of observing empirical facts. As a researcher, I cannot objectively observe the reasons logically to decide if they are being critical thinkers, and therefore positive methodologies were inappropriate. My knowledge, in terms of the research question, came from what each individual experienced, understood and thought about **X**. Each individual constructed their own meaning regarding **X**.

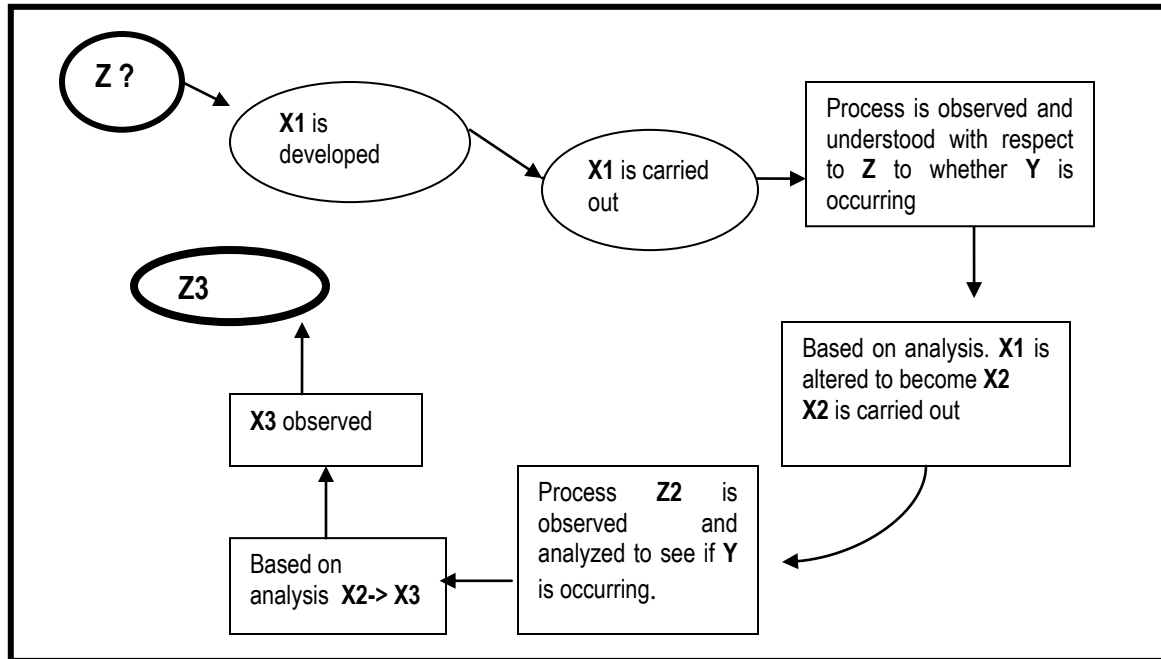


Figure 4.1: X, Y and Z factor theory to ascertain whether van Aswegen's model enhances critical reflective thinking within the specified case study

4.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study has used multiple methods in order to address the research question, the aim and the objectives. While it is tempting to 'situate' the research within a specific orientation, the truth of the matter is that there are overlaps on the stereotyped research orientation continuum. Because of this, this study has drawn on various research traditions in order to illuminate the different elements of the research study and the following describes how I see these traditions fitting in with my study.

4.6.1 Interpretivist tradition

The interpretivist tradition forms part of the symbolic sciences, where the design reflects a focus on contextual meaning-making (Janse van Rensburg, 2001) and where inquiry attempts to understand

the issues of human complexity by examining the 'lived' experiences of individuals and where reality is perceived as a composite of truths.

This study has selected elements of the interpretive tradition of research where interpretive understanding of the actions of the participants is key to the research. This tradition is based on Hegel's view that humans can only understand the world as it appears to them and not as it 'really is'. Therefore, interpretivist researchers are interested in the meaning people make of phenomena and see people as agents who take meaningful, reflective actions with these meanings (rather than their actual behaviours) being worth researching. Therefore, symbolic scientists usually subscribe to the Hegelian view that meaning is constructed by individuals and groups in interaction with each other and through language, the latter giving a range of meaning options. It is from this point that differences between symbolic scientists start to develop (Janse van Rensburg, 2001). The most important aspect of this interpretation is the 'subjective meaning' attributed to behaviour. I have transcribed and described what the participants in the study have said or written, but without context, or interpretation, they remain merely descriptions or words. This interpretation is subjective and relies on my understanding of the meaning of nursing and the health context in South Africa.

It is against this background that I have tried to draw out and elucidate the meanings of these concepts in terms of the students' own realities. As evidence of these realities, I have used the participants' own words and descriptions as a reference to their own intentions, motives and actions. In this design, I have used case studies (amongst other methods) through in-depth interpretation of journals and interviews to find the rich detail which would provide the evidence for the contextual meaning-making, where the values and subjectivity are integral to the process. I was interested in the way the nurses made meaning of their lives, not just that they *made* meaning or

what meaning they made. Nonetheless, I am constantly aware that the realities presented are only partial and are likely to be flawed, because these are human beings and reality is dynamic.

I am very conscious of the criticisms that might be levelled at the subjective nature and ‘value-laden position’ of myself as interpreter (Janse van Rensburg, 2001:18) which is why I found it necessary to locate my interpretations within my experience and the literature, triangulate data from different sources and use the different techniques, such as member checks, peer review and critical readers to help confirm my understanding of the phenomena and ensure trustworthiness. This study employed both deductive and inductive reasoning. The former involved exploring aspects of the model developed by van Aswegen (1998) while the latter involved data generation within a new context. The findings generated within this context were used to further develop the constructs found in van Aswegen’s (1998) model. It is important to note that the model was applied in a real situation (a ‘naturalistic’ setting) and was implemented within a specific educational context. It was in the minutiae of the interrelationships and guided reflections resulting from the implementation of the model that inductive reasoning took place. The research was undertaken to discover abstract concepts and ideas about the relationships between the concepts. It can be used at “*descriptive and theoretical or process levels*” (Cheniz and Swanson, 1986:8). This research is descriptive but it also supports the interpretation of the process of critical reflective practice within a course over a specific period in time, as well as in the generation of theoretical constructs from the data.

4.6.2 The inquiry as a case study

A case study is abstractly defined by Miles and Huberman (1994:25) as “a phenomenon of some sort occurring within a bonded context”. Yin (1999) clarifies further and indicates that the context is

within a real life setting, where often the boundaries between the context and the phenomenon are not clearly defined. Additionally, because the context and the phenomenon are dynamic entities, they are likely to change over a period of time, adding to the complexity of the mix. Yin further notes that it is likely, as a result of this complexity, to use multiple types of data generation, including both quantitative and qualitative data, as a means of analyzing and understanding the 'case'. Zucker (2001) recognises that there are different types of case studies, one of which can be identified by its' specific purpose, such as a case study of a teaching programme. A protocol for approaching the research process is recommended which should include not only the research instrument, but also the general rules and procedures, and should be in place before the data generation phase (Tellis, 1997).

The value of case studies is that they attempt to understand the cultural systems of action in a holistic way. These "systems of action" are the interrelated activities of the participants under study, and suggests Tellis (1997), it is these "systems of action" which are most frequently the unit of analysis in the case study. Therefore, analysis takes on multi-perspective dimensions, so that analysis is not just of the participants but also of the groups of participants and the interactions between them (Tellis, 1997). Triangulation therefore becomes a factor, where triangulation "can occur with data, investigators, theories, and even methodologies" (Tellis, 1997).

This is a case study comprising a series of smaller case studies, all within the same context. It is a study of the planning, implementation and integration of van Aswegen's model of critical reflective practice within a subject-specific context, the Nursing Management IV course in the Department of Post-Graduate Nursing Studies at DIT. It forms a collection and presentation of 'rich' information about different groups and selected participants within the course, and includes accounts of the

different participants. Through the case study of the management course incorporating van Aswegen's model, I have looked intensively at individuals and small participant pools, interpreting the derived data and drawing conclusions only about the specified participants or groups and only in this specific context. According to Zucker (2001) the intention of the case study is to describe as accurately and as fully as possible, the description of the case. My intention was not to focus on the discovery of a universal, generalizable truth, nor to typically look for cause-effect relationships; instead, the emphasis was placed on exploration and description, for the purpose of adapting or refining the model and deriving further theoretical constructs. Yin (1999) supports this intention by noting that generalization of findings from a case study should be seen in the light of generalizing not to populations, but to theory.

This study further qualifies as a case study in that it takes place in a naturalistic setting which has allowed me a more holistic interpretation of the implementation of the model, but where, as a researcher, I have limited control of the outcome. According to Yin (1994) in Zucker, (2001) the case study design should comprise 5 elements: "the research question(s), its propositions, its unit(s) of analysis, a determination of how the data are linked to the propositions, and criteria to interpret the findings", all of which are complied with in my research. This case study is framed within a participatory action research process as the research takes place over a period of two-and-half years, using the stages of the process to adapt and refine the implementation of the model while working with the data through an iterative process. The qualitative methodological frameworks used in this study are not discrete. Because there are a number of philosophical ideas and methods underpinning the study, which are intertwined with the multiple methods for generating and analyzing the data, there is no one specific qualitative paradigm that underscores this research study. Instead, because it is a complex, fluid case study working with data that span across

frameworks, it can be likened, suggests Janse van Rensburg (2001:11) to “different biomes or ecosystems in the landscape”.

4.6.3 Critical tradition

Critical theorists have a ‘critical’ outlook on society. Their view is coloured by a perception that there are inequalities in society and that research is aimed at contributing to changes that will enable shifts in these dynamics. Therefore, the research process is value-laden (Janse van Rensburg, 2001) because there is conscious intent predetermining the approach. Janse van Rensburg (2001:24) notes that these types of researchers “have been called ‘transformative intellectuals’”, a term that resonates with van Aswegen’s model of critical reflective practice. Research has a corrective action (Miles and Huberman, 1994) rather than the more distancing stance taken by other theorists who “wait for the technical application of the findings by some experts” (Janse van Rensburg, 2001:24).

Knowledge, suggests Connole (1998:20) in terms of the poststructuralist/deconstructionist perspective, and as postulated by Foucault and other critical theorists, is closely connected to power. “The concern, however, is to resist speaking for others, imposing our interests on theirs, in the quest for emancipation. Knowledge must be regarded as local, partial, discontinuous and constantly in process...” The locus of the research is the lived experiences and social relations of the post-basic nursing students within the Nursing Management IV course. It is informed by Gestalt psychology and a phenomenological methodology used in studying people in their entirety and in context, and for this reason, the case study is the method of choice. One of the features of the post-structuralist/ deconstructivist perspective is the concept of text and the meaning therein. The

students' reflective journals form an important source of data, and therefore within this text and this perspective, are the foci of deconstruction. I agree with Connole (1998:21) that

“our stable and historically grounded sense of self is regarded as illusory. Instead we are “constructed” by a host of often contradictory positions arising from our class, race, gender, age, ethnicity and sexual preference (to name but a few), the culture(s) within which we move, the social institutions which impact upon us in historical context – all mediated through language, the impact of power relations and the unconscious. We shift from one identity to another in ways which are neither coherent nor consistent.”

The key concept of *empowerment* is threaded throughout the thesis, and forms the key influence for my methodological decisions. Critical social theory draws on the works of Paolo Freire and Habermas and is forged by Marxist and Hegelian philosophy. The essential tenets of empowerment focus on the emancipation of the underprivileged or the oppressed. Lack of power is associated with negative, authoritarian, patriarchal systems of power, with the ability to control people's behaviour, lives and economic resources.

The nursing students I work with are strongly affected by their environment and the constraints of the nursing culture. Nursing, historically, is a rigidly structured profession that carries an entire system of norms and values tied up within the concept of an ethical code of practice and the etiquette of nursing. I see and hear through the nurses' narratives, how their roles are tacitly defined within bureaucratically organized hierarchies which guide and control their practice through multiple policies and procedures.

The concept of power is closely linked with status and is rooted in the notion that certain groups, in this case, nurses, are in a subordinate position (Kuokkanen and Leino-Kilpi, 2000). This subordinate position is in relation to their qualifications, experience, gender and profession. For example, the lower down the rank and the fewer the qualifications, the less one is expected to voice opinions and dissent. This perception of the nurses' value in society or lack thereof, I believe, is reflected in their poor salaries, their diminished status within society and their acknowledged dissatisfaction with their lack of support from the 'system'. Nurses constitute the majority of health care workers in the country, but their 'voices' are seldom heard or heeded within the echelons of the health care system. Their once communal voice has been dissipated by their joining of the multiple trade unions and associations, which represent more varied voices than those of only nurses. There is no doubt that nurses in South Africa are feeling frustrated and exhausted. There is a need to change the way that nurses feel about their work. There is a need to put 'care' back into nursing, but to do so; nurses need to feel cared for. In order to do this, nurses need to understand themselves and to see themselves as more than just pawns within a system, but as autonomous practitioners who have an acceptable level of control over their own practice.

I believe that if nurses can understand and appreciate their own humanity and can understand what the 'system' is and how it functions; they can start to challenge unhealthy practices, and not just passively be participants within dysfunctional elements of the system. Van Rensburg (2004:223) supports this notion, suggesting that critical theory doesn't just criticize inequitable power relationships, but tries to shift power to a more equitable stance. "Part of this paradigm is the reconstruction of our worlds. People can design their own worlds. They can engineer their futures through action and critical reflection." The value of critical theory is that it allows practitioners to address social issues as part of the research process.

While my research (and practice) is broadly aligned with the emancipatory and critical tradition, as outlined by Carr and Kemmis (1986) for example, where power is acknowledged and problematised, it has taken place in small, incremental stages over time. Awareness has awakened and developed with student engagement, resulting from my attempts to create a safe milieu where power can be reflected upon critically. This does not mean that as an educator, I consciously introduce what Ellsworth (1992:91) calls prescriptions of empowerment. These are key assumptions derived from critical literature, such as “‘empowerment’, ‘student voice’, ‘dialogue’ or even the term ‘critical’”. “ In a sense, she is suggesting that when we implement the ‘prescriptions’ in a recipe-like format, they can, she argues, have a counterproductive effect. By working through those who are attempting to empower, they can end up by become ‘repressive myths’ that in fact exacerbate domination of one by another resulting in her question “What diversity do we silence in the name of ‘liberatory’ pedagogy?”

At times in the learning process of critical reflective practice, it is not clear who occupies the term ‘student’ or ‘teacher’ in the process, as power is intentionally delimited through the introduction of the self-evaluation concept and the negotiated rules of engagement in the learning process whereby students’ narratives are acknowledged as their ‘truth’ guiding me, the facilitator, through their realities. Instead, the intention of van Aswegen’s critical reflective practice model is to use learning to empower nurses, but in a moral sense, highlighting growth, development and a growing sense of control over their own individual lives and actions whilst constantly interrogating the notion of power to prevent infringement on the rights of others.

Empowerment is a process of increasing learners’ access to independent thought and creating an environment to allow the empowered learner to experience the thrill and autonomy of the effects of

independent thought. This process promotes “intrinsic motivation” and involves “taking actions which affect impact, competence, meaningfulness and choice” (van Aswegen, 1998:404). Leyshon (2002:468) sounds a warning note and cautions against supporting the notion that autonomy per se will bring about social change, and instead, focuses on the moral principle of respect for autonomy, where the students’ choices “do not infringe upon the safety, liberty or autonomy of others”.

Van Aswegen (1998) suggests that empowerment takes place by promoting participation of the individual in their practice and their learning. She divides this process into two components: (1) a review or affirmation or redefinition of cultural values as part of a cultural change process and (2) a modification of paradigm, which, she suggests is where an institution changes the way in which it thinks or believes about itself or a change in how it operates. This movement, she believes, should result in a partnership between the organisation and the practitioner through the process of critical reflective practice, where the practitioner’s actions are freely chosen and should result in a dual commitment between the partners, but where the practitioners’ decisions and actions are “owned, and critiqued without any requirement to do so” (van Aswegen 1998:405).

This emancipatory learning is brought about by the educator creating space for students to engage in discourse and create their own meanings through personal experiences, with a view to transforming perspectives for better understanding (van Aswegen, 1998; Schrieber and Banister, 2002). This is coupled with my own struggle as educator, nurse, researcher and middle-class white South African woman trying to come to grips with understanding how my own identity (ies) surrounded by the multiple realities of the students with whom I work, within dimensions of shifting power relationships, affects my classroom practice. Foucault, too, supports the notion that power is

not static but moves fluidly, depending on situation and context (Janse van Rensburg, 2001:26). For me, this exploration of the nurses' discourses and how these manifest in their lives forms the basis for "foregrounding the power of the discourses to shape people's lives" (van Rensburg, 2004:23). This view firmly places my research within the critical science tradition as the emancipation of nurses, within the learning and teaching context, underscores this paradigm (Janse van Rensburg, 2001).

Within this research, I find myself employing elements from the critical tradition. As an educator, I have a particular interest in sharing the empowering process evoked through learning, and, through the medium of participatory action research, have attempted to bring about this change. Janse van Rensburg, (2001:24) identifies with Lather (1986) who "described critical research as a form of praxis, and the lines between research/education/development are often blurred in critical projects." Clare (2004) also notes the interaction between theory and practice, but adds people and social structures to the mix.

I have been most concerned about the potential dangers of this tradition, where it is possible to "entrench another set of values rather uncritically" (Janse van Rensburg, 2001:26) and where unequal power relationships can be perpetuated unequally. In mitigation, I have used the reflexive process extensively to try and at least understand the power constructs as a means of delimiting 'power' misuse. I am aware that that the reality I hold is but one of many, and the challenge for me is to make 'space' and allowance, or in many cases, support for other even dissonant realities.

The value of critical theory is that it accepts that individuals (i.e. the nursing students) operate within a social milieu that may in fact define or constrain their practice in ways that they, the nurse

practitioners, have limited control over. The critical paradigm, through action research, supports the theorizing of her intentions within the constraining context, and so allows her to understand the forces that shape and constrain her practice. This understanding then provides her options for alternative action. "The purpose of construing social life in this way then, is to assist people to develop a critical consciousness, which leads to emancipatory action" (Clare, 2004:127). Central constructs of this theory are power, culture, ideology and hegemony (Clare, 2004). I take heed of Leyshon's (2002:468) warning that power is not a rational commodity or 'thing' to simply be transferred or given by educators to students, so that they in turn, can use this to transform society. This concept of power is naïve, he suggests. Instead, power is "capillary and embedded in everyday practices and relationships" and is not limited to minorities, but as Foucault acknowledges, power is fluid and shifts between educator and students in their daily interactions. Following on from this notion, is the idea that if the educator works on the premise that by giving out "love, freedom and capacity", this implies, even if the educator is working with and not teaching to students, that students are material 'objects' that can be shaped. Within this notion, Leyshon (2002:468) suggests, lies the implicit belief that students need the 'expert' help of the educator, not just to become more knowledgeable and skilful in their chosen subject, but "'better' human beings", which, he says, can engender a new form of authoritarianism.

The culture of nursing is central to this study and incorporates all the associated elements of behaviour, rules and norms and institutional and material matter that comprise the system of nursing. Ideology is linked to the system of ideas and beliefs about nursing, which then legitimizes the way that nurses behave and which allows practitioners to view their world in specific ways. Hegemony refers to "ideological supremacy to the exclusion of other values, ideas and practices; conceptual-cultural domination" (Janse van Rensburg, 2001:26). It is this process of social control

whereby “an ideology of consent secures the participation of people in their subjection to the existing power relations” (Clare, 2004:134) to such an extent that it becomes legitimate in the eyes of the practitioner and becomes part of their commonly viewed world, i.e. ‘the system’. Critical theory allows nurses to critique this ideology, and through better understanding, this can promote transformative action (Clare, 2004).

4.6.4 The inquiry is also participatory action research

Primarily, this is a case study of the practical development and implementation of a model of critical reflective practice which has become embedded within a course within a programme. This context-specific case study is viewed within the qualitative research genre, through the action research paradigm, as it takes place over a two-and-a-half year period and incorporates the major elements of action research, namely: co-operation between researcher and practitioners; identifying answers to practical problems; changing practice; and developing theories and making the results known (Hatten, Knapp and Salonga, 1997).

4.6.4.1 Major elements of the action research paradigm

4.6.4.1.1 Co-operation: This co-operation or collaboration is between me, as researcher, educational practitioner and course facilitator, and the nurse practitioners (the learners). As a nurse and educator, I have a certain amount of insider knowledge, but the knowledge and experience base is not the same as that of the students whose learning I facilitated. The collaboration took place through the explanations to students and staff in terms of the rationale for the teaching and learning approaches, and, after negotiation, an undertaking from the students, and to a lesser extent, the teaching staff, to actively and willingly participate in the learning process, as well as in the research process which would be used to monitor the learning process.

4.6.4.1.2 Problem solving: The main problems were identified prior to the research process, for example, the challenges of engaging part-time adult, working students in a meaningful, sustainable manner in learning that would span the theory-practice divide, without the normal supports provided by continuous educational contact. The choice of model was mainly philosophical in design, which meant that the practical application in the teaching-learning environment required constant review, using a variety of data collecting methods to determine the arising problems or the effects of the resultant changes in practice.

4.6.4.1.3 Development of theory: The intention of developing and implementing van Aswegen's model of critical, reflective practice was to further develop or refine theoretical constructs for the practical application of this model. As a result of the participatory action research, I have been able to develop a reasoned argument for these constructs, which arose from interrogating the data from different perspectives.

4.6.4.1.4 Publicizing the research: I have tried to make known the research findings through discussions, publications and conferences. This is an ongoing process.

Waddsworth (1998) elucidates the value of participatory action research which allowed the students, staff and myself to be

- more aware of 'problematizing' practice by considering the 'who' and 'why' in the context
- more unequivocal about labelling the problem, and more aware of potential questions, to the extent of raising them, reflecting and focusing on addressing the questions

- more focused and organized in the planning and initiating of the study and careful in considering those who should be involved in it.
- more structured and disciplined in the effort to address the questions
- more rigorous in documenting and recording the information, ensuring that there was an appropriate and complete audit trail
- more thoughtful and careful about the interpretation, and use evidence to support the conclusions
- more sceptical and aware
- attempting to develop a greater insight and useful theory about the issues under investigation for the purpose of improving practice
- able to see the research as an iterative process, by making the changes identified within the inquiry and then further investigating the changes.

4.6.4.2 Reflection

Ironically but appropriately, I have chosen to use the very same technique for my research as I have for my teaching practice, and have provided supported access to the very same tool for students to support their learning – reflection, a process inherent within the action research paradigm. According to Hatten et al (1997) the action research paradigm is cyclical in nature and each cycle comprises a combination of reflection, action and review to clarify the issues or concerns. The process in this study is not a predetermined series of this combination: Rather these arise during sometimes unsought-for and unexpected moments, and at other times, this process is

approached formally and intentionally. Sometimes the issues are mulled over for long periods at a time, either consciously or unconsciously resulting in serendipitous moments of clarity. Sometimes the process is short and the way is clear. Sometimes the resulting action can be implemented immediately as it is pertinent to learning process at the time. Sometimes, I have to wait to implement the changes in the following academic year. These changes usually need collaboration and negotiation – of the institutional system, the staff and the students. The stages of the cycles in the action research process are clear even though the reflective processes are sometimes, as Hatten et al (1997) would suggest, “fuzzy” and “abstract”, resulting in complexity within the cycle. This requires deep internal involvement, which, indicate Hatten et al (1997), “is complex due to the double-loop learning requirement”. Hatten et al (1997) draw from Argyris and Schon's (1974) work in relation to the theory of action.

4.6.4.2.1 Single-loop and double-loop learning

Carkhuff (1996:21) notes that single loop learning provides for ‘band-aid’ measures focusing on lower level learning such as recall and practice. The control of learning remains with the lecturer. “It is connected to a win/lose orientation ... and a desire for control through trial and error.”

I would see this as survival learning for safe practice i.e. when nurses are novices and are in the early learning stages of their profession, they generally learn the ‘recipes’ or formulas for practice, an essential part of the learning process. It is only once they become comfortable with their practice, that they can learn to challenge these narrow frameworks, and this comes through reflection – in and of their own practice. It results in higher order thinking – critical thinking: synthesis, analysis, evaluation. Single-loop learning is linked to the concept of a relatively static society where the social structures

are relatively constant and learning is relatively stable and life is relatively predictable. In other words, rules, processes and procedures are taken for granted.

However, in a rapidly changing society, there is a need for quick, analytical thinking and decision making. This is where, Hatten et al (1997) suggest, an amalgam of intuition, propositional knowledge (knowing that or knowing about), critical thinking, tacit knowledge (knowing more than one can tell) and any other processes developed through reflection, comes into play. Boud (2001) explains reflection as “turning experience into learning” and further, that reflections are the cognitive and affective activities one brings to bear on an experience in order to understand and appreciate it better. Praxis refers to the dynamic interaction between thought and action (Whitehead, 2004), but this concept has a deeper connotation, and as Hatten et al (1997) note, this action is informed and directed and is the basis of social order. These types of processes are foundational to the reflective practitioner and are required for emancipatory or double loop learning. Hatten et al (1997) explains double loop learning as the questioning and challenging of established learning systems and frames of reference. (The differentiation between single and double loop learning is reminiscent of Benner’s (1984) Novice to Expert theory; Jonassen’s 1993 Model for knowledge acquisition (concept of novice to expert) explained in Section 3.6.7 and the difference between Bevis and Watson’s 1990 model contrasting professional and technical models of learning in Section 3.4.1).

This participatory action research paradigm draws on critical theory. This affects both my choice of model and my facilitative approach to teaching and learning within the course structuring, implementation and interpretation, for my intention has been to provide the space, means and opportunities for learners to become more empowered autonomous nurse practitioners. From this perspective, the action research is emancipatory. However, it could not be said to be truly

emancipatory, as there is still a hierarchical division between myself, the researcher, who is also the practitioner, and the participants, the students. Nonetheless, extensive efforts, particularly in the form of interrogating concepts related to power, have been made through my reflexive journal and through peer review. Students have been asked to question, consider and challenge power dynamics on all fronts, including the student-teacher relationships, and during one year, my reflexive journal was posted on-line for scrutiny and comment on the students' web-based classroom, thereby sharing in my reflexive experience.

4.6.5 Towards a new paradigm: Practitioner-centred enquiry

According to Rolfe (1998), what one requires is an approach which allows the carrying out of research into personal practice in order to generate and verify experiential and personal knowledge, but also to test out scientific knowledge in the practitioner's own setting by experimenting at the level of one's own target group, which in my case was my students and as Rolfe (1998:72) citing Hamilton (1980) pithily states "In short, a 'science of the singular'". (Rolfe, 1998:72) citing Stenhouse (1981) suggests that the traditional scientific research paradigm "is clearly inadequate for the task, since it is concerned with the generation of objective generalizable data rather than specific data about specific individuals in specific situations and 'what yields are indications of trends, that is, actuarial predictions for populations'...". While the concept of generalizability may not be feasible, this does not preclude the concept of transferability, which is possible. Rolfe (1998:73) further suggests that the aim of this reflection on the experience is to "strengthen professional judgement, that is, to help us to deal with Schön's 'swampy lowland' of practice and the unpredictability of individual cases."

Rolfe (1998:75) defines practitioner-centred research (PCR) as “systematic self-critical enquiry made public”. This is essentially a reflexive approach, introspective and subjective, where the research has a direct impact on practice. This in turn, modifies the research, and the cycle continues.

4.6.6 The X, Y and Z factor theory concluded

To answer the question (Z) posited earlier in 4.5, I needed to collect data and make sense and meaning of it. The data needed to reach Z, therefore, emerged from:

- writing in the reflective journals (which is where the student recorded her thinking and is part of the X to achieve Y). I need to acknowledge that this is not necessarily going to give what is actually going on inside her on a conscious or subconscious level. Janse van Rensburg (2001:20) recognises the dilemma.

“In relation to research design, the concepts of accuracy, objectivity and truth all depend on the assumption that certain words correspond to what is the case. In this view, certain words... ‘tell it like it is’ while other words are biased, exaggerated or simply untrue. But if any word can in principle stand for any fact, what privileges any particular arrangement of words... as being ‘true to fact’?”).

This, then, is partly the problem with using what the students are saying in their journals. If the calibre of writing were academically unsound, I could judge them as being ‘poor’ students, or I could consider them as being lazy or I could make the assumption that they just did not wish to engage deeply in reflective writing. I have chosen to believe and accept that what the student writes and writes about reflects their ‘truth’ at a particular point in time.

- reflective tutorial groups - taped and transcribed (part of the **X** to achieve **Y**).
- staff interviews regarding whether **Y** is working.
- My reflexive journal is
 - ✓ part of **Z** to record analysis;
 - ✓ used to develop **X** ;
 - ✓ used to record evidence of **Y**.

Within this process, I am the researcher, but I am also the educator using an 'intervention' which happens to have a transformatory intent. As an educator, I have tried to help the students to construct their own meaning in a critical way, so that whatever I do, they made their own meaning. This 'empowering' intent gives the process a political and social dimension.

Action research is therefore used as a vehicle as it tries to find a solution. It used small case studies (so determined because they are bounded) within a naturalistic setting. Therefore in this context, I am the researcher and the planner/ provider of **X**. I am an educator in my role as developer of the 'intervention'.

Z involves my reflections as a researcher analyzing the data, including the feedback on how **X** is working (students and staff) and my own observations of sources of data from **X** (reflective and reflexive journals etc). I then changed the unit **X** (as an educator) and developed it further. My changes were informed by **Z**. These processes of higher order learning, once named by the students (in the form of their diaries and questionnaire responses) leads to consciousness and therefore 'owning' of the process.

4.7 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to integrate van Aswegen's (1998) model within a nursing management course at Durban Institute of Technology and to monitor its effect on students' critical reflective thinking and practice. Van Aswegen's (1998) model was used to frame this study (see Chapter Two).

4.8 THE CONTEXT OF VAN ASWEGEN'S MODEL (1998:392-393)

The context of this model is nursing practice and education. However, van Aswegen (1998:309) notes that it can be implemented in any educational and health care setting responsible for the education of health care professionals. This model also caters for basic, post-basic levels as well as for staff development in service settings.

"The structure of the model gives overall form to the conceptual relationships within it, and represents the enquirer's perception of the reality of facilitation of critical reflective practice, the required conditions, the methods and outcomes..." These relationships and the effect of their interaction, the central focus of the model, is outlined in 2.2.

Van Aswegen (1998:393) defines this as the ability to "consciously and purposefully" step back from one's practice or a specific situation and retrospectively contemplate what has happened and the effects and implications thereof.

Critical thinking, critical reflection, creative thinking and reflective learning are the key concepts that form the building blocks for the main concept, critical reflective practice.

There has been a lot of work done in different spheres, particularly in education, on critical thinking. It is of topical interest and there is a growing body of knowledge on both critical thinking and reflective practice. The difference in this study lay in the nature and characteristics of the context that is South Africa, the discipline of nursing as practiced within the district health system and the educational course.

4.9 TIME FRAME

The planning and implementation of the teaching and learning strategies used within the model was initiated in 2001 as part of an ongoing and continuous process throughout the course and data was generated up to 2003.

4.10 DESCRIPTION OF THE DESIGN OF THE LEARNING COURSE, NURSING MANAGEMENT IV AND THE FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

This was a learning programme to deliver a course in nursing management. All students who registered for and wished to complete the Bachelor of Technology: Nursing programme had to complete and pass this course. Nurses in four disciplines of nursing taught within the Bachelor of Technology: Nursing programme, i.e. occupational health nursing, primary health care nursing, nursing management and community nursing, were registered for this course.

The strategies depicted in Figure 5.1 and introduced and discussed in Chapter 5 and Section 6.2 were selected to achieve an integration of teaching and learning methodologies, with particular reference to the need to accommodate to the educational constraints that were present in the health and educational context of the time.

4.11 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Trace the development of critical reflective thought within a context of a learning course of an educational programme.
2. Analyze the development of the student's critical reflective thought in the light of van Aswegen's (1998) model in order to refine and adapt the model.
3. Identify enabling and inhibiting factors within a department of a higher education institution that would support or limit the use of such a model for the development of critical reflective practice.
4. Monitor the process involved in reflective thinking evidenced from learning diaries; reflective tutorial groups and staff reflections and whether reflective thought has an effect on the resulting perceived attitudes and behaviours of post-basic nursing students related to health care practice.

4.12 RESEARCH PROCESS

The research process broadly consisted of phases, which were based on the preceding objectives.

- Phase 1 comprised the process of planning and implementation and
- Phase 2 comprised the monitoring of the selected strategies.

4.12.1 Research phases

The process of the research comprised two phases (see Figure 4.2). The stages in this first phase were discrete but distinct and they interlinked. They often happened simultaneously rather than as separate entities. Briefly, the process comprised

- an initial stage of reflection (consideration of how to answer the research question and the challenges driving the inquiry),
- planning (reviewing the literature, considering the model, the research process, including the development of data collecting instruments, developing a curriculum, learning materials, study guide and teaching techniques i.e. the strategy) and
- implementation (introducing and facilitating the course and the learners, distributing questionnaires and initiating students' reflective journals and my reflexive journal)
- another stage of reflection (through my reflexive journal and peer review) and
- a monitoring process (the analysis of the generated data) and then
- two further cycles of reflection, planning, implementation and monitoring. (A detailed plan of this process is in Chapter 5).

4.12.1.1 Phase one: planning and implementation

- The process involved introducing van Aswegen's 1998 model for enhancing critical thinking and reflective practice, but in particular, the Socratic questioning and discussion method was established.
- The techniques for designing, developing and integrating the learning journals and the Socratic questioning and discussion method were introduced. This focused on the learning context, theoretical orientation in relation to the model and the literature review, the researcher's own interest and experiences and issues current within the health context.
- The supportive systems required for nurses using critical reflective practice were identified.
- Factors influencing the development of critical reflective practice were identified.
- The stages to implementing this critical reflective practice were identified.

How can van Aswegen's (1998) model be integrated within a programme of nursing in order to enhance nursing students' critical thinking and reflective practice?

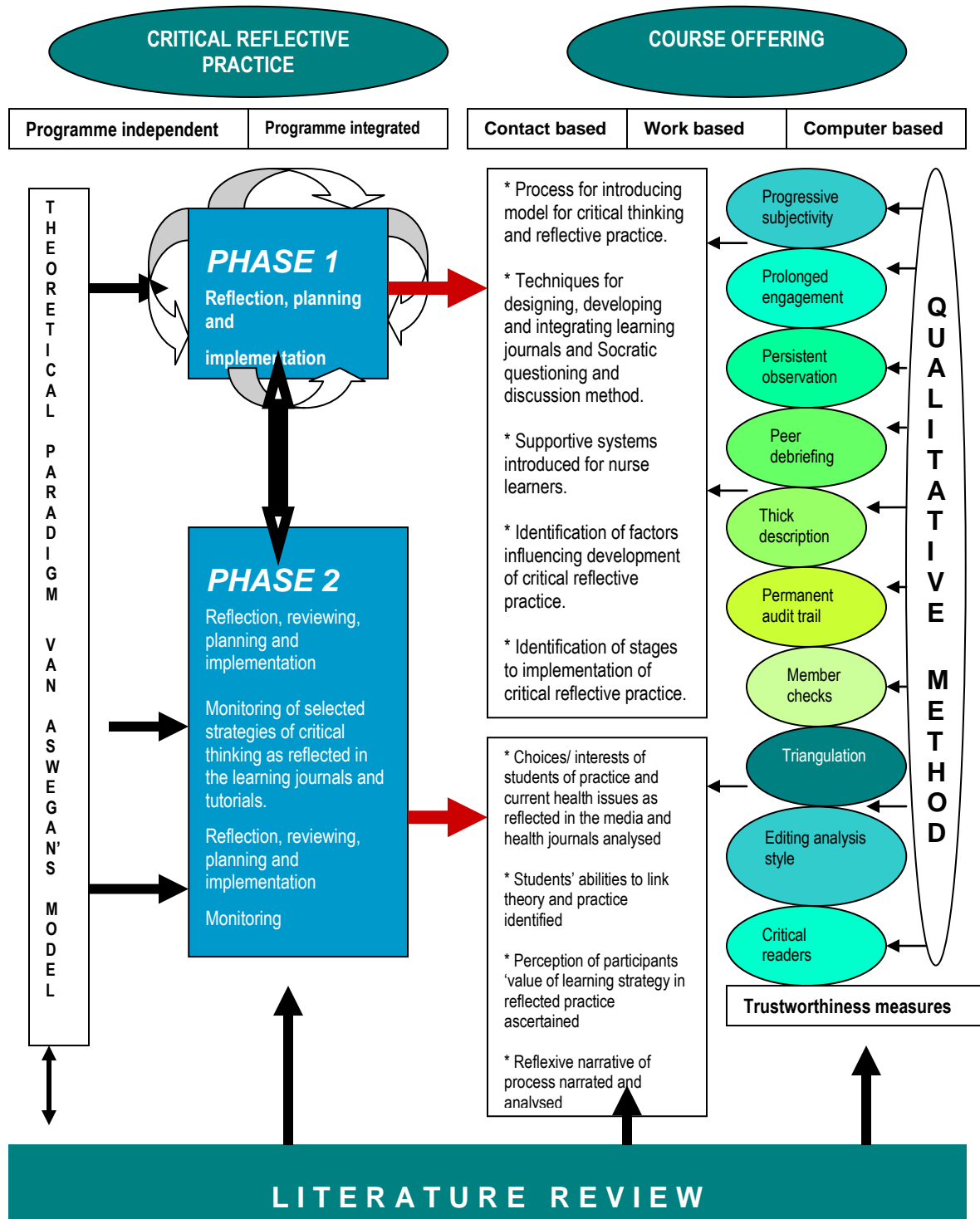


Figure 4.2: Research process: phases and flow

4.12.1.2 Phase two: Monitoring of selected strategies of critical thinking as reflected in reflective journals and Socratic discussion/ questioning

- Choices / interests of students regarding their own health or/and nursing practice as well as current health issues as reflected in the media and nursing related journals were categorise and described.
- Participants' abilities to link theory and practice were identified.
- Participants' perceived values of the learning strategy in terms of nursing practice were ascertained.
- The researcher's own reflective process and development in light of the study was narrated and then analyzed in the context of the other data sources.
- The model was further developed/ refined based on the findings.

Figure 4.2 reflects the integration and usage of the model in the research and indicates the phases and flow of the research process.

4.13 SELECTION OF SITE

The study was sited at the Durban Institute of Technology's Department of Post-Graduate Nursing Studies, which included the nursing education staff and the students who were the participants.

4.14 TARGET POPULATION

(1) All students who undertook formal studies in the department in 2001 and 2002, N=54. (This did not include students engaged in the research based masters or doctoral programme). Formal studies were those programmes registered with the National Department of Education and generated FTE student subsidies. I also included the students who had registered in the Management IV class in 2003 (n=21). Total number = 75. (This did not include those who

completed reflective journals only, although I did include this group in a separate analysis of student self-evaluations of their reflective journals).

(2) Teaching staff within the Department of Post-graduate Nursing Studies.

4.15 SAMPLING STRATEGY

Miles and Huberman (1994:24-31) form the source of reference for the following explanation of the sampling employed in this study.

The question with regards to my research, especially as the research progressed and seemed to become more complicated, was - what were the boundaries of the study or case and where did it close off?

Miles and Huberman (1994:25) define a case “as a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context.”

The Case as a Unit of Analysis =



The boundary may be the setting or the concepts or the sampling. There is a focus, the heart of the study and *somewhat indeterminate boundaries* defining the edge of the case, i.e. what will not be studied. The ‘heart’ of the study in this instance is the course, Nursing Management IV.

A case may be defined by the above or defined in terms of the nature and size of the social unit:

- The boundary can be further defined in terms of sampling e.g. which student members of the classes within the course; specific aspects of the course (for example, the reflective journal, the reflective tutorials) and may be further bounded by a time element (e.g. the Management IV course in 2001 and 2002 and the first three months into 2003 as an iterative process).

The case could be (and was) also a small group (for example, the focus group of second-language black African students), an entire class (for example, those who filled out Questionnaire One) or in fact, people grouped according to the role they played (for example, the staff members).

However, the case was also located

- **spatially** – e.g. in a classroom (contact sessions) or even an office (the reflective tutorials)
- **temporally** – events or processes over specific periods of time e.g. an episode or an encounter (for example, the reflective tutorials)
- **over a period of time** – for example, the academic year, in terms of the course
- **a sustained process** – I focused on understanding how van Aswegen's model could best be implemented within the course, using the cyclical action research process over a three-and a quarter year period.

However, "cases may have subcases embedded within them" (Miles and Huberman, 1994:27) and this is reflected in the three cycles. The case study of the course also contains cases of specific aspects of the course, for example, the mentoring process.

Miles and Huberman (1994:27) agree that qualitative research samples derive greater benefits from purposive as opposed to random sampling - mainly because the sample, which of necessity is small.

"By randomly selecting a sample, one could end up with nonsense-making data...

Sampling in qualitative studies are usually not wholly prespecified, but can evolve once fieldwork begins. Initial choices of informants lead you to similar and different

ones; observing one class of events invites comparison with another; and understanding one key relationship in the setting reveals facets to be studied in others. This is conceptually-driven sequential sampling” (Miles and Huberman, 1994:27).

This sampling, both within and across cases, allowed me to strengthen and flesh out the relationships and general constructs within the study. While this in no way allows me to be able to make the generalisations for similar groups identified within a quantitative study, instead, generic processes can be observed, and the generalizations are “to existing or new theories.”

Within-case sampling

Miles and Huberman (1994:29) explain this in quantitative research as when a sample of ‘cases’ is drawn and then comparable ‘data points’ are collected from each. In qualitative research, however, there can be a wide range of cases but even within the case of the Management IV course sampling decisions were affected in terms of “activities, processes, events, times, locations, and role partners” as units of observation. This within-case sampling followed Miles and Huberman (1994) format in that it was

- Nested. For example, the case focused on students studying a course within a classroom, within a department, within an institution, within broader South Africa “ with regular movement up and down the ladder...”
- Theoretically driven. At times the theory was pre-specified (for example, critical reflective practice) or emerged from the data, as in the reflective journals. The choices I made of the informants (e.g. students or staff), events (mid-year evaluations), and interactions (reflective tutorials) were motivated by the conceptual question, not, as Miles and Huberman (1994:29)

appreciate, “by a concern for “representativeness”.....The prime concern is with the conditions under which the construct or theory operates, not with the generalizations of the findings to other settings...”

- Iterative, working in progressive waves as the study progressed. Each step along the way, sampling decisions were made to illuminate key patterns, identify exceptions or discrepancies or negative occurrences, or observe contrasts. For example, I sampled the reflective tutorials, but recognised that as a lecturer controlling the teaching process in a multi-cultural setting, I had to consider multi-cultural aspects within the process. This led to the decision to form a focus group, sampling a group of black African second-language students.

The purpose for the selection of data was in fact determined by what Miles and Huberman (1994:31) deemed to be useful data. This data would

- “identify new leads of importance” (such as considerations of specified aspects of the Management IV course e.g. mentoring)
- “extend the area of information” (such as students’ perceptions of the journaling process using self-evaluations, part of the journal process)
- “relate or bridge already existing elements” (open-ended course evaluations where students revisited the journal from the perspective of a learning strategy as part of the course as a whole)
- “reinforce main trends” (the concept of critical reflective thinking was threaded throughout the course and considered in all elements of the course)

- “exemplify or provide more evidence for an important theme” (an important theme was the theory-practice construct. Evidence was identified in the reflective tutorials and the reflective journals)

4.15.1 Cycles

There were three cycles to this research, as depicted in Figure 4.3 and they were based on the academic year.

4.15.1.1 Cycle 1

Total student number participating in project, 2001: (n=32). Although there were more formal students in the department (N=54), and all formal students were required to complete journals and engage in the critical reflective learning process, when students directly engaged in this process was dependent on the stage of their studies. All programmes, with the exception of the NHD: Community Nursing course, are usually completed over a two year cycle. The stage for engagement for critical reflective practice was dependent on the programme schedules, as they were different. For example, in some programmes, the journal is completed within the first year, and in other programmes, in the second year.

The number of those sampled in Cycle 2 and 3 were informed by the broad-brush monitoring process undertaken of the data collected and collated in Cycle 1.

4.15.1.2 Cycle 2

(a) Students registered 2002: sample number (n= 4) from Management 1V group (n=16) in terms of reflective journals, 3 groups in terms of reflective tutorials and those who wished to complete the

four different questionnaires (see Data sources in Chapter 5). (b) Nursing staff educators within the Department of Post Graduate Nursing Studies 2002: sample number (n = 4) and (c) Three moderator reports

4.15.1.3 Cycle 3

The intention had been to only use data from two cycles, but the implementation of changes resulting from the two cycles suggested that these be followed up. The decision was made mid-way through 2003, hence the (a) three questionnaires that followed; (b) the (n=4) reflective journals; (c) focus group of 8 students and (d) the reports from the 3 staff members of the quality assurance unit. Total number of students in the Management IV class (N=21).

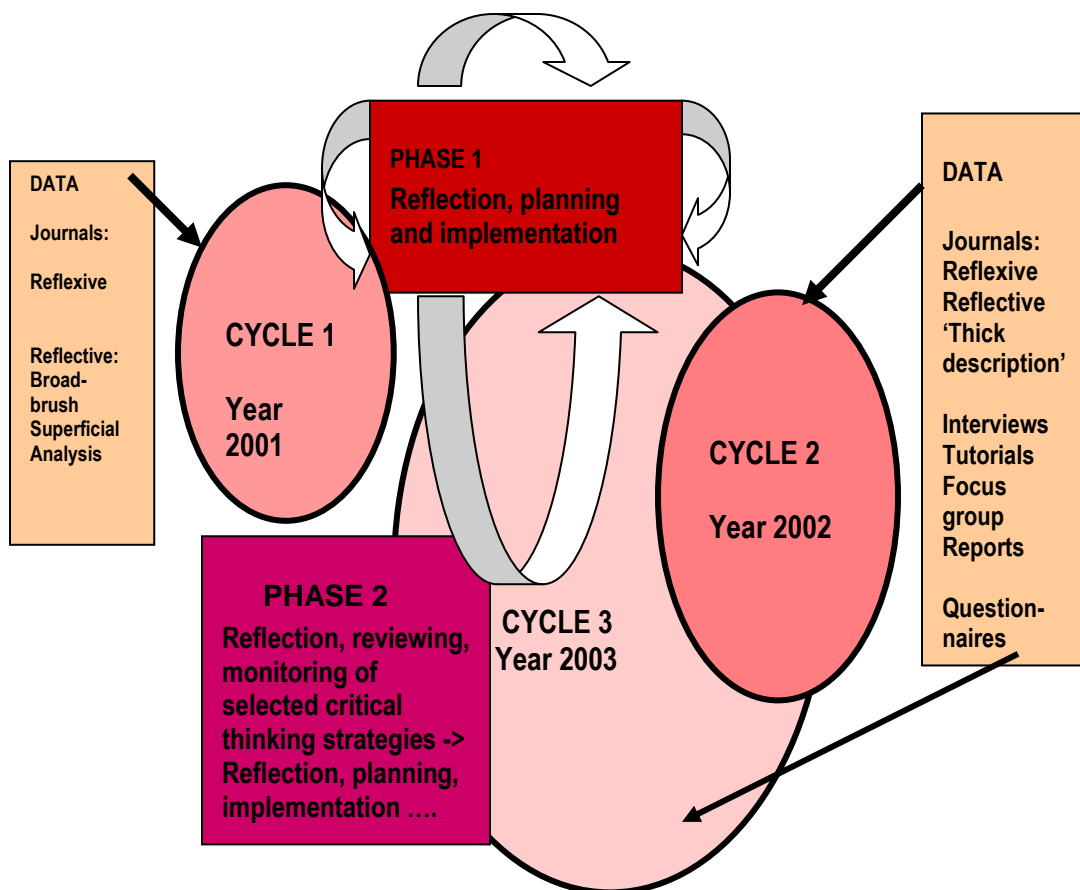


Figure 4.3: Linkages between cycles, phases and data collection

4.16. Data generation: Sources of data in terms of sampling context (size and technique)

Qualitative research argument is concerned with understanding “the meaning of experience, actions and events as they are interpreted through the eyes of particular participants, researchers and (sub) cultures, and a sensitivity to the complexities of behaviour and meaning in the contexts where they typically or ‘naturally’ occur” (Henwood, 1996 :6).

The following factors were considered in this study:

- The participants were post-basic/ post-graduate formal students at the Durban Institute of Technology.
- There was a culture of nursing and they studied and practiced within a sub-culture of nursing that took place in health care centres, generally outside of the hospital ambit, mainly in the greater Durban area.
- The students broadly reflected the demographics of South Africa in terms of race, ethnicity and cultural composition and were predominantly female.
- The majority worked full time and attended their nursing learning programmes on either a once weekly; or twice monthly basis. Workshops or complete modules were provided over varying time spans depending on the programme and on the module.
- Student – educator contact was limited and all programmes except for the National Higher Diploma: Community Nursing extended over a two-year period.

The sampling technique was based on those who had given permission to use their data, therefore this was a purposive as well as a convenience sample. The data sources are delineated in Figure 4.4 and the triangulation between the sources is explicated in Figure 4.5.

4.16.1 2002/2003 Student journals

A purposive sampling technique was used. Total student number: (N=16) 2002; (N=21) 2003.

Sample: (n=8). This sample represented

- The disciplines of nursing i.e. students from four nursing specialities within the programme, Bachelor of Technology: Nursing. These included Occupational Health Nursing, Primary Health Care Nursing, Community Nursing and Nursing Management. Although all signed consent, the first two students from each discipline who submitted their signed written consent forms were included in the sample.
- I also wanted to ensure that the cultures were represented (black African, Indian and white) and that
- I had an example of an 'outlying' student journal. This meant that I chose what I felt to be a 'weak' student, in that this student was a second-language writer, lived a long distance from DIT and did not attend classes on a regular basis. I exchanged her journal for another of the same culture, year and discipline of nursing.
- I chose a representative group of four from each year, 2001 and 2002.

4.16.2 Student reflective journal self-evaluations from 2000-2003

A purposive sampling technique was used. Total number: (N = 110). Sample: (n=71). The self-evaluations comprised a checklist and an open ended free form self evaluation. This sample was determined by the total number of free form open-ended self evaluations completed (n=71). All students completed the self-evaluation rubric, but only 71 had completed the free form open-ended self evaluations. The rubric, based on Paul's (1990) concepts of a "critical education" was a checklist. The additional free form self evaluations were open-ended nature of the responses

yielded a greater richness of students' observations in their own 'voices.' The decision to include the self-evaluation of journals from 2000, instead of from the beginning of Cycle 1, 2001, is because the journals were the initiating factor for reflective practice, and the subsequent decision to develop a whole course framed by a model of critical reflective practice. The journals were an entity in themselves, and as researcher, I saw their potential to yield valuable information. Each series of completed journal processes informed on the following year. The journals initiated in 2001 were informed by the results of the evaluations of 2000.

4.16.3 Departmental teaching staff

A purposive sampling technique was used. Sample number (n= 4) from total number of permanent and full-time contract staff members (n=6) who, in 2002, had been teaching in the department for 4 years or longer. For obvious reasons, I did not include myself, the researcher in the study, or my research supervisor, a member of the department. The decision to use the criteria of having taught in the department for 4 years or longer was based on the fact that staff who had worked for this period of time would have had sufficient experience in the department to have imbued and influenced departmental educational philosophy. Part-time non-permanent staff members were not included in the sampling for this same reason of exclusion. Transcribed interviews were e-mailed to staff members for verification.

4.16.4 Reflective tutorials

A purposive sampling technique was used.

All reflective tutorials (n=20) of one and a half hour sessions in 2002 using Socratic dialogue were audio-taped for reference and triangulation, and to provide a context and reference point for student journals.

Two of these reflective tutorials were transcribed as a check (the transcriber was asked to select two at random) against the reflexive journal, where I, as researcher, summarised and interpreted some of the sessions.

An additional three reflective tutorial sessions were later transcribed, once a decision had been made on choices of reflective journals. These reflective tutorials included those students whose journals had been chosen for analysis. These were available for membership checks and were peer reviewed for accuracy and interpretation (supervisor and Jane Tarr, critical reader).

4.17 DATA GENERATION

The data generated was in the form of 'thick description', "detailed, contextually sensitive, meaningful research" (Henwood, 1996:6). The data sources are illustrated in Figure 4.4 and the connections (triangulation) between the data sources is depicted in Figure 4.5.

4.17.1 Data sources

There were a variety of sources of data, all of which were self-reports. Some were collected by instruments designed for the research and some emanated from data generated from the process of offering the course in Nursing Management IV.

4.17.2 Data collection methods

Self-report is the type of data collection method and the instruments used to collect it are the questionnaires, interviews or reports.

4.17.2.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were provided for all students in the requisite classes. All questionnaires returned by the participants to the researcher in 2002/2003 were typed for coding. Total number of students in Nursing Management IV course: (N= 16) in 2002 and (N=21) in 2003.

- Questionnaire One: 2002 (n=14). Appendix 4.1;
- Questionnaire Two: 2002 (n=10); 2003 (n=10). Appendix 4.2.
- Questionnaire Three: 2002 (n=16); 2003 (n=12). Appendix 4.3.
- Questionnaire Four: 2002 (n=6); 2003 (n=12). Appendix 4.4.
- Questionnaire Five: 2003 (n=16). Appendix 4.5.
- Questionnaire Six: 2003 (n=30). Total number of students engaged in reflective journaling in the department (N=45). Appendix 4.6.

4.17.2.2 Other data sources

In Cycle 1, 2001, I kept a reflexive journal providing an overview of the dialogue and process resulting from the Socratic questioning and discussion methods and other selected strategies, as listed in the students' schedules for student/lecturer engagement, as well as tape recordings and selected transcriptions of these reflective tutorials sessions.

Students' learning journals were critiqued at intermittent times throughout the year. On completion of the journals, each student completed a self-evaluation of the journal, guided by a checklist and a

series of questions. In Cycle 2, 2002, I kept a reflexive journal. Additionally, I audio-taped selected engagements with the students and interviews with fellow nurse lecturers.

Three external moderators also submitted reports with this project in mind. Choice of the students' reflective journals followed the same process as in Cycle One. Reports from staff in the institutional quality assurance unit were used to support or refute data collected from the students with respect to course presentation.

Students were also required to complete questionnaires as well as the journals and the self-evaluation. Students' tests/ assignments and tasks as part of their portfolios, were also used to support or enhance understanding of the main sources of data.

Summary of data sources:

- Self-evaluation report of reflective journal (Table 7.3). This falls within both (a) and (b) categories
- Questionnaires x 6 (Appendix 4.1 to 4.6)
- Taped recordings of Staff interviews (1 interview x 4)
- Tape recording of Focus group of second-language students
- The participants' journals (reflective journals and my reflexive journal)
- Tape recordings of Socratic Questioning and Discussion (Dialogical) reflective tutorial sessions
- 3 moderators' reports
- Reports from quality assurance unit on structuring of learning materials

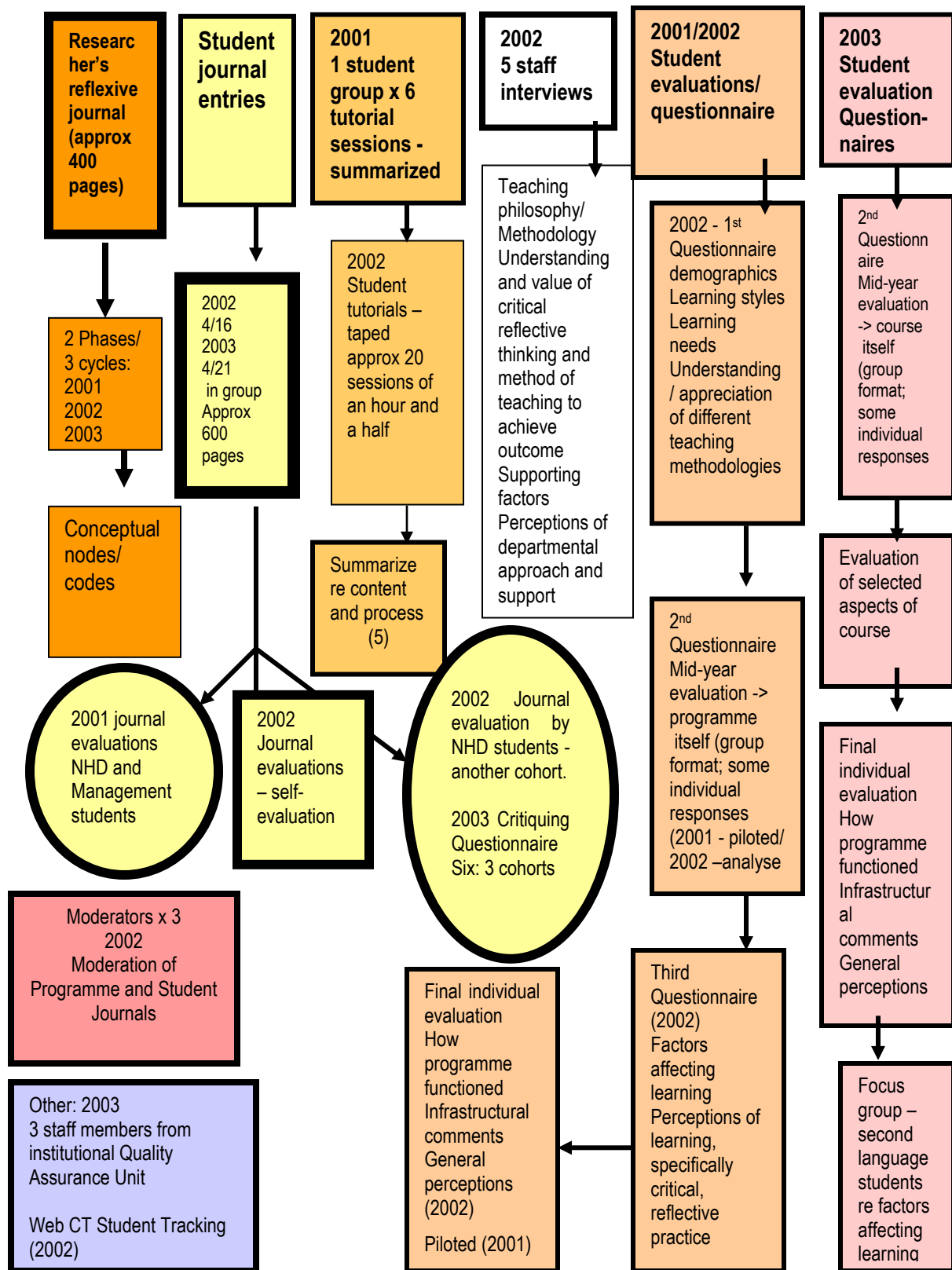


Figure 4.4: Data sources for study

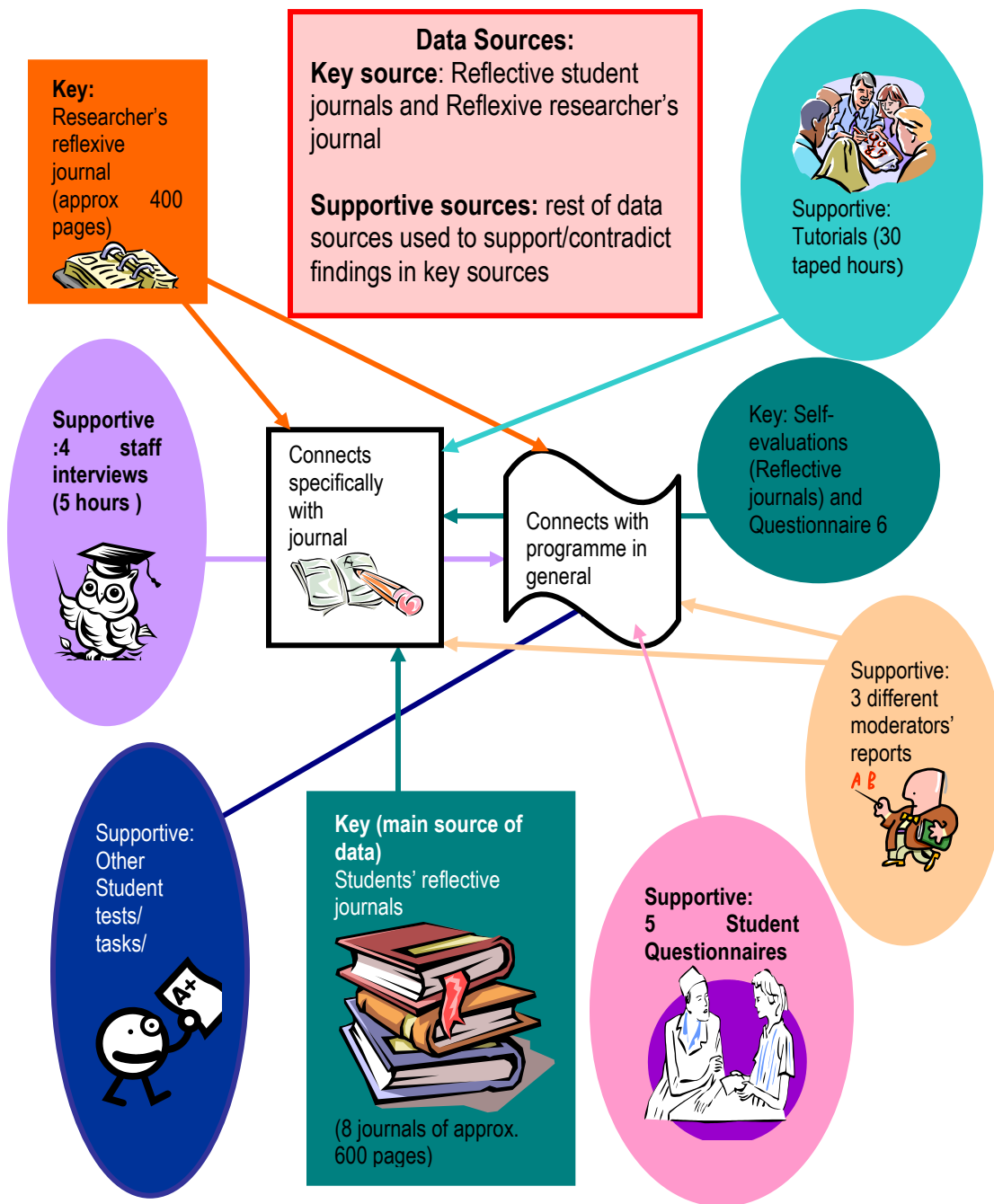


Figure 4.5: Connecting Data Sources (Triangulation)

4.18 DEVELOPMENT OF DATA GENERATING INSTRUMENTS

The main reason for using a qualitative approach is because of the underpinning of the philosophical assumption that the participants in their interrelationship with their world construct reality. The data documenting the process of the project is in the form of thick description in terms of:

- A reflexive journal (a journal of the researcher documenting the process and progress of the project – approximately 400 pages) -> a key focus area in terms of documenting the process; identifying theoretical assumptions; documenting methodology; making connections between the literature, theoretical assumptions and practice.
- Reflective journals (student journals reflecting work related incidents and their analysis; journal analysis and critiques of newspaper articles on health issues impacting on the practice of the student – sample of 8 - approximately 600 pages) -> Main focus of the research.
- Self-evaluation of the journals by the students in 2001 – (n=40) – research group (N=16) and another group of students – (n=24) – in a course where journals were a learning strategy, but not integral to the learning course framework i.e. course independent (approximately 50 pages). Student groups from 2000 - (n=35).
- Reflective tutorial discussion sessions (complementing the journal entries – 20 hour and a half sessions).
- Unstructured interviews with four fellow staff members to evaluate their perception, understanding and support of reflective practice (seven and a half hours of transcriptions).
- Programme evaluation questions from Gottlieb (1988 in Stanhope and Lancaster 1996:396) formed the basis for the interview. The issues or questions focused on

Objectives 3 and 4 and reflected on their philosophy and methodology of teaching as well as their understanding and critical appreciation of critical reflective practice.

- 3 moderator reports – one on course structure; the other two focusing on journal and effects. These link in with student questionnaires on course process, as well as with staff and reflexive journal input on course structure and process. These deal with Objectives 2 and 4.
- Three student questionnaires were developed for the sample group of 16 students in the Management IV class of 2002: The data from the questionnaires was used in conjunction with those in journals, journal evaluation questionnaires, tests, tasks and moderators' reports. The purpose was to develop an understanding of the issues within the process. These questionnaires took the form of a pre, mid-year and final course evaluation by the students. The focus was on their perceptions of the learning process of the course identified in the project and the value thereof. The questionnaires were developed after an analysis of the literature.
- Two questionnaires were used in 2003, to focus on selected elements of the Nursing Management course, namely teaching strategies and critical reflective learning.
- An additional mid-year questionnaire was offered to all students in the Department of Post-graduate Nursing Studies who were in the process of journaling, in order to evaluate the critiquing and journaling process.
- The framework for each questionnaire was based on the literature and the objectives of the study. They were scrutinised by two educators in higher education, prior to testing for trustworthiness, which was further supported by entries in the reflexive journal, as well as checking by departmental staff and research supervisors. All students completed

permission agreements, providing their informed consent to participate in the research. The completion of all the questionnaires was time scheduled into the course. Questionnaires 1 and 3 were completed in the classroom setting, and Questionnaires 2 and 4, as they formed part of the normal course requirements, were completed outside of the classroom setting. As researcher, I was available for questions. Questionnaire 6 was distributed by the course co-ordinators to all their students who wished to complete the questionnaire. These were completed outside of class contact time.

First Questionnaire

Ø The initial questionnaire was to establish a baseline and included demographic information as well as an identification of the students' perception of their learning styles and needs (see Appendix 4.1). It dealt with Objectives 1 and 2. It included questions on:

- Demographic information and educational background. This information gave an indication of students' motivation and commitment to learning and indicated possible barriers and supports for the learning process resulting from social or occupational commitments.
- Learning experiences, motivation for and influences on learning: This could possibly have influenced how they would view the new course they had engaged in and provided a perception of students' expectations, motivation and understanding of the value of the learning environment.
- Learning style: Two vignettes on learning styles had been made available to students in order to assess the style they would be most comfortable with. The first employs a didactic, teacher centred focus and the second, a problem based, learner centred focus.

- Teaching methods and course expectations: This provided an understanding of the types of teaching approaches to which the student was accustomed and determined students' openness to teaching and learning styles.
- Nursing issues of interest to student: This enabled students to participate in the 'construction' of their learning needs as a result of determining their nursing interests and provided a source for the content of their journal reflections.
- Perception/ understanding of major concepts, the major themes within their new learning course. The answers provided a sense of the level of the students' understanding of these concepts.

This questionnaire was based on educational concepts derived from Knott and Mutunga (1995) as well as from my own educational experience.

Second Questionnaire

The second questionnaire was a mid-year open-ended evaluation of the course (See Appendix 4.2).

This mid-year evaluation had been tested in 2000 and 2001 in the Management IV course. It had unearthed strengths and weaknesses inherent in courses as well as student recommendations for improvement. It focused on constructive criticism. It had been checked by an educator in higher education, as well as by students in each course. It was based on Objective 3.

Third Questionnaire

Ø The third questionnaire focused on students' perceptions of their learning development in terms of critical reflective practice (See Appendix 4.3). The questionnaire adapted Morales-Mann and Kaitell's (2001) questions identifying students' perceptions of their learning experiences.

The questionnaire was based on the critical thinking processes used in the making on the Ohio Proficiency Tests. I also used the list of codes developed during ongoing analysis and reviewed the aim and objectives of the study. Van Aswegen's 1998 model was reviewed and the proposal revisited to ensure inclusion of the identified focus of the themes.

The first page of the questionnaire was handed out as a separate page; otherwise it might encourage the participants to check for the answers in the following section, instead of writing down what came to mind (trustworthiness). The questionnaire was handed out on completion of the students' final summative test. Thirty minutes had been scheduled into their course for questionnaire completion. This questionnaire was based on Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Fourth Questionnaire

The fourth questionnaire was filled in on the last day of term and consisted of a broad overview of the learning course (See Appendix 4.4). It was intended to identify the perceptions of the students with regards to the following:

- The theoretical component
- The teaching methods
- Aspects that interested or failed to interest the students
- The reading materials used in the course
- Course facilitation
- Facilities (classroom and institutional)
- The incorporation of specific elements such as the on-line classroom, outside speakers, assignments, experiential learning
- Benefits of course

- Failures of presented course
- Recommendations for improvement of course.

This was a standardised course evaluation developed within the department and used as a standard of measurement for at least 15 years. It was adapted slightly to incorporate the new elements of on-line learning and was based on Objective 3.

Fifth Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire was to obtain a clearer understanding of students' perceptions of some of the selected strategies, namely the web-based classroom, mentoring, the Constructivist approach and the work-books (See Appendix 4.5). The questions around Web CT focused on the different elements of course delivery in this classroom (e.g. e-mail, discussion list etc.) and the perceived value or limitations of using this facility. The question on mentoring focused on the value and limitations of using this strategy and for both Web CT and mentoring, I asked the students' what advice they would give to following groups of students. I also included a Question on the Constructivist method, with an introductory statement defining the concept, and asked if this approach was appropriate or not for their learning process. Questions for these sections were open-ended. The final section was devoted to the workbooks and I devised a list of elements (in no particular order) on readability based on Hubbart (2001) and Stephens (2000) and checked these with staff from the quality assurance unit. Previously, I had asked students to comment verbally on the style and readability of the workbooks, but only had positive responses. I realised that I needed to provide a guided set of questions, hence the list.

The reflective journal self-evaluation

The criteria for self-evaluation was based on Paul's (1990) conception of what provides a "critical education" in van Aswegen (1998:138) as well as on more generalized criteria I developed in discussions and agreement with students as in Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.4. The rubric was further developed with students and accepted by the students as a valid tool for self-evaluation.

Sixth Questionnaire

In 2003, on review of the issues around critical reflective writing, I realised that it wasn't enough to have students evaluate the outcome of the journals, but that I needed to understand the effectiveness of the process. I asked the course co-ordinators and all students completing reflective journaling if they would be willing to complete a questionnaire to this effect. The total number of students present in classes was (N=45). Thirty (n=30) completed the questionnaire that addressed their perceptions on the mechanisms provided to support reflective journaling i.e. the empathetic-critiquer, the guidelines, the critique approach, the Question Prompt and the evaluation rubric checklist. The questionnaire was based on the structuring and processes involved in the journaling assignment. It addresses Objectives 2, 3 and 4 (See Appendix 4.6).

4.19 AUTHENTICITY AND ACCURACY

I used the following means to ensure authenticity and accuracy:

- Critical subjectivity (Rolf, 1998)
- Member checks (Benton, 1996)
- Peer debriefing

- Prolonged engagement
- Persistent observation
- Thick description
- Triangulation
- Critical readers
- Permanent audit trail (Wickham, 2001).

Critical readers

In this project I was the educator, project planner, facilitator, empathetic-critiquer, staff member and researcher. It was not possible to be objective about a study I was so wholly immersed within. I had developed a framework within which I ‘viewed’ the students’ reflective journals, as well as my responses as the ‘empathetic-critiquer’ – but how valid would this prove without ‘other eyes’? With permission from the students, I gave some of the journals to a colleague and my sister, Pat Betterton, to get a sense of how *they* viewed the journals and to help me to develop guidelines for three other dispassionate critical readers; Mari Pete, Sarah Lavoipierre and Jane Tarr. Two critical readers had masters’ degrees, and one is in higher education but in the field of E-learning. She is also a poet. The other two readers were unknown to myself, but came recommended by colleagues. Both were committed educators and grasped the purpose of their function (See Appendix 4.7: Guidelines for critical reading). Both were English teachers, but the one had a major in philosophy and the other, Dramatic studies – and all had life experience. My sister (also an educator) and the three dispassionate critical readers were given the retyped reflective journals and a set of instructions. I met with each of the readers to review the instructions. The three critical readers were given two sets of journals, one without and one with my memos. They were asked to

only review the memos on completion of their own analysis, in light of my proposed model. In addition, Mari and Jane were given a couple of the original journals, but Sarah was given the entire set. Jane had more time available, and so was also asked to review and analyse the reflective tutorial transcripts. Originally, my intention was to attach their reviews in an appendix for the examiner, but because I recognised the value of their input, I have, with their permission, included selected components within the text of the research.

4.20 LIMITATIONS

While the research tools were developed in accordance with the literature and then checked by two experienced educators in the tertiary field of education, except for the mid-year and final questionnaire and self-evaluation journal rubric, they were not piloted. Lack of time was a factor in testing both the first and third questionnaire, as both were initially unplanned and unscheduled in the research process, but as a result of ongoing analysis and integration of the literature, were added into the process. The timing of the classes precluded piloting.

4.21 ETHICAL CONCERNS

I was careful about the sensitivity of those being researched – ethical standards were maintained.

Ethical issues considered to be relevant in this study were the concepts of:

- Personal integrity: I was bound by both a professional code for research as well as the professional code for nurses.
- Recognition of personal limitations was also essential. Biases or prejudices that might affect the study have been declared (in the reflexive journal, for example).

- The results of the study were and will be made known and used in the department to guide practice.
- Intellectual honesty was challenged by peer review, competent scrutiny and constructive criticism within the research community.
- Personal accountability for the correct research processes followed.
- Informed consent.
- Confidentiality of the respondents was protected through the use of pseudonyms.
- Participants were informed about those individuals who had access to their information prior to signing of consent. They, the supervisor, the transcriber and I were bound by the ethical code of confidentiality as it applied to research.
- Durban Institute of Technology's Ethics Committee gave approval, based on the institutional code of practice.
- People in the research should and did benefit (ranging from sympathetic listening to being empowered with action plans for better practice) (Marshall and Rossman, 1995).

4.22 ACCESS TO DATA

Discussions with and support from departmental staff members, especially programme coordinators and specifically with the Head of Department, were essential in order to drive the process. This support translated to discussions with and motivation of the student group by the above. As part of the data formed part of the students' course requirements, access was a given, although permission to use the data for research requirements was still required (Permission Agreement: Appendix 4.8). All students signed Permission Agreements. Staff members were provided with a Permission Agreement (Appendix 4.9) and gave verbal consent.

4.23 ARRANGEMENTS FOR GAINING ENTRY

The Department of Post-graduate Nursing took a decision to support the implementation of critical reflective practice as a core educational concept and agreed to support the teaching strategy, specifically in terms of learning journals and Socratic questioning and discussion methods. The degree of engagement and support of this process varied from lecturer to lecturer. In two programmes, the integration of van Aswegen's 1998 model on critical reflective practice took place independently of the subjects taught, although the materials discussed and the data produced, linked into the programmes. I was the facilitator of this process and directly engaged with the students in the implementation of the model. In one, however, B. Tech. Nursing, I was one of the developers and facilitators of the subject, Nursing Management IV.

As a result of my deep involvement in reconstructing and developing this subject afresh in 2001, van Aswegen's 1998 model on critical reflective practice became integral to the course. It was the students within this course who were the participants in Cycles 2 and 3 of the research process.

4.24 DATA ANALYSIS

4.24.1 Levels of analysis

There are two levels of analysis – firstly the literature analysis and secondly data analysis from the various sources mentioned below. The former influenced the latter. This approach was used flexibly to both interpret and interrogate the data, along with the stated aims and objectives of the study. "Analysis of symbols, discourses of texts, is, of course, qualitative almost by definition, and has given emphasis to the impossibility of ever capturing completely the meaning of experience, conduct and events" (Henwood, 1996:7). As researcher, I did not presume to completely capture the respondents' process of reflective thinking or their development of critical thinking or the

resulting perceived attitudes and behaviours of nursing students in terms of health care practice. However, I was able to arrive at some level of understanding of these issues.

4.24.2 Use of the data

I acquired detailed evidence of experiences and used the data to:

- attempt to gain new understanding of a situation, experience or process;
- learn from the detailed accounts that students describe in their own words, or that I recorded in field notes from participant observation in the academic setting. The intent was to analyze the journals in terms of what students were thinking and their growth with regard to critical reflective thinking.

4.24.3 Themes

The themes analysed developed out of the research question, the research aim, the research objectives and the phases of the research process identified in Section 4.12. These focused on:

- student growth with regards to critical, reflective thinking;
- identifying the process of critical, reflective thinking;
- identifying commonalities in thought processes;
- identifying progress of level of critical reflective thinking;
- identifying the health and nursing issues chosen for reflection;
- identifying areas of interest with regards to current affairs impacting on health;
- identifying the type of journal articles deemed relevant to current studies by students and assessing relevance in terms of level, appropriateness;
- relevance to student's context;
- factors that hindered critical reflective thinking.

The Socratic questioning and discussion dialogues were analysed in terms of similar categories and issues. Personal experience and the reviewing of the literature allowed me to anticipate certain themes – some did not feature as much as expected – while other new themes arose unexpectedly.

In relation to nurse educator staff, the intent was to:

- identify broadly, their understanding and philosophy of nurse education, as affects their own programmes
- identify their perception of critical thinking and reflective practice and their values in relation to the process
- identify their support for the process of the implementation of selected elements of van Aswegen's 1998 model of critical reflective practice
- identify their perception of the perceived strengths/limitations of critical thinking and reflective practice as practiced within the department.

4.24.4 Process of analysis

The analysis of these attributes has taken place on a continuous and continual basis (prolonged engagement and persistent observation) throughout the research by way of my reflexive journal, student questionnaires, staff interviews and peer debriefing. This enabled me to constantly compare (constant comparison technique) the data, and because I was so embroiled in the process as both educator and researcher, it was easier to remember and make the connections perhaps, than had I been dispassionately observing someone else's practice. I therefore compared across the data sources, but, because each reflective journal reflected the narrative of a unique individual, and because the guidelines for the reflective journal were so broad, and resulted in

unique narratives, I saw these journals as individual 'cases' within the case and so narrowed the comparison process to constant comparison 'within' the individual cases as well. Tellis (1997) identifies some of the other analytical techniques I used, and these included pattern-matching (where I tried to identify patterns within the data and link them to predicted patterns, derived from experience and the literature) and explanation building (where analysis of the data within the case study is carried out, building a case for the case). This particular approach required an iterative process of arriving at a propositional statement, refining and then revising it, and then repeating the process to arrive at theoretical statements forming the basis for 'new' theory. The reflexive journal was used to describe my observations of the critical reflective process – but more importantly, it was used to question and interrogate these observations in the light of personal and collaborative experiences within the department, as well as through the literature. An analysis of the literature was interwoven throughout the reflexive journal, giving rise to a coding table or matrix that would allow an in-depth analysis. All thoughts and insights derived from the research process have been debated within the reflexive journal, which was an important data source as it yielded thick description and in this manner, I was able to triangulate data and ensure a permanent audit trail. I included in the coding system Facione and Facione's, (1996a), Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric (HCTSR) and Duke and Appleton's (2000) marking grid for reflective evidence. These rubrics were by no means definitive, but formed a guide and a matrix for monitoring critical thinking and reflection from early stages of the study. It would not have been possible to undertake a study on critical thinking and reflective practice without considering the elements included within these concepts.

This project did focus on change and development. An action research project has change as its intention and this project explored the process that brought about certain modes of thinking as its

intention. I did not specifically set out to follow the action research path, but because the implementation of the model involved students and staff, who, through their actions and input, influenced the outcome of the process, the process became a dynamic entity involving elements of change.

The Nvivo software allowed me to analyse 'thick description' and link documents or transcribed text to theories/concepts. Qualitative computing in the form of Nvivo software programme was chosen because the data demanded it.

4.24.5 Coding of the data

Analysis initially started at a technical level but progressed to a deeper level as outlined below in Figure 4.6. Data from the various sources was organised and transferred as rich text files into a qualitative software programming system, Nvivo. Each set of data was colour coded and organised into a filing system for easy access. This is a study requiring discovery of categories in data. Categories as well as single codes were also derived from the literature (for example, rubrics on reflective thinking, critical thinking and Socratic questioning) and from the objectives of the study. I developed a matrix of codes (nodes), categories and themes, and as I continued with the analysis, I either merged or updated the matrix, which resulted in 4 matrixes, each one following and developing from the previous one (see Appendix 4.9). The development of my understanding of the processes of analysis I was using is further explored in my reflexive diary entry.

The project was exploratory and the sources of ideas and codes were derived from the students' own writing and the issues and experiences they raised in conversation in reflective tutorials. Also included is my reflexive journal that followed the process of the research on an almost weekly basis

over a two-and-a-half year period. Coding initially was superficial and as the work progressed, tables of codes emerged. Key data sources were then coded more carefully and precisely. These were then organised into categories and shaped into themes and linked to a theoretical basis provided by the literature (i.e. Constructivism and other relevant forms of educational theory associated with curriculum development and teaching practice).

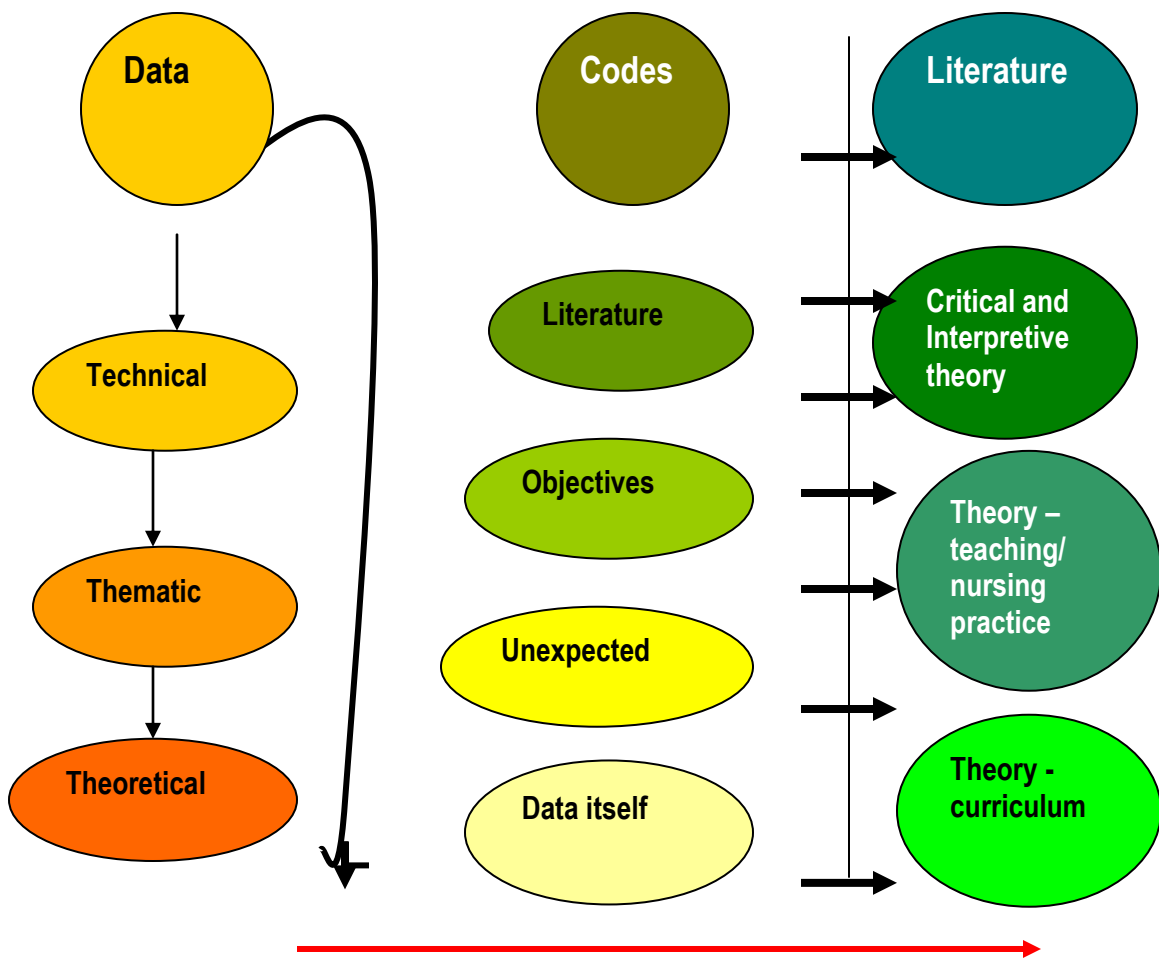


Figure 4.6: Data Coding

These were then organised into categories and shaped into themes and linked to a theoretical basis provided by the literature, for example, Constructivism and other relevant forms of educational theory associated with curriculum development and teaching practice.(See Figure 4.6).

In the analysis of the reflective journal, memos as well as coding, formed the basis of the explanations for my analysis. I then sorted and sifted through the materials.

At various stages of the project, ideas and themes were modelled to provide clarity of direction and thought. Once this process was complete, I was able to reflect on the attributes recorded in the tables in light of the objectives.

The analytic strategy is called editing analysis style (Polit and Hungler, 1997).

While the journals were coded as above, the questionnaires received a different treatment: Each questionnaire response was colour coded so that I was able to follow each respondent's written responses when all the responses were drawn together into one document (i.e. all the responses for each question were collated under that question). In this way, it was possible to arrive at themes or common responses for each question. I was able to use tables to depict themes broadly identified from the open-ended responses. At the same time, I was able to isolate the responses through following the colour cues. This was also helpful in triangulating the data from the various questionnaires, journals and interviews from specific participants. A similar approach was used to table the categories and themes derived from the student self-evaluations of their reflective journals.

The reflective tutorial and staff interviews were transcribed and as the categories had already been determined, the group responses were then organised into themes with accompanying quotes. In certain instances, categories had not been predetermined, and so new categories and themes were identified.

4.25 ORGANISATION OF THE REPORT WRITING

This was a fairly long and complicated study. I tried to make it more reader friendly by structuring the lay-out and introducing visual cues. For example, most chapters are introduced and concluded by summarising the content and key issues. The issues are delineated through a consistent numbering system and each chapter is prefaced by a conceptual model of the chapter, and the entire study is prefaced with an index and a list of the tables, figures and appendices.

Visual cues take the form of:

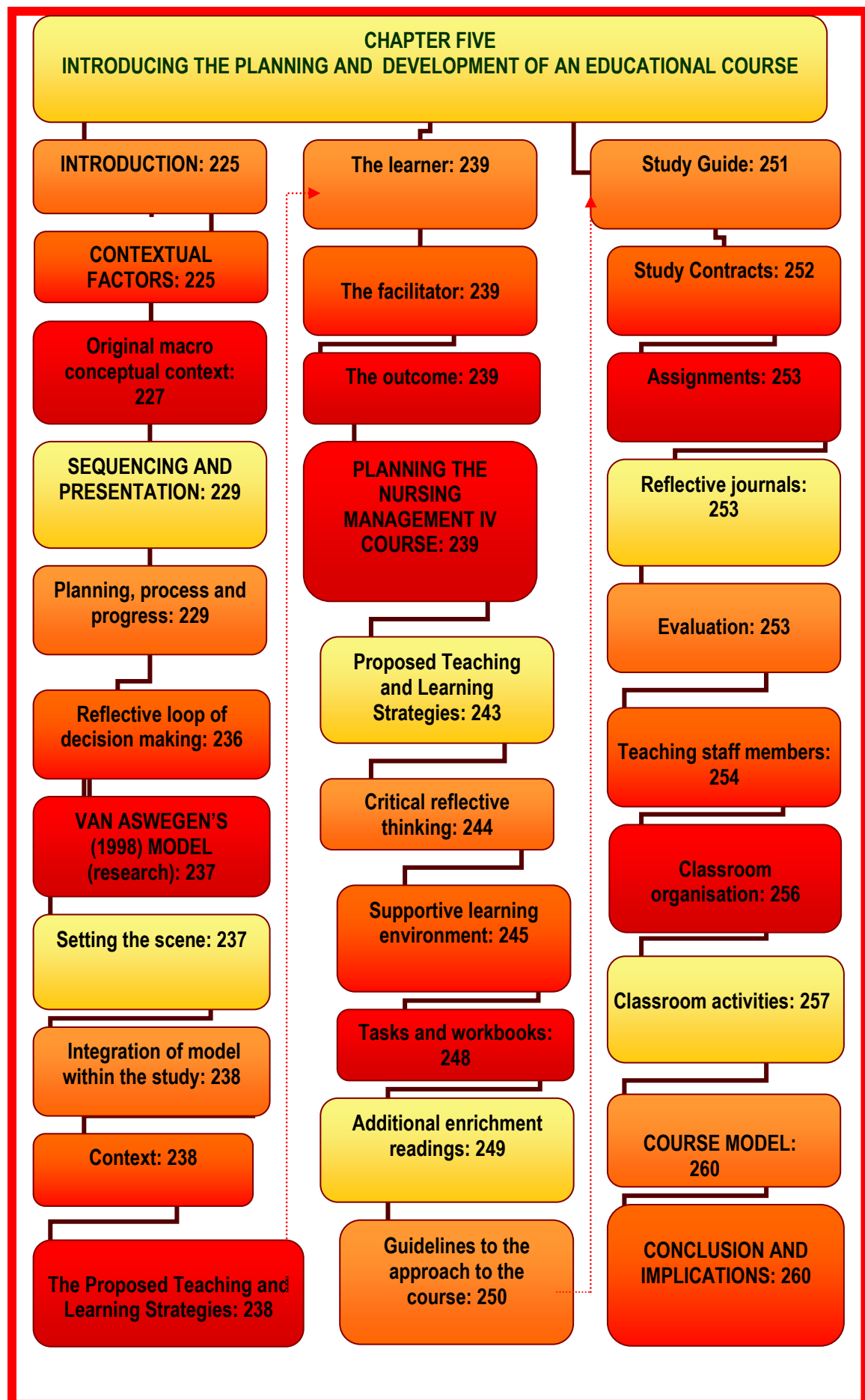
- Indentation of citations longer than 40 words (less than this, the citation forms part of the text).
- Text-within-a-box: Quotations from my reflexive journal have a different coloured font and line spacing, generally teal and single spacing.
- Borders and shading: the research process is linear and sequenced chronologically in Chapter Five, Section 5.2.1.
- Use of colour and line spacing: For example, in Chapter Six, my analysis of findings is in red, which distinguishes it from the general discussion. In Chapter Eleven, I have used different colour fonts for each of the critical readers. I have also changed the size of the spacing from double to one-and-a-half spacing for students' 'voices'.

4.26 CONCLUSION

Jane Hamilton (1995:294) in her book, *A Map of the World*, describes her main character's thoughts on stories:

“There were stories to tell, certainly, but there were also stories to tell about the telling of the stories. Although I long ago lost faith in the idea of Truth, I knew that once I spoke, the stories would take on their own shape, their own truth. In my darkest hour I doubted that there was even a lesson to take from that rubble of time. But whatever the moral was, I knew I needed to fashion the pieces together, and to myself, before all of it came tumbling out, the essence drifting heavenward, gone before I understood what it was.”

This quote reflects much of my thinking about ‘Truth’ and the perception thereof. There is an essence, but it is ephemeral, and like a wisp, cannot be firmly grasped. The process of reflection allows one to consider its permutations and use words to concretise its key elements - but there are parts of it that get lost in the translation, and parts that get added in the reflective process - that ultimately become reformed or refashioned into a concretised ‘truth’. I have tried to honestly represent, through the use of the methodology and methods, an essence of ‘truth’ that could be recognisable and accepted by the participants who shared their stories in this journey.



CHAPTER FIVE

INTRODUCING THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF AN EDUCATIONAL COURSE FRAMED BY A MODEL FOR CRITICAL REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

5. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the following chapter is to demonstrate the implementation of van Aswegen's model through the vehicle of an educational course. My intention is to describe the educational course, Nursing Management IV, and briefly trace the steps of how it was developed and refined, using the cyclical process of action research. This process of refinement is informed by aligning the model, the literature influencing the process, my reflexive journal and the objectives – to the development of the course. This chapter will therefore present the course as it stands and the developments that took place. This explanation will then provide the context for the ensuing chapters concerned with data analysis, also informed by the literature, research objectives, the model – but in addition, the data - underlining *how* and *why* these influenced the progress of this course.

5.1 CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

I inherited the course in Nursing Management IV, which up until 2000, had been offered on a piecemeal basis, an add-on subject generally treated very much like the Cinderella in the groups of four subjects offered in each of the five Bachelor of Technology: Nursing programmes. Quite naturally, the focus of the programmes was on the programme specialties and so often Nursing Management IV seemed to be considered as an after-thought, mainly taught in the lecturing format, with a focus on content. Increasingly, however, the realisation dawned on staff that while students were theoretically competent, it appeared that their understanding of management concepts seemed to be superficial and disconnected from the reality of the students' own practice. My job was to change this.

As noted in Chapter One, Section 1.1, in South Africa nursing theories have tended to be of academic interest, rather than central to teaching (Kyriacos and van den Heever, 1999). The post-apartheid government has wrought changes to both the fields of health care and education, forcing a re-examination of philosophy and programme offerings that would embrace the spirit of transformation. This was to ensure that the purpose of nurse education programmes, congruent with the needs of health services (Ntshona, 2000), would culminate in critical, creative nurses responding meaningfully to health care demands.

This chapter reflects a study on the development of a transformatory framework of nursing education, aimed at enhancing critical reflective practice, within a South African tertiary institution. Transformatory learning emancipates students through highlighting growth, development and a growing sense of control over their own lives and actions with a view to transforming perspectives for better understanding (van Aswegen, 1998; Schreiber and Banister, 2002).

My wish and intention then, was to move away from a traditional, content based course to a more flexible course that would focus on and be directed by student and service needs. But simply imposing my own framework of practice without understanding the context and culture of the students and the clients they served would be artificial at best, and harmful, at worst. It is easy to teach theory and have students learn for examination purposes. Content learning, however, is static and doesn't ensure carry-over into practice. This is problematic given the pressures and ongoing changes that beset a fragile health system, for effective change management requires informed experience.

I believe that the proof of true and worthwhile learning lies in how students contextualise their learning, engage with and integrate their learning in a way that has meaning for them and connects

with the value *they* place on the learning as it applies to their practice. Students do this by constructing their own learning experiences and take ownership by both contextualising and integrating the learning in such a way that neither theory nor practice could exist meaningfully one without the other (Johnson-Crowley, 2004). So I went to the literature and found a model, which resonated with my thinking and appeared to address the approach I wanted to take for the delivery of the course.

5.1.1 Original macro conceptual context developed at the initial stage of the project

The source for my initial crude conceptual framework (Figure 5.1) of the Nursing Management IV course was the South African health care context; the institutional and departmental context as outlined in Chapter One, Figures 1.1 to 1.3; van Aswegen's model, the research objectives, my experience as an educator and the initial literature review partially dealt with in Chapter Three. These aspects have guided the course development. The key educational strategies used to deliver the course that is based on critical reflective practice, are named in this framework.

The course is essentially a process-driven one, based on adult education principles (Chapter 3, Section 3.2). It is learner-centred (Section 3.3), based on the Constructivist theory of learning (Section 3.6), and the students' primary learning setting is their own work-place setting (Section 3.4).

Central to the mix were the teaching and learning strategies which included the following:

Portfolios – comprising reflective journals; tasks; and assignments; mentoring, Socratic discussion, reflective tutorials, critical thinking techniques, learning contracts, web-based classroom teaching, a philosophical framework underpinning critical reflective practice, course structuring, facilitation

approach to learner support and the process of continuous evaluation as conceptualised in Figure 5.1.

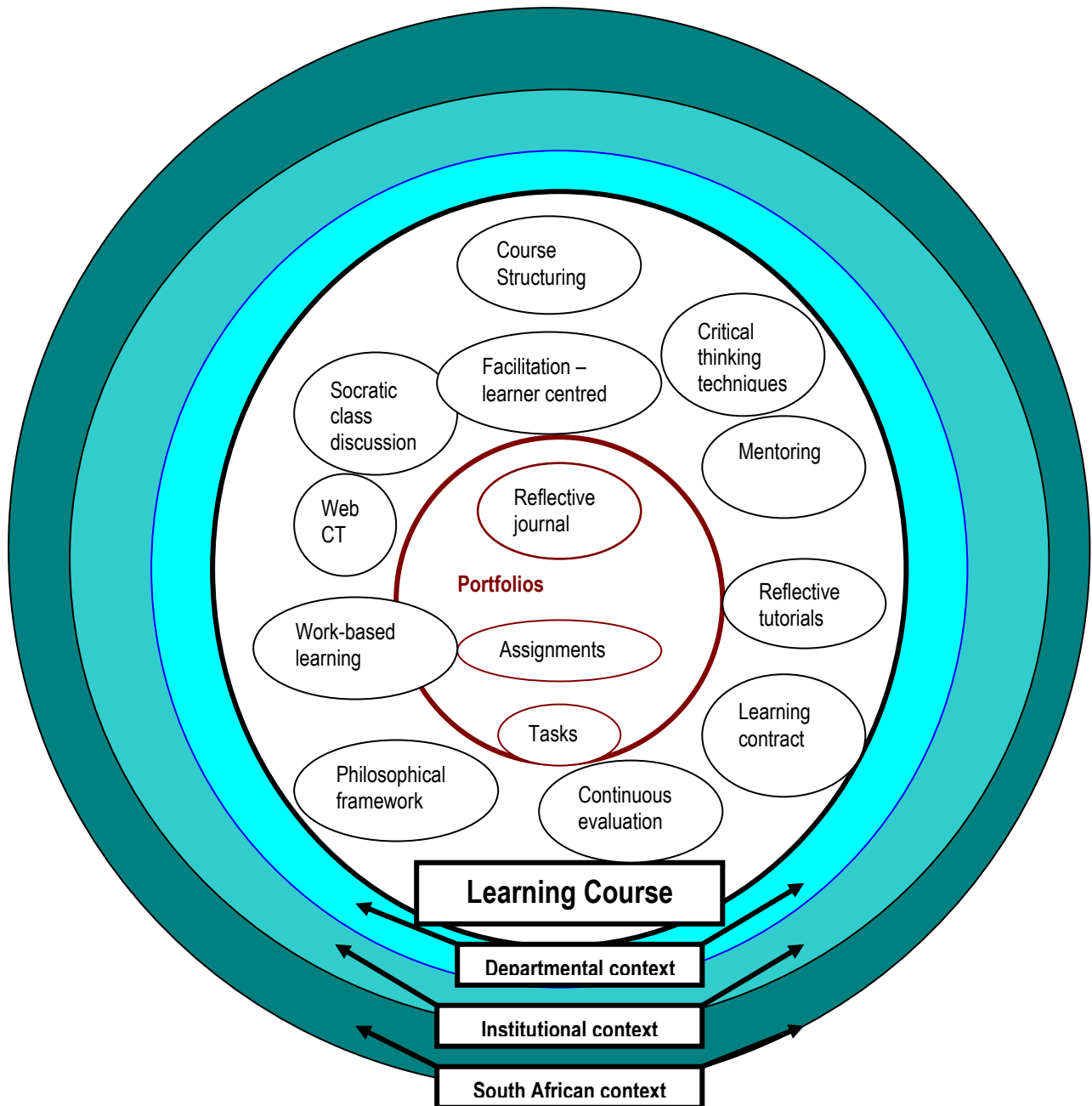
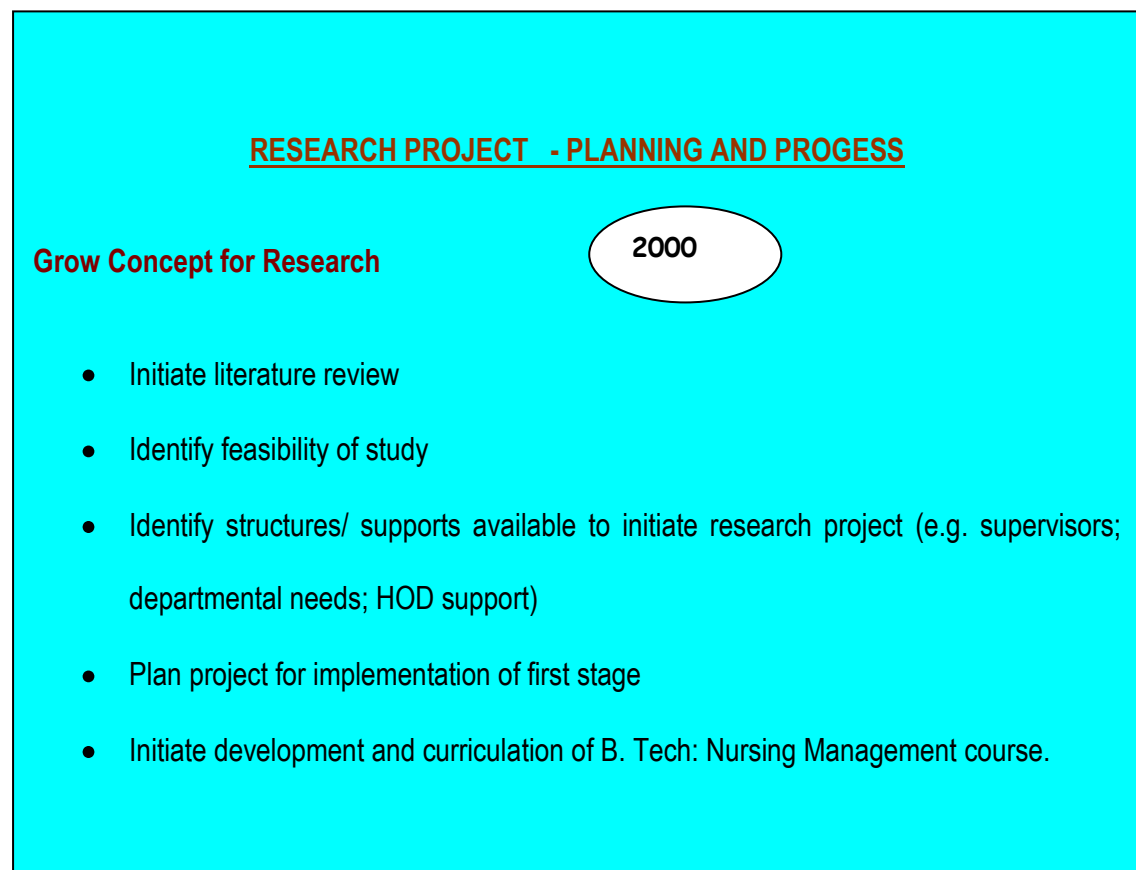


Figure 5.1: Crude macro research context

5.2 SEQUENCING AND PRESENTATION

This next section focuses on the chronological sequencing of events up until mid 2004. It focuses on my role as both that of educator developing the course and considering my practice as well as my role as researcher in this study. It is provided in a summarised format within the shaded box in 5.2.1. This is then followed by a brief explanation of how the model has been used to frame the study, and then a description of the course as it stood at the end of 2003.

5.2.1 Chronological sequencing of research project, planning, process and progress



RESEARCH PROJECT - PLANNING AND PROGRESS

2001

FIRST CYCLE

Implement Phase 1

Develop Management IV subject: approach; workbook; Web CT; CD ROM

- Complete curriculum for Nursing management programme – for Dept. of Education and Professional Board in terms of OBE/ SAQA
- Inputs – experts/ various technicians/ students/ service providers/ community – consider service based needs -> curriculum
- Determine exit level outcomes -> specified outcomes -> evaluation criteria
- Curriculum completed – B.Tech. Nursing (Management)



- Consider approach to Management IV course
- Consider philosophical framework -> van Aswegen's model (1998) of critical reflective practice
- Develop study guide and teaching programme
- Develop teaching materials -> readings
- Plan for and develop critical thinking strategies ->
 1. Socratic Discussion;
 2. Reflective journals (colour in news; reflections; nursing journal article analysis)
 3. Critiquing of journals
 4. Continuous evaluation

5. Class discussions

6. Reality based problem solving – use of critical thinking techniques e.g. mind-mapping; nominal group technique and role play

- Initiate a reflexive journal – weekly entries
- Entry (staff) – collaborate and explain to HOD/ Programme co-ordinators
- Entry (students) and permission – recruitment of participants
- Discuss research and ethical requirements – obtain informed consent from students
- First questionnaire to establish baseline information → Data source – Appendix 4.1
- Orient students to learning/ teaching strategy / review criteria
- Start class contact sessions (approximately 30 three hour sessions during academic year)
- Initiate students reflective diaries (diaries bi-weekly entries or more) → Data source Ch.7.1 and Ch.11
- Consider student support systems
- Give feedback on diary entries – differentiate between evaluation and critiquing
- Provide modes of communication – between students; between students and facilitator – telephone; e-mail; discussion forum; face-to-face contact
- Supportive environment – physical environment; facilitator (available, accessible; supportive of adult-based education)
- Identify support systems for researcher

Supervisors; accessibility;

Equipment;

Time;

Academic needs;

Research skills;

Infrastructure.

- Attend two qualitative research workshops and research workshop on Research supervision
- Identify learning needs and skills required (e.g.; computer skills for web editing; Web Ct; qualitative analysis – In Vivo)
- Join PaperHeads (doctoral support group)
- Identify required resources for developing research
- Literature review – ongoing
- Research proposal prepare and submit for approval – Research Committee
- Review and adapt/ generate theory using Reflexive Journal as data source ->
- Mid-year group evaluations to identify students' perceptions of the course progress. As a result, reconsidered and reduced the number of diary entries – Questionnaire Two
- Third and Fourth questionnaires

Data source- Ch.5,
6, 8, 9 and 11

Data source
Appendix 4,3 and 4.4

Data source –
Ch. 6.2

Research Project - Planning and Progress

2002

SECOND CYCLE

Implement Phase 2

- Develop study guide and teaching programme
- Develop teaching materials -> CD rom; workbooks; virtual classroom
- Re-consider approach to Management course

- Reconsider philosophical framework -> van Aswegen's model (1998) of critical reflective practice.
- Identify teaching theory -> constructivism
- Plan for and develop critical thinking strategies ->
 - Socratic questioning;
 - Socratic Discussion;
 - Reflective journals (colour in news; reflections; nursing journal article analysis);
 - Critiquing of journals;
 - Mentoring;
 - Portfolios;
 - Continuous evaluation (include self-evaluation; peer evaluation; developing of criteria);
 - Group work (reflective tutorials)/ student run workshop;
 - Class discussions and debate;
 - Reality based problem solving – use of critical thinking techniques e.g. mind-mapping; nominal group technique;
 - Role play – and evaluation thereof;
 - Virtual classroom as a vehicle for exploration of internet and research;
 - Teachable moments – keep updated re current issues;
 - Learning contract.
- Data collection:
 - ↓
 - Initiate a reflexive journal – weekly entries
 - Orient students to learning/ teaching strategy/review criteria

Data source – CD rom titled
reflexive journal

- Start class contact sessions (approximately 30 3 hour sessions during academic year)

- Discuss research and ethical requirements – informed consent (students/staff)

- First questionnaire to students Data source. Appendix 4.1



- Initiate reflective tutorials (6 x 1 and a half hour sessions) – audio taping for transcribing – data rich source Data source Chapter 7



- Initiate portfolios and diaries (diaries bi-weekly entries or more) – use 8 as basis for data collection Data source – Chapter 11

- Give feedback as soon as possible re portfolio and diary entries – differentiate between evaluation and critiquing. Focus on Socratic questioning.

- Provide modes of communication – between students; between students and facilitator – telephone; e-mail; discussion forum; face-to-face contact;

- Supportive environment – physical environment; facilitator (available, accessible; supportive of adult-based education/ constructivist learning/ reality based education)



- Mid-year evaluation – student questionnaire Data source- Ch. 6.2.
Appendix 4.2



- Staff interviews re perceptions on reflective practice



Data source- Ch. 9

- End-of-course student evaluation Data source – Ch. 6.2.
Appendix 4.4
- Questionnaire Five Data source - Ch. 6.2.10 - 6.2.12
Appendix 4.5
- Questionnaire Three - October Data source- Ch. 6.5.
Appendix 4.3
- Data collection, collation and transcription (partial)
- Data analysis – ongoing
- Submission of proposal for NRF funding
- Submission of abstract for Reflective Practice Conference
- Restructure 2003 course based on analysis of student evaluations

Research Project - Planning and Progress

2003/2004

- Beginning of new academic year – implementation of changes to programme based on Phase 2 data analysis e.g.
 - Structured orientation;
 - Revision and reframing of workbooks and web based materials;
 - Restructuring and tightening of programme guide;
- Introduction of an improved timetable (better timing and organisation of programme and times of offering programme);
- Entire programme constructed in manner that students can operate independently if they needed;
- Reframing of mentorship programme;
- Formalising and adding computer access time to programme rather than making it available on an ad hoc basis;

- Improved system of communication amongst students and facilitator;
- Introduction of team-teaching with specialist co-ordinators;
- Teaching of reflective practice skills and Socratic questioning method and critiquing skills to course facilitators;
- Literature review ongoing;
- Acceptance of abstract for Reflective Conference June 2003;
- Submit two papers to academic journal – basis of a chapter in thesis;
- Resubmission of responses and proposal to NRF;
- Completion of data transcription;
- Completion of coding and data analysis;
- Plan for qualitative research methodology workshop with specific emphasis on education. Use to 'filter' methodology and analysis;
- Accepted abstract and paper for international conference on co-operative education;

2005

- Final completed dissertation – May 2005;
- Submit further articles to accredited journals.

5.2.2 Reflective loop of decision making guiding the process

By reflecting on the X, Y and Z factor theory in Chapter 4, Section 4.5 it becomes clearer how this cyclical reflective loop is present in both small and larger cycles in the action research process of reflection, planning, implementing, evaluation and then reflection, planning, refining, implementing, evaluation and again, reflecting, planning, refining, implementing and evaluation as depicted in Figure 5.2.

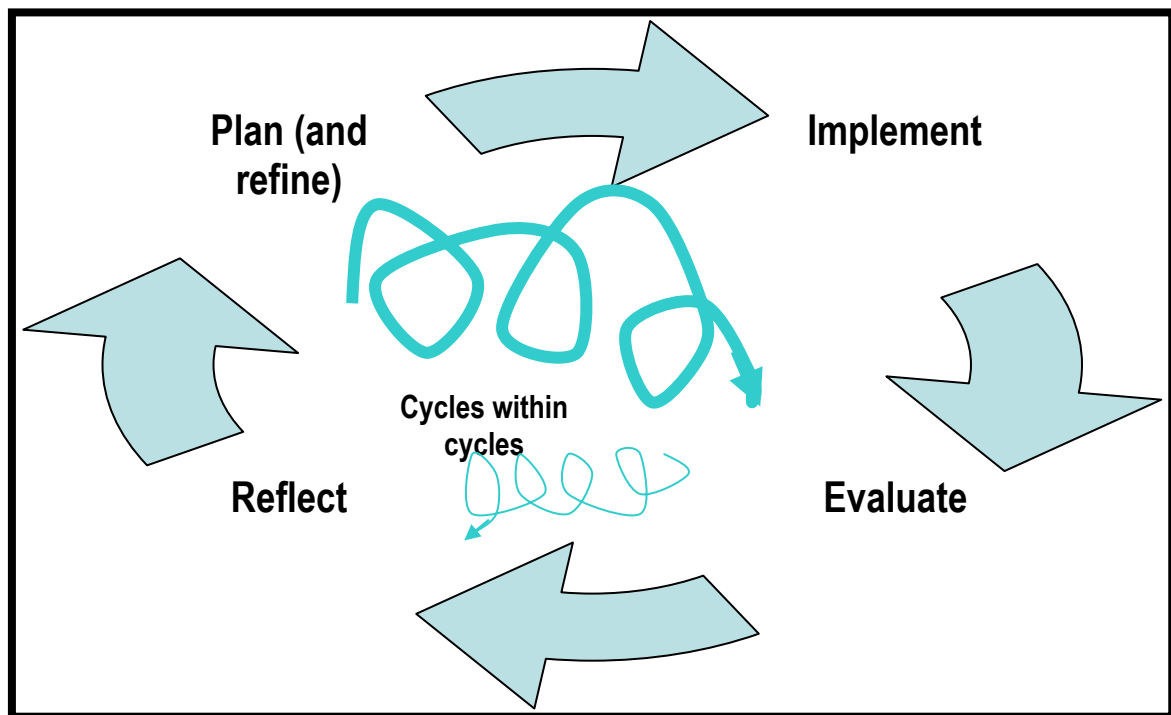


Figure 5.2 Cyclical process of chronological development of project

5.3 VAN ASWEGEN'S (1998) MODEL FOR CRITICAL THINKING AND REFLECTIVE LEARNING

The fundamental purpose behind the structuring and organising of this learning course was to support critical reflective practice and to provide a vehicle of course delivery that would encourage ongoing, regular active student learning despite the limited level of face-to-face contact with peers or facilitator. Van Aswegen's (1998) model, philosophical and conceptual in nature, does not comprise details of course structuring or implementation. It is the purpose of this study to relate how the minutiae of the unfolding course demonstrate how the model translates into practice.

5.3.1 Setting the scene

This section describes the course, Nursing Management IV, its planning, organisation and structuring. The description of the components of the programme will be detailed and include an

analysis of and rationale for the component. In some instances, the thinking behind the decisions is clarified with references to my reflexive journal, signalled by change in font size and located within a box. Chapter One, Section 1.1 outlines the programmes, the challenges and the students within the programmes in the Department of Post-graduate Nursing Studies. I needed to consult with both students and programme co-ordinators to ensure that this course was relevant to the discipline of the nursing speciality for all groups, and met the requirements for the programme as well as for the subject. All co-ordinators discussed their needs prior to the course development and were provided with all the materials relevant to the course, for discussion and input.

5.3.2 How can the model be integrated within the study of Nursing Management IV?

The model is concerned with the:

5.3.2.1 Context

The learning course was influenced by a series of contexts – from both the educational and the learner’s perspective e.g. educational (National Department of Education; the South African Nursing Council; Durban Institute of Technology; the Department of Postgraduate Nursing; B.Tech: Nursing programme; Management IV course) and learner’s perspective (personal context; occupational context; community context, health and nursing context (global, national, regional and local), socio-political context , home context and learning environment.

5.3.2.2 The process of learning within the critical reflective practice framework

These processes include guided reflection: critical thinking; creative thinking; critical reflection and reflective learning, and the factors facilitating/ limiting this process e.g. the teaching and learning methodologies; the strategies such as mentorship; portfolios – reflective journal, tasks, assignments; reflective tutorials; class discussions; workbooks; on-line learning (Web CT); and

work based learning. These processes fall within van Aswegen's model as described in Chapter Two, Section 2.3.2.

5.3.2.3 The learner

The student groups constitute a rich amalgam of cultures, educational and learning experiences, ages and language groupings. These will be specified in the following Chapter Six, Section 6.1.1 to 6.1.10. In general, however, student nurse groupings at DIT are discussed in Chapter One, Section 1.1. The traits will be reflected through reflective tutorials and reflective journals – reflecting the critical reflective practitioner as in Chapter Two, Section 2.3.4.3

5.3.2.4 The facilitator – or as van Aswegen notes, the transformative intellectual.

As I am both researcher and facilitator, this is a very subjective component. However, the facilitating process can be checked through reflexive entries and peer reviewed questions and comments; within the reflexive journal; in students' responses to the various questionnaires; the quality assurance unit's responses to the course-ware development, the moderators' evaluations as well as the empathetic-critiquing and feedback in the students' reflective journals and tasks, with the corresponding independent analysis by critical readers. I have used Chapter Three, Section 3.8 to guide my own understanding and appreciation of this concept.

5.3.2.5 The outcome

This is the praxis, or the Z factor as explained in Chapter Four, Section 4.5, as evidenced through reflective journals, reflective tutorials and tasks and results in van Aswegen's critical reflective learning and creative synthesis (Chapter Two, Section 2.3.2.5).

5.4 PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE NURSING MANAGEMENT IV COURSE

5.4.1 The Facilitator

The intention of the facilitation approach was to provide sufficient scaffolding to support student learning, but to move the students away from the dependence encouraged by a prescriptive form of teaching to enable students to function independently and autonomously, while meeting course requirements. This integrated approach to teaching and promoting learning was labour intensive and required marketing to and commitment from the staff and students. I had to consider the meta framework as well as operational issues. The philosophy of van Aswegen's model grounds the course and the educational approach focuses on adult based learning, with specific reference to the Constructivist approach to facilitation. My intention as facilitator was to follow a similar approach to that indicated by Hanley (1994), focusing on *how* to learn rather than *what* to learn. The manner in which this approach was applied to the course is discussed hereafter.

The facilitator:

- **Was a learning resource, but not the main or only resource.** Students were advised to network through the institutional staff and students; self-chosen volunteer mentors, work colleagues, peers, professional societies and other experts. While most students were in their second year of study and already used institutional facilities, I actively promoted the use of libraries (news articles, journal articles and related textbooks) and data bases both within and without the institution. The value of working with adult students is the richness of their resource-base developed over the years of nursing practice and socialisation.
- **Provided opportunities for students to challenge existing assumptions of knowledge**
- **Promoted student-driven classes and use of the Socratic method of questioning,** the technique of which was used to promote critical thinking. The Socratic Method (Socratic dialogue) is a form of introspection where self-discovery occurs by the teacher proffering a series of questions in a sequence without offering any answers. The student eventually discovers the

answers by herself (Rolfe, 2001). In other words, since no explicit teaching of content takes place, learning is essentially a matter of recalling and remembering what we already know. This approach is useful when knowledge and understanding can be gained. McFarlane and Vermeulen (2003) observe that not only does this method amalgamated with the constructivist approach lead to life-long learning, it also helps to overcome the difficulties experienced by second-language speakers. The aim was to support self-directed dialogue and equalize the power dynamics between students, and between students and facilitator as much as possible. The dialectical nature of the discussion allowed students to see issues from multiple perspectives, to interrogate their own world view and give both voice and meaning to their constructions. According to Mezirow (1981:18) cited in Platzer, (2000:689), emancipatory learning is where learners “identify real problems involving reified power relationships rooted in institutionalized ideologies which (they) have internalized in (their) psychological history.” It would seem that proffering of different perspectives was needed to allow students to interrogate their assumptions. He also suggested that the use of Socratic questioning and the sharing of problems from these different perspectives within small supportive groups would promote emancipatory learning but that the accompanying role of the teacher would need to be non-directive and not that of the usual authoritarian information provider. The idea was not to rush the discussion, particularly in view of the fact that many of the students were second-language English students, but to give students ‘space’ and the time in which to uncover relationships and concepts (See Chapter Three, Sections 3.4.4, 3.9 and 3.14.5.2). The questioning approach was intended to invite decisions instead of implying criticism, which can limit participation (Picou, Cantrell and Barr, 1998). The intention of questions is to open issues and challenge cognitive thinking, but needed to be introduced carefully so as not to threaten the integrity of the student.

- **Promoted thoughtful discussions and encourage questioning through open-ended questions.** A student noted early in 2001 that she did “feel uncomfortable as we are not used to

talking in a large number of people. You feel threatened to speak in class as there are students who are dominating”. Recognition of language difficulties and cultural differences enabled an awareness and anticipation of potential difficulties and embarrassments and so the use of small group discussions and activities within the classroom was promoted, as were follow-up small group tutorial sessions based on compatible groupings, which followed in 2002 after a trial run of a small group of students in 2001.

- **Provided tasks, based on work experiences**, which encouraged students to engage in higher order thinking. A thematic approach to the course was used, based on a situational analysis of their work environment. The tasks were structured to build on this concrete knowledge base, enabling students to develop both a micro and macro view of nursing management within a known context, and so move from the concrete to the abstract. Experience rather than theory referenced these tasks, which were meant to be completed prior to class. These were then challenged or understood in the light of the experiences of other students, and within a theoretical context.
- **Promoting student autonomy and control** (see Chapter Three, Section 3.2): Although an overall framework for the course and its functioning was provided, most of the structuring, organisation, content, timing, evaluation process and approach were open for input, discussion and negotiation. Non-negotiable decisions were the number of tests, assignments, tasks and contact sessions. Students were required to enter into learning contracts, the content of which was open to negotiation.
- **Promoted the use of raw data and primary sources** for learning resource materials. The data from the students’ own health services formed the source for the situational analysis and subsequent tasks and assignments (See Chapter Three, Section 3.5).
- **Focused on the spirit of enquiry**: The learning process rather than outcome was emphasised (see Chapter Three, Section 3.6.4).

- **Used, encouraged and accepted students' interests, practice experience, ideas and questions to drive lessons** (see Chapter Three, Section 3.6.5).
- **Promoted collaboration and leadership in students** which supported student initiative in identifying own sources of information as well as action that resulted from learning. While students worked independently, there were a number of strategies that promoted collaboration and leadership (see Chapter Three, Section 3.7.1.3).
- **Encouraged the use of a variety of alternative sources of information** and the use of local resources for problem resolution.
- **Supported students' reasoning processes through problem solving:** Promoted an environment that supported the challenge of ideas (Burton, 2000, in Chapter Three, Section 3.1.1).
- **Provided time for reflection and analysis:** Respected, recognised and integrated student generated ideas (see Chapter Three, Section 3.10.5).
- **Promoted self-analysis and evidence-based learning** (see Chapter Three, Section 3.14).
- **Promoted the use of information used in real-life problems** (see Chapter Three, Section 3.5).
- **Promoting learning beyond the immediacy of the classroom** (see Chapter Three, Section 3.5).
- **Linked learning to work environment and profession** (see Chapter Three, Section 3.5).
- **Adapted strategies or lesson content based on student responses.**
- **Facilitated the process of reflective thinking and writing** (see Chapter Three, Section 3.14).

5.4.2 The proposed teaching and learning strategies

The intention of the approach to teaching was not to provide content teaching, but rather to teach students to think critically and reflectively, and use their experience to interrogate the theory (see

Chapter Three, Section 3.2). I was far more concerned with enabling students how to think rather than prescribing what to think. Chapter Three, Section 3.10 and 3.11 grounds my understanding of critical thinking and reflection and the following strategies and formats support this process.

5.4.2.1 Supportive learning environment

Lepp and Zorn (2002) support my view that environment influences learning.

“Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thought nor measure words, but pouring them all right out, just as they are, chaff and grain together, certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and with a breath of kindness, blow the rest away“

~Anonymous (Shoshone) as cited in Lepp and Zorn (2002).

I wanted to create the kind of environment that allows thinking to flow in a supportive, but challenging way and endeavoured to create a physical environment in the classroom that would support this (See Section 5.4.2.1). I realised that ‘safe space’ was not only physical, but also related to the way in which I could create an openness for students to posit their thoughts (Lepp and Zorn, 2002). Chapter Seven discusses the tutorial analysis. Within this, I have described both the need and the approach for a conducive learning environment for the small group discussions to take place. Within the classroom, where there were larger groups, wherever possible, I created circular seating. Lepp and Zorn (2002:384) describe the circle as symbolic of “unity, harmony, connection, and fellowship.” They suggest that the culture of safe space is made by providing choices and as the facilitator, by sharing one’s self. “This revelation is daring and makes the statement, ‘If the teacher shares, it is expected of me, and it is okay for me to share also.’ “ (Lepp and Zorn, 2002:385). The degree to which teachers' personal boundaries are open or closed, and their sensitivity to students' needs for privacy or intimacy influence the quality of education.” Other ways in which I tried to promote this kind of environment were through a comprehensive orientation,

where the teaching and learning approach was discussed. I tried to be respectful and supportive of individual differences and the humanistic theory in Chapter Three, Section 3.1 guided my approach.

5.4.2.2 Courseware development

My intention in the facilitation of this course was to support the Constructivist approach to learning and to allow students to shape their own learning and decide their own learning needs and priorities within the framework of the course structure. I explained to students at early stages that in order for this to happen, there were basic requirements:

- (1) Readings allocated for the class would be completed prior to class sessions;
- (2) Students would be provided with enrichment activities and readings but that there was a choice in whether or not to engage with these; and
- (3) Tasks related to their workplace setting must be written up and completed prior to class.

The reasoning behind these prior activities was that this would enable students to do the work for themselves, who would then as a result of this strategy, be able to identify where learning had taken place and where their real learning needs were. Class sessions would then be student rather than lecturer driven.

All of the above depended on whether or not students chose to engage in this reading resulting in understanding of and intelligent engagement with the course requirements. Hubbart (2001:231), recognising that the students at UNISA, a South African university providing distance education, had to study in a medium that was not their home language, cites Chick (1985) who makes a connection between sociolinguistics and socio-cultural contexts. Chick identified the negative cycle created between an English speaking lecturer and students and Zulu-English speaking students and suggested that this context created a cycle of social discrimination “which links the sort of micro-level misunderstandings that arise in the latter, cross-cultural encounter to macro-level

problems such as cultural stereotyping and racial discrimination in a society.” An appreciation of this possibility or even this likelihood in view of the similarity of the context, led me to consider the development of workbook modules that would attempt to cross this divide. As facilitator, I had to try and ensure that I used techniques in the written communication to motivate this engagement. I considered some of the basic techniques I had identified in a variety of readings, to promote independent study and tried to incorporate these in the course-ware development for the workbooks, study guide and CD-rom, all of which were completed in 2001 and then refined each subsequent year. For example, some of the features identified as being successful were in the layout with the wider margins, “more graphics; less cluttered text with better use of white space and uses larger print with a greater variety of font types” (Hubbart, 2001:232). I immediately realised that in an effort to cost save, I had used A5 size pages in 2002, a mistake I rectified in 2003. In 2001, I accidentally used a mix of font sizes but changed this in 2002 to one font type in an effort to maintain consistency and less clutter. I had tried to create emphasis by the use of bold, highlighter, space, blocks and graphics.

Hubbart (2001) in recognition of the attempt by UNISA, in an environment where most of their learners studied through the medium of English, and not their mother tongue, and in light of the organisation’s educational movement to becoming more learner centred, undertook a study, the end purpose of which was to make the “discourse” of the educational materials more accessible to learners. He contrasted two UNISA study guides, a 1991 and a 1997 guide, the latter being identified as being more reader friendly as it had higher general readability values and significantly higher involvement values. This study guide was identified as a significant factor in the marked improvement of student results.

Stephens (2000) and Hubbart (2001:232) support a number of the linguistic elements associated with readability which include “the use of short, familiar concrete words, rather than long, low frequency abstract words; verbs rather than nominalisations; active rather than passive constructions; shorter rather than longer sentences; and an adequate number of explicit cohesion links”.

Both identify private verbs such as ‘feel’ (do you feel that...), ‘find’ (how do you find .. in your situation), ‘think’ (if you think this... how would we...) as being significant indicators of personal involvement. “There is a strong sense of writers engaging with student readers acknowledging their position and their concerns, and negotiating meaning with them as they are prompted to notice, to think, to question and to understand” (Hubbart, 2001:237).

Also characteristic of involvement are the contractions of spoken discourse and written discourse between people known to each other e.g. isn’t, doesn’t. General emphatics such as ‘just so’, ‘of course’, really emphasise writer commitment.

Hubbart (2001:232) describes accessibility in terms of Fleisch’s ‘human interest’ element. This is where the text incorporates personal words including names and first and second person pronouns and “ ‘personal sentences’ (such as questions, requests, imperatives, exclamations and truncated sentences)”. Intuitively, most of the tasks and introduction to modules in the Management IV course, had incorporated this ‘human interest’ element. This was probably enhanced by functioning of the tasks and assignments, which were work-based and work-related, and relied on the personal formula. Tanner in Hubbart (2001:233) describes this human interest feature as “oral strategies and others have called features of orality or of spoken language in fact are the result of relative

focus on interpersonal involvement”. Hubbart (2001:234) notes that “effective expository writing has the writer engaging in a kind of implicit dialogue with the reader...”

At the end of the research process, I considered the workbooks a work still in progress. Whatever the evaluation, changes would be ongoing, affected by current happenings, new research and student needs.

5.4.2.3 Guidelines to the approach to the course

Students were provided with guidelines to the approach to the Nursing Management IV subject. These included a rationale for the reality-based, work-situated problem-solving approach. It drew their attention to their prior knowledge and experiences which should inform their learning and indicated some of the adult learning, student-centred approaches to learning that should be employed such as

- mutual determination of course needs and learning outcomes
- choosing and working with mentors
- accessing and using a variety of learning resources including external speakers, the library (texts, data bases and videos), workbooks, CD-rom and course guide
- pre-reading of course materials
- preparing work (reflective tasks) *before* class
- the open-door facilitation process
- tutorial sessions
- reflective journal
- participatory approach.

It also highlighted the critical reflective learning theme that would factor throughout the entire course. These concepts are dealt with in Chapter Three, Sections 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6. Le

Cornu, Peters and Collins (2003) support this approach in their identification of some of the following elements as being important in developing a culture of learning: Establishing norms for learning, re-negotiating students' roles and responsibilities, explicit teaching of social skills and processes, re-negotiating the educator's roles and responsibilities and being a reflective educator.

5.4.2.4 Study Guide

The study guide was intended as a working guide and to be used on a regular, ongoing basis. The themes, readings and administrative components of the course in its entirety were structured for the whole academic year, and the readings, tasks and assignments were titled and page-numbered, cross-referenced to the workbooks, which were also page-numbered and indexed. Intimate knowledge and use of the guide was required for the students to actively participate in their course and studies. A comprehensive explanation to the usage of the guide was provided during the early course orientation and the guide comprised brief explanations and descriptions of the following course components:

Lecture dates and times, venue, departmental staff members, programme objectives (SANC), B.Tech: Nursing SAQA outcomes, B.Tech: Nursing: Management Programme subjects, Nursing Management IV course objectives, course duration, the computer based approach, course content, general departmental rules governing assignments, assignment guidelines, task requirements, tests and evaluations, recommended texts, grading legend, due dates for assignments, due dates for tasks, timetable and subject content, assignment mark weighting, Web CT usage, practica/experiential learning objectives, study contract and evaluation rubric examples.

The study guide was referred to at each contact session, at the initial stage for discussion of the context and format of the class, and at class completion in preparation for the following contact session.

5.4.2.5 Tasks and workbooks

Workbooks provided core and required readings that formed the theoretical basis for between 12 to 20 tasks students were required to engage in prior to class attendance. The intention was for the students to consider their practice; actively engage with the theory; test their practice in their own work settings in light of the theory, with support and facilitation from their mentors, and then discuss their tasks with peers in the class setting. In this way, they actively determined the gaps in their learning and the direction of the class activities. The sharing of knowledge was self-driven, and therefore was more meaningful. The evaluation of the tasks was simple. The purpose was to ensure that students linked theory to actual practice in a meaningful way, and that was all. Most of the tasks were phrased in the form of reflective questions, and as long as students answered these questions in an applied manner, they were given a grade. The grading was broad and was clearly indicated in their guide. Grammar, punctuation and all the rules that comprise academic writing style were not considered in the grade allocation – however, the concepts of critical thinking such as analysis, application, transference and interpretation were. I wanted students to inductively question and interpret their own practice so that practice was not driven by theory, but rather, practice interrogated theory. I have included the following extract from my reflexive journal to provide an example of how the literature supported this thinking and the reality of what occurred in my classes.

Reflexive Journal entry: 16 September, 2003

Rogge (2001:67) notes in her study that her students were expected to read prior to class and prepare for their seminars by answering their case-study questions. She says that “by answering the model questions, the students discovered the natural linkages” and connections between the disease processes and that discussions led to identification of the characteristics of the subject matter, which then naturally led on to inferences for treatment modalities. The point, she suggests, is that educators “are faced with the need to do more than help students recall facts about specific disease process; they are challenged to assist students to learn how to learn for a lifetime” Rogge (2001:69).

Comment: This same approach is carried through in my study in that students were expected to read and complete their tasks prior to class. Expectation, however, did not always match the reality. Certain students were meticulous about completing work in time but many completed the tasks in their own time. The readings, however, in general, were covered, which then allowed for group discussions. The students also discovered that if they did not read or prepare for class, that frequently classes did not focus on the readings and went in other directions. For those who hadn't read and hoped for clarification, this then became problematic. In fairness, they were offered opportunities to discuss these readings or their concerns at other times e.g. through tutorials or independently. Some took up the offer, others didn't.

Students were provided with additional readings on-line and recommended texts were provided in the library. The students were repeatedly told that the information within the workbooks was adequate and that they were not required to read further. The decision to read more broadly was to be determined by the students – it was not a requirement.

5.4.2.6 Study Contracts

Part of the departmental philosophy was to work with study contracts with all students. Hewitt-Taylor (2001) and O'Shea (2003) indicate this to be an ideal method of facilitating self-directed learning. The commitment required for self-directed learning in the Nursing Management IV course necessitated an early understanding and agreement with this approach. The concept of a contract was discussed and the socially and morally binding nature of the document was emphasised. The contract was provided and explained on the first day of the three day course orientation and signing was required by the final day of orientation. This was to ensure that the students fully understood and accepted the process and requirements, and had the option to continue or deregister from the course, should it be contrary to their expectations or learning needs. The study contract included a component on student demographic information and then focused on the following aspects: commitment to learning requirements, specifically adult-based, student-centred education with corresponding student responsibility; the focus on critical reflective learning and practice; prior class reading; class attendance; group work; Web CT and computer literacy; the mentoring relationship; and commitment to self-directed learning. The signed contract was photocopied, so that both student and course co-ordinator had copies as reminders and proof of intent. The first contract developed for this course was scrutinised by a staff member of the institutional quality assurance unit, who noted the commitment required from the students, but observed a lack of negotiated commitment from me, the facilitator. A salutary lesson. As a result, I returned to the students to negotiate my own role.

Boud (1998:201) advises caution when boundaries, relationships and reflection are being considered.

“The range and class of activities which will be the object of reflection should be agreed. Without this there is potential to inadvertently enter areas which are beyond the normal contract between teacher and learner and thus to face tricky ethical dilemmas. There need to be boundaries on what outcomes of reflection are to be shared with others and these boundaries should be clear from the start. The boundary between professional space and private space is not fixed, but needs to be clarified in any given setting to avoid a particular version of what Habermas (1987) has referred to as ‘colonisation of the life-world’. That is the intrusion of institutions — work, profession, educational institution — into the domain that has been regarded as personal and in the hands of the individual to share. “

5.4.2.7 Mentor

Students were expected to identify a manager who was prepared to act as a mentor for them during the course. The purpose of the mentor was to facilitate better access to and understanding of the student’s work context and to support the student through the learning process by facilitating access to information and acting as a sounding board for ideas. An important skill in management is to be able to manage people. One of the students’ management tasks was to establish entry into the system and to motivate for such a mentor, with whom they would need to meet at least twice a month. They were also required to ‘negotiate’ and draw up a contract with their mentor.

In 2002, the concept of the mentor was initiated in this study with varied levels of success. A workshop, run by the students as part of the course requirements, was based on the mentoring process. The intention was to explore the purpose, value and implementation of the mentoring process and the workshop was also used as an opportunity for students to recognise and

appreciate their personal mentors and the value of their personal growth. It became clear that more emphasis needed to be placed on the marketing of the concept in 2003 for students to realize the value of the mentoring process early on. This took place during orientation to the course; in group discussions about the process on an intermittent but regular basis; via various readings on mentoring made available to the students; through a presentation of the highlights of the 2002 video-taped workshop; through a letter of introduction and request to the proposed mentor and the development of a negotiated contract with the individual mentors.

5.4.2.8 Assignments

In addition to the tasks, the students were required to complete five assignments. These were developed with the programme co-ordinators and the evaluation criteria for most of the assignments were developed in collaboration with the students. Academic correctness was important and the grading incorporated these components.

5.4.2.9 Reflective journals

The journals (or diaries) comprised a significant component of the course mark reflecting the significance attached to their role in promoting critical reflective writing. Chapter Seven, Sections 7.1 and 7.3.6 address the structuring and significance of this approach to critical reflective practice.

5.4.2.10 Reflective tutorials

Six one-and-a-half hour reflective tutorials were organised after class sessions in my office. Students determined who should be in their groups, when they would attend and how the sessions should be run. Suggestions as to the structure were made i.e. discussions could be on the diary entries, readings or components of the course that the students either had difficulties with or would like to engage around in further discussions. Alternatively, work based issues could be debated.

The approach was casual and informal, and students could eat and drink and be comfortable. Students were encouraged to speak their mind, while respecting the presence of others. In the initial stages, my role as facilitator set the tone, but gradually, the dominance of my role receded to sometimes merely being a presence and providing a space and a forum for discussion. The reflective tutorials were seen as an important adjunct to reflective journaling and are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Eight, Section 8.1.

5.4.2.11 Evaluation

The approach to this course can be understood in the context of the differentiation between evaluation and grading, two concepts, Tanner (2005:435) notes that are frequently combined as a single concept and she sums up my philosophy on evaluation as follows:

“True, evaluation is necessary and prerequisite to grade assignment. But evaluation can and must serve many more purposes than grading, not the least of which is to guide learning. Nursing is a complex discipline. To practice nursing well requires a deep understanding and way of being in the world, beyond a simple recall of facts or performance of an objective list of behaviors.”

The department committed to the principle of Continuous Assessment over 11 years ago for all formal programmes. The intention in the Management IV course was to involve students in determining criteria and providing varied and appropriate forms of continuous evaluation, including self-evaluation, peer and external evaluation (the workshop). Evaluation is both of the individual and of the group, and is evaluated by individuals or by a group. Formative evaluation received significant weighting because of the significance attributed to the formative process of the learning (80% to 90%), but the course concluded with summative evaluation, to ensure that students had a comprehensive and holistic grasp of the subject in its entirety. Unlike most subjects where there is one external moderator, this subject had at least three external moderators, each from the different

discipline in nursing e.g. Occupational Health, Primary Health care and Management. Moderators can and do access student files comprising all their work, during the year.

Feedback was continuous and students generally received the critiquing of their diary entries and feedback on their tasks and assignments the following session where time was provided for students to read and question feedback. In 2002, feedback was not consistently returned immediately for the next session (this is a labour intensive process). This appeared to affect student motivation and the completion of follow-on tasks and reflective journal entries, and so a determined effort was made in 2003 for a quicker response time. It was notable that in 2003, students kept to the scheduling of tasks, journal entries and assignments (except for one or two exceptions), therefore validating this approach.

I also had an open-door policy and students' files were kept in the department, accessible to students. When they have read through their feedback or questioned comments or the evaluation or made the necessary corrections, they returned their work to their folder, which they could reread at any time during the year. Those who e-mailed, used Web CT or submitted work on a computer disc were responded to via the same system. Students were advised to keep copies of all submitted work. Near the end of the course, their files were returned for a two week period so that they could revise/ review for a summative assessment. Their formative assessment was kept on spreadsheets in the department and students were kept fully informed as to the status of their marks. The type of assessment and approach to assessment was discussed and debated in class and students were instrumental in developing criteria and approaches. These student files or portfolios (as discussed in Chapter Three, Section 3.15) comprising the reflective journal, tasks, assignments and tests, were collated at the end of the year to be kept for a 5 year period for quality

inspection purposes by external assessors. A course transcription was completed and filed, should students need this information for professional purposes, e.g. emigration to another country.

5.4.2.12 Teaching staff members involved with course offering

In 2002 and for the first six months of 2003, I facilitated the class sessions. An external lecturer mostly facilitated the second half of 2003, after we had discussed the format of the class session. Every third or fourth class, external speakers (experts in their fields) were brought in for part of the class session. Discussions with the speakers took place prior to class in order to orientate them to the intended outcomes of the class sessions. They were provided with the readings and the objectives and then ran a class either including these, or bringing in alternative readings.

Prior to 2001, this course was seen mainly by other departmental staff-co-ordinators as an adjunct to their programme where they had determined course content, structuring and offering. It was mainly taught in piece-meal format, with a focus on content and the lecture method, largely because of the limited number of periods set aside for the course. Course co-ordinators integrated and taught many components within the discipline they were teaching, which had the obvious merit of students perceiving management as an integral part of their specialised discipline. The transition to another staff member taking responsibility and determining content and approach (even though liaising with the co-ordinators and basing the course on SAQA and SANC determined outcomes) was not easy, particularly as the approach demanded increased student input (affecting time for practica and other programme requirements). This evaluation was facilitated by constant liaison with staff and marketing of the course to staff and students, as well as support from the head of department, combined with the fact that that formally researching the process offered legitimacy, and the appreciation that the department worked, by-and-large, as a team. This team of nursing educators, indirectly, were a very important part of the course process and progress.

5.4.2.13 Classroom organisation

Desks and chairs were organised in a circle in 2002 and an oval in 2003, and the arrangement was determined by the students and classroom design. Lepp and Zorn (2002) suggest that one way of promoting safe learning is through aesthetically pleasing environments. The classrooms used had high ceilings, wide spaces, comfortable chairs, big windows and an urn and space to make tea. The students were encouraged to shift chairs and rearrange the room to suit themselves and the timing of activities depended on when they tired and needed a break. Movement to change perspectives was encouraged by the frequent forming of smaller group discussions and role-play (Lepp and Zorn, 2002). I tried to arrange class sessions so that adjoining rooms or space was free for students to engage in these small group discussions in a place of relative quiet.

Although there was an overhead projector, video machine and monitor and whiteboard, these were ancillary and were not used much as they would in the lecture format, but were used rather to highlight issues under discussion. Tea-time was flexible and students were allocated a cupboard to store their mugs and tea. The class had their own pin-board, where readings or notices were displayed. Students could organise this how they wished.

5.4.2.14 Classroom activities

The first five minutes of the 2002 class, midway through the year was devoted to prayer (student initiated and managed). The first 15 minutes for all groups (and the 2002 group after prayer) dealt with the administration aspects of the course and the proposed session for the day. Students' folders with their tasks/ assignments or diary entries were handed back and students spent time reviewing the comments. Questions were asked and students either took their work home for another week to review or handed them back to the facilitator, so that they could be returned to their 'class-based' folder.

Students could and did use this time to change the process of the session by proposing alternative tasks for the day. Most students realised fairly early on in the year, that class sessions would not follow the traditional lecture format, where the lecturer would determine the content and cover perceived significant components of the session. The students had to determine what was to be covered during the day. The completed tasks formed the basis for the discussions and if students had not covered the required reading, it was omitted from the session. The responsibility for learning was handed to the students. Group tasks based on readings formed a routine part of the session, and many of the tasks were skill-based or discussion based. The intention was to provide a psychologically safe environment for role play and development of ideas and theories, or problem solving.

Most sessions included a component on diary discussions and students shared issues in class. Also included in the session, were discussions on newsworthy health related issues. Initially, discussions included the whole class, but this then moved to small group discussions or role play. Each class contact session concluded with students moving to an on-line computer centre, where they then engaged in an interactive on-line classroom.

5.4.2.15 Web CT (On-line learning)

In 2002, although students had been given five afternoons of computer literacy teaching at the beginning of their two-year degree programme, quite naturally, their level of computer literacy was minimal. Very little significance had been given departmentally to computer literacy, other than to insist that student handed in typed assignments, which they did not necessarily need to type themselves. Nursing is a clinically based profession and because very few students had access to computers or even used computers in the workplace (between 1- 5%), it was not seen by the department to be an educational requirement. The computer and its internet access seemed to

represent a type of freedom that many students had not experienced before. The departmental argument prior to 2001 postulated that disadvantaged students would be further disadvantaged if they were required to be computer literate (beyond the requirement of the five session course). Those students with the financial means or working in a health industry where computers were freely available were advantaged, and it would not be fair to others to insist on computer use. I initially supported this theory but ultimately realised that unless we provided computer access, we were disadvantaging all the nursing students. So, a trial run of a web based classroom was introduced in 2002 where engagement in its activities would be seen as an enrichment activity, but structured in such a way that facility in computer usage in no way affected the students' marks. Students who had free time could access and engage in the activities presented through this classroom. The result of the evaluation in 2002 provided the stimulus to formally include the Web-based classroom in the timetable in 2003 and for all students to engage in the web-based classroom facilities. This was to be a course requirement, but again, would not and did not affect the student's grade.

Certain issues guided the practical implementation of this component of the course. I understood that it would be very easy to frustrate students, therefore allowing them to give up the process. Personally, my main frustrations have resulted from a lack of knowledge of the technical aspects of the computer. I can work on it but not in it, and had I not the technical support provided by the learning institution, would possibly not have persisted in its usage (I note this as an older user). The computer access for students at our institution, particularly in our faculty, was precarious, to say the least, especially if students are not formally registered for Computer Studies. Fortunately, the staff (N=3) in the On-line learning department were supportive and progressive and as I was one of the first students on their Web CT staff training programme, they allowed my students and I to use their computer laboratory, with its dedicated laboratory technician. Therefore, while students

worked in the laboratory, their computer technical difficulties were attended to. Those who worked off campus were provided with a 24 hour help-line from one of the On-line Learning Department's staff. This did not prevent all frustrations about computer technical problems, but certainly alleviated most.

5.4.3 Reflections on the process

My reflexive journal was particularly useful in allowing me to ruminate upon and process the implementation, evaluation and the refinement of the processes occurring within the Nursing Management IV course. A selection of these reflections provide example of this process and is included in the raw data as Appendix 5.1.

5.5 META STRUCTURE

This chapter has provided an overview of the learning course, Nursing Management IV through a variety of lenses, triangulating various data generated from a number of sources. It is a complex course, and perhaps it might best be encapsulated and summarised in the form of the meta structure of the course as seen in Figure 5.3 as follows:

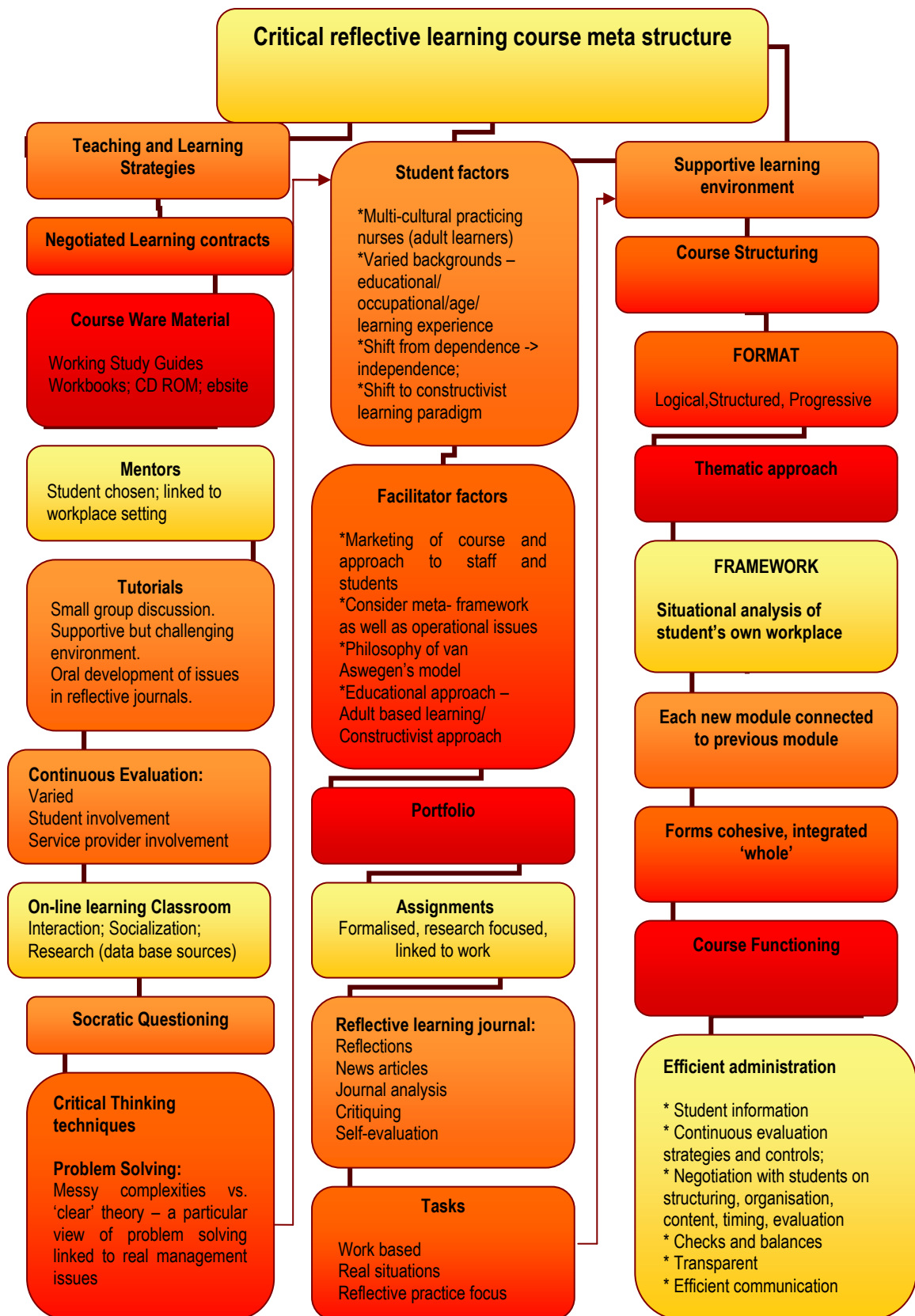
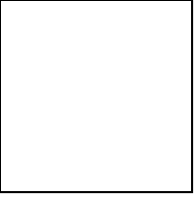


Figure 5.3: Meta-structure of nursing management course

5.6 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF COURSE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Nursing Management IV learning course, on which the study is based, is complex in nature, multi-dimensional and comprises a number of integrated teaching and learning strategies and includes a mix of theory derived from practice, mentorship, reflective journaling, Socratic questioning, group discussions, web-based learning and a Constructivist approach focusing on adult, problem-based learning.

Through research in subsequent chapters, I look for evidence of the students' ability to think and learn critically and reflectively, which I believe were supported within environments created or used to promote emancipatory or transformative learning. These contexts did not only include the classroom, but included the multiple facilities of the tertiary institution (e.g. libraries, on-line learning centre), the students' work environment (clinics, occupational health centres, hospital units), their social and home contexts as well as their professional contexts in the broader health field. The teaching and learning approach was multilayered and integrated. It focused on process, student-centred learning with a conceptualised, thematic approach to management activities and functions within the students' workplace. This reality-based learning (as discussed in Section 3.4 as a whole) was enhanced by a variety of critical reflective learning techniques including portfolios, reflective journals, work-based mentors, web-based learning tasks and assignments, learning contracts, visiting lecturers/consultants, and a variety of evaluation strategies within the context of continuous evaluation. These are aligned with McCombs and Whistler's characteristics of learner-centred classrooms, as described in Chapter Three, Section 3.3.1. The facilitator-learner relationship was based on negotiation and mutual respect and key teaching techniques were informed by adult learning principles and by the Constructivist approach to teaching as explained in Chapter 3, Section 3.6. These included Socratic based discussions and reflective writing where current events, derived from the news media and professional nursing journals, and from theory derived



from nursing practice, formed source material for discussions and reflections as depicted in Figure 5.1. Throughout this process, the research question, purpose and objectives of the study drove the investigation.

CHAPTER SIX OVERVIEW OF THE NURSING MANAGEMENT IV COURSE THROUGH THE LENS STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

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CHAPTER SIX

OVERVIEW OF THE NURSING MANAGEMENT IV COURSE THROUGH THE LENS OF STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

6. INTRODUCTION

Chapter Five provided the description of the planning and implementation of the course, Nursing Management IV. The purpose was to provide a context for the evaluation of this course in general, which is then dealt with in this chapter. Selected key components that also influence the outcome of the course (for example, the reflective tutorials and journals), have all been placed in subsequent separate chapters. This is because these chapters are able to provide the detail which provides the richness and depth offered through the learning that has taken place in the Nursing Management IV course, as well as provided a means of triangulating the data.

The data to support the findings in this chapter was generated from five questionnaires, (fully explained in Chapter Four, Section 4.18 and available in Appendices 4.1 – 4.5), as well as the data generated from moderator reports, (explicated in Sections 4.17.2.2 and 4.18) and self-reports from staff members of the institutional quality assurance unit, Centre for Higher Education (CHED). While my intention was to evaluate van Aswegen's model through the implementation of the Nursing Management IV course, this chapter just refers briefly to where the data connects with the model.

The actual evaluation is placed in the concluding chapter.

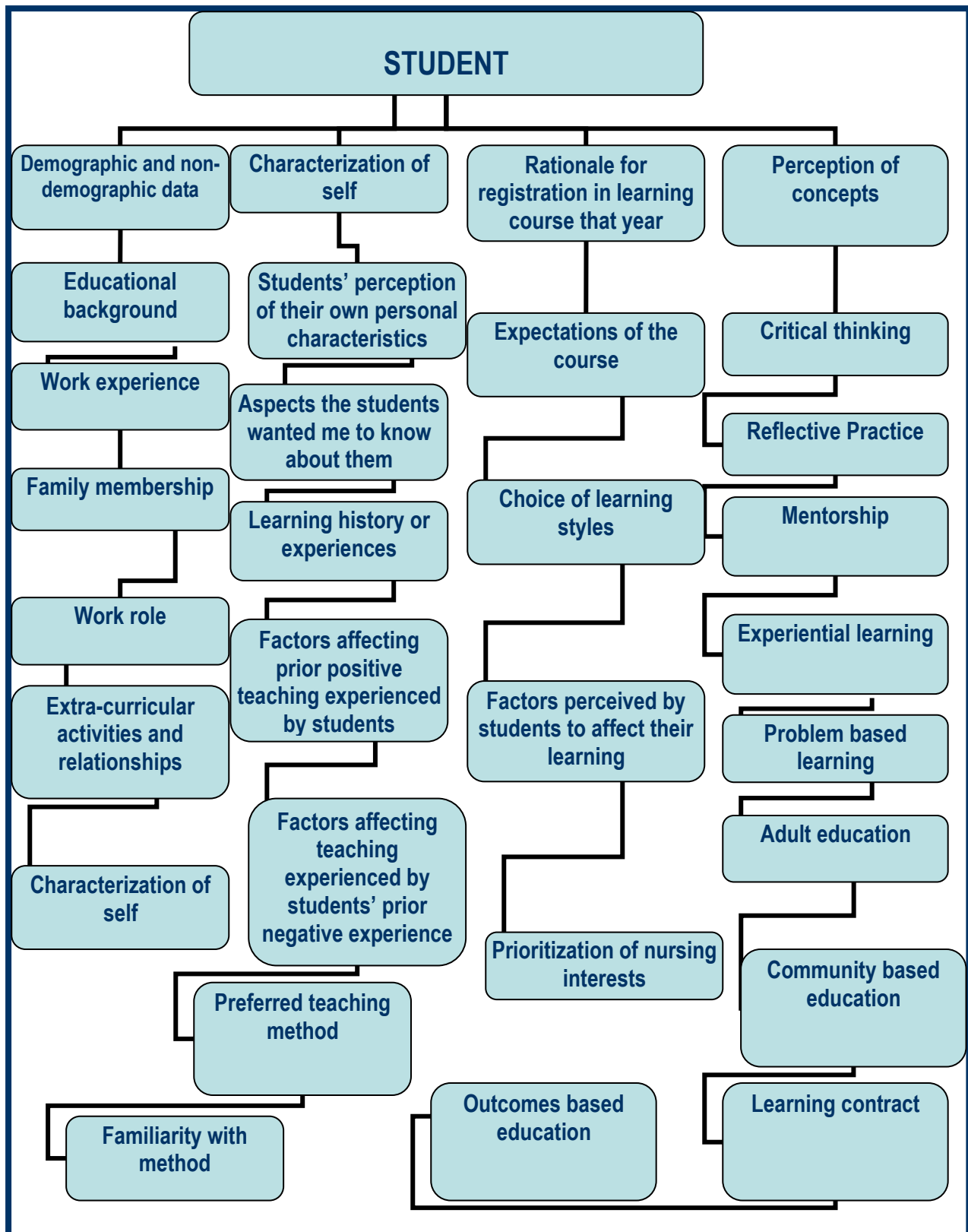


Figure 6.1: Outline of Question One – Prior knowledge and experience of learning

6.1 QUESTIONNAIRE ONE - IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

The findings of this questionnaire helped to establish a baseline of information on student demographics as well as an appreciation of the students' perception of their learning styles and needs and factors influencing their motivation and learning. It was useful in re-considering the structuring of the course and the teaching approach, and was a valuable means of comparing their mid-year and final evaluations of the course. Both data sources and participants (target population and sampled groups) generating the following data are fully explained in Chapter Four, Sections 4.16 and 4.17 and the questionnaire structuring is outlined in Figure 6.1.

6.1.1 Demographics

(N=14). Average Age = 39; Age ranges between 28 and 56, indicative of life experience. All fourteen were women, eleven (n=11) of whom were black African, one (1) Indian and two (2) white, one of whom had emigrated from Switzerland. This meant that for only two (2) students was English their home language.

6.1.2 Educational background

All students had completed their schooling and then gone on to nursing college. All had completed general nursing and midwifery. Some had additional diplomas in advanced midwifery (2) community health nursing (8) psychiatric nursing (8) and/ or additional certificates (13). One (n=1) had a certificate in biblical studies and one (n=1) had undergone an enrolled nursing programme before becoming a registered nurse, while one had completed a degree in teaching, and another a diploma in business administration and management. These students had all undergone at least 12 years of schooling and a minimum of 4 years of nursing (registered nursing and midwifery) and (n=12) had completed at least an additional three years of nursing studies. In terms of how

recently students had engaged in studies, I knew that twelve (n=12) were completing the second year of their B.Tech: Nursing programme. Of the twelve who listed dates of previous studies, (n=5) had completed a course in 1993; one (n=1) in 1994; two (n=2) in 1999 and (n=3) had completed a course in 2000.

Comment

This indicated that these students were motivated and were familiar with the learning process. For all, it was part of their life style. The student demographics are those of multi-racial practicing nurses. Their backgrounds are varied in terms of educational/ occupational/age and motivation.

Although the students have engaged in the learning process for between four to seven years on a tertiary level, this learning has generally taken place within a college of nursing context, where teaching has traditionally focused on training and the more traditional learning strategies (explained further in Chapter 1.1). These factors needed to be considered when supporting the student learning shift from dependence to independence; the shift to constructivist learning paradigm as apposed to the more traditional forms of teaching and learning. Openness to creative approaches that will enhance student learning and practice had been part of the departmental philosophy for a long time and is a requirement for the transformative educator as explained in Chapter 2.4.4.2.

6.1.3 Work experience

(188 years work experience between 14 students). Average working length = 15 years. Work experience ranged between 8 to 21 years.

Comment

All the students had a significant amount of work experience. This was quite important in terms of the teaching approach that relied on students' ability to use their prior experience and

understanding of the nursing profession and their nursing institution to connect practice and theory meaningfully. All students were at a level of nursing where their practice should be instinctive and intuitive. Truman (2003) referring to Benner, acknowledges that intuition is linked to experience, typifying the expert practitioner and involves the thinking that emerges from a combination of experience, skill and knowledge – but not necessarily based on evidence and logic. The critical reflective practice model would rely on students to focus on their practice in a critical reflective mode and “see” their practice within a new or different light that would provide greater meaning for the way in which they could practice.

Interestingly, all but one had worked (and trained) in more than one health care settings, and the settings ranged from inner city hospitals to remote rural clinics. One student had also worked as a policewoman. As an educator, it would be very easy to become intimidated by the wealth and variety of nursing experiences, unless I turned this to all our advantages and ensured collaboration and sharing of knowledge and experience: The Constructivist approach supporting adult education principles seemed most appropriate in this context.

Brookfield (1995), while recognising that accumulated learning acquired through years of experience defines the concept of adult learners, warns that reliance on this accumulative experience is not necessarily connected to a wealth of knowledge and understanding. In fact, it is very easy for adults to perpetuate the same meanings from experiences without critical interrogation so that these ‘lazy’ thoughts can in fact, prevent the development of self-insight. The second pitfall noted by Brookfield (1995) is that all experiences are culturally and socially shaped “according to the cultural, moral and ideological vantage points from which they are viewed.” He suggests that accordingly, we construct our own experiences, having perceived these through

perceptual and knowledge-formed filters which are so deeply rooted within our cultural psyche, that we are hardly aware of them or how they function. The purpose of the implementation of the critical reflective model is to anticipate these pitfalls and facilitate a milieu to facilitate a self-conscious discernment of how it is that these adult students came to what they knew.

6.1.4 Current work context

All students, except one, worked in health care settings which supported their specialties and would allow me to use their workplace as their primary classroom.

Comment

All the requirements for their Management IV course would find an appropriate context for students' tasks, assignments, reflective writing and skills based experience. The one student who was not employed, was required to spend a significant portion of time in a workplace to meet her practical component of her degree specialty, so she too, would have an appropriate context, although she did, in fact, struggle with this. The specializations included community nursing, primary health care nursing, occupational health nursing and advanced midwifery. Three (n=3) students lived more than two hours traveling distance from classes.

6.1.5 Work role

10 of the 14 students were in a leadership or management role of some sort. For example "I am the sister in charge of the occupational Health department. The management and partners look to me for guidance and support in terms of occupational health and systems." Another notes:

"My role as a Chief professional nurse as to supervise subordinates and orientate students to primary health care settings. I am responsible to give health education and to explain the procedure of the clinic to the clients providing them with booklets

(Batho Pele) with all the information regarding to service. I am also working as an HIV/AIDS counselor and also assessing and prescribing treatment to the clients.”

Another identifies her responsibilities:

”I am a unit Manager of an obstetric Department with all the authority of a unit supervisor where I delegate categories according to job descriptions, duty schedules, co-ordination of work and projects in logical and orderly (way). I am also a chairlady of the Patient Care Committee that involves the leaders of the community. I am the Secretary of Extended management for the institution. I am also a member of the disaster management committee and Resuscitation group.”

Comment

The intended outcome of this course was that by the end of the course, students would be able to manage a health care unit at unit level – so it was appropriate that the majority of students were at this stage of development and readiness. All nursing programmes in South Africa have a management component. In keeping with adult educational principles, it is only when one is ‘ready’ to assume a particular role that the learning becomes more meaningful (Brookfield, 1995).

6.1.6 Family membership

Seven (n=7) were either single parents, or single (n=2) with family responsibilities, a not uncommon phenomenon in South Africa (van Zyl, 2003). Only one (n=1) student was single with no family responsibilities. Six (n=6) students lived in families headed by males, although all students indicated that they assumed a major financial and organizational responsibility in their homes.

“I am the (main) player in this family. I do the housework, cook, see to the kid’s homework, extra curricula etc. I do the shopping; paying accounts, even take out the

dirt. I also do the functions of my husband, like sort out the rates, sort out the filling, organize the tax claims etc. I am always the one to take the kids to doctor when may one sick, spend night awake when they are sick, take them to the clinic etc. I also get up at 04:00 o'clock to give my 3 year old bottle Dad does never does this.”

“It’s my husband, 4 sons and me”, notes one. Another student notes:

“I am a single parent (by choice). So I am the head of my family. I have two kids, a boy 15 years, and a girl 8 years. There is also my late sister’s girl 13 years of age. Children help in family chores e.g. Girl help cleaning the house do their washing and prepare meals and cleaning his room. Also help with siblings when there is no adult at home. He is more gentle than girls who are sometimes rebellions. They are all wonderful kids. “

Comment

All students had major responsibilities and numerous roles that they fulfilled in their families. Younger students generally have only themselves to consider, but for these students, this was not the case at all.

Robinson (1981) in Oehlkers and Gibson (2001) recognised that most of the issues or difficulties that students experience is related to personal rather than course-related factors. She identified four problem areas as being lack of time, difficulties in concentration, family commitments and problems with time management and planning. It is understandable that the element of time and best usage of time was so important for the students in my course, and this concept is noted in responses in other questionnaires or evaluations. A number of students (n=6) indicated that they were responsible for the support of family members of the extended family. In my experience, this

is not uncommon in South Africa, particularly amongst the black African communities, probably because of cultural norm of the extended family system and our limited social support systems.

6.1.7 Extra-curricular activities and relationships

Eleven (n=11) of the fourteen respondents were involved in community organizations, the majority of which had a religious and caring base where the students were involved in helping others in their community. One (n=1) of these also had a home-based knitting venture to supplement family income. The other three (n=3) students focused rather on their strong family ties and much of their socialization revolved around the family rather than on community organizations.

Comment

The religious element was fairly dominant in this group and when asked how they would like to have their classes operate the group as a whole opted to start the class sessions with prayer.

One student describes her activities:

“When I am with my family there are usually a lot of activities and rituals to attend. I am a member of women Manyano at Methodist church. This group women has dedicated to teach others handcrafts others teach about health matters especially HIV/AIDS. This is done extensively during the Easter holidays when a lot of children are back from school and attend church services during Easters.”

Comment

Religion is important and it is not uncommon, particularly with black African students and many students tell me that they start their work sessions in their health practice with prayer. This is foreign to my cultural precepts, where religion is fairly private, and so became part of my learning curve and appreciation of the students' values.

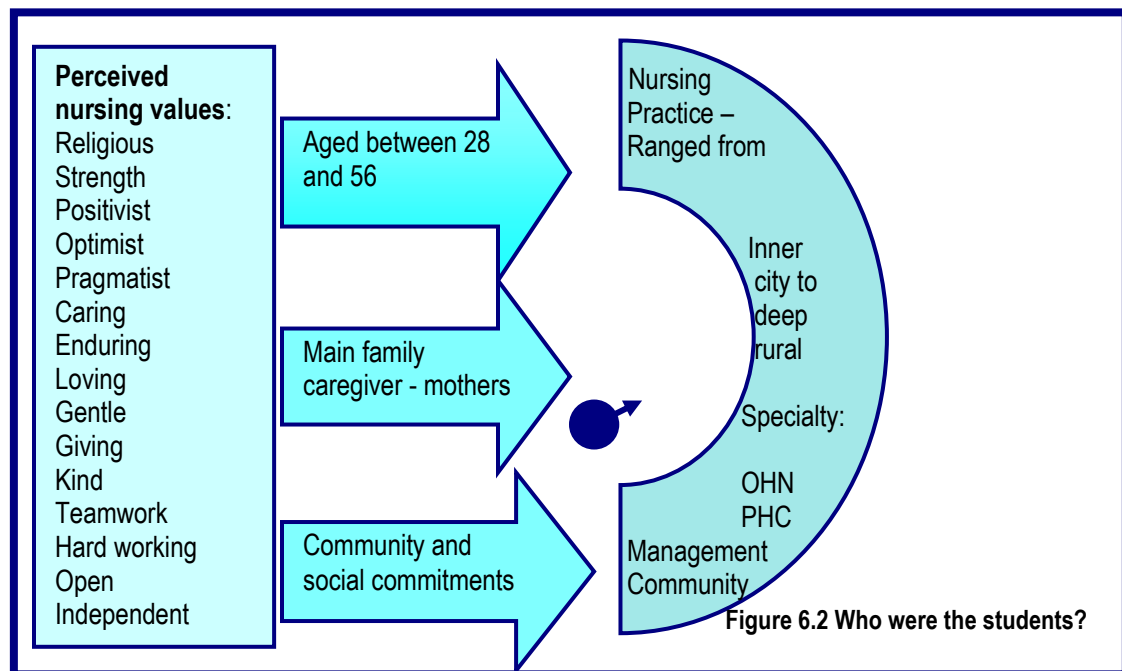
6.1.8 Personal characteristics

Table 6.1: Students' perception of their own personal characteristics

Normal(n=1)	Kind(n=3) Sensitive (n=5)	Hardworking (n=4)	Learned through experiences (n=2)	Open (n=2) Honest(n=1)
Comfortable with self(n=2)	Unprejudiced (n=1)	Happy(n=2); friendly (n=2)	Love life(n=2)	Committed/focused (n=3)
Unstressed(n=2)	Loving(n=1); giving(n=1)	Gentle/vulnerable (n=2)	Good listener/respectful (n=2)	Self-belief(n=1); independent(n=1)
Strong(n=2);	Quiet(n=2); shy(n=1)	Likes people(n=1)	Team player(n=1)	Enduring(n=1)

Comment

Students were asked to identify their own personal characteristics and the resulting Table 6.1 comprises categories I determined from their responses. Generally the characteristics noted focus on the positive and are traits valued in nursing such as kind, caring, hardworking etc.



6.1.9 Aspects the students wanted me to know about them

The general impression received from the students was their desire to learn and a wish for me to understand and appreciate these ambitions. At least three (n=3) noted their striving for excellence.

However, students also wanted me to understand these learning needs within a context: They expressed a need for me to appreciate their ability to hear and understand the information (n=4); to appreciate the different rate of learning (n=4); to appreciate extraneous factors which might impact on their studies, such as home or personal issues and to appreciate their individual differences and motivations to learn (n=9).

Comment

As the year progressed, I became increasingly aware that students appreciated my understanding of themselves as individuals. It seemed as if they felt safer and that by my recognising their perceptions of their needs, strengths and weaknesses, that I could be trusted to make the necessary accommodations in the teaching process without embarrassing them because of unreasonable expectations. This was evidenced in their tutorial discussions and reflective journal entries, where they had been invited to use these forums and been assured of confidentiality. This did not mean that I changed my expectations with respect to the quality of work required but just that I made the necessary adaptations that would allow them to meet these requirements, such as a change in teaching style (i.e. smaller discussion groups, slower pace) or scheduling of work (more flexibility regarding self-scheduling).

6.1.10 Learning history or experiences

➤ Factors affecting prior positive teaching experienced by students

Lecturer's personality and teaching style that promoted:

- encouragement and guidance (n=2);
- clarity in teaching (n=2);
- trust (n=1);

- appreciation of each student (n=1);
- curiosity and sharing of learning (n=2);
- independent learning (n=1);
- group discussions (n=1);
- promotion of independent learning (n=2).

Other factors included “committed teachers” (n=1) and student’s familiarity with teaching approach (n=1).

➤ **Factors affecting prior negative teaching experienced by students**

Negative learning experiences varied, but mainly focused on poor or unsupportive facilitators (n=3). One (n=1) student found continuous and repetitive talking by educator to be “boring” and another, (n=1), found the repetition of previous notes, uninspiring. One (n=1) student was profoundly affected by personal issues outside of the classroom which prevented learning. One (n=1) student was exposed to a new approach to learning – self-directed learning which she found “frustrating and strange” initially but which ultimately allowed her to become independent.

“When doing advanced midwifery at KEH the self-directed learning. It was a frustrating and was strange, but after 5/12 we learned to be independent. We were theorists and became pragmatists, self-directed learning ables the learner to read explore, look for information research and we are allowed to be introduced into ideas techniques for doing things that are advantageous.”

Although more than one student wrote about unkind teachers, the following student’s difficult experience had a clear impact on her future choices for herself and her family:

“As I compare learning today and before, sticks are no more used these days but children are very good at school. As a child if you are being forced to do a thing at

the end of the day you hate it. As it is now I hate that my child would go to a black school in the locations, I like them to have better life than me.”

Comment

In South Africa, nursing students undergo a 12 year schooling programme at both primary and secondary levels. Particularly for students of colour, pre-apartheid education is recognized for its inequalities and deficiencies in its material and staffing resources, and the education prior to 1994 is generally considered as being “deprived” (Gwele, and Uys, 1998 and Kyriacos and van den Heever, 1999).

Entry into nursing is generally after grade 12, when students either undergo a three year general nursing programme for registration with the South African Nursing Council (SANC) as a general nurse or a four year integrated programme, which includes general nursing, midwifery, community nursing and psychiatric nursing. This is done either at a nursing college in the form of diplomas or as an undergraduate degree at universities (Kyriacos et al., 1999). Students who have not completed their secondary education or alternatively or, who have not obtained their matriculation, may enter the nursing stream as an auxiliary or enrolled nurse, and can then ‘bridge’ into the general nursing stream (Poggenpoel, Myburgh, and Kaye-Peterson, 2001).

In South Africa, students may study further on a horizontal basis by means of post-basic diplomas in their fields of specialty. All nursing programmes recognized by the SANC are outcomes based (Geyer, Naude and Sithole, 2002). Education in South Africa, as in many other countries, is seen as a means of advancement and nursing through the college-based system is viewed as a means of salaried education; a way of supporting self and family while at the same time, advancing a career.

6.1.11 Preferred teaching method

- **Familiarity with method**

Knott and Mutunga (1995) identified a continuum of teaching methods which ranged from being mainly expository, teacher oriented with a content focus (for example, lecture and laboratory work) to mainly discovery (for example, problem solving group work and simulations) student oriented with an emphasis on process. Thirteen (n=13) students answered this question and it would seem from the responses that students were familiar with most of the different teaching methods. Students were most familiar with the traditional lecturing method (n=13) and least familiar with the less traditional techniques such as fishbowl (n=6) method, buzz groups (n=6) and simulation and games (n=7).

- **Rating of method**

Eleven students rated these strategies, and as would be expected, those strategies they were least familiar with received the lowest rating – fishbowl (score =7), buzz group (score =8) and tutorials (score =9). Interestingly, although only (n=7) students were familiar with simulation and games, this strategy received a very high score (score =30). Other strategies students rated highly were Questions (score =27) and Controlled discussions (30). Interestingly again, those strategies where students had to take more control over their learning received lower ratings e.g. free group discussions (score =14); debate (score =17); problem solving groups (score =20); seminar (score =22) and projects (score =22). However, although they were familiar with lectures (score =18) and laboratory and practica work (score =16), these were not rated high on their list of preferences.

6.1.12 Rationale for registration in learning course

All fourteen (n=14) student registered to improve their knowledge and skills and enable them to function better in the work environment; three (n=3) indicated a need to complete their degree for promotional purposes or just to complete what they had started the previous year. Two (n=2) noted a desire to share their knowledge with colleagues and thereby improve their working environment and one (n=1) indicated a frustration with a system that incorporated too many poor managers. At least three students evinced a desire to become an independent practitioner (n=3) and one student (n=1) indicated that the qualification should also help improve her status at home. One (n=1) student indicated that in addition to wanting to be a better nurse and manager, she wanted to be a better person.

Comment

Tenets of Constructivism

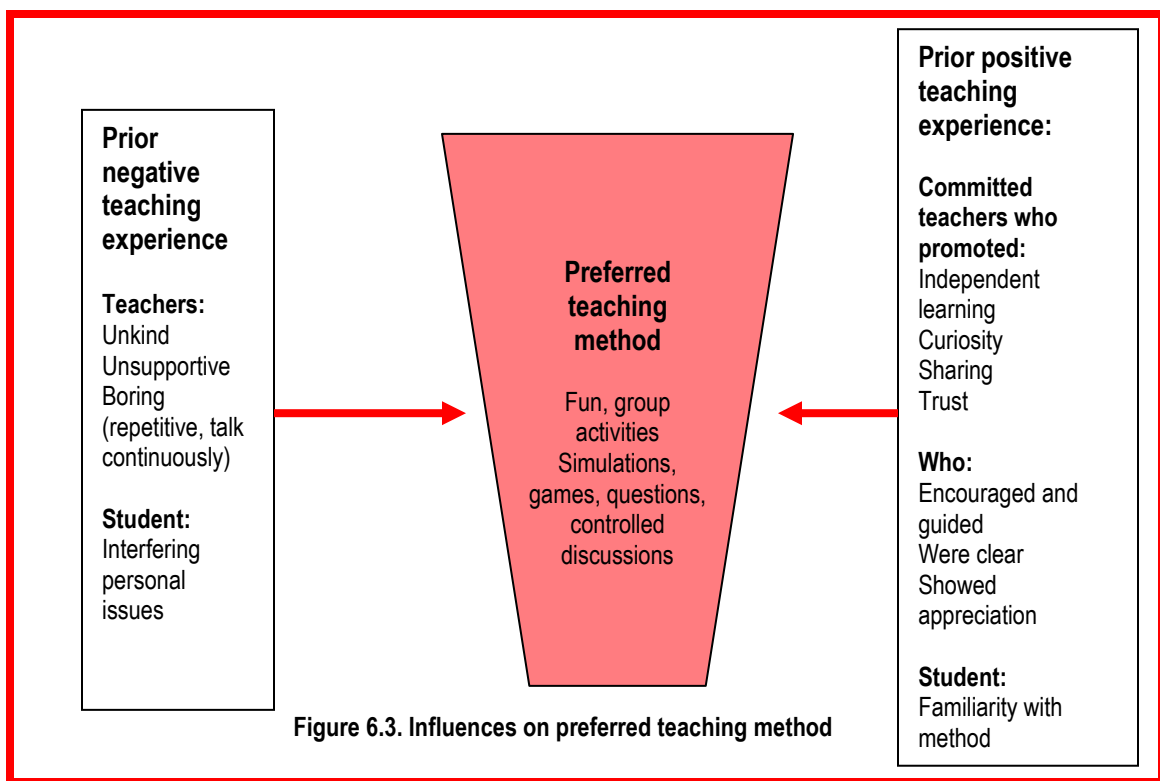
According to Reagan (2003:125) the main tenets of this approach postulate that:

- Learning is a personal and individual process that is constructed (Students in the Management IV course actively participate in working out time schedules through using a work organiser and calendar; actively engage with the study guide; make choices about diary entries and who and what to respond to, which classes to attend, how to engage with Web CT, decide on the work experiences to choose to illuminate and interpret their tasks)
- It is an active, collaborative process (students often work together in class, in groups, tutorial groups and decide on the collaborative nature of their connection with their mentors) and all learning is situated in a context (their occupational and educational context).
- It is developmental in nature (the reflective journals epitomise the developmental process of the learning) and requires structuring and organisation by the learner (while students are provided with time tables and a work structure, they are asked to review the structure and revise according

to their own needs. Most stay with the structure as it provides a sense of security, but in each group, there have been a couple of students who have determined their own pace entirely. Others forge ahead.)

- "Disequilibrium facilitates learning". Learners need to be off-balance, and grapple with inconsistencies or contradictions and mistakes should be viewed as a "result of learners' conceptions and therefore not minimized or avoided." (The tasks, linking theory and practice, completed prior to class, allow for this to occur. This is seen as a learning opportunity, rather than a judgement of ability. This process is linked with the concept of continuous evaluation which allows the student to review and rewrite the task or assignment after the opportunity to reconceptualize the process in a supportive environment.
- "Reflective abstraction is the driving force of learning. As meaning-makers, humans seek to organize and generalize across experiences in a representational form." (Again, the discussions and debates that emanate from student journal reflections epitomise this concept). This supports another principle of dialogue to promote thinking.
- Learning ensues as a result of the building and development of structures that support theory development. As students struggle to make their experiences and learning meaningful, they shift conceptually to arrive at new perspectives. This is a continuous, developmental process. There are a number of ways that I have tried to help scaffold this process for my students, through provision of supports e.g. the tools of learning, the environment, the processes, the structures, or the actual structuring of the course materials so that there is sequential, conceptual development based on an organisational structure that is not only representational, but real - i.e. the students' own work environment.

This openness and desire for learning created a positive learning environment and is supportive to the concept of Constructivism, as long as I could convince students that the critical reflective approach to learning would result in a realisation of an improvement of their knowledge and skills. I find it interesting that a student was able to recognize a need for learning that would spread across the personal, academic as well as professional levels, although this might have been implicit in the comments of other students.



6.1.13 Perception of purpose for learning that year

There was a sense that the course comprised more than individualized components or strategies, but generally students were unsure of what it could or should offer but wanted to make the most of what would be offered by the course per se “but nursing is dynamic there should be skill more that what I see.” One (n=1) indicated that she had a lot of administrative work to deal with and hoped this course would help her to resolve this, and another indicated an appreciation of the built-in

(unexpected) component of computer communication skills. Two (n=2) students were more specific, one indicating a need for political literacy and another, who happened to be a facilitator, indicated a need to improve her educational teaching skills. In terms of expectations of the course, these were congruent with their learning needs but of specific interest was the express expectation by three students (n=3) that theory would be applicable to the workplace context. Two students (n=2) indicated that new knowledge should make a difference to the community within which the students practiced.

Comment

I think that this is a fairly recent South African concept emanating from the 1994 ANC government's philosophy whereby just about all aspects of life affected by government are required to have a community benefit. This is implicit in the president's state of the nation address (Mbeki, May 25, 2004). Van Aswegen's model (Chapter 2.4.4.4) recognises the value of the external environment.

6.1.14 Expectations of the course

In general, students wanted to complete the course having grown professionally. They wanted to make a difference to the people they worked with and wanted their learning to be relevant. In general, this is very much in line with the intention of van Aswegen's model in Chapter 2.4.4.5.

6.1.15 Choice of learning styles

Students were provided with two scenarios, (A) a structured, didactic approach to teaching providing ample direction and supports, and (B) an open style of teaching using the Socratic questioning method to support problem solving. (A) is teacher-centred and (B) is student-centred.

Students seem to appreciate that different learning styles were appropriate in different contexts. There did not appear to be an all or nothing approach. It was recognized that Scenario A tended to work better

“...during the initial stage of learning when the subject has just started so as to (engage?) but students in line with what they are going to do then they can be left alone, to do discussions and talks as the syllabus goes by.”

As another student stated: “A learning style would be appropriate for the introduction of the subject and if the subject is new to the Candidates”. It was perceived to be useful in terms of time saving in that it allowed large numbers of students to be addressed at once. As one student stated:

“Scenario A styles will be appropriate when you know the students and their needs as well as their intellectual abilities. And you can apply this method after assessment/ test where you discover that they did not understand because of low marks they obtained”.

However, one student emphasises

“A is not a good type of learning because it does not give students time to seek information themselves, and this is sort of spoon feeding type. But if you have never been exposed to B you can never see the difference.”

Scenario B, on the other hand, was more appropriate suggested one student “...when the students are doing projects or held work or when there is a particular problem to be solved and when they are independent enough with that subject e.g. midyear” as, states another student, it “...provides an easy learning because it helps the students to explore and helps them in self directed learning process. Enthusiastic and creative students get a chance to show their talents. Working in groups helps a lot in developing individuals and act of input.”

Students appear to be in agreement that Scenario B is more appropriate to self-directed, adult based learning where students can draw on their experiences to support their learning. As one student mentions, it is

“...for students who do not have exaggerated respect for lecturers opinion. Who are inspired to think and learn and understand also on their own research, thinking and understanding. Also when there is availability of such material resources like computers with access to internet.”

Comment

In terms of difficulty, there were no clear cut choices as to the best method of teaching to promote learning. In general, students appeared to appreciate aspects of both, leading one to the conclusion that there are a number of different learning styles and the choice of style seems to be affected by different factors such as situation, experience, knowledge base, need, motivation etc. There is no ‘one style fits all’ scenario, nor is there ‘one style that fits all the time’. I think that, in general, their response is appropriate.

6.1.16 Factors affecting learning

Table 6.2: Factors perceived by students to affect their learning

POSITIVE FACTORS	NEGATIVE FACTORS
Personal alertness/ self-motivation (n=2)	Boring, repetitive lectures (n=5)
Family support (n=2)	Lengthy lectures (over 45 minutes) (n=2)
Full participation (n=1)	Lack of discussion (n=1)
Humour (n=1)	Work/family demands; limited time (n=3)
Regular contact – facilitator (n=2); colleagues (n=2); internet – Web CT (n=2) availability of facilities	Classes offered too late in day for safe travel home (n=1)

Self-belief (n=1)	Too much information to be written down (n=1)
Positive, constructive criticism/ attitude of facilitator (n=2)	(n=1) Negative criticism; bias – negative attitude of lecturer/ peers
Previous experience with method (n=1)	
Clear expectations (n=1)	
Challenging information; interesting classes (n=1)	

Comment: This was an open-ended question which I categorized into themes in Table 6.2. It becomes clear that components of van Aswegen's model (Chapter 2.4.4.2. and 2.4.4.6.) are valued by the students as supportive of their learning process.

6.1.17 Prioritisation of nursing interests as they affect students' understanding of the nursing profession in South Africa

This question was prefaced by the following introduction: *The scope of nursing management is extremely broad. While you will be given the theoretical underpinnings of nursing management in your programme, there may be a number of issues/problems/challenges that you would like to discuss or focus on in order to allow you to practice more effectively in the health care environment.*

About half the students indicated interests specific to their discipline, and the rest indicated areas that overlapped into health management issues, politics as it impacted on health care and professional nursing issues.

Comment

This was useful in that it indicated where I could focus in terms of teaching. In retrospect, these were the issues that students focused on in their tutorial discussions and in their reflective journals.

6.1.18 Perception of concepts

I introduced the following concepts which were threaded as a theme throughout their learning course and were either explicit or implicit in van Aswegen's model (see figure 2.2): critical thinking, reflective practice, mentorship, experiential learning, problem based learning, adult education, community based education, learning contract and outcomes based education. I did this in order to ascertain how familiar students were with core teaching and learning strategies that would form the approach to their course. Most of these concepts had been introduced in the orientation period and I could see that just under half of the group was familiar, to some degree, with them, but that I would have to consciously remind them when they were engaged with these strategies.

- **Critical thinking (this formed a key concept in van Aswegen's model in Chapter 2.3.1.1)**

“Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skilfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness. It entails the examination of those structures or elements of thought implicit in all reasoning: purpose, problem, or question-at-issue, assumptions, concepts, empirical grounding; reasoning leading to conclusions, implications and consequences, objections from alternative viewpoints, and frame of reference” (Scriven and Paul, 2003).

Students used the following terms to describe the concept:

Analyze; form own opinion; careful, deliberate, objective, creative thinking ; problem analysis; informed decision making; consider variety of perspectives; use of reason and logic, consideration of consequences; forming conclusions. These fall within the realm of critical thinking. Only one (n=1) student had no idea of the concept and another provided an incorrect interpretation.

- **Reflective Practice (a key concept in van Aswegen's model in Chapter 2.3.1.)**

Van Aswegen (1998:393) defines reflective practice as the ability to “consciously and purposefully “ step back from one's practice or a specific situation and retrospectively contemplate what has happened and the effects and implications thereof. Practitioners would engage in constant cycle of introspection and self-appraisal in order to understand their own actions. This concept was a little more tricky but five students (n=5) did have a general idea that practice was based on consideration of that practice, and being able to form judgments. For example, one noted that this was where one was “able to think back to what has happened in the past and what needs to be changed in future so that we don't make the same mistakes.”

- **Mentorship**

Mentorship is not common practice in South African nursing. It is closely aligned to but should not be confused with preceptorship.

Preceptorship, a method of clinical accompaniment, guidance and supervision, is an accepted teaching strategy of providing support to students in clinical settings (Greene and Puetzer, 2002). It is frequently used in South Africa where student nurses undertake their experiential learning in a variety of health care settings. Because these experiences are usually decentralised, the

educational nursing department appoints preceptors, customarily experienced nurses with clinical expertise, who act as role models. They will guide, teach and evaluate the students, directed by curriculum objectives (Phillips and Duke, 2001). Preceptors liaise with students, health service staff and are accountable to the educational institution. This is usually a short-term engagement (Northcote, 2001).

Mentoring is different. It is a relationship in which a more experienced person (the mentor) contributes directly to the growth and development of the less experienced or inexperienced person (the mentee), usually in the workplace. It is a reciprocal, mutually agreed upon, caring relationship where both people need to like and respect each other. The prime focus is on personal and professional growth which takes time, and is determined by the holistic learning needs of the mentee, and not curriculum objectives.

- **Experiential learning (this formed a key concept in van Aswegen's model in Chapter 2..4.2.6 as Praxis)**

This is learning that results from an interrogation, understanding and processing of the experiences that have taken place in the work environment. These understandings find a place in the individual's own self-construct or world view that provide a uniqueness to her learning. Four (n=4) students answered and correctly indicated that it was the "real workplace experience as a means of correlating practical and theory."

- **Problem based learning**

According to Ngeow and Kong (2001)

“Problem-based learning (PBL) is an educational approach that challenges students to “learn to learn”. Students work cooperatively in groups to seek solutions to real-world problems and more importantly, to develop skills to become self-directed learners. Here, the goal of problem-based learning is viewed as learning for capability rather than learning for the sake of acquiring knowledge.”

Three (n=3) students indicated that it was the ability to solve problems (not strictly accurate), however, others (n=7) noted that it is “Learning that originates from a problem that is identified in order to solve it.” Van Aswegen’s model focuses on the concept of critical thinking as the basis of problem based learning in Chapter 2.3.1.2. and 2.3.1.3.

- **Adult education**

The operational definition of this concept varies. It can be seen as the work of organisations with a view to social and educational upliftment; it can be seen as education aimed at adult learners, who have specific learning needs and approaches to learning, as in the concept of androgogy.

Ten (N=10) students answered and used terms such as self-education; self-evaluation; self-disciplined (n=3), active, voluntary participation in learning (n=2); setting own objectives (n=2); life-long learning through empowerment; learning that will help with daily living (n=2); learning by adults through practice, and taking control over the outcome.

Only one student appreciated this concept differently as teaching to adults who had not previously attended school. All were correct within the broader definition.

- **Community based education**

Kortenbout (1995:38-42) notes that this is the use of real life-learning situation in the community within which the student works which allows for the student to integrate theory and practice and prepares for entry into the workplace. It also allows both educator and student to keep up to date with real needs and concerns facing the community and approaches to problem solving are based on relevant resources at hand rather than theoretical 'pie-in-the sky' approaches. Only three (n=3) students appreciated that "Learning that focuses on people outside hospital setting". The rest considered the concept in terms of educating the community itself.

- **Learning contract**

"A learning contract is essentially an agreement negotiated between a learner and a staff adviser that certain activities will be undertaken in order to achieve particular learning goals and that specific evidence will be produced to demonstrate the goals have been reached. In return, formal recognition (often in the form of academic credit) is given for the work produced" (Anderson and Boud, 1996:221).

Challis (2000) identifies the learning contract as placing the responsibility of learning with the learner and also appreciates that this forms one of the elements of reflective learning that promotes skills and initiates so that students can meet life-long learning needs long after the course has completed.

Nine (n=9) students answered this section and had the general idea "You signed the contract to confirm your commitment by doing work requested in time e.g. assignments or tests."

- **Outcomes based education**

This is education that essentially focuses on what the intended outcome of a learning programme should be. This then enables the educator to focus and organize the learning system, which includes the curriculum, the process of teaching and the evaluation strategies, around what students should successfully achieve at the end of the process (Daziell and Gourvenec, 2003).

Five students attempted an answer and none had any real understanding of the concept. One (1) appreciated that it was part of life-long learning and that it now operated in our schooling system.


Positive: Self-motivated Self-belief Supported Participates Humour Regular contact Available, accessible facilities Constructive criticism Positive affirmation Familiarity with method Clear expectations Challenge		Negative: Lectures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boring, • Repetitive, • Lengthy. Too much note taking Lack of discussion Work/family demands – limited time Timing of classes – too late in day Negative criticism Bias
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Figure 6.4: Factors affecting learning

6.2 COURSE EVALUATION: SUMMARY OF STUDENT PERCEPTIONS BASED ON DATA GENERATED FROM QUESTIONNAIRES TWO, FOUR AND FIVE.

Six (n=6) students out of a class of 16 (N=16) completed the course evaluation form (Questionnaire Four) in 2002 and 12 (n=12) students out of a class of 19 (N=19) completed the form in 2003. (The combined number of respondents for the two years: n= 18).

16 (n=16) students out of the class of 19 (N=19) completed a questionnaire (Questionnaire Five) on selected aspects of the programme, namely Web CT, mentoring, teaching and learning strategy and workbooks evaluation and 9 (n=9) students of the class of 19 (N=19) handed in group mid-year evaluations (Questionnaire Two) in 2003. Therefore, the findings are not definitive, but do provide a sense of the groups' perceptions. Comparatively, findings between the groups 2002 and 2003 were somewhat similar, and so it is possible to present a combined view of the course, with one or two exceptions (notably the Web CT classroom and orientation to the programme, specifically on critical reflective thinking, the reflective journal and the Constructivist approach to learning). As most students have used their own names on the evaluation forms, it enabled me to assess the value of their input within the context of their own studies and work situations.

Figure 6.5 provides an outline of the issues generated by the data in Questionnaire Two and Figure 6.6 provides the structure of Questionnaire Four, the results of which are added to and included in Section Six.

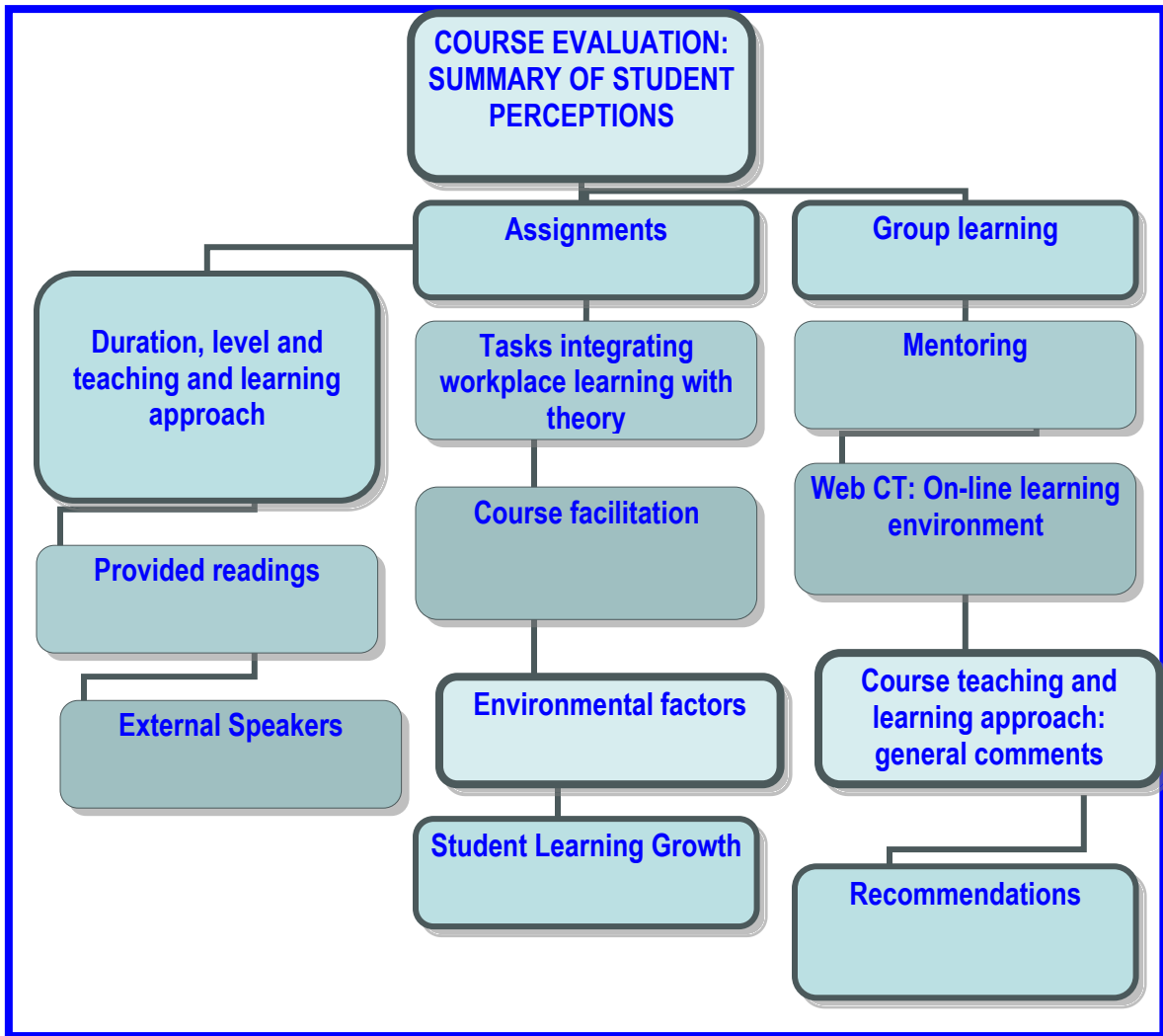


Figure 6.5: Outline of Questionnaire Two: Course Evaluation

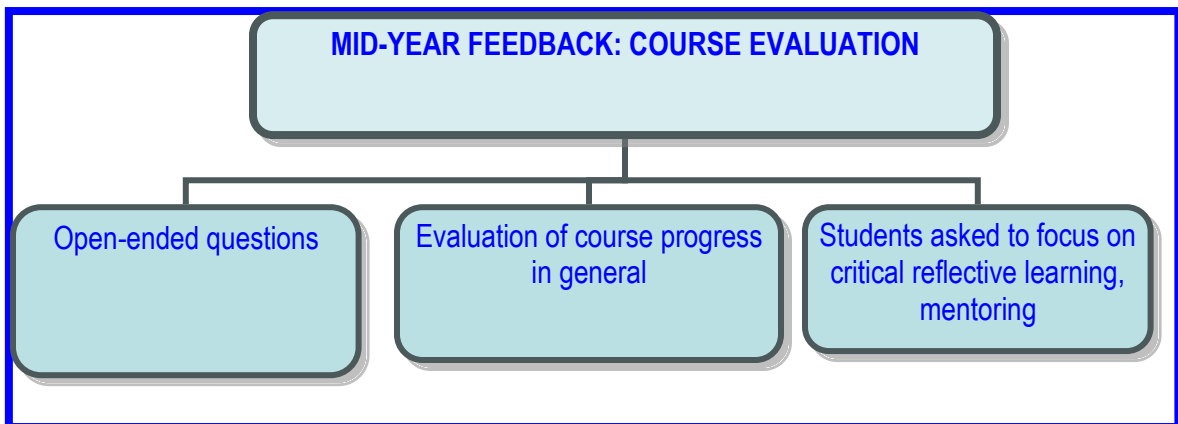


Figure 6.6: Questionnaire Four: Student groups' evaluation of course progress

6.2.1 Duration, level and teaching and learning approach

Most (n=18) found the duration of the course to be adequate i.e. the length of the course was appropriate for the requirements of the programme and met the needs of the students. The approach to the programme was based on the Constructivist theory of learning, and students were led to understand that the level of their own preparation and input would affect the outcome. Most students found this approach to learning relevant (n=8) or acceptable (n=11).

A student comments

“The subject matter of the management course was interesting and the class and course has been a pleasurable experience, and would certainly be recommended to others interested.”

A student notes:

“The course, and the subjects are well structured, informative, easy to understand and relevant to our working situation. The idea of learning the subject or tasks before it is discussed in class was a good help because it make you come to class prepared and full participation is promoted. it made the course alive and very much interesting, not to mention the creative workshop that we had in September, it made me proud of being a student at DIT. The writing of diaries and the tutorials have taught me to analyse any situation or experience with different sources of knowledge.”

The students understood that the course was generic and meant to be applied to their own work environment. All students (except one student in 2002) worked in various health care settings, which varied from deep rural to inner city; from as far a-field as the Eastern Cape, northern

KwaZulu Natal and the Natal midlands to Durban and its surrounds; from hospital based settings (outpatients department; theatre, labour units; orthopaedic department;) to community-based settings that included community health and primary health care to private enterprise (pathology laboratories) to occupational health nursing contexts. This meant that although an understanding of management in general was useful to their practice, the context also determined their learning needs. Students also operated at different levels in their place of work i.e. some were at management level, some operated independently and some operated lower down on the professional scale. This had implications in terms of their learning needs. Their years of experience and their previous learning and in-service education also affected their learning needs. It was with these factors in mind, that the section on the content covered was considered and researcher interpretation of individual responses was made on the combined data sheet. All in all, it would appear that in general, the course content and approach to teaching and learning met the needs of the students and was appropriate for the intended outcomes. That there was no consistency in content areas considered redundant or of special interest supported this notion.

A student's comments:

"The Diary and Journal section of this course, was, in my view, most successful. Using critical thinking techniques and issues of local and other or own interest, the chance to be creative in writing of contemporary essays or diary entries, was a task which needed little encouragement.

The continual student/facilitator conversation encouraged further dialogue and thought.

The system caused the student to "sit back and reflect" on thoughts, opinions, and more time was taken to write, considering alternatives, including evidence and to be more careful with the final results.

It caused the student to examine, discuss, reflect, analyse, solve, defend, evaluate, argue, compare, generate, create and explore. This all to make work and life more manageable.

The reflective thought behind the entries connected thoughts, feelings and action and allowed for the student to view all as not being perfect, to look for flaws in practice, in legislation, in the workplace.

Work and nursing practice, in reality, is not perfect; if it were, there would be no room for change, and change is constantly around us as we evolve.

It encouraged new thought to emerge and new strategies to be chosen.

This section of this year's programme should not be changed."

Comment: Van Horn (2000) learned from Zacharias (1991) that journals can be used as a means of critical thinking in that students can use journals to compare situations or ideas; condense and clarify key concepts in readings or activities; observe, analyse, evaluate, transfer lessons learned from one situation to another and make decisions based on evidence. It is one of the strategies suggested in van Aswegen's model.

Bloom's taxonomy levels and reflective journaling

In education it is easy to focus on one element. For example, in nursing this might be the technical element (the technocrat). Many of our students appear to value the need to be clinically competent as the required educational outcome. Therefore, here one could invoke the skills element of learning. This then, for many, means that the occupational needs for education are satisfied. However, this needs to be balanced by personal and professional 'competence' - so that in education, a purely skills-based competency leads to the development of technocrat, whereas an integration of occupationally-based skills and knowledge, personal growth and development (taking

into account concepts of caring, communication and interpersonal relationships for example) and professional growth and development (for example, the philosophy, ethics and scope of practice required of the professional nurse) are needed for true education to occur. This requires a more humanistic and holistic approach to education. This is where the reflective journal makes sense because it is exploring all three levels. These three elements, personal, professional and occupational, strike a chord with Bloom's (1964) taxonomy of the psychomotor, affective and cognitive components of education.

Technical rationality model

Rolfe et al. (2001:7) discuss a technical rationality model which exemplifies this reductionist approach to knowledge acquisition. In this model, knowledge and theory flows from the researchers and educationists to those in the practice area who must then apply this theory to practice. In this model, the only role of the practitioner is in the implementation of theory. The educationists are the developers and determiners of what constitute knowledge. In turn, they interpret the knowledge and how it should be translated into practice and lastly, they supervise practice in selected sites. Rolfe et al. (2001) note that it is this model that is prevalent in England, and I would suggest that it finds echo in South Africa. This type of teaching suggests a one way flow of information, from teacher to student, and thereby from theory to practice, resulting in theoretical or propositional knowledge, which presupposes that knowledge must be research based.

I am well aware that the students I teach are post-basic students who have progressed through this system. However, the majority are practitioners, with a number of years experience in their respective fields. I would suggest that much of their previously learned theory was gained by

means of rote learning and skills practice. The internalization of concepts was a result of the 'rules' of nursing practice, rather than an interrogation and understanding of the essence of this practice. This is a broad and possibly biased perception of the nurses with whom I come into contact. Nonetheless, too many nurses practice without due regard or reflection on their practice, to make this a total untruth. Many know 'what' they do, but not necessarily 'why' (this has been forgotten over time) and the practice is the thing rather than the rationale.

It is these nurses that I think of as Rolfe et al. (2001:9) quotes Stenhouse, 1985: "If after comparing the measurement results (from a research study) with your own experiences you find yourself uncertain of judgement, then basically there is no alternative to doing your own research". It is this practitioner-based enquiry that made perfect sense to me, and has helped free me from the burden of imposing my own predetermined knowledge as if it were the only source of excellence, or even a source of excellence. Check lists, scoring rubrics, nursing practice frameworks, although I know they have a place, and a valuable place, in nursing education and practice, were always hard for me to swallow. Nursing practice is not one-dimensional and for every situation, there are many variables, and often, just as many answers. I think that this is what drew me to community nursing, a field which requires a degree of creativity, flexibility and adaptability as apposed to functioning at a hospital bedside where so many structures are in place, predetermining and superimposing norms of practice.

Many South African nurses, because of our system which is overburdened and understaffed, are, depending on their own perspectives, in the invidious position of having to practice with minimal supports, resulting in poor practice. On the other hand, the context also allows for a greater degree of autonomy, which in itself can promote a sense of challenge and excitement, leading to a desire

to be better practitioners. It is this desire, that the pursuance of better practice through introspection and action, that could motivate nurses to greater things.

A student notes:

“Thank you any way for equipping us with knowledge which is rich in modern technology that will open new doors or senior positions for us.”

Another student links her learning to actual gains in the ‘real world’:

“The management course has provided me with skills that have molded my personal and professional experience. It has inspired in me the knowledge of how to correlate theory with practice in a realistic manner. This was easy for me because I have been working as a unit manager and I have noticed a great change in my managerial skills, professionally and personally. The interview I had in July for Chief Professional Nurse post was a great success, all the questions were based on what we have covered in our management course. The Human Resource Development, Disciplinary procedure or code of conduct, the last one required the things that your will do in your unit preparing for COHSASA (Council of Health Services Accreditation of South Africa). I have noticed that even the COHSASA baseline survey document consist of all the information that is in our modules starting from the formulation of the Vision, Mission statement and setting of Objectives of the unit etc up to the last standard of Quality improvement Programme.”

6.2.2 Provided readings

Readings providing the theory to support practice, in general, were considered useful (n =12), appropriate (n =6) or adequate (n =4): At worst, as two students stated, they were 'sometimes too "long winded"'. In general, as the following students stated: "They have information relevant to the topic & issues pertaining to management" or said another "the information within was appropriate and adequate to fill knowledge gaps" and said a third "useful – equipped you better to interact in class".

One student made the following suggestion:

"The amount of reading given for the year's course was rather a lot and I would suggest that one should allow this to be given an information rating;

1. to be gathered and read at times available to the student even in the future
2. the reading is of benefit to the understanding of this year's work
3. the reading is imperative for understanding this year's work."

Comment

This was supported and explained at the beginning of the year, verbally and in writing, but, as with other issues, needs to be reiterated at intervals and more than once. While the some of the students may not have valued the reading requirements, departmental staff (Chapter Nine, Section 9.4 and Table 9.5) recognised the value and saw the effects.

6.2.3 External speakers

All students (n=20) were unanimous in their appreciation of introducing external experts to expand or initiate new knowledge. States one student: "The choice of dynamic speakers from outside who were giving us different lessons was excellent".

6.2.4 Assignments

Assignments were considered useful and appropriate (n=19). One student analyses her experience:

“The assignments were quite daunting and a lot of time was spent on this section.

The Situational Analysis was an unknown territory and perhaps more time could be spent on the outline of expectations, could be more specific in goals expected.”

Comment

I used the same approach to this assignment as I did with tasks and expected students to ask clarification questions rather than initiate a full explanation first. As the assignment dealt with new and major concepts and formed the springboard for all future assignments and tasks, the student's recommendations are appropriate.

6.2.5 Tasks integrating workplace learning with theory

Students (n=17) agreed that completing their tasks within their specified work environment enabled them to integrate theory and practice.

Notes one student:

“Our hospital will be visited by COHSASA in November this year for the final external survey and in an internal survey that was conducted in September 2003 our department got 91% thanks to Maureen for setting the Tasks and Assignments that were so relevant and helpful to me in preparing for the Council.”

Another student comments on the challenge of the work involved:

“The tasks given regarding different categories/problems entailed in management work, were a challenge which had to be well orchestrated to be able to complete them on time, and with decent effort afforded to each and every one at the same time. This I would not change.”

Comment

I have found that it helped if students appreciated this scheduling and so this required organisation on my part, in terms of correct planning and documenting in the study guides. Students also underwent an exercise of physically writing in their tasks/assignments due dates on both the electronic and paper calendar. I also ensured that the programme staff co-ordinators had a copy of the schedule so that there were limited clashes in programme assignments. This was done well in advance of the new academic year so that the co-ordinators also had input into the scheduling. A significant portion of time was spent during orientation on the organisation and scheduling of work and how to use the guide most effectively. Each class contact session was initiated by consulting the study guide. This was very important as there were a number of new issues/ concepts and a variety of readings, tasks and activities. Effective organisation, scheduling and administration were important factors in the efficiency of the learning process.

6.2.6 Course facilitation

Hanley (1994) suggests that students enter the learning environment with their own experiences and cognitive structure determined by these experiences. These structures may be valid, or not, complete or not. These structures will change only if new information or experiences can be linked in a meaningful way to original understanding or experiences. This process has to be actively ‘constructed’ by the student in order for the new idea to become integrated into memory. Memorized facts not connected to prior learning are quickly forgotten. Hanley (1994) suggests that

the role of the facilitator is to engage the student by organising material “around conceptual clusters of problems, questions and discrepant situations” and to enable students to develop insights linked to prior knowledge. Ideas are presented as broad concepts and then deconstructed into smaller parts and students are encouraged to question, analyse and form their own conclusions.

In general, students felt the standard to be high (n=16). Three students in 2003 however, noted the following “first half of year – excellent, but when additional tutors were assigned, not ideal.” Another noted that the “facilitation time was too short” and a third that “Not always very clear instructions as understanding of what was actually required.”

Comment

The third student’s comment spoke to my discursive style of teaching where the written instructions are specific but the oral explanations tend to be general and based on the questioning method. This student liked to have all the requirements buttoned down, leaving little to chance. The criteria, however, were at times, fairly broad so as to incorporate the diversity of the disciplines and workplace settings and allow for creativity and independent thinking. I did try to accommodate this student by encouraging her to submit a rough draft through e-mail, and returning this with comments which she could then incorporate into a final report. This facility was available to all students but only three took up this option on occasion.

Those who responded positively made the following comments “I would like to comment on the facilitator’s effort given to this management course. This was an enormous task, and the effort afforded the task must have been equally huge, when viewing the quality and quantity of information”. Another recognises that “The role playing made the subject clear, use of black-board

and illustrations.” Another indicated: “Facilitating style enables you to integrate theory to practice with guidance and understanding.” Another noted: “Because it motivated me to look into other perspectives, to appreciate the subject” while another recognized the “supportive, reinforcement style especially during tutorials, diary session.” One reported that the facilitator “encouraged student to derive own way through compilation of diaries and tasks and assignments” whilst another suggested that “when the subject was well presented, a sense of enthusiasm resulted”. This supportive mode was appreciated by another student who said the facilitation “motivate a person to learn more about what subject and it makes easy to apply it” whilst another appreciated the following facility “the reinforcement of the subject, especially during tutorial times”. The developmental component of the facilitation was appreciated “it helped me to develop myself”. Another picked up on the style of facilitation “Facilitation for the subject was slightly informal which assisted me to verbalise management issues more freely.” Motivation by the facilitator was seen as important by a number of students: “if lecturer enthusiastic about subject found it more interesting” and another notes that the facilitation “was my motivating factor. I had to perform within the high standard and make me appreciate the content”. Another said that “integration with the facilitator was good, a lot of support was given.” At least three students indicated that although facilitation was good, there was a great deal of work within this subject and one noted “Too much work to be done at the end of the course. I was exhausted, worse because I have to complete another 1 year to get management.”

Comment

This last is a useful comment, particularly as the students determined – at least to some degree – the amount of work they would need to do to meet their own requirements. Many of the tasks, which required minimum input, were approached by many students, as if they were full-blown

assignments. This factor necessitated my reiteration to two students in the earlier stages of the year (2003), that their effort was appreciated, but was not necessary in terms of my own expectations and evaluation. However, as I again reiterated, they had to determine the effort and input required for their own learning. This, I found, to be a difficult concept for many students to internalize. More effort, rather than less, became the norm.

It should also be noted that this comment is from a 2002 student: Programme co-coordinators in 2002 also verbalized their concerns about work overload. As a result of these concerns, the tasks remained the same but number of required tasks for evaluation purposed was reduced from 19 to 12. Students who completed the additional tasks (and at least 25% of the students completed one or more of these) were awarded extra marks. Required reflective journal entries were also dropped from 60 to 30 per year. Although students worked consistently and effectively during 2003, it appeared that the effort was equitably rewarded.

6.2.7 Environmental factors

On the whole, other than the thorny issue of insufficient and inadequately maintained toilet facilities (remembering that these are nursing students!), students felt the learning environmental facilities (classroom, audio-visual aids, chairs, air conditioning, seating, parking, library) to be comfortable and appropriate.

6.2.8 Student learning growth

All students (n=19) felt that the course had facilitated personal and professional growth and (n=16) indicated that they would recommend this course to others.

Two students observed:

“Critical thinking and reflective learning strategy facilitates:

- creative, critical and reflective thinking skills because it helps you to be able to argue in order to explore different components of the topic or article facing with
- You become able to analyse and interpret information
- You become inquisitive, well-informed
- You read with open-mindedness
- You become honest when facing personal biases (you try and look at an issue in different angles)
- Willingness to explore other people’s actions
- You become willing to reconsider if another person comes with a different version
- you have a clear understanding of the issues
- You learn to justify and support your views and opinions
- It increases independency and it helps you to learn on your own
- You take full control of your learning and you monitor your own progress – no-one is after you when you know what you should be doing.”

Comment

The ability of these students to articulate and summarise essential components of their learning process and recognise the significance thereof, is tremendously exciting to me as an educator. I particularly value words used such as ‘willingness to explore’, ‘honest when facing personal biases,’ willingness to ‘reconsider’ alternative viewpoints, ‘open-mindedness’, inquisitive’, ‘justify and support views’ and ‘take full control of your learning’. The concept of self-development

reoccurs time and again and is a vital outcome of the course. It is also a key concept in van Aswegen's model.

These same students made relevant observations about the following:

"Negative perceptions:

There is a lack of clarity. Sometimes in what you do you don't know if you doing something wrong or right.

Feel uncomfortable as we are not used to talking in a large number of people. You feel threatened to speak in class as there are students who are dominating

It will be difficult to evaluate yourself at the end of the year as you don't know where you went wrong or right."

Comment

The subject of Management is somewhat different to many other clinical nursing subjects in that there are a number of alternative solutions which change in different contexts. The answers are often "messy" and not clear-cut. On the one hand, the students recognise the relevance of including critical reflective thinking as this helps to address the 'open-endedness' of many management issues – but on the other hand, this is also frightening, as solutions are not necessarily straightforward. For nurses, where life-threatening situations demand immediacy and correctness of action, this has often led to the initiation of rote-learned responses, which allow for the nurse to feel 'safe' – but as nurse educators recognise (with specific reference to Patricia Benner and the stages of nurse development), rote is not always right – hence the need for flexible, creative, critical thinking.

In terms of large group discussions – I recognised fairly early on that only certain students participated in these discussions. I did not stop these, but limited these discussions to being precursors of rounds of follow-up small group discussions and returning to the class group to sum up the smaller group discussions. Reflective tutorials were also seen as an important vehicle in encouraging full student participation. In terms of self-evaluation, this is always a difficult concept. It is far easier to rely on external evaluation than internal evaluation, although this is a necessary stage of development towards self-understanding and appreciation.

6.2.9 Group learning

Although not expressly requested, one student commented on the group process:

“We were exceedingly fortunate to have a group who “gelled well” and stuck it out! the aspect of learning as a group was comfortable, opinions voiced interesting and we amalgamated well (little, if nothing, in the way of conflict)”.

Comment

The department recognised the importance that group work made in the learning process and all programme orientations included group work, principles and practice. Most students in this management course were in their second year of study and so, were familiar with the concepts and practice of group work. Generally speaking, the students in this course attended reflective tutorials in groups of 4 – 6 and these same groups undertook a research study in another course. Conflict is a negative outcome of ineffective groups and that a member of this group recognised the lack of conflict was an achievement.

Figures 6.7 and 6.8 summarise students’ perceptions of the course.

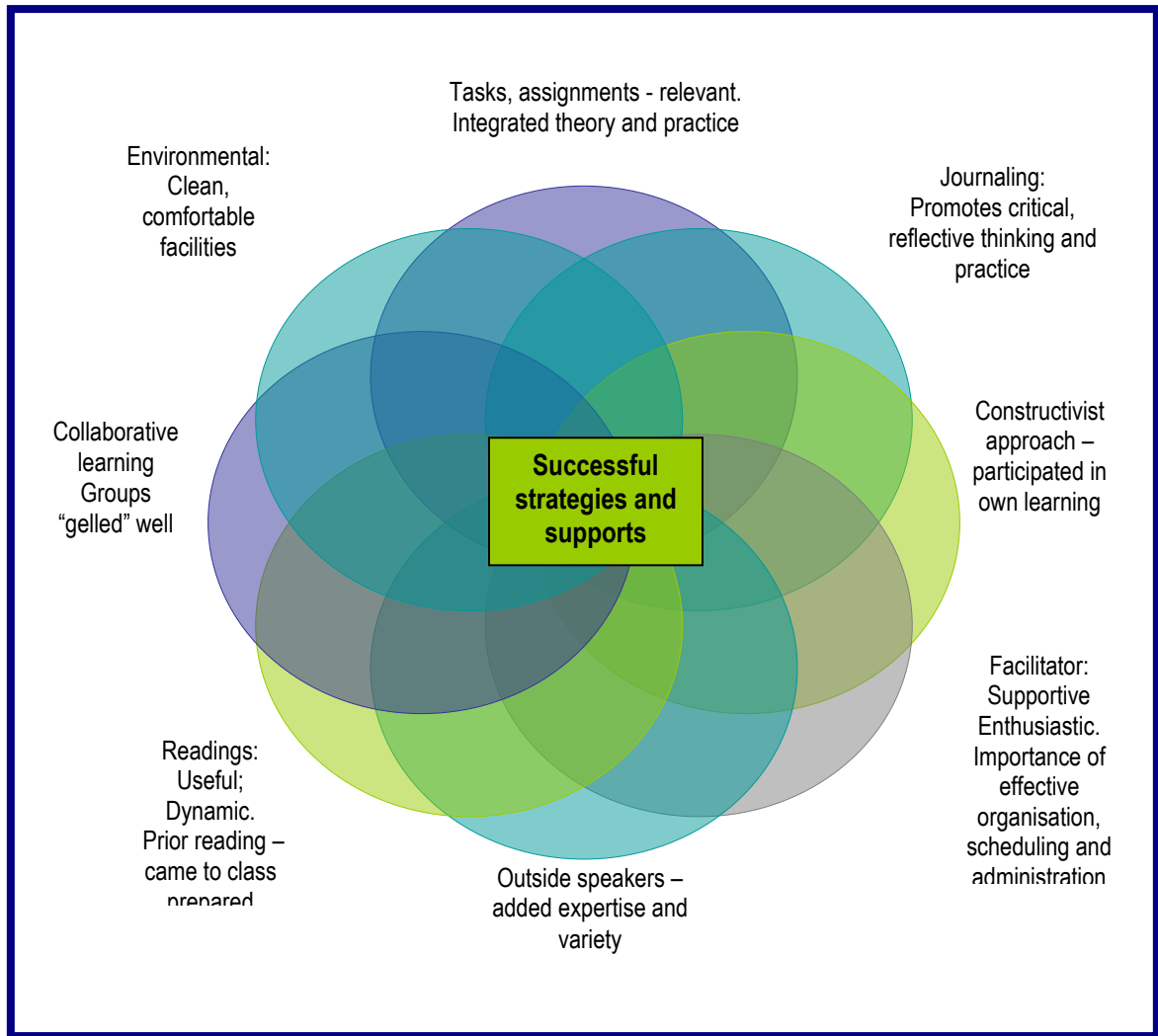


Figure 6.7. Students' perception of successful strategies and supports within the course

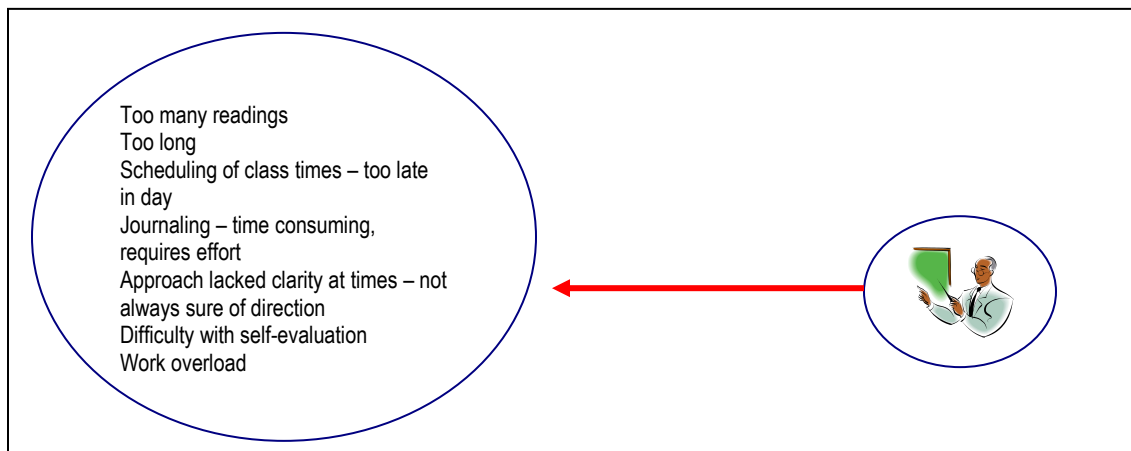


Figure 6.8. Perceived difficulties with course approach

The following data was mainly generated by Questionnaire Five in 2003 in Figure 6.9, which focused on selected aspects of the course. However, because there were open-ended questions in Questionnaires Two and Four, some of the responses alluded to these components, and were therefore incorporated within this section.

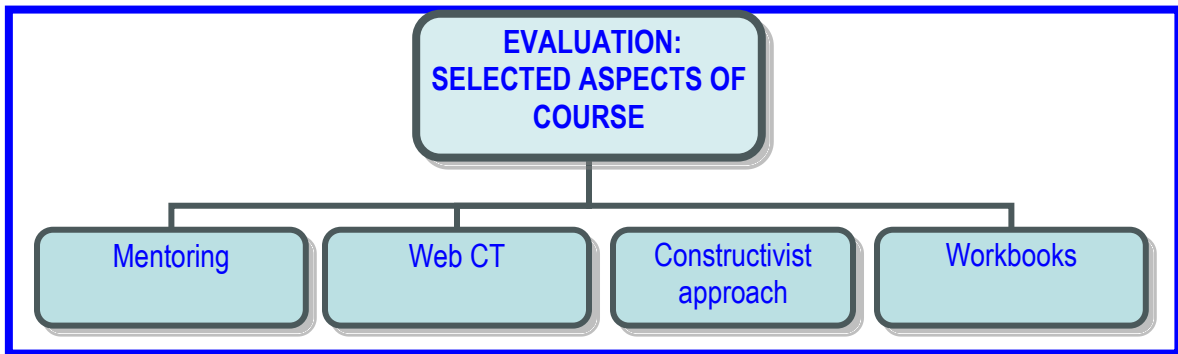


Figure 6.9: Questionnaire Five. Student evaluation of selected aspects of the course, Nursing Management IV

6.2.10 Mentoring

6.2.10.1 Rationale for mentoring as a learning strategy

According to East (1995), if nursing is to claim the title of being a profession, then the novice nurse must be prepared for a role that incorporates and encourages autonomy. Mentoring programmes need to encompass not only the development of competent clinical nurses, but also the development of an individual's ability to become self-directing and thoughtful – the reflective practitioner. Mentoring programmes offer opportunities, founded on the concepts of adult learning, to enable newer entrants to the specified field of nursing, to make a smoother transition from novice to knowledgeable practitioner. Barnard (2002) suggests that they also help the mentee navigate the political landscape of the work environment by making introductions to key personnel and opening previously closed doors to and within the system. This is particularly valuable in

nursing, generally regarded as a highly structured, hierarchical profession with specific norms and multiple policies and procedures for operating within the culture of that profession. But it is the informal associations made outside of the hierarchical context that are more conducive to developing the relationship. Zey (1984) in Sarnier (2000) supports this by suggesting that the process is likely to be high-jacked within a rigid hierarchical organisation because of the need to conform to the hidden norms implicit in the culture of that system.

6.2.10.2 Mentoring as a bridging process

East (1995) believes that mentoring is a bridging process between theory and practice which goes beyond induction and training to continuing professional development for practitioners and managers. The stronger the bridge, the more confident the mentoring pair and the more frequent the journeys across the bridge, backwards and forwards, from not knowing to knowing, from not understanding to understanding, in an ongoing process until eventually theory becomes integrated into practice. The purpose of this process is to enable the mentee to become an autonomous professional who is both self-reflective and self-directing.

6.2.10.3 Types of mentored groups in nursing

Mentoring is not a concept that can be clearly categorised and contained. There is fluidity in the relationships and the role. Northcotte (2001) has identified five types of groupings where mentoring can take place. These include (1) nurses still in training, (2) nurses returning to practice, (3) nurses from a different country needing help with adaptation, (4) newly qualified nurses and (5) established practitioners. The nurses in this study were an amalgam of two groups: they were established practitioners but they were still students in the process of learning.

6.2.10.4 The role of the mentor

A mentor is a trusted and friendly advisor or guide, especially of someone new to a particular role. In classical terms, the mentor becomes involved in a powerful interpersonal relationship with a less experienced, normally younger person. Darwin (2000:197) however suggests that this is a narrow, functionalist perspective and it should not apply to this study's situation where a more "critical or Radical humanist" perspective is valued, as it is one that prevents unequal and sometimes exploitative power relationships. In the case of many of the nursing management students, the mentees were less experienced in the specific specialty, but were not necessarily younger, and certainly not inexperienced in nursing per se. So in this context, career-age rather than chronological age becomes more relevant (Darwin, 2000). The mentor usually represents knowledge, reflection, insight, understanding good advice, determination and planning - qualities which cannot easily be mastered alone. Using the metaphor of a journey, the mentor acts as a travelling companion who is more of a trusted guide than a tour director.

6.2.10.5 Successful mentoring relationship

The mentor protects, urges forward, explains mysteries, points the way, leaves the mentee alone when necessary, translates codes, clears obstacles and encourages – always encourages – helping the mentee find the courage within herself to go on. This is a relationship between two people and what distinguishes fine mentors is their ability to care, suggests East (1995). The mentor engenders trust, issues challenges, offers vision, and alternatively supports and challenges the mentee (Northcotte, 2001). Allen (2002:440) identifies three key aspects in a successful mentoring relationship: mutual respect and trust between mentor and mentee; a facilitative environment of "understanding, empathy, and cooperation; and mutual sharing of information through good communication skills." Beyene, Anglin, Sanchez and Ballou (2002) also stress the

importance of this relationship and their study underpins my interest in and focus on the mentor-mentee relationship where I was concerned with the notion of establishing what Darwin (2000:2007) identifies as the “horizontal relationship” where a climate of risk-taking and dialogue is established to create new knowledge so that mentoring becomes “a collaborative, dynamic, and creative partnership of coequals, founded on openness, vulnerability, and the ability of both parties to take risks with one another beyond their professional roles.” This opens opportunities to share and discuss at levels where the boundaries between expert and learner become blurred, because of the interdependence and maturity of the relationship so that the vertical interaction transcends to a horizontal one of collegiality (Darwin, 2000:2007.)

6.2.10.6 The role of the mentee

This interactive alliance points to the mentee’s role in this relationship. Greene and Puetzer (2002) believe that it is the mentees’ responsibility to be open to receiving help; to be open to learning and caring; to be committed to their profession, to inculcate a desire for competence and demonstrate initiative and a strong sense of self. The mentees also need to understand their health service and the barriers to learning within their work context. Barnard (2002) clarifies their organisational role in this relationship as one where they are responsible for their own development, where they set their own agendas and organise the meetings with their mentors. They are also required to have a personal plan, ask for honest feedback and be committed to the relationship.

6.2.10.7 ‘Letting go’

The mentor eventually needs to ‘let go’ of the mentee and good mentors ensure that their mentees can recognise that authority has its uses but is limited and that the task of becoming independent involves separation from the authoritative concept and taking on one’s own authority. Grey and

Smith (2000) identify the value of mentoring, but also focus on the very natural gradual distancing which occurs over the process of time and the learning which results in changes in the relationship. Traditional patterns of mentoring recognise the separation phase, but this is connected to the original concept of mentoring of young men by older, more experienced men and does not take into account the type of relationships engaged in by women. Darwin (2000:2006) cites Gilligan's 1982 research which "suggests a fusion of identity and intimacy for women, rather than identity preceding intimacy. Developmental theory has established men's experience and competence as a baseline against which everyone's development is judged, often to the detriment or misreading of women..." So, I do not see separation as necessarily meaning a physical and emotional distancing, but rather a reshaping and readapting to a new, perhaps more intimate friendship.

True mentoring of a classical nature is the holistic support for the individual in the development of a new and complex professional role.

6.2.10.8 METHOD

6.2.10.8.1 Research Question

This component, 16 students self-reports, was based on an open-ended question as part of the larger questionnaire completed at the end of the learning course:

Discuss the value and limitations of your experience of the mentoring process this year. Explain what I did to make this an effective experience and what I should have done to make it a better experience?

6.2.10.8.2 The structuring of the mentoring process within the study

Students were expected to identify a manager who was prepared to act as a mentor for them during the course. The purpose of the mentor was to facilitate better understanding of and access to the student's work context and to support the student through the learning process by providing access to information and acting as a sounding board for ideas. Students were expected to establish entry into the system and to motivate for such a mentor, with whom they would need to meet at least twice a month. They were also required to 'negotiate' and draw up a contract with their mentor.

The mentoring concept was initiated in this study with varied levels of success. A student-run workshop debated this mentoring process. The intention was to explore the purpose, value and implementation of the mentoring process. The workshop was also used as an opportunity for students to recognise and appreciate their personal mentors and the value of their personal growth. It became clear that more emphasis needed to be placed on promoting this concept earlier and more frequently so that new students would understand the 'how to' and learning benefits and so engage and 'own' the mentoring process. This took place

- during orientation to the course;
- through a video-taped presentation of the highlights of the previous workshop;
- through a letter of introduction to the proposed mentor;
- through the development of a negotiated contract with the individual mentors;
- via provided research articles on mentoring;
- in on-going group work about the process by anticipating difficulties and role-playing solutions;
- through self-evaluation.

6.2.10.9 Findings: Students' mentoring experiences

6.2.10.9.1 Meaning of mentoring: All students had a general idea of what a mentor was and used terms such as supervision, guidance, support, teaching, assisting, counselling, coaching and nurturing by one "who has experience in that field" and who is more knowledgeable.

Trust: The familiarity promoted the trust needed in the relationship. "My mentor served as a familiar face guiding my studies. This made her approachable and dispelled the fear of burdening her with my deficiency in understanding of the course content."

Accessibility: A student supports the concept and values the mentor's accessibility. "The concept of the student choosing their own mentor is recommended as they themselves will only know how accessible this person would be to them. There were no actual reportable limitations for me regarding my mentor."

Finding a mentor: This was not an easy task for many students. Not only was the concept new to many of the chosen mentors, but nurses in general, no matter the level, were stressed and stretched and found it difficult to set time aside to meet with the student:

"Was quite valuable for the times we met and discussed issues. But it was difficult to meet regularly with the mentor. From the beginning of the course I had problems in getting a mentor. People I talked to were having problems and others left (resigned) before even we started. I usually consult any person who might be available at the time and willing to offer help..."

Creative choice in mentors: The student realises that this is an informal relationship and if it is to work, both parties need to be committed. This is difficult when the student has to do her own negotiating, and obviously, with both parties working, time becomes a factor. Despite earlier discussions around flexibility in choice of mentor, this student now regrets not having been more creative in her choice and looking closer to home where access and expertise were available:

“My mentor was in a new position and a very busy one and really hadn’t the time to support. But was always available to view work done or give advice. I regret not asking my brother, retired this year, to act as mentor, as he would have been wonderful. (Did not even think of this until the second half of this year.) But this also is a lesson in serious consideration regarding planning technique! You must explain to students - Think about the right mentor, what reasons the student is doing this for and that there is much more to mentorship than mentoring.”

That special person: Finding the right mentor makes the learning process that much more valuable:

“...Until toward the end I found a dedicated person who even sacrifice her time to assist in my studies. She pitched to the workshop though she was having other commitment and I wished I met her from the beginning. Tasks that needed to be discussed with mentors ensure that every student is having one. I think you did all you should have done.”

Commitment: It becomes relatively easy to embrace a method that is tried and true, but this was a new approach, a learning experience for each student, and not only did they have to negotiate with their mentor, they had to develop a self-realisation about the mutuality of the responsibility: “There

has to be commitment on the side of the protégé as well as the mentor.” Notes another: “I think is enough what you explain about the mentoring but nothing more you should have done – all depended to me as a student and my mentor to make it work effectively.”

Time needed: Relationships take time to build and develop and this has to be carefully factored into student planning. This was difficult when both mentor and mentee worked, but in different places:

“I didn’t get mentor on time and even the one I had was working in the municipality while I am working in provincial hospital so we were not meeting frequently because of time. You kept on encouraging us to find a mentor.”

Maintaining the relationship: Another student echoes the time limitation but offers a solution that allows her to move past the role of ‘student needing help’ to a collegial role which, I suspect, makes non-engagement difficult because a deeper connection is made:

“Adequate guidelines were given to implement the process. One of the difficulties I found was to maintain the mentorship relationship as my mentor was always too busy. I found the best way to overcome this was to ‘deformalise’ the process and discuss issues with her over a cup of coffee, rather than keep a fixed appointment which she was unable to keep”.

Request for more formalised guidelines: “It may be useful if (facilitator) was to make available a ‘mentor guide’ in which goals are set, to give guidelines”. The Constructivist self-directed approach to education formed part of the critical reflective model used in the management course notes and, as Hanley (1994), indicates in this approach, the ideas outlined are presented as broad concepts

and then deconstructed into smaller parts and students are encouraged to question, analyse and form their own conclusions. After deconstructing the mentoring concept, I expected the students to form their own reconstruction of guidelines based on their own needs.

Theory and practice connection: One of the benefits of choosing volunteer mentors from the health services is that it also validates the view that the learning programme is connected in a real way to management concepts at health service level. The tacit knowledge about the organisation also becomes explicit.

Professional development: Beyene et al. (2002) and Darwin (2000) recognise that mentoring is linked to career success. Additionally, Darwin (2000) points out the resultant increased organisational productivity and leadership development. Students elaborate:

“Mentoring proved to be beneficial in executing most of my work. Although the contact session was so little with my mentor but the conversation telephonically and the written material supplied to me assisted me a lot in my work. This have encouraged me and taught me to be able to stand on my own and contributed a lot towards my independent abilities.”

Negotiating the relationship:

“It has been a good but very demanding experience. We had a very hard time at the beginning because we both did not know what was expected of us. But eventually we had a grip. But then it was so difficult to meet sometimes we ended up discussing issues on the phone because of the time factor. I had very limited contact with my mentor but it was a good experience as I have been able to have a taste of

the difficulties that the managers have. May be if you can have the mentors phone you at least once and give them an idea of what you would like them to help the students with.”

I purposefully did not co-opt mentors as I felt that students needed to negotiate the relationship and decide on their own learning needs. Additionally, this was not a formal appointment: The mentoring process was voluntary and entailed no form of payment. Waters, Clarke, Ingall and Dean-Jones (2003) in their study on a mentoring programme for new nurse managers, support my approach by articulating the need for mentees to choose their own mentors in their own way and in their own time.

Further student observations:

“Mentoring has been of value to me. Most aspects for assignments and tasks discussed with mentor and better understanding acquired. You did it well, when you structured mentoring such the student chooses her own mentor. It makes it easy to communicate.

Limitations: No properly guidance if you do things on your own.

Should have done: Ask the manager of the unit to place me as a deputy manager so that I can function and practice managerial skills. Consulted the expertise whenever I need information, not to suck it out of the thumb sometimes and think this is what should be happening.”

Choosing someone outside the discipline of nursing: This was useful as it enables the students to think ‘outside the box’ of nursing. Wider exposure often means different ideas. The

student also discusses the mutual benefits of the relationship as well as the feeling of safety engendered by a contract:

“My mentor is my HR manager – it made him feel important – good for his self-esteem. I gained from his input and stimulation and challenges of thinking along different lines. Overall very beneficial – good to have a “contract” with someone to bounce things off.”

“I had just joined the Company and it was very important for me to have a mentor, my boss, who informed me about the company, who encouraged me during the course and was a fantastic source of information. “

“My mentor was an immense help as he made time for me on an average of twice weekly. We discussed issues regarding the tasks and assignments which made understanding easier. I would recommend this for next year’s programme.”

“Trialling’ a mentor: It is difficult to be sure that the first choice of mentor is the correct one. A student makes a suggestion:

“A good grounding as to positive aspects, how to set up etc. Difficult to decide who to choose – sometimes initial choice turns out to be unsuitable. I have a couple of structured sessions with 2-3 potential mentors before making a decision and commitment to one. The first session could have structured questions to be asked, so as to initiate discussions – help, point the way for future sessions. Often time a problem and times became informal frequent “chats” rather than structured time together”.

Mutual benefits: It can be clearly seen that there are mutual benefits to this relationship and that mentoring does result in professional growth, a concept supported by Chowwen (2004). The negotiated entry into this relationship is also part of the learning process. Greene and Puetzer (2002:63) provide reminders of how knowledge can be achieved in the context of this relationship, initially by the student engaging in formal classes, then through a

“review of policies and procedures before undertaking a new task, text and journal reading for key concept learning, self-study modules, critical thinking exercises, and tests. Attitudes are shaped through role playing, open concept thinking, case study review, feedback sessions, and value clarification exercises” – all of which can be entertained within this relationship.

A worthwhile experience: A student notes:

“Mentoring process was made an effective experience since our course facilitator kept asking questions from us in the classroom as to how we were doing in our practical situations and how we related with each other. It stimulated interest and improved communication, because we always looked for what we can report on in the class which can be of help to everyone if discussed in the classroom”.

Zieghan (2001) and Oliver et al. (2002) suggest that mentoring of students in the workplace by mentors of a similar culture is helpful in allowing the student an ‘alternative voice’. They note that this is one of the ways in which educators can promote an appreciation of the cultural diversity amongst students.

6.2.10.10 Recommendations on the mentoring process

- **Formal teaching for mentors - or not?**

Oliver et al. (2002) indicate that specific training in mentoring will be helpful in alleviating some fears identified in their literature review by mentors, such as lack of preparation, lack of support and feelings of being overwhelmed by mentee's personal problems. However, I am not convinced that this is the correct approach, particularly if I want students to negotiate entry and establish their own boundaries and frames of reference. Although the introductory letter does offer clarification and support on request, perhaps advising students to reinforce this offer for those mentors who specifically request support might be the correct way forwards?

- **Tips on finding a mentor**

I would recommend flexibility with regards to the choice of mentor(s) and would advise students to analyse their work and social environment, in terms of choosing a mentor(s) that would most suit their needs, taking into account the possible limitations that could be presented by the relationship e.g. limited available time or lack of interest in supporting or promoting student knowledge or accessibility factors. Students also need to be aware of and look for specific traits in their proposed mentor. According to East (1995), these include the person to be a well respected, knowledgeable authority who appears, at the outset, to offer support, allay fears of isolation, ignorance and ridicule, and challenge and confront where necessary. The mentor needs to be up-to-date in the field, recognises what lies ahead and forewarn the mentee in advance of what needs to be done. The mentor should have a macro perspective of course requirements and be able to de-mystify the process for the mentee. The mentor should be able to recognise and appreciate the mentees' abilities, act as the mentees' advocate where necessary, provide constructive feedback,

promote independence and finally, allow for 'separation' for the development of a changed relationship.

- **The question of power**

Darwin's (2000) warnings about power disparities, inequitable relationships and barriers to true learning is particularly related to mentoring as a strategy within the workplace, where it is a formal, regulated, identified strategy of Management. There is a difference in this course of study. The arrangement and choice of mentors is informal and decided on by the student and does not form part of the student's organisation's intent. This immediately places the choice and decision of this learning strategy within the student's grasp. This does not nullify the power differentials, but it does even the playing field, as it were. Additionally, there is no assessment or accreditation function attached to the mentoring role, which further limits the power relationship (Oliver and Aggleton, 2002).

- **Guidance for mentors**

One of the students identified a need for guidance for the mentor. In addition to the above, perhaps some of the advice from undergraduate students in Grey et al.'s (2000) study might also be useful:

- ✓ Be supportive and allow the student to 'discover' the answer rather than providing all the solutions
- ✓ Demonstrate trust and confidence in the student's abilities
- ✓ Establish a relaxed relationship
- ✓ In the early stages, determine the student's abilities and knowledge base and her intended learning outcomes

- ✓ Find out what the student needs in order to meet these learning outcomes
 - ✓ Negotiate the framework for the learning relationship and try to provide opportunities for the student to meet her learning outcomes
 - ✓ Formalise a contract
 - ✓ Remember the student when something of interest occurs in the work context or if you can include her in learning experiences e.g. management meetings or helping with connections.
- Samier (2000) adds to the last point and suggests that the differences and uniqueness of the mentee's style of operating and thinking should be accommodated so that the mentor can tailor the experiences and discussions, particularly those related to alliances and collaborations. She also draws our attention to the ethical aspects of the relationship, which comprise a focus on mutual obligations and judicious use of authority. Oliver et al. (2002) include the concept of establishing confidentiality and Greene and Puetzer (2002) highlight the need for organised planning, using a calendar for the scheduling of tasks. Barnard (2002) re-emphasises that the responsibility for controlling the relationship is the mentee's and believes that ideally this particular relationship should be about 6 to 9 months in duration. This would be appropriate for the course of study of nursing management. However, there is no reason that this relationship should not continue or move to a different shape or context, and Samier (2000) is of the belief that a sound mentoring relationship within the workplace may take three to five years to fully develop. Barnard (2002) indicates that the discussions should be decided upon between the two parties and neither should rely upon external course specifications.

6.2.10.11 Conclusion

Oliver et al. (2002) articulate that learning occurs through the agency of this mentoring relationship, where one learns with the help of another. People, they suggest, need encouragement and a

relationship that allows them to engage in dialogue that promotes critical thinking, the exploration of the self in order to establish a sense of self and opportunities to learn from experiences. This pilot study seems to indicate that as a scaffolding technique, mentoring appears to be a useful strategy within the critical reflective practice framework. Further studies are suggested to corroborate and strengthen these findings.

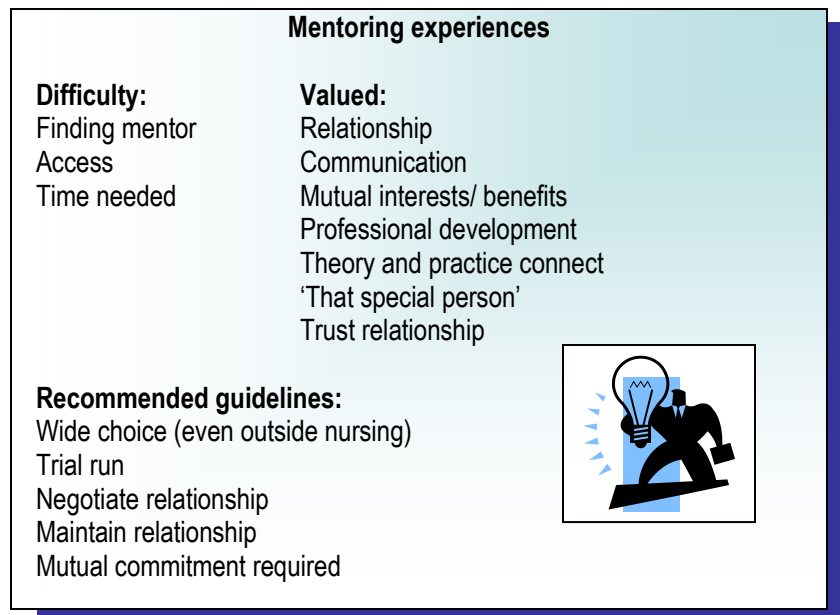


Figure 6.10: Students' mentoring experiences and suggestions

6.2.11 Web CT: On-line learning environment

This is a safe, institutionally structured on-line learning environment, the purpose of which is to encourage student research and active student involvement with and in the construction of the learning process. It is a virtual on-line classroom, which has a number of facilities. Basically, this is a shell or a structured framework for an educational programme that has been provided for me and other interested course facilitators through the Internet. It allowed me to place course information in a format that should be easy to use and easily accessible to students who had computer and Internet access. It also provided a number of tools that could allow both students and facilitator to

communicate with and amongst each other such as e-mail, a group discussion list, a calendar for planning and a photo gallery to share their photographs and some information about themselves. It allowed students to control the educational process and their own interaction to a much greater degree and it was an ideal medium for our situation whereby facilitators and students shared limited common backgrounds and limited face-to-face contact. The self-learning that takes place through the web-based computer-linked classroom particularly draws on the behaviourist theory addressed in Chapter Three, Section 3.1.

Initially, I wanted to find a way to promote computer literacy skills for students through a means that would provoke their curiosity and motivate engagement – and where the outcome would be determined by their interest and needs and not by the reward of a grade. The one outcome I really wanted was to engender excitement the about the possibilities of computer communication as a vehicle to support and promote critical reflective practice. Any further outcome would be seen as a bonus.

Total student number in 2003 (N=19). In 2003, students accessed Web CT an average of 462 separate occasions (the maximum number of times accessed were 985 and the minimum number of times accessed by a student was 164) and students averaged 23 entries over 2003 (the minimum number of student entries were 4 and the maximum number was 58). This does not account for the e-mailing system, for e-mails were not tallied.

6.2.11.1 Web CT findings

The following results are based on:

1. (a) 2002 student evaluation of the Nursing Management IV course (n=6) of total number of registered students (N=16)
2. 2003 student evaluation of the Nursing Management IV course (n=12) of total number of registered students (N=21)
3. 2003 Evaluation of selected aspects of the Management IV course: (16 completed forms of the total student registered group of 21)
4. 2003 Web CT student tracking system.

While Web CT has a number of facilities, the following are those used by the students in this course:

- **Calendar (N=14)**

When students accessed this facility, they found it useful (n=9) "Vital! Helped me work in advance to ensure that all work was evenly paced and completed in time." "It kept me up to date with the study programme for the whole year and knowing changes in advance." Or there were those who did not use it at all (n=5) "Had fun setting it up but never used it".

- **Access To The Nursing Management Programme Through The Web (N=15)**

I had developed course-ware materials for the Nursing Management IV course in the form of workbooks. I then adapted and transposed these into a web-based format using the computer programme, Microsoft FrontPage. Significant adaptations included more graphics, sound, colour, highlighting, provision of aesthetically pleasing backgrounds and connectors (connecting descriptions linking the theme of the one module to the theme of the next). I hyperlinked all the modules and created a framework so that students could manoeuvre through the course fairly

easily. I also integrated a number of URL sites within the modules to enable the students to read, click and move into a related site on the internet. The course content and study guide were uploaded onto the Web CT classroom site and allowed students to access any aspect of the course wherever they had internet access.

The advantage of this format was that it was colourful, interactive and allowed students to read and work ahead if they wanted to, a facility not available to them in the paper format. (Students were provided with five workbooks, one at a time, and were only given the new workbook when scheduled in the study guide). This same content and web based format was made available to students on a CD ROM, which could be used independently of or dependently on the internet. It is clear that students require different formats for learning and that while the format of the Web based content worked for some students, others noted: "I tended to use my notes rather than the same data on Web CT syllabus. I think because I am naturally book-orientated."

The responses of the students varied as to use and access of this facility: Limited use and access (n=5) "Not very useful as we tend to use the programme guide and workbook more as we don't all have computers," and "Used occasionally, but used books mainly "or "CD useful at times, when the next book was not available, and I wanted to see something" or useful in varying degrees (n=11) "What an experience! This course has actually invented and opened new areas of life – exposure to computers which was totally new to me" or access "was gradually improving every time I went there but frustration occurred after the password had been rejected". The negative comments related to accessing the site (n=3) "Very frustrating – Web CT not always accessible" and "I experienced difficulties in most of the instances to gain access from my personal e-mail to the site."

Comments

The person responsible for Web CT technical assistance at the institution's On-line learning Centre did make available her cell number to the students and spoke at least twice to students formally in class about what to do. However, if one works on the assumption that the students did try to access the facility and failed, this then becomes an issue that requires constant liaison with this enormously helpful department.

▪ E-mail (N=15)

The e-mail facility allows students to communicate with each other and with me, their course facilitator, both on and off campus through a closed system. It allowed students to send and receive messages, to upload and download materials and to store information (See Table 6.3)

Table 6.3: Perceived value of e-mail facility

Useful	Not useful
Encouraged communication between group members – time saving, convenient and promoted social interaction. Promoted quick responses. (n=7)	Have limited access to the computer and too little time – e-mailing not seen as a necessary skill as cannot use it outside of DIT (n=1)
Allowed for communication off-campus or outside of the department (n=3)	Have own e-mail facilities – which are quicker and more convenient (n=11)
Facilitated e-mailing in other contexts other than specific course e.g. social (n=1)	Already have e-mailing skills (n=2)
Positive new experience (n=2)	Frustrating and costly as picked up viruses on home computer (n=1)
E-mail and send information to and from tutor off campus in own time (n=2)	High cost factor off-campus as takes time to access and enter classroom and then work on-line (n=1)
Clarified communication – prevented ambiguities (n=1)	
Assisted in research (n=3)	
Promoted computer skills (n=3)	

- **Shared on-line journal entries and responses**

The notion of extending the concept of reflective journaling to sharing with peers on-line was developed in response to a 2002 student's suggestion. In 2003, students were required to write one entry on-line per month and to respond to two entries of other students. Spouse's (2001:14) recognition that shared "problem-solving, preferably with colleagues or alternatively through journal writing, provides opportunities for existing knowledge and practices to be challenged and to generate new understandings" connects with these findings.

Most students enjoyed the social element of the engagement i.e. identifying, empathizing, and sharing with others: This resulted in a 'feel-good' experience as well as a further opportunity to bond and strengthen group ties. It also allowed students to appreciate the context and problems others had to deal with, which allowed them to support each other, strengthening the group bond as well as providing ideas which could cross into their own context. Notes a student: "Sometimes this was good as brainstorming resulted in solutions never thought of before." Students could share their problems and ask for and give advice, which was both encouraging and helpful. "I have been able to solve other work problems through sharing problems".

On the downside, some students felt that "Sometimes sharing was difficult as issues discussed were not interesting for all". Fortunately, as another student notes "the subjects changed quickly and did not remain in focus long enough or time pushed one onto the next discussion, diary entry or task". Another noted her difficulty: "Not easy to share – too many personal issues – to the unknown – gets better during the year. Non-personal issues not a problem". One student "Felt I had to be careful how I phrased feedback so as not to offend or sound or be viewed as critical".

[Comment](#)

Personally, I see this as a positive learning experience as much of management is related to how to give effective feedback.

One student noted, “I discovered how serious other colleagues were viewing issues then I discovered its significance and effectiveness in learning”. One student indicates her difficulty “Due to lack of computer exposure there were not much to share with colleagues but prepared to learn skills.”

Comment

Group influence is frequently a motivating factor and is maybe responsible for the cliché ‘Keeping up with the Jones’s’. It would also seem that the sharing of diary entries on-line was affected by levels of computer skills and time. The system was effective for the practicing of computer skills but for sharing of reflections, the effect was limited.

▪ Discussion list

The Discussion list allowed for discussions, readings or offered the facility for students to respond to various topics. Students recognised that the Discussion List provided them with a forum. Said one student “Used most of the time. Plenty of correspondence here. Definitely helped change way of thinking, connected one’s thoughts to one’s feelings, and therefore one’s actions are more structured and slower.” Another noted: “was useful when it came to communication and sharing diaries with each other. It was the one way we got to really know each other socially as there is no other time” and another said, “What I liked about this part I was able to choose first what I needed most.” This was supported by another student who noted that the structuring of the Discussion List “Assisted us most to get information as quick as possible and to enable us to select what we want easily”.

Comment

It seems that the concept of choice was used – with the added advantage of the organisation or materials in the form of headings (title list) allowing for quick and easy access. Typing skills were promoted and students were motivated and interested by the virtual classroom.

The Discussion list was structured in segments and included some of the following headings:

1. Main (posted entries and responses: n=70)

This section was used to post instructions, reminders, administrative issues or issues of general interest to the class. While it was open for posting by all, in general, as facilitator of the classroom, I tended to post most of the entries. Students, however, responded.

2. Student Journal entries (posted entries and responses n=438)

This section provided the most interactivity (outside of e-mail) and here students posted their entries and responded to the entries of their peers. Most entries reflected students' personal involvement or difficulties with the health care system, their working situation and the resultant dilemmas, nursing or personal issues. Others focused on current issues reflected in the news or emanating from classroom discussions and debates.

3. News articles (posted entries and responses n=63)

My intention was to promote health and political literacy, ensure that students kept abreast of current events and affairs relevant to health and would be stimulated into debate. I also wanted to ensure their access to relevant sites and resources and used mainly Health Link (<http://www.hst.org.za> provided on my list server by Health Systems Trust), Health E-news (www.health-e.org.za) and the current on-line South African newspaper, The Mail and Guardian

(<http://www.mg.co.za/>). The first two provided a number of useful URL sites and health linked resources and in fact, provided a form of comprehensive education on current health affairs, specifically but not peculiar to South Africa. It would seem that the information was, as one student puts it “Interesting. Once again, a lot saved to be read at a slower pace later. But all sound, thought-provoking, relevant matter that ‘grabs’ your attention”. The main problem seemed to be lack of time, not interest. One group of students, the Occupational Health Nursing group, (all except one) had access to computers either at home or at work and belonged the Occupational Health Nursing society where they were kept updated and informed through their own list server and therefore this section, was for them, somewhat redundant.

4. Readings (posted entries and responses n=41)

I had sourced readings relevant to the programme from a number of institutional databases or Internet sites. In general, the additional readings were perceived as useful as observed by one student: “The additional readings were beneficial in that we were able to gain a better understanding regarding the topics”. It would appear that those who did not read all the readings, would have, had they more time at their disposal and only one student noted that she seldom used the readings as they appeared to be “a bit repetitive.” However, as another student noted “the readings helped in giving me different views on single issue. Readings on the same topic helped analyse and sift out relevant from irrelevant material.”

5. Focused entry into the internet by the provision of URL sites

My intention with this facility was to both guide and direct student access and learning on the Internet. It is so easy to get lost in the World Wide Web or get sidetracked and frustrated or just plainly land up in a world of junk. I wanted students to explore, but initially, I wanted them to do this

with discretion and so learn to differentiate between information access that was academically acceptable and information that was questionable. Again, the following comments reflect prevalent views: "Excellent as you just click and it takes you there ". "This was very helpful as it saved time in searching for information". "Would have loved more time here to have made more use of them for tasks and assignments. I didn't quite get organised enough to make enough use of this bonus". "Were very useful, both for the course and also helpful in the work situation." As with a number of the computer based facilities, learning for those students to whom the mysteries of the internet were new, learning was a gradual process and was seen as "Very interesting – as I got to understand it".

6. Access to library-linked data sources such as the Journal for Advanced Nursing

Although only a few students appeared to use this facility, the following view reflects the general consensus: "Relevant, top class, renowned references. Not always able to make enough use of them". Again, this was the students' own personal choice. I tried to provide as much variety as possible so that the students could direct their learning and choose in areas of individual interest, as well as decide *how* and *when* they wished to access the material. Those who used this facility found it "Very useful especially on the research project."

One of the things I wanted to achieve with the computer, was it's across-the- board usage. It was intended for students to be able to see its broader scope of reference and it is interesting to note that a number of student incorporated broader access/ learning by referring to their Research 1 subject in their evaluation and recommendations for the Management 1V course.

7. Research (posted entries and responses n=22)

I was aware that all students were also registered for Research 1, and so provided a site in the virtual classroom specific to research. I posted a number of research methodology readings and URL sites I thought might be useful to the students and encouraged them to access and use this site for discussions or postings of their own.

6.2.11.2 Student perceptions of gains from using Web CT

Students mainly recognised an improvement in computer skills, which then helped them to organise and present the effects of their learning more quickly, confidently and effectively as expressed in the following sampled student comments: "A wealth of knowledge; enhanced my skills in being hands-on regarding the computer. It has eased(?) my learning drastically". "Proficiency and speed. the tasks and assignments really helped with other general improvement in PC skills." "Computer skills. I even bought my own to continue practising at home during the holidays." "I can proudly say I am computer literate now. I have gained so many things." "Communication – very good to facilitator – prompt response – confidentiality good all in relation to facilitator." "More communication skills." "More computer literacy." "If used more, would have been more beneficial. Think it would be used more if no access to classroom weekly. this made the need for the library not so important." "Accessed readings – where the books not found!"

Comment

This was an important comment as materials were not always available in the library and so, with this additional source of information, students were not bereft of important resources.

"For my research information and update readings through the internet." "I introduced the Web CT site to our industrial training officer, who found it a good system to get employees at our workplace

computer literate through learning their jobs.” “A lot! Actually I have discovered that I’ve been just like a blind person – without those skills.”

Comment: When I first recognised the potential of the virtual classroom and started learning the skills to work with digital materials, it would have been very easy to allow the technology to drive the learning process, particularly as I had invested so much time and effort in learning and developing the resources. Fortunately educators from the on-line teaching department drove the learning process and focused on the pedagogical underpinnings of e-learning. Additionally, I and my colleagues in this pioneering group of educators were committed to student learning.

Adams (2004) too, was alert to the danger of technology driven learning, which she notes, often leads to superficial learning when not accompanied by theoretical filters. This could lead, she suggests, to injudicious use of the technology, merely because it is there. This constructivist form of learning is effective and promotes deep learning when educators use strategies that encourage appropriate educationally and professionally sound *active* student engagement with the content, their peers and facilitators.

6.2.11.2 Did students meet the intended outcomes of the Web CT component of the course and the research objectives?

There appears to be more than sufficient evidence to suggest that they did. Additionally, this component of the course has clearly addressed some of the aspects of the Research Objectives 1,2 and 3 as outlined in Chapter 4, Section 4.11.

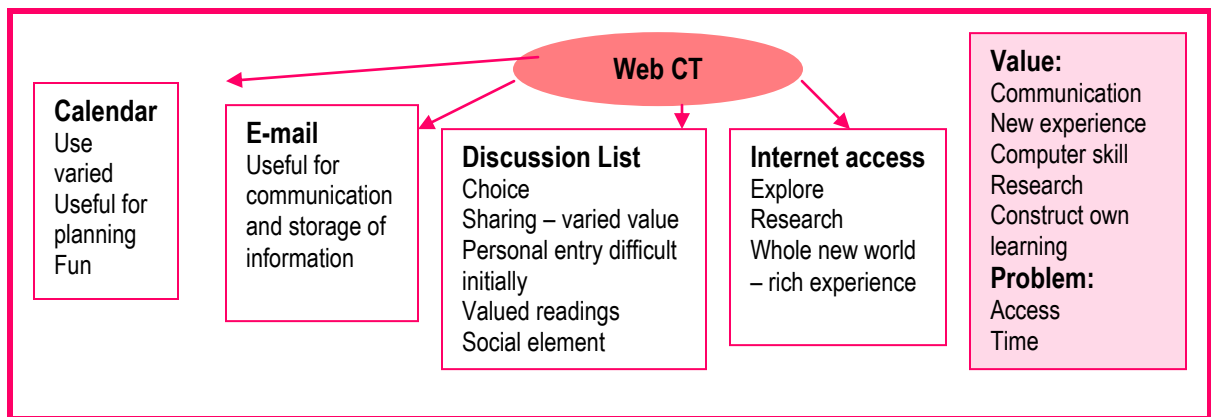


Figure 6.11 Use of Web CT

6.2.12 Course teaching and learning approach: general comments

I chose to use the Constructivist educational approach, learner contract, reflective journals, mentoring, reflective tutorials, prior reading, completion of workplace related tasks prior to discussion, assignments, enrichment activities (e.g. Web CT), invited expert guest speakers and continuous evaluation as a means of supporting student learning. Students indicated their perceptions and feelings about this process as follows:

“Would have like opportunity to “update” tasks after lecture. Problem – getting to class to bring in a skeleton draft and give chance to update as many will wait till after lecture to do work.”

Comment:

The opportunity to ‘update’ did happen, but only after it was evaluated as part of the continuous evaluation process.

“Some feel that the tasks should be undertaken after the content has been discussed so that they have an understanding of what is expected from the tasks. However, for me this was beneficial as it posed a challenge to read further and complete my task confident that a variety of information has been consulted. Overall the approach is what tertiary education is about.”

"The idea of readings and tasks performed prior to the lectures is excellent. The students are prepared and can participate in the lecture, argue points and that makes for a much more meaningful session as I am sure it would be for the lecturer."

"Mentoring is good but it should not be just one person because not all learned people eager to share knowledge."

"Completing of workplace tasks was not useful to me because I didn't have a mentor so I didn't have anyone to contact if I have a problem – or help me before I could submit my task."

"As this study course is geared at mature learners, I feel this method is excellent as most learners are self-motivated and take responsibility for their own progress. It allowed for learners to set their own standards and aspire to gain knowledge at their own pace."

"It was very good to invite outside speakers to teach as variety is tasteful. We may have developed boredom with only one teacher and then lack of motivation to learn. Please do not stop inviting outside speakers as they add taste and interest on the part of the learners. Continuous evaluation is best suited for the course and the low motivated learners on this aspect need to be accommodated and remedied in time."

"Was very beneficial. Access to Web CT to all without problems would be helpful."

"They were appropriate and relevant. Can be continued with the next groups."

"These were appropriate. Gave us a chance to be able to read and analyse some arguments and the outside speakers were all interesting but morehow I hope you will consider adding more visitors."

"For me they were appropriate – as most people that used to come were very informative. The learning approach I feel was good as was very relaxed – everyone free to relate."

"They were appropriate as each and every individual that you invited was excellent on their work and they know what they are doing. Webb CT has brought some form of technological information in my mind. Tutorials have been reinforcing what we learn in the classroom. The assignment that you have chosen made me understand the organisation that I have been working in."

"This was all very good for me to grow as a person in various aspects of who I am – and the good changes that have occurred. This past year has been a time of growth – overall aspects of who I am." (Picture of a smiling face and a heart- my words).

"It made me work harder and think on my own a lot more."

"It took a bit of time for me to adapt to this approach at first, because of my past learning experiences. However the structure began to take shape for me towards the end of the course. This is so because I learn differently and prefer more structure. However, in adult based learning this is extremely important, which I fully am at fault for."

“Did ensure readings done for lecturers as needed readings to do task. Interaction in class wasn’t proof of this though. Outside lecturers a nice change to the routine and most of them dynamic and interesting.”

“All were exciting. We were not bored. Since we were exchanging methods of learning and lecturers which is so motivating to learn. Written tasks and assignments helped me a lot because I gained knowledge of written assignments better than my previous performance because my lecturers had comments during the marking which helped me discover what was expected from me.”

6.2.13 Recommendations for future offering of Nursing Management IV

Maintain the following practices:

1. Involve students in determining their learning needs and in the shaping of the programme. Try to accommodate for individual preferences and needs. Provide students with the results of previous student evaluations of the programme in enabling them to determine their own learning needs.
2. Appreciate that students come from a broader social context and strongly consider an individualised approach.
3. Ensure an appropriate and extensive orientation to the learning and teaching approach and intended outcomes (Oehlkers and Gibson, 2001).
4. Develop, with the students, the criteria for the ongoing tasks. Ensure relevance to working situations by consultation with students, and adapt accordingly. Let practice drive theoretical needs and ensure regular opportunities for sharing, discussing and debating relevant reality-based issues.

5. Should other lecturers be involved in the teaching of the programme, ensure an appropriate orientation to the principles of the Constructivist approach to the teaching of the programme. Reinforce consistency of approach and evaluation in the presence of the lecturer(s) and students to promote the continuity of the approach and avoid any ambiguities.
6. Reinforce the principles inherent in the critical reflective approach; the Constructivist approach to learning; adult education and the mentoring system on a regular basis. Support student ownership of own learning needs and maintain an open, supportive and motivational learning and teaching environment.
7. Maintain the tutorial system in its current form, explaining and emphasising the value within the learning system. Support the group process as a means of facilitating learning. Oehlkers et al. (2001) find that peer support increases in value when the facilitator is not available. Therefore, promote supportive group processes such as collaborative projects and e-mail or discussion list exchanges.
8. Highlight and reinforce the mentoring approach and reflective journals as a routine item in class contact activities.
9. Recognise and support, where possible, individual learning needs. Recognise, support and reward student effort. Provide feedback regularly and as quickly as possible (Oehlkers et al., 2001).
10. Endeavour to be culturally sensitive and involve students in this effort. Recognise language differences and the need to accommodate the difficulties resulting from these differences e.g. within small groups or on an individual basis.
11. Ensure that prior reading and preparation drives the contact sessions. Ensure that students can differentiate between required readings and 'enrichment' readings.

12. Provide and support 'enrichment' activities e.g. on-line learning, group work, the mentoring relationship, outside speakers, flexible and creative experiential learning activities. Challenge students on both a group and individual basis, to maximise their use of the learning opportunities.
13. With students, set high, but realistic standards, and support and recognise the meeting of these standards. Provide incentives, such as recognition in class or on-line.
14. Be open to students and to change and maintain own up-to-date knowledge base. Variety in teaching methods and evaluation is key.
15. Enrich the course by inviting experts from the field or education to 'share' with students.
16. Continue to liaise with course co-ordinators for marketing, consistency and support purposes.

6.3 MODERATOR REPORTS

The following extracts from three moderators reports (discussed in Chapter Four, Section 4.18) comment on related aspects of the course:

Moderator One:

GENERAL COMMENT

"My general comment is that I find the materials to be of a very high standard, clear, simple and very facilitative to independent learning. The whole approach to this course is practice and reality based, directly aligned to the Outcomes-Based-Education approach and therefore in line with requirements of the Department of Education. I am highly impressed with the technical presentation of the material."

2. PROGRAMME AND SYLLABUS

"The syllabus is comprehensive enough to produce a quality manager who can fit in any health care or other setting..."

3. COURSE PRESENTATION

“Initially I was concerned about the students who had no previous exposure to computer technology because of their disadvantaged background. However, after discussions and awareness of the opportunities this course has to offer in this field, I felt encouraged that these students are actually put in the best position to overcome the barriers posed by their previous lack of access to computer-based learning. The assurance that their previous lack of knowledge and skills in this field does not in any way influence evaluation and grading of their work is very important, noting that it can be very intimidating to be mixed with experts or those who are experienced in the use of computers. I hope the students will be motivated enough by their lecturer’s expertise and enthusiasm on this”.

4. COMMENTS ON NURSING MANAGEMENT COURSE MATERIALS

“It helps to have a table of contents page for all the books.”

Comment: There were.

“The focus and logical sequence of this book is not quite clear (for further discussion)...”

Comment

After discussion, the moderator indicated her satisfaction. However, the workbooks for 2002 were restructured for 2003 and followed the Generic Process of management. Sequencing and structure was tightened up for 2003, and then further adjusted for 2004. The intention is to update and review the workbooks on at least a bi-annual basis with both students and educational experts.

“... Comments on Mentors (a very good system if implemented and monitored effectively). Suggest some form of liaison between the mentor and the lecturer, from a proactive rather than a reactive stance, i.e. to be convinced of her awareness and acceptance of her role as mentor (the initial letter is not enough)...”

Comment

A contract was developed.

..."I am aware that some managers may see this as an intrusion on their authority to manage and on their limited time, a fault finding exercise or unnecessary interference on management matters, especially if mentee is considered a junior person.

The question to bear in mind is:

"Are all managers good and performing at expected standard?"

"What if our student happens to land in the hands of the "not-so-ideal" one who happens to be the closest and most convenient?"

My wish is that the good one will warmly welcome the mentoring opportunity and the interactive process between the student, lecturer and herself to give and receive feedback.

Time and cost constraints being considered, one could look at the cheapest and most convenient methods e.g. e-mail. Telephone conference (if available), meeting with nearby managers etc..."

Comment

These are valuable questions and comments. It is true that not all mentors are ideal, but it is also true that students learned to differentiate the wheat from the chaff, and bore the consequences of their decisions. For me, as co-ordinator, to nominate 'ideal' mentors for the students would be contrary to the intention of promoting autonomous learning.

"...BOOKS 2, 3, 4

Very well outlined and serve as good comprehensive study guides. Enough attention has been given to important areas like communication and financial management.

Book 2 logical sequences: Suggest pages 169 - 170 before pages 152 - 168."

5. TASKS AND ASSIGNMENTS

“At a glance these appear to be too many for part time students, however considering the content, they are fair and manageable to a committed student.”

Moderator Two:

DIARIES AND TESTS.

“Congratulations on getting the reflective diaries done. A wonderful example of the concept that ‘management skills are caught, not taught’. The quality varied within the group, it is a difficult concept of most S.A. women to do, as the submissive instinct borne out of culture and history are difficult to overcome. Most noteworthy was the individual growth of the students, it was very promising. This must have been a time consuming teaching method and rewarding for mentor and student. It was sad that many did not move onto more professional and Primary Care issues from professional journals. However for the level of the student, I think you managed to get a good quality of thought from most...”

Comment

Up until this stage, all students were free to determine the content of their reflective diaries. However, in discussion with the course co-ordinator, the students in the first year of their programme, from 2003, focused on news and journal articles. In their second year, the focus would change to include reflective thoughts relating to their work and programme. This was initiated in 2004.

“...the assignments and the method of this form of learning was again innovative and well accomplished by the students...”

Moderator Three:

“The innovative monitoring of students’ perception of their own growth, was an impressive addition to the student assessment strategy. Personal growth is frequently the most painful and this was evidenced by the resistance expressed by some students to this aspect of the course work. Challenging social stereotypes and cultural perceptions is essential in order to stimulate a questioning of norms and clarification of value systems.”

6.4 COURSE-WARE LAYOUT

The following are some of the principles of course-ware development and writing (as discussed in Chapter Five, Section 5.4.2.2) and students’ perceptions of the integration of these principles within the course-ware, as identified in Tables 6.4 and 6.5. Also included are observations made by three members of the institutional quality assurance unit (CHED):

Table 6.4: Students’ perception of the efficacy of course-ware layout in workbooks and study guide

Principle of structuring and layout of workbooks and guide	yes	no	someti	N/A
Accessibility of information – without distorting	(n=16)			
Introduction to key concepts, questions and issues	n=15)		(n=1)	
Engage with material in meaningful way. Learning includes “content knowledge acquisition, cognitive development and the ability engage critically with the subject matter”	(n=16)			
Write to promote effective learning by engagement with the text.	(n=15)		(n=1)	
Arouses interest	(n=11)		(n=5)	
Written for learner use	(n=15)		(n=1)	
Usually gives estimates of study time	(n=9)	(n=2)	(n=5)	(n=1)
Designed for a particular audience	(n=11)	(n=1)	(n=2)	

Usually gives aims and objectives	(n=13)		(n=3)	
May be many ways through it	(n=6)		(n=6)	(n=1)
Structured according to the needs of the learner	(n=11)		(n=5)	
Major emphasis on self-assessment	(n=12)		(n=4)	
Alert to potential difficulties	(n=7)		(n=7)	(n=2)
Often offers summaries	(n=10)	(n=1)	(n=4)	(n=1)
More personal style	(n=8)		(n=6)	
Content unpacked	(n=9)		(n=5)	(n=1)
More open layout	(n=12)	(n=1)	(n=1)	(n=1)
Learner evaluation should be conducted	(n=10)		(n=4)	(n=1)
Requires active response	(n=13)		(n=3)	
Often provides study skills advice	(n=10)	(n=2)	(n=4)	
Readability considered important	(n=15)		(n=1)	

Additional Comment: “Not enough diversity – many examples relate to hospital and not many to occupational health group. Group activities usually had one occupational health scenario.”

Table 6.5: Students’ perceptions of the inclusion/exclusion of reader friendly writing principles:

Reader friendly word or phrases	Yes	No	Sometim	N/A
Simple	(n=14)		(n=3)	
Short	(n=6)	(n=3)	(n=6)	
Familiar rather than esoteric (high sounding)	(n=12)		(n=2)	
Concrete with metaphorical possibilities rather than Abstract	(n=14)		(n=3)	
Verbs that are active, descriptive and vibrant	(n=12)		(n=4)	
Short sentences	(n=9)	(n=2)	(n=5)	
Positive, affirmative sentences	(n=16)			

Personal style, engaging in dialogue with reader	(n=11)		(n=5)	Excellent
Provide connecting links between ideas and sentences	(n=13)		(n=3)	
Consistent – same term for same concept	(n=13)		(n=3)	
Start with the known and add new information	(n=9)		(n=7)	
Define key terms clearly and early in material	(n=14)		(n=2)	
Illustrate key concepts with concrete, vivid examples	(n=13)		(n=2)	Excellent
Use headings and advance organisers. ..These are initial statements which express new concepts to be learned in familiar terms.	(n=15)		(n=1)	
Write for your learners. Know who they are.	(n=12)		(n=4)	
“Provide support in the forms of clues, reminders, encouragement or even the breaking down of a problem into steps, thereby allowing for practice in a structured process of learning.”	(n=15)		(n=1)	
Provide cues to help with learning.	(n=14)		(n=2)	
Organisation of material in a logical, orderly way and omission of needless, ambiguous words	(n=13)		(n=3)	
Other: some articles or topic too long e.g. budget	(n=1)			

Additional student comments:

“Some sections too long e.g. financial. 2-3 articles saying the same thing about the same subject so I lost interest. Prefer a more condensed reading that require a constructed effort on my part and not just pages of readings saying the same thing.” “Dates not updated eg still some 2001 dates.”

“Some grammar mistakes.” “? ask someone to correct the readings during the yuear – I would pick them up while reading but can’t tell you where they are now.” “Layout needs to be looked at. Sometimes one work/sentence on next page when could be included on previous page.” “Some table information poorly set out.” “References (yes) Informative (yes)”

Comment

This has been an instructive exercise, and while there are many positive comments which support the manner and content of the material developed, structurally, I have had to revisit and correct the specified aspects related to layout. Other aspects in which attention was indicated included:

- Starting with the known and adding new information (this is done orally in class, but perhaps a few descriptive connector sentences between and at the beginning of sections, as included in the web site course content were needed)
- Shorten sentences
- Personal style (this was available mainly in the first few workbooks and in all the instructions, but perhaps I needed to increase this element)
- More summaries
- Estimates of study time – perhaps adding in a section in the study guide
- Alerting students to the potential difficulties of the readings/ tasks/ assignments

Questions, Hubbart (2001) notes, are important tools characteristic of “implicit dialogue” with the reader that the writer seeks to engage, and are a common phenomenon of educational material. Again, a technique used in the Management IV course, in all forms of oral and written communication. The Socratic questioning method was deliberately used as an element of van Aswegen’s (1998) model in the class discussions and reflective tutorials.

On reflection, I realised that perhaps just using the research of others to describe the development of the courseware might not be sufficient and so shared the workbooks with a colleague, a moderator (comments in Section 6.3) and educators from the institutional quality assurance unit (CHED).

Joan Connolly (2003), a colleague from CHED and doctor in Oral-literacy Studies, debated the merits of readability formulas or other approaches to evaluating the courseware materials. She concurred with Stephens (2000) who notes that readability formulas such as the Fleisch Scale or the Fog index can only measure surface characteristics of written materials. “Qualitative factors like vocabulary difficulty, composition, sentence structure, concreteness and abstractness, obscurity and incoherence can not be measured mathematically” (Stephens, 2000). Nor can they inform on the complexity of ideas; the logic progression of content; the audience appropriateness of vocabulary; culture, class or gender bias; or design elements. They cannot take into account the resources available to the different readers such as recognition skills, subject interest and prior knowledge or the physical and psychological circumstances under which the material is read. So, no formulas. Instead the 2003 students (as in Tables 6.4 and 6.5) as well as staff members from CHED were asked to review the material (the 5 workbooks as a whole) in light of the learner-centred material criteria and the rules for reader friendly writing.

There were two responses from the staff members, one summarised general perceptions of the workbooks and study guide as below (Mankowitz, 2003) and the second (Timms, 2003) was mostly in the form of specific corrections to pages/sections. Both responses were useful and main ideas were subsequently incorporated into the reviewed and changed 2004 course-ware materials:

- “the scope and contents were “ ‘impressive’ ”
- the cross-referencing between Programme and Workbooks is insufficient
- incorrect subject title
- themes are too isolated and need to be meshed through rationale at beginning of each workbook with reminder to outcome

- too much material for outcomes
- good guide
- some inconsistency in referencing
- some inconsistency in language, tense and structure
- some questioning about cultural sensitivity in use of words and graphics.”

6.5 DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS: QUESTIONNAIRE THREE (see Appendix 4.5)

The purpose of this research was to establish a means of supporting critical reflective practice. One of the means to determine this must surely be the students themselves? Chapter Four, Section 4.18 explains how this questionnaire was developed. Figure 6.12 provides an overview of the structure of the questionnaire.

This questionnaire was based on Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Chapter Four, Section 4.11.

Number of respondents (N=16). These were the number of students in the Management IV class.

This questionnaire was completed after their final summative test at the end of October, 2002.

Time was allocated for students to complete this questionnaire in class. Students were told that they were free to go after the summative test, but that it would be appreciated if they would stay to complete the questionnaire. Most of the questions were open-ended, requiring categorisation of responses.

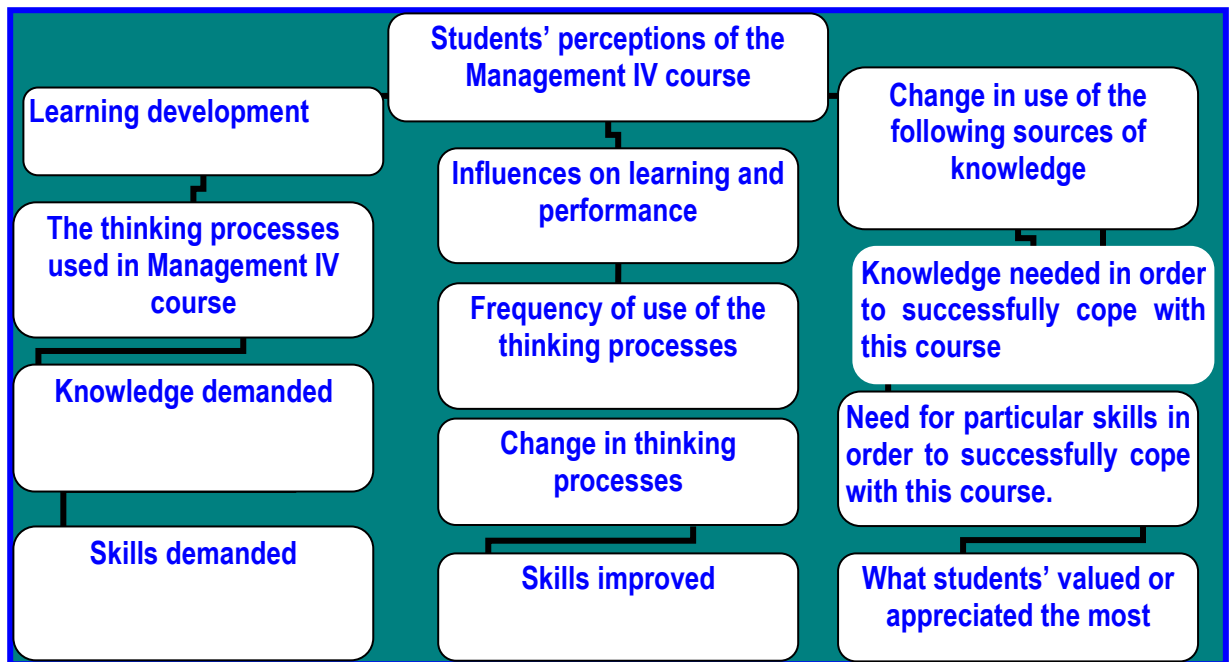


Figure 6.12: Questionnaire Three. Students' perceptions of their learning development in terms of critical reflective practice

6.5.1 (Question 1) Students' perceptions of the thinking processes used in Management IV course

Of the sixteen respondents (N=16), thirteen (n=13) students correctly described some key elements of the processes of critical and reflective thinking, while two (n=2) named some of the processes.

One student noted:

"I used the critical and reflective thinking that I learnt in management; which enables you to think constructively to make sound judgement, develop sound solutions and challenge them. To be able to listen attentively while analysing the information I get"

Another indicated that this thinking resulted in autonomous learning:

“Critical thinking which means looking at my experiences and think in depth analyse the situations. Reflective thinking putting or integrating my experiences with the new theory learnt in order to make informed decisions. Creative thinking this helped me to be able to learn on my own.”

Another appreciated the effect of the technique:

“I looked at issues pertaining to my life and profession as if looking through a window. I used critical thinking and reflective thought to change my attitude and behaviour based on the principles that I have learnt through the year. E.g. problem solving.”

Another identified the reflective process:

“I had to think a lot. Just when I thought I’d finished thinking, I had to think again. My thinking process also changed as my thought and opinions did e.g. diaries. This was good form me, as it enabled me to see things from all angles, and appreciate others opinions.”

Comment

As previously noted, I used the Constructivist epistemology, which, as an approach to adult education, focuses on self-directed learning. A fundamental concept inherent in this approach is the development of metacognitive skills, epitomised by critical, reflective thinking processes (Peters, 2000:169). By describing the thought processes used during this course, this seems to provide some indication that students not only used these processes, but also understood the processes used.

According to Peters (2000:169)

“metacognition may be seen to be crucial to acquiring new skills and knowledge as a result of allowing students to understand their own thinking and learning.....These skills are the tools with which students can become self-managers and appraisers of their own thinking and learning.”

6.5.2 (Question 2). Knowledge demanded by the critical reflective thinking approach to the course.

Generally speaking, students wrote about qualities, rather than knowledge required by the approach to the course. The following two students encapsulated some of the thinking:

“It required a lot of extra input in terms of being able to look at real life situations And making decision based on knowledge and facts. Sometimes I found myself wondering whether I was on the right track or not. I tended to focus quiet a bit on my personal life which did and still does inevitably affect my professional life. I also had to do extra readings to fully understand certain concepts eg. Mentoring”

Another noted:

“I had to learn about me, for me to be able to think critically, and then when thinking critically, I learnt a lot about me – good and bad. I also learnt that we are all so very, very different from each other. I sometimes couldn’t believe what others were saying and likewise for me too – I’m sure.”

6.5.3 Characteristic required

Table 6.6: Characteristics demanded by the critical reflective thinking approach to the course (my own categories).

Participation(n=3)	Commitment (n=4)	Technical skills(n=2)	Concentration(n=1)
Suspend judgement (n=1)	Good communication skills(n=2)	Problem-solving skills(n=2)	Self-disciplined/ responsible (n=3)
Open to constructive criticism (n=1)	availability of time/ interest (n=2)	Work-based experience(n=4)	Courage /assertiveness(n=2)
Analytical ability (n=6)	Autonomous thinker (n=2)	Deep thinking(n=4)	Lateral thinking (n=2)
Ready to make judgements/decisions (n=4)	Open to active reading/exploring/ learning(n=7)	Self-knowledge and awareness (n=4)	Consultation with others outside of t classroom (n=4)
Good listener/ consideration of alternative perspectives (n=6)	Knowledge and understanding of concepts of critical reflective thought(n=1)	Broad knowledge base of management issues and concepts (n=5)	

Comment

van Aswegen's model (1998) was used as a framework allowing me to flesh out a course incorporating it's philosophical concepts, which have formed both a guide and a yardstick for monitoring student development. It is therefore useful at this stage to consider van Aswegen's

(1998:298) identified characteristics of the critical reflective transformational practitioner, which theoretically should result as an outcome for this course. It is clear that a number of these characteristics have unwittingly been identified by the students themselves, demonstrating congruence with the model:

- ❑ “challenges processes, assumptions, theories, ideologies
- ❑ not discouraged by personal failure, persistence
- ❑ openness to learn from others; intellectual humility; flexibility
- ❑ high drive and energy levels
- ❑ pro-active; innovative, vision, curiosity; recognise intuitive thought processes
- ❑ self-confident; intrinsic motivation; assertive; self-aware; regulation through choice; self-corrective; self-disciplined
- ❑ positive regard for others; tolerates ambiguity and work toward resolution; suspends judgement
- ❑ focused and purposeful
- ❑ meets epistemological demands regardless of vested interests or ideological commitments
- ❑ consistent in application of intellectual standards
- ❑ reasons mutilogically
- ❑ verifies, corroborates, and justifies claims, beliefs, conclusions, decisions and actions.”

These characteristics are also relevant in terms of the students' perception of the skills that were demanded of them in the Management IV course.

6.5.4 (Question 4). Skills required

Table 6.7: Skills demanded by the course (my own categories).

Good listening skills (n=5)	Skills enabling motivation to learn (n=2)	Conflict management skills (n=1)	Management skills (n=5)	Study skills (n=2)
Critical judgement/ logical thinking (n=4)	Reflective, analytic and creative skills (n=4)	Leadership skills/ decision making (n=3)	Time management skills (n=3)	Skills independency thinking and functioning (n=2)
Skills in opening the self to learn (n=2)	Technical skills (computer based) (n=3)	Ability conceptualise (n=1)	Good communication skills(n=6)	Skills in self-discipline(n=3)
Problem solving skills(n=4)	Cognitive skills (n=3)			

6.5.5 (Question 5). Influences on learning and performance

Table 6.8: Students' perceptions of influences on learning and performance in this management component (my own categories).

Work-based experience (application of theory and practice) (n=2)	Unemployed – so difficulty in linking theory and practice (n=1)	Computer-based approach (n=1)	Reflective tutorials – for discussion on problems (n=4)	Pleasant, positive teaching/learning environment (n=1)
Mentoring process(n=5)	Self-discipline (n=1)	Personal factors(n=2)	Motivating leaders (n=1)	Allowed to be unique and different (n=1)
Inter-group relationships(n=6)	Co-ordinator and role-modelling(n=7)	Support for learning (n=1)	Love for subject /need for skills (n=2)	Open and facilitated access to lecturers(n=2)
Work load (n=1)	Diary (n=2)			

Comment

Students tended to answer this question positively rather than negatively. Although only one student noted that for her, being allowed to be unique and different was important, the fact that she

even recognised this was exciting to me as facilitator as it indicated recognition by the student of the freedom to learn and therefore take ownership of learning. It then becomes knowledge that is learned rather than taught (Peters, 2000). Of particular note was the significance attached to the inter-group relationships (n=6) and the roles played by the coordinator/facilitator (n=7) and the mentors (n=5). This course focused on self-directed learning using the Constructivist approach. The literature indicates that this approach is mainly directed at the learner as an individual, progressing at her own rate and incorporating knowledge relevant to herself as an individual. This obviously precludes or diminishes the role of the group. However, in this course, the group seems to be an important factor and therefore the argument that the Constructivist approach is primarily self-directed may not necessarily be an absolute. According to Peters (2000), opportunities to share experiences within a group allow for a range of diverse opinions which helps to broaden the students' knowledge base because of different situational contexts and different experiences, and are therefore excellent building blocks for new information. He suggests that reflection on this knowledge can only but add to both practical and theoretical knowledge alike. Peters (2000:171) further notes that this process allows students to "effectively construct multi-dimensional knowledge; knowledge that is personally understood and more easily transferred".

The prime purpose of this Constructivist approach to teaching and learning was to empower students and thus enable them to become autonomous and transformational critical reflective practitioners. It is inherent in van Aswegen's 1998 model of critical reflective practice. Similarly, Worrell, McGinn, Black, Holloway, and Ney (1996) developed a model for empowerment which included four specific elements:

- Collegiality: this focuses on the interrelationship between colleagues or peers and is based on concepts of co-operation and mutual respect

- Communication: this is the sharing of thoughts, ideas and information between people
- Autonomy: this concept centers on the notions of independence, self-direction and self-control
- Accountability: this is the notion of acceptance, responsibility and being answerable for the result of one's actions
- It would seem from the students' responses in Tables 3, 9 and 10 that these elements are also highly rated by the students, indicating an awareness of the empowerment process.

6.5.6 (Question 6). The frequency of use of the thinking processes in this management programme

(A brief explanation of each of the processes was included as a reminder to students. Naming the thinking processes is not easy and I was more interested if students, with understanding, believed that they had used the specific processes). The various processes included application of theory to practice; identifying cause-effect relationships; classifying or categorising; comparing and contrasting; evaluating; inferring; observing; prioritising; summarising; synthesising; interpreting; analysing alternative viewpoints; drawing conclusions and making realistic recommendations.

The various thinking process were used always (n=68); often (n=104); seldom (n=63), sometimes (n=9) and never (n=0). On average, students believed that they had used these various processes always (n = 4.24); often (n=6.5); seldom (n=3.9), sometimes (n=0.5) and never (n=0).

Comment:

There were 16 thinking processes included in the question. The majority of the student responses indicated that they often or always used these though processes perhaps indicating that at least

students were thinking about the thinking process, and by recognising the terms, indicating awareness that these formed part of their thought processes.

6.5.7 (Question 7). Increased use of thinking processes?

Table 6.9: Students perception of their use of these thinking processes more than, less than or the same as before entering this course.

Thinking process	More than before	Less than before	Same as before	Not Applicable
Application	14	1		
Identifying cause-effect	12	2	2	
Classifying or categorising	11	4	1	
Comparing and contrasting	12	3		1
Evaluating	14	2	1	
Inferring	12		1	1
Observing	15	2		
Predicting	13	1	2	
Sequencing	13		1	1
Prioritising	16			
Summarising	11		4	
Synthesising	13	1	1	
Interpreting	13	1	2	
Analysing alternative viewpoints	14	1		
Drawing conclusions	14	1	1	
Making realistic recommendations	16			2

[Comment](#)

Whether or not students were actually thinking in different ways using different thought elements is not noted, but students believed that they were, and recognised that there were different thought elements involved in the cognitive processes. I think that this ability to differentiate between the separate elements raised an awareness of the processes involved in thinking, and therefore allowed the students to be conscious of their thinking choices.

6.5.8 (Question 8). Knowledge sources: Frequency of use

Table 6.10: Students' perception of their use of the following sources of knowledge more than, less than or the same as before entering the course.

Knowledge source	More than before	Less than before	Same as before	Not applicable
Internet	10	1	3	
Mentors	16			
Text books	12		3	
Journals	13	1	1	
Newspapers	13		1	
Fellow students	8	3	2	
Colleagues	12	1	2	
Friends	11	1	3	
Experts	14			1
Community resources	12	1	2	
Facilitator	14	1		
Library	12	1	2	

Comment

It would seem that the students in general, used the variety of resources more than they had previously. This seems quite significant in light of their experience as learners and was most appropriate to their constructing their own learning environments. It is also quite significant that the students were reading in at least four different mediums and reading more than they had before.

6.5.9 (Question 9). Required knowledge

Table 6.11: Students' belief of their need to have knowledge of the following in order to successfully cope with this course.

Knowledge of:	Yes	No
Group dynamics	12	2
Basic computer usage	14	
Problem-solving steps	14	
Information retrieval	14	1
Community resources	13	1
Functioning of your health service	14	
The SA health system	12	2
The rules of discussion and debate	11	3
Assignment writing	13	1
Developing a written argument or discussion	10	3
Other	1	

Other: Critical analysis and reflective practice.

Comment

The skills noted or the knowledge required is of foundational concepts that I, as co-ordinator, perceive to be important in working through this course. Take for example, group dynamics: Students had numerous occasions to work with each other, either in class in group discussions or practicing of skills, or in reflective tutorials or, with some students, in study groups. The use of groups was a key teaching strategy in the department, and the skills learned through this process, spilled over and affected learning in other subjects. It is for this reason that tutorial groups comprised (generally) the same students who worked together for group research in their Research component of their B. Tech. Nursing programme.

Skills in basic computer usage were foundational in enabling students to access and use the various facilities offered through the computer, and again, these skills spilled over to other subjects. Much information retrieval, in fact, took place through the medium of the computer – although obviously use of the library was just as important in this regard. Students recognised very early on that Management is ‘messy’ and that it was more important to understand *how* to problem solve, than to learn content matter only.

All students were working within a health system on a macro level that formed part of the larger South African health landscape. This course enabled students to move out of the one-on-one patient interaction to being able to ‘see’ their patient and the system that supported their practice, within the macro context.

Because this course was reliant on the linkage and interpretation of practice within a theoretical context, rote learning became irrelevant and the ability to develop a discussion and argument to

support thinking, both written and oral, was key in this course – hence the concern about the rules of debate and the development of an argument, as well as the rules of assignment writing.

6.5.10 (Question 10). Skills needed

Table 6.12: Students' belief in the need for particular skills in order to successfully cope with this course

Skills	Yes	No
Research skills	10	4
Communication skills	15	
Time management skills	14	1
Organisational skills	14	
Self-motivational skills	14	
Team work	15	
Critical thinking and reasoning skills	15	
Ability to reflect	14	1
Active listening skills	14	
Interpersonal skills	16	
Computer literacy skills	16	
Motivational skills	15	
Other		

Other: Listening skills also helped me a lot.

6.5.11 (Question 11). Improvement of skills

Table 6.13: Students' belief of whether the following skills improved or not as a result of their involvement in this course

Skills	Improved this year	Not improved this year
Research skills	11	1
Communication skills	11	
Time management skills	10	1
Organisational skills	11	
Self-motivational skills	12	
Team work	12	
Critical thinking and reasoning skills	10	2
Ability to reflect	11	1
Active listening skills	11	
Interpersonal skills	12	
Computer literacy skills	12	
Motivational skills	11	
Other	2	

Other: (1) Assertiveness skills (2) Listening skills also helped me a lot.

Comment

Twelve students (n=12) answered this question and almost unconditionally noted that there was an improvement in the listed skills learned or used during the course of the year. Questions 2 and 3 were open-ended questions focusing on skills and characteristics required for this course, and

most of these skills are mirrored in Questions 9 and 10. In Questions 2 and 3, although sixteen students (n=16) responded, in general they noted two to four references to skills gained. In Questions 9 and 10, students were provided with a far larger list of potential skills, which served as a reminder to students, which perhaps accounted for more students recognising the various skills they had needed or improved upon in the duration of the course.

6.5.12 (Question 12). Valued learning

Table 6.14: What students' valued or appreciated the most in terms of the management component (my own categories)

Ability to 'manage' (n=2)	Amount learned (n=1)	Reflective tutorials(n=2)	Being treated as an adult (n=1)	Contact sessions (n=1)
Ability to recognise causes of thinking and behaviour (n=1)	Communication between groups/ lecturers/ work colleagues and management (n=1)	Critical thinking and reasoning skills(n=3)	Ability to recognise link between theory and practice (n=1)	Tasks and assignments (n=2)

Nine (n=9) students responded to this question, although at least three (n=3) indicated that the workload seemed excessive.

6.5.13 (Question 13). Factors influencing learning

Table 6.15: Listed factors perceived by students to affect learning in a positive or negative way

Factors	Positive factor	Negative factor	Not Applicable
Time (to learn)	5	8	1
Personal factors e.g. problems or positive happenings at home or work	3	9	1
Tutorial sessions	14		
Discussions in class	14		
Learning environment in class	12	3	
Learning environment in reflective tutorials	12	1	
Learning environment at DIT	12	3	
Learning environment at home	8	3	
Support from peers	12	2	
Support from facilitator	12	2	
Support from colleagues	10	4	
Support from family	12	1	1
Readiness to learn	11	1	
Amount of work	9	5	
Applicability / relevance of tasks and assignments	13		
Diary	12	2	
Past experience	12	3	
Questioning approach by facilitator in reflective tutorials, diary, tasks, classes	13		
Use of multi-modal system e.g. workbooks/CD rom /internet/ facilitator/videos/ outside speakers/Web CT	10	3	1
Use of Web CT (e-mail; discussion list; posting of messages/ readings; calendar)	12	3	
Self-directed learning	13	1	
Self-paced learning	12	1	
Consultation on tasks, assignments with others outside class e.g. mentor/ colleagues/ peers	12		
Integration of tasks, assignments, reflective tutorials, diary to own work environment	12	1	1

Additional student comments: One (n=1) student found that distance from classes was a barrier and two (n=2) students indicated that they had problems with self-motivation: "Sometimes I didn't want to learn. For me management and research in one year was too much."

The problem of work amount was supported by five (n=5) other students and this fact was instrumental in my reconsidering and reducing workload in the following year, even though nine (n=9) other students had indicated that the workload was appropriate.

Comment

All in all, it would seem that the various strategies provided within the course were supportive of student learning. It would seem that it was those strategies that were not within the scope of the facilitator that were least supportive e.g. time factors (n=8), personal factors (n=9) and support from colleagues (n=4). Perhaps ways of dealing with these types of issues should be discussed in the early stages during orientation to the programme so that at least, students can anticipate and perhaps prevent these occurrences.

6.5.14 (Question 14) Perception of the effect that diary reflections and tasks had on students' attitudes and behaviour in their health care practice (n=11)

In general, students indicated that the diary reflections had a positive effect on their attitudes and behaviour (n=11). Some (n=5) commented of an increased self-awareness "Each time I need to comment on something I became emotional, then my practice was affected." Others noted a growing awareness of others (n=3) "It made me aware of how my actions can affect others." Five (n=5) identified an improvement in their management of situations "I have grown and matured through being able to justify my actions or realise I should have handled things differently. I have changed the way I handle situations in my practice by trying to be aware of what I do, how I do it,

when I do it and what are the consequences of my decisions” and one (n=1) noted that she could now “see things as a whole”.

6.5.15 (Question 15) Self-exploration, personal growth and empowerment

Fifteen (n=15) students responded positively to the questions asking if they were able to explore and analyse their feelings during the course, and as a result, were able to evaluate themselves. All fifteen (n=15) felt that they had grown personally and become more empowered as a result of their learning experiences during the year.

Comment

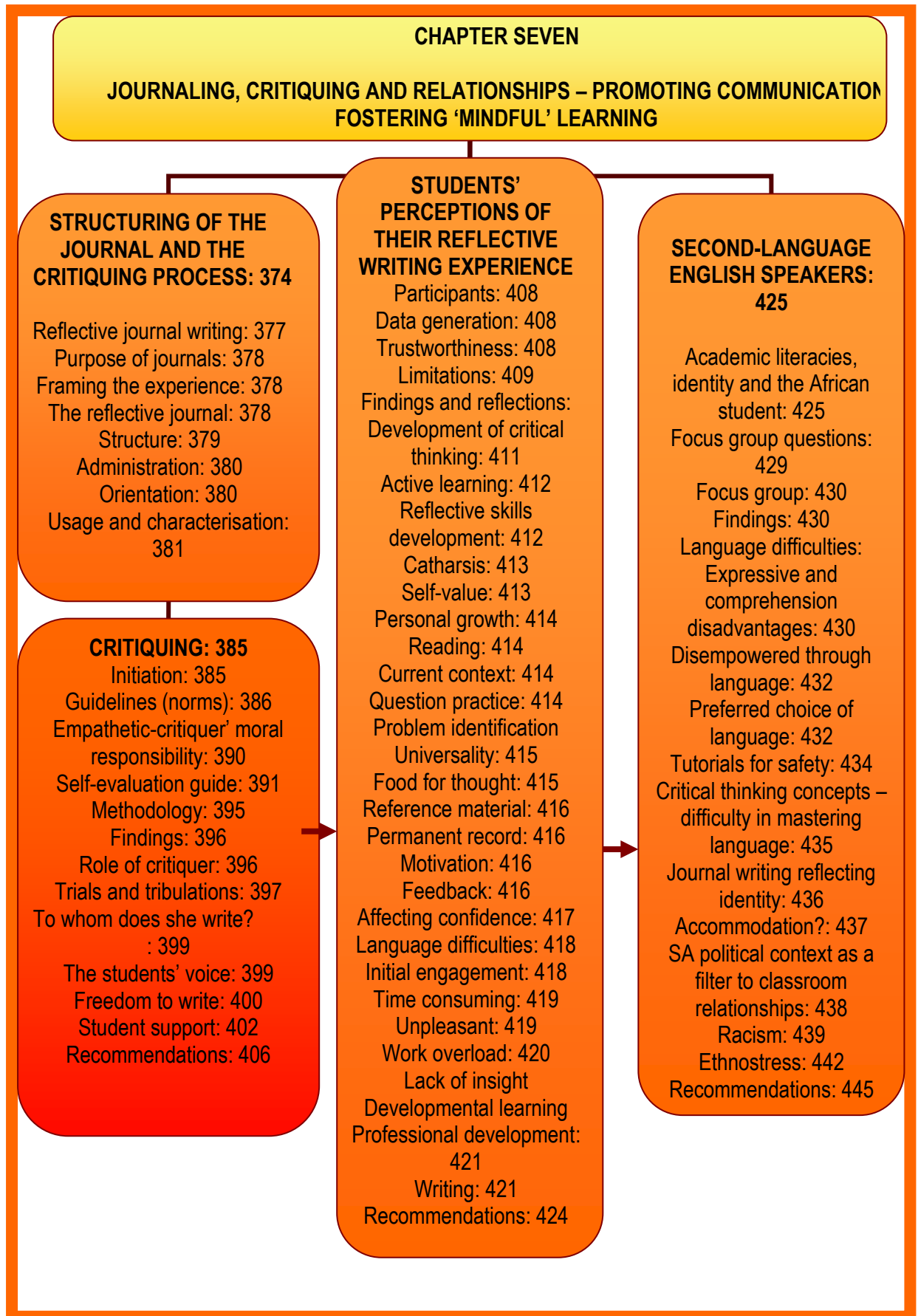
The fact that students were unanimous in their response to these questions was most interesting, especially in light of their first questionnaire at the beginning of the year, when only one student indicated that they personal growth and development was a goal. I do not think that students had considered this concept as a direct goal of their learning programme, as possibly they had not done so in previous courses.

6.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter seeks to provide an understanding of how the various components of the course in Nursing Management are viewed by the various participants. It has considered how the demographic factors had influenced students’ learning and what they perceived to constitute the concepts inherent in the learning process. It describes how the students have perceived the factors affecting the organisation and impact of the Nursing Management course on their learning, and interrogates their perception of the various components of the course and how it was offered. It triangulates these findings with some of the views held by others external to the course offering. It

visits the key concepts inherent in critical, reflective practice in terms of the students' understanding.

By generating data from a number of sources at various periods during a year and over the two year time frame (inter and intra case study examination) to explore these aspects of the study, a picture does emerge. Seemingly, theory and practice do converge in this open, flexible, creative and dynamic framework and it is hoped that value can be seen in the soundness of the educational processes supporting transformatory learning. The structure is stable, incorporating agreed norms and standards, but is dynamic, because it is based on a philosophy, rather than on content. This allows for flexibility in usage and accommodates nurses working within different health contexts, who learn at different rates. Its strength lies in the reality-based context of the worksite, where practice drives the learning need, and where learning can be adapted to meet the changing needs of the workplace. The growth is personal, academic, professional and occupational and is ideal for the life-long learner. The benefits, I would suggest, are only limited by the level of motivation and openness of those involved in this educational process.



CHAPTER SEVEN

JOURNALING, CRITIQUING AND RELATIONSHIPS – PROMOTING COMMUNICATION

FOSTERING ‘MINDFUL’ LEARNING

7. INTRODUCTION

Communication is core to holistic nursing and fundamental to the learning experience. Jackson (2004:203) points out that both carers and the cared-for are likely to “thrive in an environment that values body-mind-spirit-based interventions, mutuality, caring intention, personal meaning and growth, and clear communication among all persons”. As discussed in Chapters Four, Section 4.12.1.2 and Five, Section 5.4.2.11, journaling is used as a tool to promote communication as a means of articulating feelings and ideas, and the art of critiquing and facilitator dialogue is a means of stimulating, supporting and challenging this process. Part of this entails the development of a supportive learning environment, which assumes an understanding and appreciation of the learners and their frames of reference, already explicated in Chapter One, Section 1.1 and Chapter Six, Section 6.1.1 – 6.1.8. This chapter, however, focuses on a selected group of students, where the potential for communication difficulties is highlighted.

This chapter reflects the students’ and my grappling with communication from three different perspectives. Accordingly it is divided into three sections, each reflecting or influenced by the students’ perceptions:

1. The structuring of the journal and the critiquing process
2. The value and difficulties of journaling
3. The difficulties of being a second-language student.

All four research objectives are addressed to some extent in this chapter:

- *Trace the development of critical reflective thought within a context of a learning course of an educational programme.* This is particularly evident in the second section which focuses on reflective journaling, and is valuable because the students themselves have identified *how* they have used this mode as a means of critical, reflective thinking.
- *Analyse the development of the student's critical reflective thought in the light of van Aswegen's (1998) model in order to test, refine and adapt the model.* One of van Aswegen's recommended strategies for implementation of her model is the reflective journal, and the first two sections describe and analyse the implementation of this process with the concomitant recommendations.
- *Identify enabling and inhibiting factors within a department of a higher education institution that would support or limit the use of such a model for the development of critical reflective practice.* Each of the three sections considers these factors and the resulting implications.
- *Monitor the process involved in reflective thinking evidenced from learning diaries; tutorial groups and staff reflections and whether reflective thought has an effect on the resulting perceived attitudes and behaviours of post-basic nursing students related to health care practice.* Because this chapter focuses on students' evaluations in all three sections, attitudes and behaviours of students are highlighted. The first two sections concentrate on the reflective journal and in the last, a focus group of second- language English speakers deliberate on their learning and the issues impacting on their learning. They discuss these factors mainly in terms of their tutorial sessions, but also to some extent, in the light of their journals and class contact sessions.

7.1 STRUCTURING OF THE JOURNAL AND THE CRITIQUING PROCESS

Why is it that when one becomes a student, role reversal becomes the norm? As a nurse educator and researcher, I have observed a common phenomenon after teaching post-basic nursing students

for a number of years, and, of course, having been a student myself. The students I teach are registered nurses who hold responsible jobs in a range of different fields in nursing. They are accustomed to making life-threatening decisions and functioning in environments where there are very few managers and not enough workers (Lehmann and Saunders, 2002). Yet show them a classroom and call them a student and what do you have? The feed-me syndrome. Expectations are based on the assumption that when the teacher teaches and the learner learns, the effort must be seen to be made by she who is paid. A natural consequence of this expectation is to teach didactically. The process is quicker and easier than learner-centred teaching. The teacher and the effort are visible, the power remains with the teacher and the student becomes the recipient of this font of knowledge. Control is clear.

It is not only the students who conspire to maintain this status quo. Freshwater (2000) in her recognition of nurses as victims of oppression, suggests that educational systems collude in the continuance of this oppression in promoting the cultural narrative i.e. the subordination of nurses. She argues that teaching, like nursing, is, and should be, a moral activity but that by promoting acquiescent and submissive behaviour, the general outcomes of traditional teaching, we collude in furthering this oppression. Additionally, a system that focuses on a superficially derived learning output, through concentrating on test scores and content teaching rather than on 'deep' process learning, further contrives to reduce student autonomy.

Freshwater (2000) suggests an alternative - transformatory education. She writes that the freedom provided by experiential learning and the autonomy to interpret events personally experienced leads to self-transformatory learning. One of the key ways in which this can be accomplished is through reflecting on one's own practice. However, notes Freshwater (2000:484), this can only take place "if insight gained is acted upon and the practitioners involved value the change." In response to this

moral imperative and in view of the reservations expressed in Chapter One, Section 1.1 about the effectiveness of traditional approaches to teaching in enabling “deep” learning, a strategy for transformatory learning, the reflective journal (as described in Section 7.1.3 and discussed in Chapter Three, Section 3.12) was introduced as a means of promoting critical, reflective writing.

To implement the journal meant that I had to consider the process needed to support this strategy. How could I motivate students to move into an adult-based independent learning mode and use the reflective journal effectively so they could value the reflective journal as a transformatory learning tool? In other words, how could I move beyond a technical response to journal writing and ensure that the learning gained in the process would in fact change nursing practice in everyday life?

It is one thing to recognise that reflective writing in the form of reflective journals supports critical thinking and reflection (Kerka, 1996; van Aswegen, 1998; Kok and Chabeli, 2002), but it is an entirely different matter to engage students in a strategy that focuses on the process in which the learning is developmental, and only valued by students after an appreciable time period. “Tell me how you will measure me and I will tell you how I behave,” states Goldratt (1997:109) asserting that most people behave in accordance with how they are measured. I was looking for transformational learning and did not think that the usual yardsticks for measurement would accommodate this requirement.

The outcomes of this contemplation was (a) the development of a self-evaluation guide (b) an approach for introducing the concept of the reflective journal, and (c) critiquing, a motivational and maintenance strategy to support reflective writing. This section of the chapter is about the critiquing process and an assessment strategy to support students’ abilities to appropriately assess their own reflective writing process and promote transformatory learning. Students’ perceptions of the value of this approach, taken from a mid-year evaluation, in the form of a questionnaire, are reviewed.

These combined strategies linked to the reflective journal were introduced in three part-time post-basic nursing programmes, Groups One (the first year B. Tech: Primary Health Care nursing students), Two (the course, Nursing Management IV) and Three (the National Higher Diploma in Community Nursing), at DIT in February 2003. The students in these programmes reflected South African racial demographics. The majority, who were black African, spoke and wrote in English as their second language and were products of the pre-apartheid “Bantu” system of education with its “legacy of illiteracy” (Bester and Pienaar, 2002:286). As researcher/educator and journal initiator, I oriented two nurse educators to the critiquing process, through explanation, discussion, modeling and supporting literature. As our role in this endeavour was that of supporter and not critical educator, I named this person for this function, the empathetic-critiquer. Group One’s course co-ordinator critiqued and supported her group on an ongoing basis. I was both facilitator and empathetic-critiquer for Group Two and introduced the journal to all three groups. Group Three’s empathetic-critiquer engaged in the journal dialogue two months into the process, but, unlike the other two empathetic-critiquers, did not meet face-to-face with the students.

7.1.1 Reflective journal writing

Rolfe, Freshwater and Jasper (2001:42) describe reflective writing as “processes involved in writing that can be utilized as a means in themselves to help us learn from our experiences”. The difference between reflective writing and any other form of writing is that the primary purpose of reflective writing is its use as a transformatory tool for learning to enable us to reach a deeper and different understanding of the issues pondered. For reflective writing to be effective, the writer needs to set parameters and rules for writing and to control the process. It is not the content of the written material that is important, but “it’s analysis in terms of what can be drawn out in terms of understanding and learning” (Rolfe, et al., 2001:42).

Writing is an intentional activity with a specific purpose in mind, a manner of ordering our thoughts and connecting ideas in a way that makes sense. Rolfe et al. (2001:47) note that the processes of thinking and the subsequent translation of these thoughts into the written word, is a complex cognitive and physical activity, requiring dedicated time, purpose, focus and commitment. These, combined with the impetus or motivation to write, they suggest, come from “within ourselves and our practice”.

7.1.2 The purpose of the reflective journals in the learning process

Given the constraints of the health and educational system, the purpose of the reflective journals was to promote critical reflective thought and practice through:

- Engaging nursing students in a learning process on a continuous and regular basis, particularly in light of the limited student/lecturer contact.
- Providing a forum for an awareness of current events as a macro context of a system that shapes their nursing practice.
- Encouraging academic literacy through writing practice in a psychologically safe environment.
- Self-directed learning.

7.1.3 Framing the journaling experience

7.1.3.1 The reflective journal

Students need to be critical of their learning experiences and evaluate these, particularly in the context of their nursing practice. Reflective journals have been identified within the critical reflective practice model in Chapter Two, Section 2.3.1 as a strategy to enable students to do this. These journals are in a sense, a portfolio of their experiences.

7.1.3.2 Structuring of the journals (see Appendix 7.1)

Structuring of journals is important and provides purpose and direction (Hannigan, 2001). Therefore, prior to engaging in the journaling assignment, nursing students were given instructions on the process of journaling and on the required structure of the journal, which comprised 5 elements and was organised as follows:

- Part one was a free-form 'stream-of-consciousness' reflective component requiring students to reflect upon issues relevant to health care from a nursing perspective as well as their personal lives in order to develop new insights into their practice. Students were provided with a framework for idea generation or reference purposes. However, they had the freedom to move outside of the framework. The structuring and presentation of their journal was informal and 'write-as-you-think' was encouraged. This section of their journal allowed for an authentic 'voicing' of the student, reflecting a personal identity.
- Part two, 'colour the news', required students to read and analyse relevant newspaper articles to promote an awareness of contemporary health issues which could influence their nursing practice. This was to ensure a broader grasp on current health issues and an appreciation of how they fit into the local and even global context. The aim was for the students to determine and highlight the key issues using a coloured highlighting pen and enable students to review the articles from a critical perspective, separating fact from fiction and opinion. Students were required to find relevance to and a connection with their own practice. The style of writing, of necessity, became slightly more formalized, but was still free-flowing.
- Part three required that the students analyse relevant journal articles, the purpose being to encourage evidence-based practice. For the purposes of both the journal and news article analysis and reflection, the students were required to attach a photocopy or the original article to enable the empathetic-critiquer to engage in informed dialogue with the student.

The writing style required was therefore more formalised and rules of structure applied, although the critiquing focused on the process of thought and did not evaluate the 'correctness' required by academic style as elucidated in Chapter Three, Section 3.10.6.3.

- Part four comprised the self-evaluation of the journal by the students. This is provided as Figure 7.1 and discussed in detail in Section 7.2.4.
- Part five comprised the critiquing process, in which the rules of conduct for the facilitator in the role of empathetic-critiquer are explained. These are elucidated in Section 7.2.2.

7.1.3.3 Administration of journaling process

An organised system of collecting, collating, critiquing and returning of journal entries to students, and then storing for final review, needed to be initiated to prevent the empathetic-critiquer from being overwhelmed and disorganised by the sheer volume of loose pages. To facilitate this, students were encouraged to date, number, annotate scientifically and submit journal entries on a regular basis to enable the empathetic-critiquer to respond in writing to student entries.

7.1.3.4 Orientation to journaling process

Effective entry and engagement in journaling required an appropriate orientation and explanation of the process, as well as to the concepts of critical thinking and reflective practice. This process, as explained by Yuen Loke, Kam-yuet Wong and Wai-lin Wong (1997) is accomplished by explaining, providing and analysing previous student entries, as well as by providing opportunities in class time for writing (on-line and hand written). Justification of the purpose of journaling in the learning process needed to be provided by researched evidence, and in 2003 students were provided with research generated articles. This helped to alleviate questions about the necessity of the exercise. The importance and value of this process needed to be reinforced regularly and continuously, and class and tutorial time allocated for discussions and sharing of entries. Yuen Loke et al. (1997) identified

the value of peer sharing in their research. They also noted that reflective learning was made possible by the combination of journaling and dialogue. It was very easy for this assignment to be viewed negatively, because of the time, effort and prolonged nature of engagement. It became clear that journaling needed to be supported by staff members as a departmental initiative. This had a ripple effect on the motivation of students in that enthused staff members in turn inspired students. So, educators engaged in critiquing too needed to be oriented to the process, particularly in view of the required commitment involved in free text writing. Jordan (2000) observes that this is particularly difficult to analyse and therefore, critique. Also, even though the intention was to critique the thinking process rather than the content or clinical nature of the entries, it behoved the empathetic-critiquer to be current and au fait with the issues. This often required reading over and beyond the parameters of the empathetic-critiquer's teaching portfolio. This is a time consuming process and requires commitment (Jordan, 2000).

7.1.4 Journal writing: Usage and characterisation

Students' usages of the reflective journals varied and were characterised by:

- **Voices:** Different voices were used for the different sections. The reflective sections of the journal were characterised by conversational, colloquial language and phrasing characteristic of the students' home and nursing culture. The journal analysis required a more formal voice, and the rules of academic literacy applied. The journals provided an authentic voice from the individual students through prolonged engagement (Kerka, 1996).
- **Writing modes:** These took three forms (1) descriptive (2) cathartic and (3) reflective writing which have been discussed in Chapter Three, Section 3.14.4.3.

- **Writing purpose:** Auerbach (1999:6) describes this as (a) writing for self-expression and meaning-making; (b) writing for affirmation (the socio-cultural practices approach); (c) writing for access to powerful discourses: “Through overt instruction students learn to identify specific text types (narrative, factual, procedural, and persuasive), analyze their structural and linguistic features, and generate their own texts that conform to the conventions of each genre” and (d) writing for social change, where writing becomes a means of exploring important social issues for the purposes of bringing about a change and improvement in lifestyle. Chapter Three, Section 3.14.1 considers purpose in greater depth.
- **Cognitive activities:** Students observed, described, contemplated, conjectured, problem solved, questioned, identified with, expressed emotions, analysed, evaluated, reflected, made inferences, empathised, sympathised, drew conclusions and made recommendations. Students were encouraged to engage in the reflective process by describing a situation within the context of health care, identifying and analysing key components and describing the feelings evoked and the effects of these feelings. They were asked to consider various perspectives and philosophical positions and the possible implications of the reflection on their nursing practice. Action planning was also promoted. To support this process, each student was provided with a list of questions to consider, the Question Prompt (Table 7.2), which could be used by the student as she wrote. The intention was to promote an awareness of critical reflective thinking (van Aswegen, 2002). This same list formed the basis of the empathetic-critiquer’s Socratic questioning approach and resulted in the type of questions and responses identified in the ‘Critiquer Response’ in Table 7.3.
- **Content choice:** These varied considerably and reflected the interests and concerns of the students. The focus was on health and the student had to consider the implications of the reflection on their own nursing practice.

- **Organisation of the journal:** Again, this varied from strict accordance with the requirements to a creative interpretation focusing on either on a perceived 'easy' option such as health news commentaries, or using the journals in a way that gave more meaning to the student. Examples included using the journal as a journey through educational or personal experiences or implementing a thematic approach and integrating the three categories - reflections, news and journal section.
- **Length of entries:** These varied considerably. Initially, the concept of quantity not being a criterion of evaluation was problematic for students. It often took considerable time before the concept of self-evaluation linked to specified criteria became integrated and accepted. This is also possibly because many of the criteria were fairly abstract, rather than concrete in nature - for example, the provision of evidence of the various levels of reflection and critical thinking.
- **Critiquing format:** Socratic questioning was used to promote clarification of issues, probe assumptions, probe reasoning and question evidence, and encourage the student to look for the implications or consequences of their thinking or practice (Steppian, 1999). The critiquing of the journals is discussed in detail in Section 7.2.2.
- **Frequency of submissions for critiquing:** This varied in courses from weekly to bi-monthly and was largely determined by the student. Some students, particularly those who had the most difficulty with journaling, submitted perhaps two to three times in the academic year. There was very little evidence from these students of any dialogue with the empathetic-critiquer. Those students who submitted entries early and often and had frequent regular feedback from the empathetic-critiquer, commonly responded and engaged in a dialogue by

answering questions posed by the empathetic-critiquer and sometimes posing their own questions in response.

- **Number of submissions for critiquing** In 2001, the number of entries required was 60, but in response to student evaluations, was reduced the following year to 30. Although a 'number' was given to the submissions required, unless it was clearly evident that the students had not taken the assignment seriously, this was used as a guideline rather than an absolute requirement when moderating the student's self-evaluation.
- **Format of submission:** These generally took place on loose leaf pages within a student folder, and were mostly handwritten. Those who e-mailed their entries received an immediate typed response, rather than having to wait for formal contact sessions. At the end of the academic year, these pages were bound together, with the assignment requirements and the self-evaluation, after the students had had an opportunity to read and reflect on their entries. This relates to Section 7.2.4.
- **Privacy of journals:** It seemed important to stress the fact that journals were private (Boud, 2001) and would only be shared between the writer and the empathetic-critiquer and in the summative phase, by an external moderator. Students would decide on what entries they wished to share with the class. This consideration was relevant when students shared entries during group reflective tutorials and through on-line submissions in a web-based classroom.
- **Student-to-student engagement:** this took place during class discussions, small group tutorial discussions and on-line critiquing amongst peers. This was a result of a number of

students' desire to share in-and-with the journal entries of their peers. In a sense, it provided a standard for comparison, but this sharing also promoted the universality concept of many of the issues and concerns. It allowed students to relate to each other and to learn from each other. It appeared to motivate and encourage students to continue the writing process.

- **On-line journals:** These were instituted for a specific group in 2003 as a result of student feedback in 2001 and 2002. An on-line classroom provided the context, and institutional computer access and utilisation was built into the course (Chapter Five, Section 5.4.2.15). Students were required to post an electronic entry per month (in addition to their reflective entries submitted in paper format) and were required to 'critique' the work of colleagues, using the list in Table 7.3. Students recognised the value of sharing alternative perspectives and of giving support and advice (Chapter Six, Section 6.2.11). It allowed the 'quieter' students to be seen in a different light and the 'closed' classroom provided a 'safe' environment (Malloy and DeNatale, 2001). For most of the students, on-line learning was a new and exciting experience, and provided a stimulating means of developing computer literacy. Research search skills were developed in an interactive, motivating environment. The e-mail system promoted the informal unstructured format and the facilitator was able to develop a deeper relationship with students using this one-to-one medium.

7.2 CRITIQUING OF THE REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

7.2.1 The initiation of the students journaling process in the 'critiquing' component

This component of the study focuses on the critiquing process and is based on the findings of Questionnaire Six as mentioned in Chapter Four, Section 4.18.1.1 and 4.19. At year beginning in 2003, I oriented the three groups of post-basic nursing students to the concepts of critical thinking and reflective practice, and these concepts were reinforced intermittently in class over the first few

contact sessions. As recommended by Meleis, Sawyer, Im, Helfinger, DeAnne and Schmacher (2000) and Glaze (2002) the researched value of reflective journaling was pointed out to students and implementation of the reflective journaling assignment was discussed in classes, as were potential difficulties around timing, effort and maintenance of effort. Examples of generic entries were made available to students and students were guided in their first reflections in the class period. The empathetic-critiquers of Group One and Two further supported this process by engaging in class discussions on shared journal entries, and Group Two had an additional support in the form of reflective tutorials and shared on-line entries.

7.2.2 The guidelines or 'norms'

Students were provided with an assignment guide that included the rationale for journaling, a suggested framework and an organisational and time structure (See Appendix 7.1). Additionally, they were provided with terms of reference, guidelines for reflective writing, feedback and critiquing (Table 7.1), a questioning prompt (questions to promote reflective thinking, Table 7.2) and the self-evaluation of reflective journal checklist (guidelines to facilitate self-assessment, Table 7.3). The guidelines or norms for reflective writing, feedback or critiquing covered issues around purpose, structuring, reflective writing style, approach, self-evaluation strategy and relationship between the 'empathetic-critiquer' and the writer, with specific reference to confidentiality, privacy, respect. The non-judgemental, facilitative, supportive role of the empathetic-critiquer and the Socratic questioning within the critique was also defined. Students were reminded that the focus should be on thought processes and not content, as such. The guidelines or norms for reflective writing, feedback or critiquing covered issues around purpose, structuring, reflective writing style, approach, self-evaluation strategy and relationship between the 'empathetic-critiquer' and the writer using the Socratic questioning technique and sometimes offering own observations in response to an observation made by the journal writer (as in Table 7.3.1). Sometimes these observations directed

student to further relevant readings, which were attached to the critique and returned journal entry submission.

Table 7.1: Guidelines and norms for reflective writing, feedback or critiquing

- The journal is meant to support critical reflective learning and promote critical reflective practice.
- Reflections are neither right nor wrong, the journal is simply a space for self-expression.
- "Journal entries are reflections, which often evoke more questions than answers. The purpose of forming questions is to help focus on personal meaning and interpretation in the reflective moment." Hecker et al., 2000.
- Assignment requirements are provided with submission timelines, number and structuring of entries e.g. numbering, dating, identifying etc. Suggested frameworks and questioning prompts are offered as guidelines only. Students are free to choose topic, approach, and style of writing. The only requirement is that the student responds to the question 'What are the implications of this reflection for my nursing practice?' at the end of each reflection.
- The student will self-evaluate the reflective journal based on the evaluation rubric. As long as the evaluation tallies with the evidence supported by the rubric, the student grade will remain unchallenged.
- This is a personal experience. The relationship between the student and the empathetic-critiquer needs to be assessed by the student. Students are to share only what they feel safe about sharing and are free to question or challenge the role of the empathetic-critiquer within the terms of reference.
- The role of the empathetic-critiquer is not that of an evaluator, but rather to guide, promote and challenge critical reflective thinking.
- Confidentiality between student and empathetic-critiquer will be maintained.
- The journals remain private between student and empathetic-critiquer (and moderator). Students, however, are encouraged to share and discuss chosen entries with peers in class or reflective tutorials.
- The focus of the response will be on the process and not on the content per se.
- The response will be non-judgemental and focus on supporting, motivating and guiding student reflections and critical thinking. Students may question any evidence to the contrary.
- The empathetic-critiquer will accept the student's entry as 'their truth' and will read all entries for the purpose of supporting critical reflective thinking.
- In the reflective section, the student is encouraged to write using 'her own voice' and style. The purpose is to focus on the thinking process and not the academic merit of the writing per se. Therefore, writing style will not be corrected.
- The empathetic-critiquer will undertake to respond timeously and respectfully to each student.
- The empathetic-critiquer will be conscious of the ethical nature of the engagement and will not penalise students in any way for weaknesses or lapses shared in the reflections.
- The Socratic questioning method will be used and students are urged to consider the Questioning Prompt (van Aswegen, 2002:54) to promote and validate critical reflective thinking.
- Students are urged to seek help or support from their empathetic-critiquer where necessary.

The Socratic questioning method: Facilitating critical reflective thinking lends itself to the Socratic questioning method, introduced in Chapter Three, Section 3.1.1 and Chapter Five, Section 5.4.1. According to van Aswegen (1998) this is a method that allows learners to express and measure their thinking and contrast it to that of others – and in the reflective journal, the 'other' would be the empathetic-critiquer. While reflection and reflexivity is a natural part of personal transformational growth, and not, as could be argued, synonymous with comparing and contrasting personal ideas with others, it needs to be remembered that the initiation of this process requires the motivation and support as discussed in 7.2.6.7. I would argue that students should not be measuring their thinking

against that of others, but rather, focusing on self-growth. The types of questions included rhetorical, inference, interpretive, recall and reflective (Wolfe, 1987). Questions were also used to check accuracy and precision, probe depth and breadth of knowledge, prompt further clarification and question the significance of the issue or reflection. This was also sometimes achieved by paraphrasing or restating. The intentions for the outcome of the questioning were to promote social skills, such as empowerment or cognitive learning or creative outcomes which facilitated insight development, creativity, enthusiasm or action. Commentary was provided to connect theory to practice and to enhance meta- cognition (Kerka, 1996). This process is highlighted in 7.2.6.7. Table 7.2 was provided for students to support this process while they were writing.

The empathetic-critiquer: Kerka (1992) in her analysis of the literature on 'deep' thinking clarifies the type of teacher behaviour that promotes higher order learning. This includes providing support, requiring evidence and justification for positions taken, facing students with thought-provoking and open-ended or Socratic questions and alternatives, and serving students as a mentor rather than as a teacher.

Table 7.2: Questioning Prompt

Suggested questions to encourage critical reflective thinking

- What did you think about this?
- What assumptions were you making at this point?
- Did you challenge the assumption of ____ ?
- Were you sceptical about the validity of this diagnosis/decision/conclusion?
- Which explanation is best supported by the data?
- What other interventions could have been used?
- Was intuition involved in making this decision/ or coming to this conclusion?
- Did you reflect on the feasibility of ____ ?
- How did you arrive at this conclusion?
- How did you evaluate your thinking processes re: ____ ?
- How did you evaluate your analysis of the data?
- How many other interventions/diagnoses/ outcomes might have been considered in making your decision?
- What decisions would you make to manage this situation differently?
- What would the results look like?
- Did you trust your judgement?
- Did you consider other alternatives?
- What conclusions did you reach after examining your own critical, reflective thinking?

Source: van Aswegen, E. 2002. Action Learning through Journal Writing. Nursing Update. 26(1): 54

The empathetic-critiquer's role is to provide a supportive environment facilitating higher-order learning through focusing on reality-based contexts, collaborating with students and staff and supporting innovative thinking and exploration. Failure should be seen as an opportunity to learn, and praise should be for the effort and not just the result. As the empathetic-critiquer, I facilitated a psychologically safe environment for the student by providing intentional support in the initial stages as indicated by Marland, (1997). This was accomplished by identifying positive elements in the reflections and providing positive feedback in the text, which did not require their physical presence. Acknowledgements were also made verbally in class and on-line. Instances of identification with the writer were expressed. As the student seemed to become more confident, the challenge would increase with a focus on higher order learning questions.

Self-judgement: Discussions took place on the fallibility of lecturers. I saw this as particularly important when working with students who had been socialized into seeing their 'teacher' as omnipotent and all-knowing. Whilst there are criteria and standards available, the purpose of the self-evaluation is that the students look to themselves, and not to others to make judgements. This concept of self-judgement was particularly difficult for students. Decisions about what to write and what to think need to be supported, at least initially, suggests van Aswegen (2002:54) "to reduce the possibility of early abandonment due to higher than normal feelings of dissonance".

Non-judgmental empathetic-critiquer response: Students' value system and behavioural responses to issues are implicit in these journals. The intention has been to encourage students to write without restriction and to not allow external judgement to impede their own. While at one level, this is perfectly true, in that students may question and refute external judgements as well as make the decision to respond or not to the questioning, at another level, the absolutism of this premise is false. The empathetic-critiquer chooses which questions to ask in order to perpetuate a train of

thought or to promote a level of thinking. The empathetic-critiquer chooses which aspects of the writer's response to respond to, in the form of support and encouragement (i.e. judgement). The empathetic-critiquer chooses which issues to comment on and highlight (again, a judgement). The important issue is not to be perceived by the students to be judgmental in the critical evaluative mode normally associated with traditional academic feedback. This cycle of dialogue becomes an integral and valuable means of formative assessment, enabling feedback to both empathetic-critiquer and student (van Aswegen, 2002).

7.2.3 Empathetic-critiquer's moral responsibility

Students are in a vulnerable position and the onus was on the empathetic-critiquer to be morally responsible and not violate the trust of the student. I appreciated, as do Hargreaves (1997) and Marland (1997) that this development of trust takes time and required behavioural demonstrations by the empathetic-critiquer. Paterson (1995:212) supports the notion of the teacher as a "metaguide", either in the way the journal is presented and implemented or through the critique, the dual engagement or dialogue with the student. The idea is that the "metaguide" or empathetic-critiquer should help the learner deliberate on the reflective moment and act as a guide, coach, mentor or partner-in-dialogue supporting the adult learner through the reflective journey. However, as Kerka, (1992) notes, the student should take on the responsibility for learning.

Empathetic-Critiquer sensitivity: Although critiquing has a specific purpose, it behooved the researcher as the critiquer to be mindful of the different frames of reference and values of students. Many of the students come from different ethnic groups and have very different educational and social backgrounds from the critiquer. It stands to reason that reflections are based on personal ideologies. Therefore, as suggested by Hargreaves (1997) I needed to be aware that challenges to reasoning could result in tensions and reassure students accordingly. Boud (2001) reasons that the

more the written reflection evokes strong feelings of discomfort, the greater the need for consideration and sensitivity by the reader.

Facilitator expertise: In follow-up tutorial sessions, as facilitator, I frequently adopted a counsellor role, and engaged in techniques and prompts similar to those developed in psychiatric nursing programmes. Hargreaves (1997) believes that special counselling skills are required to facilitate these groups in order for students to 'make meaning' of their experiences. Not all teachers have this ability or the inclination. Hargreaves (1997) also indicates that it is dangerous and an oversimplification to advocate the use of psychotherapeutic interventions and group work as a process of students getting into groups and reflecting.

7.2.4 The self-evaluation guide

Andrusyszyn and Davie (1997) reflect the general consensus, which is that journals should not be graded and one should rather evaluate participation or non-participation in the process. Further, van Aswegen (1998) cites Osborn (1979) in noting that evaluation stifles creativity. Conway (1999), on contemplating her own journaling experience protests: "The 'quality assurance' demands of assessment had delegitimated my voice before I had begun to speak. My postmodern perspective had been dislocated. My anticipated journal had turned into a modernist instrumental enterprise." Boud (1999:123) appreciates that there is a fundamental tension between the concept of evaluation and reflection in that evaluation requires presentation of students' best efforts,

"emphasizing what one knows, not what one does not yet know. Reflection, on the other hand, is about exploration, focusing on lack of understanding, questioning, probing discrepancies and so on. There is always the danger that assessment will obliterate the very practices of reflection, which courses aim to promote. The assessment discourse celebrates certainty; reflection thrives on doubt".

Conway (1999) was concerned with power differentials: "In this case those regimes were located in the relationship of the power of the assessor to define learner knowledge within a learning journal." These are legitimate fears. However, I found that busy, already overloaded students would certainly not give the effort of engaging with reflective journaling without the reward of a grade and that grade needed to reflect their effort. Therefore, the grading of the journal comprised a significant percentage of the course mark, as part of the continuous evaluation process adopted in the course and described in Chapter Five, Section 5.4.2.11.

Because Degazon and Lunney (1995) in concordance with Goldratt (1997) suggest that if evaluated, the writer writes for the evaluator, I hoped to overcome the limitations presented by the notion of grading by allowing the students to self-evaluate their journals. I tried to address the fears about power differentials through the non-judgemental guidelines, sensitive critiquing and mutually agreed upon criteria upon which the self-evaluation would be based as seen in Figure 7.1. This self-evaluation guide comprised an assessment rubric (as explained in Section 7.2.4. and summarised in Figure 7.1) and was provided and discussed with students before they started their journal as a guide to help them with the self-evaluation of their journal. According to Hannigan, (2001), prior orientation is necessary to promote reflective learning. Students were assured that as long as the self-evaluation reflected the criteria in the rubric, their mark would remain unchallenged.

Boud (1999) observes that it is in the area of self-assessment that students have the most difficulty, but involving students in the development of assessment criteria relevant to their practice and their own achievements, is key. Boud (1999:121) states, "We cannot expect students to become competent professionals unless they learn to be actively involved in constructing and reconstructing notions of good practice as they proceed". In the same vein, the self-evaluation

checklist or rubric was developed. This is a set of guidelines consisting of the characteristics being assessed and a rating scale for the performance criteria (Figure 7.1). The rubric comprises three sections: the first focuses on critical thinking, with the criteria based on the literature, specifically, Paul's (1990b) conception of what provides a "critical education" in van Aswegen (1998:138). The students developed the grid and were involved, through discussions and agreement with the researcher, in the second part of the rubric which contained more generalized criteria. I intended this rubric as a *guide* for students to refer to in planning their open-ended evaluation (the third section) and not as a technical checklist that would result in an outcome grade for, as Conway (199) so aptly states: "This privileging of an instrumental measure over the reality of the learner is reductionist and based on a positivistic notion of an ultimate truth."

The importance of self-evaluation is that it leads to self-awareness and intellectual growth (Kok et al., 2002) and an appreciation of required standards and own levels of ability (Coombe and Canning, 2000).

Boud (1999:126) recognises that

"the main impact of self assessment on learning is through active involvement and reflection on what constitutes appropriate work (or good practice)—it is not about the task of choosing a point on, what is often a poorly defined, scale. The subject expertise of academics often blinds us to the intrinsic superficiality of a mark — we know the fine discriminations which lie behind the symbol, learners usually do not and are unable, sometimes unwilling, to find out."

For this reason, the students were required to view the following checklist (Figure 7.1) as a guide and reference for critical reflective thinking, and take it into consideration when compiling a free-form one-to-two page self-evaluation of their learning journey.

(Please hand in your completed journal and the self-evaluation table and evaluation commentary. Attach these to the front of your journal. Don't forget to give yourself a mark)

Student name: _____ Programme: _____ Mark: _____ /100

Criteria for self-evaluation: The purpose of the journal and the discussions around critical thinking and reflective practice was to facilitate clearer, smarter thinking and improved nursing practice. Did your journal and your discussions encourage you to do the following?

Critical reflective thinking criteria:	frequently	sometimes	seldom	never	example: entry number
Use your own thinking to come to conclusions and solutions					
Defend positions and issues					
Consider a wide variety of points of view					
Analyse concepts, theories and explanations					
Clarify issues and conclusions					
Evaluate the credibility of sources					
Raise and pursue root questions					
Solve non-routine problems					
Transfer ideas to new contexts					
Make interdisciplinary connections					
Evaluate arguments, interpretations and beliefs					
Generate novel ideas					
Question and discuss each others views					
Compare perspectives and theories					
Compare ideals with actual practice					
Examine assumptions					
Distinguish relevant from irrelevant facts					
Come to terms with contradictions and inconsistencies					
Explore implications and consequences					

Source: van Aswegen (1998:138) citing Paul (1990) in Critical Reflective Practice: Conceptual Exploration and Model Construction. Thesis. UNISA

Journal requirements: Have you done the following?	yes	no	sometimes
Written 1 entry per month (28 in total) ?			
Reflected upon relevant professional issues?			
Indicated the relevance of each article (newspaper/ journal) for your practice?			
Changed some aspect of your practice as a result of your reflections?			
Used journal / newspaper articles that lent themselves to the topic 'Health Issues and Nursing in South Africa'?			
Highlighted key issues in the selected newspaper articles?			
Referenced correctly?			
Analysed your journal articles in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recency of events i.e. current issues discussions, comments and recommendations that are feasible, reasonable, well thought out, relevant, creative and that fall within the constraints of the present health system? 			
Used your Question Prompt to help you with the above?			
Presented your journal in a neat and legible format?			

Write a one to two page commentary on your evaluation using your checklist as a guide and also include the strengths and limitations of keeping this journal

Figure 7.1 The guide (checklist/ rubric) for self-evaluation of the reflective journal

The empathetic-critiquer, who had dialogued in partnership with the student through the journal, would accept the grade as long as there was a correlation between the self-evaluation, the rubric and the reflective journey. (This would be moderated by the empathetic-critiquer and the course moderator). The bell-curve for overall student evaluation became irrelevant. Truly the student evaluated her own learning in terms of her own growth. This mark then contributed significantly to the final course mark, and was just one of the various evaluation strategies used in the process of continuous assessment of the course.

7.2.5 Methodology

The total number of students engaged in journaling in the department and present in classes was (N=45). Thirty (n =30) completed the questionnaire (Questionnaire Six as explained in Chapter Four, Section 4.18) that addressed their perceptions on the mechanisms provided to support reflective journaling i.e. the empathetic-critiquer, the guidelines, the critique approach, the Question Prompt and the evaluation rubric checklist (See Appendix 4.6). The questionnaire was analysed according to the questions, which were categorised as in Table 7.3 and then interpreted in terms of the literature and objectives in the form of a discussion. (The categorized results of the raw data are available for review).

Table 7.3 Categorisation of themes resulting from data generated from Questionnaire 6

1. Students' perceptions regarding role, function and responsibility of the critiquer	7. Perceived critiquer support in journaling 8. Critiquer perceived as a hindrance in the journaling process	14. Suggested changes to critiquing process
2. Students' understanding of the rules for critiquing established and explained by facilitator on orientation to diary writing	9. - Manner of student response - Type of responses	15. Influence of critiquer in terms of manner of student entry and engagement in the journaling process
3. Students perceptions of the responsibility : - of the critiquer in fulfilling	10. Perceived attitude of critiquer	16. Influence of critiquer in terms of timing of entry

the rules for critiquing - of student's obligations in critiquing process		
4. Students' belief as to whether the critiquer was fulfilling the requirements of the critiquing role	11. Approach of critiquer perceived to: - enable critical thinking - enable reflective thinking	17. Influence of prompt questions
5. Recipient of the student's diary entries	12. Freedom from restrictions in writing (students' perception)	18. Influence of diary evaluation rubric /checklist
6. The different 'voices' of the student	Influence of the choice of colour of the critiquer's responses	19. Appropriateness of evaluation rubric as an evaluation tool

7.2.6 Discussion of findings

These are summarised in Appendix 7.

7.2.6.1 General comment

While the intention was to present the findings as a cohesive 'whole', it became apparent as I was appraising the questionnaire responses, that the responses of Group 3 were mostly negative and almost diametrically opposed to those of the other groups where the empathetic-critiquer was present and engaging continuously and regularly with students, both through written dialogue and in class discussion. To reiterate: Group 3 had no face-to-face contact with their empathetic-critiquer.

7.2.6.2 Empathetic-critiquer fulfilling the critiquing requirements

Studies indicate that nursing students' reflective journals are formats with which to practice ways of knowing and reflect on different ways of thinking and responding. They empower students to challenge the 'system' and argue with tutors, giving them a safe place in which to practice and defend their thoughts (Paterson, 1995; Kerka, 1996; Kok and Chabeli, 2002). Obviously this depends on whether both parties are using the same rules. Those students in my study who had established a safe relationship with their empathetic-critiquer based on a similarity of expectations, felt they were 'safe' and generally agreed that the purpose of the critique, was, as one student stated, to enable her

“to write thoughts, ideas, situations down. To then look at the situation critically asking why, what was the motive behind actions, seek alternatives to what happened and by reflecting on the situation, learn from it and so grow in knowledge.” Another student felt that the critiquer needed to “see the situation as I have written it and to review my reflection with a non-biased critical view”. This requirement is supported by another student’s observation that she wanted the critiquer to “be honest, open minded as my diary is my thoughts, feelings, views on issues expressed in the manner I feel comfortable with”.

According to Rolfe et al. (2001) inherent characteristics of reflective writing include an understanding that reflective writing is a developmental process of coming to know something and it is this process through which learning takes place and where writing skills are seen first and foremost, as thinking skills. “Higher order conceptual skills can only evolve through a writing process in which the writer engages in an active, on-going dialogue with him or herself and others. Learning and discovery are purposes as important for writing as communication” Rolfe et al. (2001:45).

7.2.6.3 Group Three’s trials and tribulations

Students felt strongly that the empathetic-critiquer-writer relationship should be negotiated; particularly since the traditional norms of teacher-student relationship had been thrown in disarray. One student noted that she expected the empathetic-critiquer “to come and speak to us face to face. I (we) need her to tell us what criteria she uses.” The student appeared to expect the empathetic-critiquer to use different criteria to those explained during orientation to the assignment. She obviously needed a justifiable reassurance that there was a matching of expectations.

In instances where the relationship between student and empathetic-critiquer had not been adequately negotiated, students were either sceptical of the delineated role or felt that the

empathetic-critiquer's role was "To coach me where I went wrong (there is nothing like: there is not wrong or right) If it isn't like that then there should be no comment in the diaries". Some students clearly did not understand the self-directed approach to learning or the implicit value of the self in reflective writing.

Another student noted, "She/he must be realistic. If she is having misunderstandings of the content better call me face-to-face for explanations. Not to assume." I think that this is where I realised that opportunities in class to clarify issues, especially where language is problematic, are important.

Some students did not believe that the empathetic-critiquer was sticking to the non-judgement rule. "Quoting from her comments "Is that true?" as if she is doubting what I've written," writes a student plaintively. The Socratic questioning intended to take the student to another level of thinking is seen to be a criticism of the student's opinion, rather than an aid to enable further thinking. The Socratic sceptical stance seems to bear no weight with some of students. Perhaps this approach – which is very much part of my formal classes – needs to be elaborated and explained as part of the orientation to the assignment? What the empathetic-critiquer can and cannot do was explained to all groups but the process of Socratic questioning was only fully explained to Group Two. Perhaps critiquing (perceived criticism) and reflections are mutually exclusive – and perhaps the connection between the ability/willingness to reflect and critical thinking need to be spelled out – but maybe they also limit the will to reflect? Reflection implies a willingness to ponder and explore beyond inner boundaries within the self without fear. There is an element of creativity and a desire to move past the safe and the known. My concern is that the critique, instead of scaffolding, could limit this exploration. Again, perhaps this lies in the way the critique takes place?

7.2.6.4 Recipient of the student's journal entries

As an empathetic-critiquer, I spend a lot of time and energy on the critiquing process and treat all reflections as 'truth'. I respond in writing and often follow up in discussions or through providing supporting or conflicting readings associated with the reflections. I wanted to find out if this effort was of value, particularly where students did not respond in writing, as it would be less work to only critique randomly selected entries. I was intrigued to find that all students did respond in some form or another (in their thoughts, conversations with others or in other entries) and that most required the critique as a motivation to reflect further. Nearly all the students indicated that they would not submit entries on time, and some indicated that they wouldn't submit at all without the critique. I find this fascinating for although half the students wrote specifically to their empathetic-critiquer, others wrote for themselves, or to the empathetic-critiquer and themselves or to a general audience. Rolfe et al. (2001) believes different disciplines use writing differently and evaluate writing differently. This being the case, it is suggested that students write within their field to real, actual readers. This way they can

“lift writing above the basic idea of writing for others and transform it into a way through which we can combine thinking and writing in a dialogue with ourselves and others, and to develop our own understanding and create knowledge out of our experience” (Rolfe et al., 2001:47).

This in turn leads to transformative learning. Kerka (1996) concurs, recognising that entries provide tangible evidence of cognitive thinking. They make thoughts visible and real, giving a way to interact with, elaborate on, and extend ideas. Therefore, the act of writing for an audience lifts the writing to a transformatory rather than just a technical experience.

7.2.6.5 The 'voice' of the student

Most students recognised that they could and did write in a different, less formal, less inhibited style to the traditionally accepted academic format for assignment writing and that the critique related to the thinking and not the writing processes. Kerka (1996) finds that journaling is another written format

for reflection, but it is different in that it is written in the student's own 'authentic voice'. It is this personal engagement that supports a necessary emotional component in the learning phase, and the students' journal entries reflect this. This 'voice' reveals the student's identity, and an awareness of their own thought processes and ideas, which in turn, allows them to claim ownership of these thoughts as their own, and not that of others.

7.2.6.6 Freedom from restrictions in writing

Many students felt that they could write freely, without fear of criticism because of their recognition that reflection is a developmental process and that the critique is the facilitative part of the process. A few saw the empathetic-critiquer in a facilitative/'friendship' role and not a critical or judgemental one. "Initially we were advised it was how we see things and the exercise was to stimulate and provoke our own thought processes. It was there (the diary) to help us work through issues." Another noted it is "difficult to explain, it is more a personal feeling, of being in a comfort zone, of having a 'friend' to talk to".

However, there were those who questioned the authority or value of the 'faceless' empathetic-critiquer and felt restricted: "She always criticise but not correct you. She don't criticise in a positive way/constructive way. She don't care". I think that this statement lies at the heart of the student's concern. Here is an unseen presence, which, through the critique, attempts to engage with the student. Because the student hasn't met with the empathetic-critiquer or related to her in a personal way (obviously the student does not 'feel' the personal contact through the journal), this in turn allows the student to believe that the empathetic-critiquer 'does not care' – a real indictment of the teaching process.

Belensky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) in Oehlkers and Gibson (2001:269) understand this concern for “connected knowers develop procedures for gaining access to other people’s knowledge” and when this is absent, the student feels at a loss. Even though this finding presents as a weakness, it has highlighted an important aspect that will be translated into a review of those who critique and the critiquing process. Boud and Walker (1998:196) clarify:

“Not everyone wants to or can critique. This approach needs to be fully discussed and clarified and the potential for learning or resistance considered. Problems of teacher power are compounded by the fact that many teachers are simply not conscious of what they are doing and would be offended if it were suggested to them that they were even exercising power over students. A degree of mature awareness (Maslow 1968) beyond that possessed by many teachers may be needed if reflective processes are to be used ethically”.

A student voices her frustration: “She comments in every page: Always commenting”. This student has had regular feedback but has not met her empathetic-critiquer. She does not appear to feel that she benefits from the critiquing and sees the critiquing as constant criticism “ - always commenting.”

Another identifies her uncertainty: “Because I feel that I am feel strongly about a certain diary entry and the person who is critiquing my entry may feel differently and she may be able to help me see things from a different perspective.” It seems to me that the critiquing is a form of negotiation with the student, negotiating around expectations and the norms adopted by both parties. Naturally, students will feel they are in a less powerful position and that it is up to them to identify and meet the expectations of the empathetic-critiquer, unless the empathetic-critiquer makes absolutely clear the parity of the boundaries that govern the relationship. I think that I have been somewhat naïve in my expectations governing the relationship between the non-present empathetic-critiquer and the students, or even the students and myself. I make assumptions that students can and will learn to

trust the process, and me, but I don't know that I can always overcome years of socialisation in the disparate educator/student power relationship.

7.2.6.7 Empathetic-critiquer support

Most students indicated that the empathetic-critiquers had supported them at some level or another and Tables 7.4 and 7.5 reflect the manner of the perceived support. These tables, by no means exhaustive of the possibilities, were developed in response to the literature (Wolfe, 1987; Paul, 1990 and Wakefield, 1998) and as a result of the analysis of my critique of a student's journal. Table 7.4 comprises a list of the types of responses to student journal entries, and the second, Table 7.5 in no particular order, is a list of the types of questions used in the process. (A more detailed explanation of the type of questions with accompanying examples is provided in Appendix 7.2).

Table 7.4: Types of supportive responses to student entries (feedback)

Acknowledging individual worth	Structuring the thinking process	Promoting critical thinking	Recognising processes- restating or reframing to enable student/self to recognise what is happening	Focusing/ highlighting key issues
Providing information	Providing direction	Identifying with the student	Linking to previous discussion/entry	Criticising
Recognising the student's personal circumstances/ dilemma	Promoting reflective thinking	Supporting the student by: *encouragement *recognising personal circumstances of student	Personalising	Requesting information
Requesting clarification of thought	Reinforcing specific concepts	*reality check – promote self-image	Connecting to ideas	Reminding
Drawing analogies/ creating metaphors	Positive reinforcement by praising the student	Analysis of event/situation	Demonstrating awareness of own weakness/lack of knowledge	Connecting to prior learning
Identification of relevant elements				Demonstrating awareness of own feelings/ emotion
Feedback indicative of honest/ authentic intention	Accurate observations			Recognition of/planning for next stage

Table 7.5: Types of questioning to promote student responses to promote different levels of thinking (i.e. knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation)

Rhetorical questions	Purpose/ explanation of Socratic questioning	Questions for recalling procedure	Probe for clarification questions
Deductive questions	Structure/ how to question	Probe implications/ consequences questions	Probe perspectives/ viewpoints questions
Probe assumptions questions	Questions for divergent thinking	Questioning about hypothesis	Questions to promote action
Probing belief/value system for justification questions	Interpretation questions	Questioning about hypothesis	Closed questions
Questions about the question	Questions for reflective thinking	Questions to empower through insight development	Open questions Inference questions
Anticipatory problem solving questions	Probe reasoning/evidence Questions		Inductive Questions
	Questions to enthuse		Transfer questions

One student writes that support comes

“with questions that are usually asked at the end. They help to view the situation the other way and also provide solutions to problems and understanding of the issue. Instead they motivate to think carefully about the diary entry and facilitate to relate the incidence (incident) to what we have read in class. Re-analysing the problem, like its possible or underlying causes of it. They change the negative feelings I initially have. It helps me not to come into conclusions with a situation without thinking deeply about it”.

It is clear that the development of insight is time and process related, linked to the need for a reaction:

“At the commencement of the course, any critical comment was seen as a personal affront but as the year progressed, these critical comments were seen as tools for positive change and personal growth and the diary is now written to evoke a

reaction. M.'s approach is constant in that her critiquing encourages your thoughts, not hers. By the manner in her critiquing, the author is 'given' an idea that there is something missing or further interesting ideas are required to complete the diary entry by supplying the "missing link".

Another commented: "Non-biased, encouraging. Asked questions which were thought provoking and challenged to view from a different position; also gave guidance for following entries." Maloney and Campbell-Evans (1997) were convinced that dialogue was essential in maintaining commitment to the journaling process. Pierson (1998) realised that it also supported deeper levels of reflection. Dialogue was seen as a valuable process in scaffolding ideas and enabling students to revision thinking and integrate new ideas or knowledge within their nursing framework.

An important comment: "I think the problem is with me. I cannot comment properly or in such a way that is correct." It seems that the student is still focused on 'correct' responses. If so, she is in a lose-lose situation in that the empathetic-critiquer will always come up with comments or questions that explore the issue. It must be made clear to students that there are a multitude of responses – and that there may never be a 'correct' response in the absolute sense. This concept is reiterated frequently during the orientation to the reflective journal – but the idea is not always grasped. The whole value of the reflective process is the development of independence of thought and ownership of learning. (Kok et al., 2002). Rolfe et al. (2001:43) recognise that for many, the "very act of writing is thought to be a learning activity in its own right" i.e. learning-to-write, or, as it is commonly known, academic literacy. However, there is a difference between learning-to-write and writing-to-learn, the latter, in fact, being the antithesis of the former. Writing-to-learn is at the core of reflective writing and externally imposed rules of writing are likely to hinder reflection. This is because in learning-to-write, one tends to write for others or for one's perception of the expectations of others, and not for the self.

It becomes important to decode the unwritten rules. In reflective writing, notes Rolfe et al. (2001:46) the educator is challenged to enable the student to move past the question “Is this the correct way of writing this?” or “How do I do this?”

A student notes: “I sometimes get angry when she is against what I had written as if I was not clear or sure of what I was talking about.” This seems to indicate the vulnerable position students are placed in. If their perception – reality based or not – is that the empathetic-critiquer is not responding according to the prescribed norms, this makes the student’s position more vulnerable than in the normal assignments with traditionally prescribed rules, where the evaluation is often far more harsh and critical. This feeling of vulnerability is possibly engendered because the student is putting her subjective opinion and not that of others e.g. resourced experts, on display. Student comment: “Come to us, talk to us, maybe we can be in an enlightened circle.” I think that it is clear that the student (s) are not rejecting the diary, rather they are noting their disquiet about the lack of contact with the individual who is communicating at a distance from them. This disadvantages them enormously, because they are communicating in a medium that is particularly difficult for them. No wonder they were frustrated. How could the non-present empathetic-critiquer possibly ‘know’ them? Students felt strongly that the empathetic-critiquer should provide evidence of her credentials, her knowledge of the student and subject matter, in person. The act of having to take the word of other staff members that the process could be trusted, was seen as insufficient.

7.2.7 Conclusion

Initially, I wanted to explore the critiquing process and self-evaluation in light of the students’ own reflective writing process. However, there was also an unexpected and indirect outcome in that my colleagues and I, as educators, have also been assessed and been found wanting. The tools are appropriate – it is the teaching strategies and supports that need work. We have been measured –

but how do we behave? For transformatory education to truly take place, we as educators, need to appreciate the concept of student/teacher entry negotiation and appreciate the power implicit in the relationship and so develop a system of trust and true support to flatten the perceived power disparities.

7.2.6 Recommendations

- Provide a comprehensive orientation to reflective writing, the journaling assignment and the self-evaluation strategy. Ensure clarity on teacher/learner expectations of the process and the roles of the student and the empathetic-critiquer. This can be done by negotiating the roles and by providing opportunities for reflective writing in class and subsequent debriefing sessions. Provide clear, written guidelines, which need to be negotiated with the students. Ensure there are time frames and a structure for submission.
- Keep in mind the difficulties students encounter e.g. having sufficient time for writing; needing regular, timeous and supportive responses; needing maintenance motivation and recognition for their contributions.
- Involve the students in revising or adapting the evaluation tool to meet their learning needs.
- Reinforce this process intermittently through the year and integrate the Questioning Prompt and Evaluation Rubric checklist within this process by allowing students to identify examples within their own journals of critical reflective thinking and practice.
- Promote a supportive climate of trust, confidentiality, privacy and respect, ensuring the availability of the empathetic-critiquer for student guidance and support.
- Promote the sharing of journals, in class or through on-line entries, as initiators for debate and discussion.

- Teach students the critiquing process through modelling and encourage the respectful critiquing of each other's entries in the on-line shared space. Table 7.5 reflects guidelines of this process.
- Promote mutual understanding between empathetic-critiquer and student by entering into a negotiated learning contract, spelling out the roles and responsibilities of both parties.

Personally, I have found the first part of the self-evaluation (Table 7.1) – the critical reflective thinking criteria – too complex and difficult to explain easily. I subsequently have discovered a prioritised list based on the results of a series of four workshops which I would recommend as being more student friendly. 150 educational practitioner participants devised this list, which was designed to enable educators to develop criteria for assessing the quality of students' reflective work as follows (Scrivens, 2002):

Table 7.6 Prioritised list for reflective thinking

(a) accurate observation	(e) awareness of own attributes/qualities stage	(i) making connections (prior knowledge)
(b) analysis of event	(f) awareness of own weakness	(j) honesty/authenticity
(c) identification of relevant elements of knowledge	(g) awareness of own learning	(k) recognition of/planning for next stage
(d) awareness of own feelings/emotions	(h) making connections (ideas)	(l) commitment to change

7.3 IS JOURNALING EMPOWERING? STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR REFLECTIVE WRITING EXPERIENCE

7.3.1 Introduction

This section of the chapter is about nursing students' thoughts on their journey of self-discovery through reflective journaling. As an educator, I figuratively walked along-side the students as they embarked on this process of self-discovery by providing guidance and support. Their individual learning journeys were recorded in their reflective journals. It took great courage for students to

embark on this introspective process, to trust both the process and themselves, and follow the unseen path ahead. This chapter section reflects the students' perceptions of the value they placed on their experiences and lessons learned through journaling.

7.3.2 Research participants in the self-evaluation of reflective journaling

The research group for this component of the research comprised post-basic nursing students who had completed reflective journals between the years 2000 and 2003 (N =110). The sampling included only those nursing students who had completed their journals and a self-evaluation commentary (n=71) of their reflective journals. Informed consent was obtained from participants.

7.3.3 Data generation

The sources of data were written self-evaluation commentaries by the students on the various components of their reflective journals. These were free-form open-ended self-evaluations that provided rich, contextual descriptions and were founded on the self-evaluation guide in Figure 7.1. The commentaries focused specifically on nursing students' perceptions of journaling as a learning tool for "deeper" learning. To complete the assignment, students were required to consider the criteria listed for critical reflective practice and provide their written perceptions of the value and limitations presented by the journal writing assignment after reviewing all their journal entries. The self-evaluation commentaries were collected at the end of the course.

7.3.4 Measures to ensure trustworthiness

The journals yielded thick descriptions and so I was able to correlate written reflections within reflective journals with the self-evaluation commentaries and the facilitator's critique. In this way, I could corroborate or refute elements of the students' self-evaluation.

I tried to structure a psychologically safe environment for the students through written guidelines (Table 7.1) which guaranteed the students the freedom to write freely with the understanding that the reflections were their personal experiences and therefore, could not be judged by others, hence the self-evaluation.

7.3.5 Limitations of this component of the study

Since the self-evaluations were intended as a means of establishing a grade for the nursing students, bias could be a factor, in that an erroneous perception of gaining a better grade might have influenced some of the nursing students' remarks in their reflective journals.

7.3.6 Findings and reflections

This section is organised to reflect key categories of the nursing students' perceptions of the value of journaling to promote deeper learning, as well as some of my reflections on the process. In some cases the students' perceptions have been paraphrased and in others the nursing students gave "voice" to their thoughts. In my interpretation of the students' voices, I found evidence of similar findings in the literature, but a number of their perceptions appeared to be unique. Categories reflecting the value and limitations of reflective journaling were highlighted and sorted, resulting in a set of categories as shown in Table 7.7 and further refined into themes in Table 7.8. When students wrote similar comments, they were placed under 'common findings' or "General" as it is listed in the table. In the table, f = reflects the number of counts or times these categories were referred to by the various students (the frequency). The f = merely reflects trends and is not definitive. In other words, the placement of commentaries in categories is subjective (my choice and interpretation) and does not reflect the significance that the student attaches to the category.

Table 7.7: Students' (n =71) perceptions of the value and limitations of journaling.
In Table 7.7, f = the frequency of counts expressed and NOT the number of students.

PERCEIVED VALUE	PERCEIVED VALUE	PERCEIVED VALUE
General <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed a bank of memories/evidence of work output (f=8) Served as a reflection of 'own truth' (f=4) Journaling seen as 'own work' (f=4) New learning (f=4) Developed research skills (f=6) Promoted writing skills and self-expression (f=11) Found journaling enjoyable (f=17); &/or challenging/helpful (f=19); Retrospective appreciation (f=5) Promoted discipline (f=5) and/or organisational skills (f=6) Developmental – learning perceived to have occurred over the lengthy period of time (f=18) Professional development (f=16) Given more time would have given more effort (f=10) Valued the experience. 'Keep the diary' (f=25) Promote confidence (f=2) Empowering (f=6) Reinforced ideas (f=1) Provided psychologically safe space to examine problems (f=1) 	Reflective thinking – perceived value: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of reflective skills (f=18) Reflective thinking enabled: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Altered/broadened perspective (f=18) Deeper understanding (f=12) Valuing of introspection (f=10) Development of self-insight (f=13) Exploring of emotions (f= 9) Student to empathise (f=6) Questioning of current practice (f=7) Spontaneous, unrestrained writing (f=3) & creative thinking (f=2) Personal growth and development (f=22) Valuing of the self (f=13) Catharsis (f=9) Value clarification (f=5) Problem identification (f=21) and solving (f=9) Familiar with process, but could now name or more aware of (f=5) News article section - perceived value: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Served as a reference to society and provide a context for health (f=12) Overview of health trends (f=4) Served to highlight/explain issues seen in own health service (f=9) as well as provide a reality check on the constraints within the health service f =2) New behaviour – buys newspaper (f=3) Provided sources of current health information (f=11) and allowed students to keep updated (f=6) Facilitator feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-judgemental critique (f=3) Support/clarification (f=16) Sharing of entries (f=4) 	Critical thinking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of critical thinking skills (f=32) Critical thinking allowed student to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentiate between real and ideal practice (f=4) Be more objective (f=7) Apply theory to practice (f=23) Move from micro to macro thinking (f=7) Integrate learning from other areas (f=6) Challenge preconceptions (f=7) Clarify thought (f=7) Formulate own opinions and judgements (f=11) Raise and pursue root questions (f=1) Journal 'evidence based' section: Source for research material (f=6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided sources of current health information (f=14) and allowed students to keep updated (f=40) Promoted new, frequent, in-depth active reading(f=26) Piqued curiosity (f=3) Learned to read and analyse critically (f=6) Evaluated credibility of sources (f=6) Students joined a new library (f=2) – already members of institutional library Guided support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question prompt: (f=6) Self-evaluation criteria: (f=3) Guided Internet access - news and journals : (f=6)
LIMITATIONS Reflective writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult and draining emotionally and mentally (f=4) 	LIMITATIONS Feedback/explanation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-confidence affected (f=3) Uncertainty re expectations (f=12) Insufficient instruction/explanation (f=4) Limited/delayed feedback (f=4) 	LIMITATIONS Journal/ news articles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoided – seen as irrelevant/depressing (f=1) Lack of funding to buy newspaper (f=2)
General. Difficulty in or with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical thinking (f=2) Grasping new concept (f=10) Maintaining motivation (f=4) as lacked confidence in own judgement (f=7) or unable to see relevance (f=1) Length of involvement (f=4) Work overload/ number of entries (f=18) Time constraints/ time consuming (f=21) Uncomfortable, conflicting emotions (f=4) Perception of irrelevancy of assignment (f=1) initially (f=2) or inability to see as learning priority (f=1) Mark allocation not equivalent to effort (f=5) Writing articulately (f=5) Starting assignment (f=20) Completing assignment (f=7) Reflecting and thinking at same level/rate continuously (f=1) Self-evaluation (f=3) and (f=35) who did not attempt the free-form self-evaluation, but did complete the rubric 		

Table 7.8: Themes relating to students' perceptions of the value or limitations of journaling

<p>Journaling as a tool for learning</p> <p>Type of learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affective • Developmental (includes cognitive) <p>Effects of learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development • Cognitive development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical thinking skills Reflective skills Questioning of own practice Problem identification and problem solving Reading Reflective writing • Affective development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catharsis Value Clarification Self-valuing Personal growth and development Confidence building <p>Difficulties associated with the processes of journaling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence • Language • Initial engagement • Time consuming • Level and extent of effort and involvement required • Work overload • Lack of insight <p>Use of journaling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making connections through news text and journals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of contextual 'space' Connecting with self and 'other' Active engagement with issues Reference sources • Personal travelogues, personal reminders <p>Sustaining the process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of stories • Supportive feedback
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7.3.6.1 Development of critical thinking skills (f=32). Notes one student:

"I have used some of this process before but now was able to give it a name. I feel I am able to consider a wide variety of point of view, as I have always been interested

in understanding where people are coming from, why and what makes them think the way they do. I have been able to grasp two varying points of view and observe how people speak past each other, not hearing what the other says...In the beginning I used the analytical question hand out to guide my writing. Towards the end of the year I was able to automatically analyse the situation I was writing about."

Another makes the connection between critical thinking and reflection:

"I have learned to implement these critical thinking techniques to assess, plan and evaluate situations in my work and home life. The more I reflect the more critical I become, and the more critical I am, the more reflecting I do."

7.3.6.2 Active learning. Kerka (1996) notes that journals can provide tangible evidence of mental processes, and students themselves recognised this occurrence. Post-basic nursing students perceived active learning to have taken place as they acknowledged their ability to think analytically and more objectively (f=7), to integrate learning from other areas (f=6), to challenge preconceptions (f=7), and to differentiate between real and ideal practice (f=4) although they saw that this took time and effort.

7.3.6.3 Development of reflective skills (f=18). Journaling enabled post-basic nursing students to address issues at a deeper level, looking beyond the superficial aspects of the problem. One nursing student suggested it helped to develop patience and understanding of patient concerns through deeper reflection. Some nursing students noted that it became easier to find solutions to problems by making the implicit explicit. Many students appreciated the broadening of their perspectives (f=18) and recognised reflection led to deeper understanding (f=12), a valuing of introspection (f=10) and the development of self-insight (f=13)

"If I had written some of the entries as soon as they had happened, the diary entries would be very different and more emotive in response. With the delay in writing, I

was more likely to be in control of my emotions and be more objective in my thoughts and ideas.”

7.3.6.4 Catharsis (f= 9). Journaling “made me feel lighter with my problems.” According to van Aswegen (1998) critical reflective practitioners are self-aware, which implies an understanding of the linkage between the cognitive and affective constituents of the self. Although only three nursing students named the exploration of emotions as a value, it was implicit in many of their examples. It was “very draining emotionally, especially some of the reflective thoughts. The process of writing thoughts down is exhausting, although it is a kind of “therapy” too, and helps to clarify ones feelings. It was a safe forum to “vent” and not fear reprisals”. “Diaries taught me to come face to face with my feelings and my fears...they have taught me to deal with my emotions.” The downside of this was that nursing students (f=4) found some of the terrain too difficult to navigate, leaving them emotionally and mentally drained.

7.3.6.5 Value clarification (f=5). The reflective process “Helped me to transcend prejudice...” It helped the student to “deal with my attitude in being judgemental without obtaining enough facts about the person or the matter at hand.” Journaling “encouraged students to seek articles, read newspapers, reflect on emotions and viewpoints, to be aware of current affairs and political situations that could impact on their work, and to apply critical evaluation in their analysis.” “It made one more conscious of others” beliefs and viewpoints, particularly within our South African society, and to understand the need for tolerance and sensitivity.”

7.3.6.6 Self-value (f=13). The journals allowed for the recognition of personal worth and ability and achievement. Marland’s (1997) own research made similar findings. Seven nursing students recognised their ability to think independently and form an opinion and so could choose their own routes. Four nursing students thought it was worth noting that journaling as a creative process,

was their own work entirely. Journaling developed confidence, “I enjoyed doing them as I saw the benefits. I also felt more confident, realising and seeing that my point of view was never right or wrong, and that we all see things differently, and its OK.”

7.3.6.7 Personal growth and development (f=22). A noteworthy number of students recognised the value of journaling towards their own personal growth. “I am a changed person”. “It was a growing process”.

7.3.6.8 Reading (f=26). This section of the journal promoted new, frequent, and in-depth active reading. “I have got an interest in reading articles – something that used not to do. I have seen the aim of reading an article is not just to read for news, but now I am able to analyse whatever I read. I read an article with an open mind now.”

7.3.6.9 Current context (f=12). Many nursing students noted their reading of current issues in newspapers and journals in the land of their travels had widened their awareness of current events and provided an appreciation of broader contexts for their nursing practice.

7.3.6.10 Questioning of current practice (f=7). Reflecting provided an opportunity for nursing students to revisit their nursing practice. The students recognised their ability to view clients holistically, consciously using different perspectives and integrating new and diverse knowledge and make their own judgements (f=11). Reflection allowed nursing students to “analyse issues pertaining to daily living and professional practice and form judgements and conclusions and to anticipate the actions of other professionals, patients and members of the community in diverse areas of living.”

7.3.6.11 Problem identification (f=21) and problem solving (f=9). Journaling allowed nursing students to describe and discuss their personal, workplace related problems or those encountered in their studies. These same elements were identified by Paterson's 1995 study. Journaling enabled the students to address issues at a deeper level, looking beyond the superficial aspects of the problem. The questioning and comments of the facilitators appeared to help this process. "I enjoyed replying to the comments, as it made me think more deeply. Often it also made me see things differently. It broadened my vision as I was used to seeing things "tunnel vision."

7.3.6.12 Universality (f=12). Familiarity with the terrain and local inhabitants makes for smoother travel. Nursing students developed an understanding of the clients in the community through news articles that reproduced clients' concerns and complaints, as well as their appreciation, of elements in the health-care system. The news articles throw a different light on nursing practice in general, from which the nursing students can extract common truths. They "serve as a good reference to society". Students perceived value in being able to observe the changes happening "on health matters, changes in people and the way this country is governed."

7.3.6.13 Food for the inquiring mind. Many nursing students started to read and view newspapers in a different light. They saw reading newspaper articles as a basis for discussion and argument, and engaged the journal as a sounding board. The assignment forced nursing students to reflect with understanding and reading became an active process as students used analytical questions to identify, understand and see relevance of issues. Nursing students (f=11) noted a development of a broader knowledge of current issues. This correlates with Orem's (1997) study where learners who perceived an effective application of journaling to their professional practice were more easily convinced of their own ability to make meaning of their professional lives.

7.3.6.14 Reference material. Curiosity was piqued and some nursing students (f=3) made a point of verifying information at the source. Journal articles formed wells for reference material for nursing students practice (f= 40). "This kind of exercise will help us next year when doing our research. We shall have an idea of how to look or search for information."

7.3.6.15 Permanent record (f=8). The recording of events and developments of the journey may never be precise when there is a reliance on memory. Journals make remembered facts meaningful to the traveller. "I am now able to look back and see that I have come a long way." Another recognises "A feeling for where one has come from and where one is going". Observes a student nostalgically: "They brought back a few sad memories and some very happy ones. One forgets so quickly as life just goes on." The stories within the journals may provide valuable insights, suggested one nursing student. As a historical record, reflective journals "provide the springboard. Not only through its accuracy in terms of time, date and year but also by the mere fact that it is one's sole possession. No one can take it from you. You are at liberty to hand it from generation to generation." Marland (1997) identified parallel conclusions to these nursing students.

7.3.6.16 Motivation (f= 4). The sharing of journal entries encouraged some nursing students to continue the journey. "Diary entries were read out in class, for this I'm grateful as it gave me ideas of what's expected of me."

7.3.6.17 Feedback. Increasing levels of reflection and critical thinking are evidenced when feedback is immediate, frequent and recognition is given. This study indicated that journaling was a new skill for some (f= 6) and that a number of nursing students had difficulty in engaging in journaling (f=10). Some nursing students (f=4) apparently felt there was

insufficient explanation of the process and limited or delayed feedback (f=4) that affected their writing. This appeared to affect levels of self-confidence (f=7) and motivation (f=4) and these nursing students therefore did not appear to trust their own judgement or the value of their own work. Higgins (2000) therefore argues that the process of feedback is a complex interweaving of emotion, identity, power dynamics and competing discourses and so must be approached with care. This is evident in the following student's remarks

"It was difficult to start the process of writing for "fear" of writing the wrong thing. Once the first entry was written and returned with comments, it was easier to see what the process was all about. Trying to move away from a right or wrong answer takes some getting used to. Upbringing/educational norms instil a sense needing to write the precise information the educator is looking for. In this assignment there were no hard and fast rules, other than the reflection and critical thinking exercises. Even at the beginning I was concerned that there was always a comment/ question and wondered if I would ever 'get it right'. I then came to the understanding that there is no right or wrong answer."

7.3.6.18 Issues affecting confidence (f=3). A student aptly cites the philosopher George Bernados "In thinking, if a person begins with uncertainties, they shall end in doubts, but if they can begin with doubts, they will end in certainties." Some nursing students actively engaged in reflection, whether or not feedback was given, although disappointment was registered if there was no feedback. A few nursing students noted that journaling was difficult because it was new to them. "Didnt know if we were right or wrong till we were marked." In the early stages a number of nursing students noted an initial lack of understanding of the requirements. The process of understanding how to journal appeared to take time, a point also noted by Paterson, 1995. "Initially the Journal/Diary appeared to be a lot of unnecessary work. We were loaded with work at the beginning of the year

and the burden of keeping a diary seemed impossible. Towards the latter part of the year keeping a diary became very interesting. Reflecting on various incidents and situations enabled me to see various aspects from different perspectives.” Orem, 1997, argues that for many adult learners, journaling is a positive reinforcement of the learning process and that those students, who are comfortable with the medium, appear to demonstrate more in-depth learning.

7.3.6.19 Language difficulties (f=5). Some nursing students experienced difficulty in writing articulately. Some first and second language nursing students’ critical reflective thoughts were hampered by their lack of familiarity with the art and process of writing in the English language and understanding its nuances. “I lack precision and often give insufficient details, which impacts on the evaluators ability to interpret my statements.....” The recognition of these barriers, however, encourages the traveller to find translators. “My lack of command of the English language can be frustrating and impacts on my communication ability, however this course has encouraged me to use the dictionary and thesaurus.”

7.3.6.20 Initial engagement (f=20). Starting seemed for many, to be the hardest part of the journey. Early understanding of the process of critical reflection allowed for early engagement. The later the engagement, the more difficult the nursing students found it to commit to the process of journaling. It appeared to the researcher that those nursing students, who had difficulty in engaging, tended to withdraw from the process and had difficulty completing the assignment (f=7). “In the beginning, I was lost with diaries.... I delayed to send these entries and also there was a delay in receiving comments.” Paterson (1995) made concurrent deductions, but also noted other reactions of anger and frustration at the process. However, other students, while slow in starting, with understanding and support, engaged effectively “I took a while to get going as I am no writer, but once I got started I thoroughly enjoyed myself.”

7.3.6.21 Time consuming (f=21). For many nursing students however, the journey was too time consuming, requiring much effort in terms of reading, reflecting, analysing, and writing. I “had to read many articles in order to come up with one that was appropriate.” It takes “some effort to continuously think of how one reacts to experiences at work and to record the information and then reflect on how it impacts on ones nursing care. The purpose of analysing our care and using reflection has value. However, it is difficult to consciously analyse ones reasoning or logic, record it in writing, reflect on how to apply it meaningfully to be of any meaningful significance”. Maintenance of motivation and effort was difficult. Journals “need a lot of time and a lot of thinking which was too much for me.” This is in line with findings by Paterson (1995:211) who identified common resultant problems of “procrastination, superficial, non-reflective entries; waning enthusiasm about the activity; and unwillingness or inability to reflect.”

7.3.6.22 Unpleasant experience. Journaling was seen by some as an unpleasant experience because of effort, but this was counterbalanced by the realisation of the resultant development of the individual and the professional person. Nursing students recognised where they had failed to meet the specified requirements. Some students explained that their learning programme was very demanding and had not prioritised the journal assignment. This led to the postponing of the writing, which then became perceived as a psychological as well as physical burden. Difficulty was identified in writing articulately (f=5); the length of involvement (f=4) and reflecting and thinking at the same level and rate continuously (f=1) “I am really tired and have had so much work to do, and so instead of writing, here are pictures of where I work and the people with whom I work”. Paterson (1995) noted the varying levels of reflective ability of students. Nursing students experienced difficulty in critical thinking (f=2), completing the assignment (f=7), and maintaining motivation in writing (f=4) as they lacked confidence in their own judgement (f=7).

7.3.6.23 Work overload (f=18). Heartfelt expressions of concern by the nursing students on the number of entries required ensued. “The diaries were difficult to do because of the workload we had since we are not really full time students. We are expected to do our school work perfectly. To be a good parent, to be a cook at home and be a good/excellent wife and to be excellent at your workplace. I found it difficult to do it”.

7.3.6.24 Lack of insight (f=7). Some recalcitrant travellers completed their self-evaluation without much insight. It appeared that the sum of the journey did not add up to the whole. Three nursing students observed that the self-evaluation was difficult and uncomfortable.

7.3.6.25 Developmental learning (f=18). Learning was perceived to have occurred after prolonged engagement by the nursing students. “Whenever I did a diary entry, I wrote down what came to mind. Then as the year went by I began to think more deeply and wrote about what I spent some time thinking about.”

A number of nursing students noted that the process was difficult, long and continuous. “During the first couple of months into the programme I was very irritated and could not understand why we had to do this assignment. I initially found no purpose in doing it and thought it was really a waste of time and energy. As the months went by I began to benefit from the diary in that I started to enjoy the reflective thought as it made me stop and relook at the way I handled situations and if I had the opportunity, what I would do to change my response. This is very evident when comparing my entries from the first couple of months to later months. I began to reflect, not only on issues that personally or emotionally affected me but also on day-to-day experiences that we often don't think twice about. I

have found that I was able to learn from my own experiences, and that I have grown professionally as a manager.”

In general, nursing students visibly experienced the benefits of the prolonged engagement with their diary. “It made me not to walk with blind open eyes.”

7.3.6.26 Professional development (f=16). Reflecting on nursing practice and reading critically on health related issues promoted professional development in the nursing students. Interestingly, some students believed that the process of journaling promoted discipline (f=4), improved their organisational skills (f=5), and at least nine noted that if there had there been more time available, the journey would have been worth the additional effort.

7.3.6.27 Writing. Writing was seen as a means of self-expression by nursing students and journaling was seen to increase vocabulary and promoted the use of dictionaries and thesaurus (f=11). Ten nursing students indicated how difficult it was to start writing and a number noted that they had put this off as long as possible. However, as one nursing student noted that once started, she was surprised at how much fun it was and how many interesting things she learned. “Hopefully this has taught me that not all things are as bad as they seem, once you get started and have the courage to see it through to the end.” A number of nursing students found this experience both enjoyable (f=17) and challenging (f=19) and at least (f=25) supported the journal as a means of learning and indicated that it should remain as part of the learning programme. There were many paths to journey’s end and perhaps it was because the journals were so open-ended and allowed nursing students wide-ranging choices of topic and approach, that the students appeared to gain different insights from the process.

7.3.7 Discussion

The findings of the study suggest that open-ended reflective journals encouraged self-directed learning. Journaling was seen as a means of reflection promoting self-insight, self-development and a strategy for life-long learning. However, journaling was also perceived to be a difficult, time-consuming, continuous exercise, which for some students required much effort, particularly in the light of concomitant learning, occupational and social commitments. Glaze's (2002:272) analysis is particularly useful in viewing the findings in a slightly different perspective. She identifies the transitional properties of reflection explained in Meleis et al. (2000) which include "awareness, engagement, change and difference, time span, critical points and events. Critical points and events (Meleis et al., 2000) are evident in the various stages identified by students as they undertake their reflective journeys." These, as with some of Glaze's (2002) findings are reflected in this study. While Glaze (2002:272) found that her students became self-aware and engaged once they "overcame misconceptions about their reflective abilities", but that initially, poor insight prevented the reflective process. While it is true that some students in this study had difficulty with reflection per se, their engagement seemed to relate more to their understanding (or lack thereof) of the reflective process. For nearly all these students, the formalisation of this process in the mode of an academic exercise was new and disconcerting. Early orientation and engagement and continuing support seemed to be initiating factors. While I concur that insight and reflection go hand in hand, in this study there were substantial differences in students' abilities to reflect. I would suggest that this was the result of an amalgam of many factors, such as motivation, time, valuing of the process, effort and yes, insight. Glaze (2002:272) suggests that it is also a result of prior socialisation in learning (i.e. those who have learned to question and those who have not).

Glaze (2002:272) along with a number of other researchers, focused on the transitory property of time, and came to very similar conclusions to my own. This has significance in the planning of

programmes. The reflective learning process is not a 'quick-fix' approach to learning and time is required to overcome the difficulties inherent in reflection. A safe environment is essential with continuous support needed for this demanding exercise.

The transitional properties of change and difference are identified in a number of findings, where the students acknowledged the developmental growth in their learning process. Glaze (2002:272) reflects on what for my students, was not an easy change "Overcoming such thinking and accepting responsibility for their learning was another major milestone for these students". Although I used van Aswegen's model and Glaze's students used Goodman's (1984) levels to guide reflection, I believe it also "enabled students to deepen their reflections and became more aware of the social and political forces that shaped their behaviour".

7.3.8 Conclusion

Journaling, as a reflective learning medium, particularly in circumstances where there is a limited student/facilitator contact, enables engagement in reflection and learning for a prolonged and continuous period of time without the physical presence of the learner being required in a face-to-face situation for learning (see Section 7.2.2). The levels of engagement and the learning derived from the process seem to vary and journaling does not appear to be an exercise to be entered into lightly. Appropriate orientation around the critical reflective process and journaling and the provision of regular and timely feedback in the form of written and verbal dialogue is required to promote motivation. The art of critiquing and the use of Socratic questioning appear to promote this process of engagement in critical reflective thinking. Paterson (1995:214) urges sensitive management of students by the teacher in terms of recognition and support of differences. She suggests a type of scaffolding approach, intuiting the balance between providing support and information when needed, but withholding information and "nudging" the student from engrained patterns of thinking to

considering alternative forms of thinking. This notion on scaffolding is highlighted in Chapter Three, Section 3.7.1.3 and again, in Chapter Five, Section 5.4.1 and Chapter Six, Section 6.1.12. Journaling is not an easy process and requires time, effort and commitment and an appreciation that reflection is in fact, a developmental process.

Journaling does not seem to be a tool for learning or teaching for everyone. In order to engage in reflection, it seems that one needs to value the process. It would not serve educators who focus specifically on content teaching because of the free-form responses. It is also difficult to assess (Hargreaves, 1997) and make value judgements and takes a great deal of effort and time to critique.

This section of the chapter has described journeys of discovery that shaped our learning: mine, as an educator, reflecting on the process of learning as seen through the pens and journals of students, and the students, who through their stories, found voice to their journey of self-discovery.

7.3.9 Recommendations

- The orientation to critical reflective journaling should be comprehensive and Paterson (1995) and Glaze (2002) indicates that early engagement is dependent on an appropriate orientation.
- A 'scaffolding' approach to the journaling should be implemented to support the process.
- Ongoing focus and facilitation of critical reflective writing should be maintained. Kerka (1996:3) suggests that the key lies in the "proficiency in reflection." The focus should be on thought processes and not content, as such (van Aswegen, 1998).
- Feedback or "critiquing" should be a regular, ongoing, immediate, non-judgmental, supportive process (van Aswegen, 1998:2001).
- Student journal entries should be shared and discussed with their peers.

- Student workload and commitments should be considered and the required effort could be negotiated with the students.

7.4 SECOND-LANGUAGE ENGLISH SPEAKERS: A JOURNEY WITHIN

7.4.1 Academic literacies, identity and the African student

The majority of my students came from a different cultural context to myself and it may well be that I lacked an understanding of the different nuances emanating from their frames of reference. It might also be that my understanding of the academic literacy (defined in Chapter Three, Section 3.12) of the nursing programmes was so “ingrained, difficult to pinpoint and subtle in effect” (Bock, 1998 in McKenna 2004:118) that I was not able to communicate this to students. McKenna (2004:2) suggests that it is only those students who have coped with the system and the academic literacy code, who will be able to progress. It is possible that the academic institution and/or lecturers promote a system that does not support academic literacy acquisition because of ‘conflicting ideologies’ and that what is ultimately taught, depends on the “dominant discourse” (McKenna, 2004:3). McKenna does, however, lend hope in that she indicates that lecturers need to reflect on what, why and how they are doing in class and that they should provide a form of “instructional scaffolding” that allows students easy and simple access to the world of academia (Langer and Applebee, 1998 in McKenna, 2004:3).

What do I do to enable this to happen? I would put forward that in general I try to do the following:

- reflect upon and constantly question my understanding of the processes and people involved in the learning milieu;
- enter the world of the students and their reflections;

- appreciate that second-language students may have difficulty in conceptualising but consider that this may be because they lack the words or phrasing for expression, and that this doesn't necessarily mean that they have not grasped the concept;
- simplify theory by application to their world, specifically, their discipline;
- do not believe that I am the ultimate authority in their learning process;
- appreciate that perceptions of understanding and valuing specific learning differs;
- appreciate that frames of reference are different from a number of perspectives (e.g. culturally, educationally or experientially);
- believe the best in and of students rather than expect the worst, and so focus my feedback to be positive and constructive rather than negative and destructive;
- be emotionally available and accessible to the students;
- create a consistent and logical context and approach to their learning;
- use appropriate readings and rewrite in simple terminology; and
- provide scaffolding but motivate for deeper thinking.

The question is: are second language English students disadvantaged by having to write in a diary? Are they sufficiently able to articulate their thoughts so as to enable them to think and write reflectively and critically? Thought and the ability to express oneself are inextricably linked. It is one thing to engage in dialogue and respond to the resulting thought patterns of English speaking students but what did I need to consider with those students whose primary language was not English? The majority of my students fell into this category and were black African. I went to the literature for some of my answers.

Chimbganda (2001) recognises that the problem of writing for second-language English learners in our higher education centres is a cause for persistent concern. The author offers useful insights on

how process and task-based approaches to writing can be used to enhance academic writing skills, both of which elements are integrated within the reflective journal assignment.

De Kadt, (2003:93) undertook a study on an academic literacies approach to student writing, focusing on English writing by African speaking students at a regional university. She tried to establish to what extent these students were able to participate in and establish ownership of the knowledge construction needed in their institution, considering their frame of reference for identity formation i.e. their "life histories, prior education, family, social, cultural, gender and linguistic content." These, she notes, form the basis of their consciousness and identity and naturally, they would respond to the curriculum through the filters of their own perceptions and priorities. The students in my programme would have these and additional filters, their professional context as nurses and their organisational work structure and environment.

De Kadt (2003:93) notes that education is more than knowledge acquisition, it is the formation of identity and consciousness and these terms, she notes, "imply increasing reflection about awareness of one's own thought processes and ideas, decision-taking as to what one does and does not find appropriate and claiming ownership of the self" - the self-identity. She argues that a priority of this lies in the identity of "being an African" which involves an integration of the diverse roles and experiences and integrating it into a cohesive whole. She wanted to find out if the students felt they were able to write in their own African 'voice.' From a research perspective, the construct of the 'voice' is relevant, she notes, as it reveals the author within the text and "is considered by many to be a prerequisite for successful academic writing. At the same time, any 'own voice' in writing must be mediated through language" (de Kadt, 2003:93). As in de Kadt's study, many of the students I work with use English as a second language. De Kadt (2003) joins a number of other researchers in acknowledging that this is difficult and that attempting proficiency in addition to coming to terms with

the cultural connotations implicit in language, places a further burden on students in their efforts to find and 'own' their own 'voice'.

De Kadt's study (2003) recognised that her students had a strong sense of what being African meant and linked this with a great sense of pride in their African self. However, she found that these students experienced great difficulty in being true to this sense of their African self in their university institution, mainly because of having to accommodate a mainstream western culture - and this was strongly linked to the language, English, as a medium of academic expression. In this context, students found difficulty in expressing themselves as 'African' students (an accepted norm) and in fact, avoided expressing themselves as such in the academic writing context in order to accommodate mainstream western culture and for grading purposes. The consequences of this difficulty in true expression results in the inability to express the self freely and "express deep feelings well" as well as a lack of confidence. Additionally, many subject topics in the students' different programmes did not appear to accommodate the African voice. De Kadt (2003:95-96) through the responses, identifies the African voice as one that "involves committed writing which speaks to the actual situation, past and present of Africans, and which is intended for a specific audience who are likely to react through having a common history and background."

I am acutely aware that second-language students in my class are similarly disadvantaged. Underlying the purpose of journaling which was ostensibly to promote critical reflective thinking and practice, was to find a means of accessing the students' own voices in a way that would help develop their confidence and allow them to express themselves more freely than was currently allowed within the formal norms of the academic curriculum. Although Gwele (2003:97) says diary "writing is not an African tradition", in her study on portfolio development she found that students would write, even when it proved painful emotionally, when it was a course requirement. De Kadt (2003:100) observes

that "identities in South Africa have long been constructed primarily in linguistic terms; which in turn leads many black students to reject English as irrelevant to their identity". I had hoped to discover this identity and thereby enable students to gain a sense of pride and ownership in and of their own learning. At the same time, I had hoped to be able to understand and appreciate the diversity and contexts within which these students operated, and through this understanding, provide relevant learning experiences. De Kadt (2003) intimates that many black students view English at best, as a tool. Many mainly regard the language with suspicion and even dislike. Weideman and van Rensburg (2002) note that low language proficiency is not limited to second language speakers, and the importance of this observation lies in the high correlation between language proficiency and academic performance. I hoped through constant and regular engagement with the written word, that students would become more familiar and comfortable with English, so that when they were required to use it in a strictly formalised context, the familiarity wrought by practice, would bring confidence to the process.

7.4.2 Focus group questions

Given that this course was focused on 'deep' emancipatory learning and that reflective journaling and tutorial discussions involve the development of self-awareness and a sense of 'identity', to what extent does it allow second-language learners to feel able to engage in the course and take ownership of their learning?

The following focus group questions directed the discussion and were partly based on de Kadt's (2003) paper:

- What does it mean to you to be an African?
- Are you able to express yourself in this programme in a way that allows you to express your own identity?

- The fact that English is the choice of language for speaking and writing in the technikon – how does this affect you?
- How does having a lecturer from another culture and language affect you?
- Does the journal – with no academic writing rules – allow you to express yourself freely?
- What have you not been able to express and why?
- If you had a choice and could change anything in this programme to allow you to express yourself more easily – what would you like to see?
- Has the practice required by journaling, helped improve your written communication?

7.4.3 The focus group

As a result of these ruminations, I set up a focus group of (n=8) second language speakers on the 31st of October, 2003. (Total number of second-language English speakers (n =14), of whom (n =13) were black African). Class number (N =21). The second language for all participants was English whereas the home language was mainly Zulu (one – Liseko - spoke Xhosa; one a mixture of Xhosa and Zulu). One student originated from Swaziland. At work, the majority of the participants spoke half the time in English and the other half in Zulu; only one student (Niki who lived and worked in a much more rural environment), spoke a quarter of the time in English, and the rest of the time in Zulu).

7.4.4 Analysis of findings

The focus group discussion was directly transcribed and then summarized. Three group members who were available read the transcription and the summary to check for accuracy. Categories and themes in line with the questions were devised.

7.4.5 Findings

7.4.5.1 Language difficulties: Being disadvantaged in terms of both expressive skills and level of comprehension

Second language students seemed to feel that they were at a disadvantage when it came to verbal expression. This affects both the rate of speaking and the ability to explain:

“It happens sometimes. Sometimes you feel like saying something so that everybody will understand it, but the more you try to explain it seems as if there is some obstacles. The meaning can’t go to everybody, no-one can really hear what you are trying to say.”

Another indicates her difficulty in understanding (comprehension, not just expression). But the lack of understanding is connected to the rate of the verbal communication. This is an important lesson for me:

“Ja, a choice because English is the international language. Yes, because in the group we find that, like myself I find myself most of the time lost. Because it is like as Liseko is saying we are mixed. So you will find that it will take time for me to even understand the instruction – let me take an example- an instruction - Because we have got people who have got the first language is their English – their response will be quick. While I am still trying to absorb what is happening – so in that way we end up even with the listening of English, worse with the writing, no I won’t say worse, same with the writing. In the writing, or even in the speaking, you think in Zulu so you still have to translate it into English, try and find words to put it in English – like when you are talking, you are talking, you are talking only in English, I must try to put it into Zulu and try to understand it before I can respond and you find that as we are mixed, we are somehow, somehow having that gap that we are a little bit slower or we grasp later than others.”

Banda (2004) echoes this finding, noting that at tertiary level, learners want to be taught in English, but think in their mother tongue before translating into English. The lesson for me is to provide space and time for speech (and understanding) to take place – and perhaps, even, to slow down my own pace. I do try to accommodate to this almost subconsciously by repeating the concept in different ways, or suggesting to the class that I am not the greatest of teachers with my circumlocutions, and often get someone else in the class to explain the concept in another way. This provides both time and opportunity to revisit the concept – and no-one loses ‘face’ (except me, but it is an intentional strategy).

7.4.5.2 Disempowerment because of the medium of communication in class, compounded by the legacy of apartheid

The issues in this section relate to a course being conducted in English by a first language English speaker and the perceptual connotations emanating from the resulting feelings of inadequacy influenced by prior socialisation.

There was a general feeling that being taught by a first language English educator was problematic and disempowering. One noted: “all the time we are the people who are suffering – ... we are to be – I don’t know whether (it is) to be submissive or, you know if we have no choice.” Students indicated that they were hesitant to say ‘slow down’ or say that they didn’t understand. This, one noted, would put them at a disadvantage and leave them feeling that they would be perceived as slow or stupid, and such was their lack of confidence, that to even allow this to be considered, would be untenable. Being part of a mixed racial group, particularly when they already felt at a disadvantage because they were black (“it is internalised” “part of our socialization”) they felt, would further disadvantage them because of the rapid to-and-fro pace of discussion when articulate English speaking students discussed and debated.

Henning, Mamiane and PHEME (2001:121) believe that being disadvantaged in not being comfortable and competent in the language of the academic institution (and this would be the language of academia in South Africa in general) is an issue of power “because it means that their own language does not allow them entry into the academy”. Cele (2004:43) blames the national language policy, which in its effort to reduce elitism and redress inequalities in the various educational, political and social domains, has, she notes, oversimplified and unfairly raised the status of English above those of indigenous languages. Cele (2004:43), however, acknowledges that English “remains a critical component of social and economic development” but suggests that English should not be taught for cultural assimilation but rather for differentiated use. This does mean that students in tertiary educational systems require proficiency as long as one answers her question “For what purpose is the language to be taught and used?” (Cele, 2004:45).

7.4.5.3 Preferred choice of language in teaching

A few of the students indicated that they felt more comfortable with the second language English speaking teacher who took over my classes during a three-month sabbatical. However, this acknowledgement seemed to be more in terms of pace than the actual dynamics of the language. Additionally, one student, supported by a few other murmured voices, insisted:

“For me to conduct a lecture in Zulu, I think it can be terrible... I don’t think anything in nursing; you can sit down and teach in Zulu.” Another suggested that

“we are used, that academically, we have got to present ourselves in English and it must be English and all along we have been taught in English up until now – even when I was going for my drivers’ licence, I chose English. There were options... Zulu was so difficult. So, what she is saying is that structurally for a planned programme

academically we now know that we are used to English so if it is changed now - it is taught in Zulu- there can be grievances even with us”.

Therefore, with only one strongly dissenting voice, the group seemed to consider that English should be the medium as language choice in teaching, mainly through the realisation that all prior teaching had been in English and that to change at this stage would be problematic. Cele (2004) in fact, raises the issue that any literate educated person is in fact, deprived, if they do not 'know' English.

7.4.5.4 Reflective tutorials (small group discussions) as a forum for safety in expression

It seemed that breaking the students into small, familiar groups of their own choice in class discussions was useful and the reflective tutorials with similar, familiar groups was particularly helpful in that the students could use that opportunity to address issues around comprehension safely. This fits with one of Henning et al's. (2001) findings with some student groups where not only did students feel more comfortable in small learning groups where they spoke to each other in their primary language but this comfort was extended by also using their own experience and background in the discussions.

Even though the reflective tutorials were in English, these were considered helpful because

“we've been given time to respond even if the question is asked, we know that you will take your time to respond unlike in the class where there is a question and the answer is needed there ” and, indicated another,

“also during the tuts, you are here, and as you are doing now, if you don't understand something, you try your best to explain it until you grasp it because you've at least got enough time if it is three of us.”

Another noted that the reflective tutorials helped because of the familiarity and ease with which group members related to each other:

“Yes, Maureen. A lot. It helped a lot. It was easy to talk in a tut because it was only 3, 4, 5 people. And especially because – another thing, I know it has nothing to do with this – the time we spent together -like if I am in front of these people, I am not worried to say no, please I don’t understand, can you repeat again, you know? But now, like in people you are not used to - you think, Oh no, they will say “What is this now?” so you just decide to say this. “

Nandi:

“Yes, because with the tuts we were arranged in such a manner that it was the group that you know, ja. “

As I am part of the tutorial interactions, these need to be in English, but where small groups are formed for class work, students may discuss in the language of their choice, and then feed back to the bigger class group in English. This at least allows for the interrogation of difficult concepts without the medium of the language forming a barrier.

7.4.5.5 Critical reflective thinking concepts: Difficulty in mastering a second language

It did not help that the concepts around critical reflective practice are abstract, and not part of students’ regular vocabulary. The process of reflection and understanding what was required took a long time. This resonates with de Kadt’s (2003) study. The lack of vocabulary within the students’ own language is not an uncommon problem. Very much as Afrikaans failed to provide language for some technical engineering terms, this also applies to other indigenous languages. So, even if the class was presented in the students’ primary language, there may well have been instances where the vocabulary might be missing, and the English words would be used in conjunction with the

primary language. I don't think the students realised that this was a difficulty across cultures and languages, and not specific to them alone.

Two students indicated that the critiquing responses were invaluable in providing guidance.

Nandi noted:

"I had the same problem because with my first diary I think maybe I drafted it 5 times and I wasn't sure what to write but I had this clinical experience that I am supposed to relate but I wasn't sure about what to write but with the comments that you were writing in my diary, as far as I am concerned, they really helped me because I had to go back and read and then redraft even though that I didn't resubmit – but I mean the comments, they really helped."

The recognition by this student that she didn't have to resubmit and didn't resubmit, but did the work anyway is indicative of the process of reflection for the purpose of self-directed learning. The responses in the reflective journal were obviously useful and connected with Henning et al.'s (2001) study where students indicated that they preferred detailed feedback on their written work.

One student noted that she still had difficulty with the reflections and found the concrete supports of the newspaper and the journal article more tangible and easier to respond to "because everything is there". This is perhaps indicative of the usefulness of support "scaffolding" for second-language learners.

7.4.5.6 Journal writing reflecting identity

When asked if their diary writing reflected their identity and their own issues, despite not being written in their primary language, the group seemed to feel that the "meaning, I think, remains the same." Another indicated that it was easier to write than to talk "It is easy to write". This is probably because

of the difficulties touched on in 7.4.5.1. If I understand Banda (2003) correctly, in her study of first and second language English speakers' translations of academic texts, some of her students lacked the ability to transfer knowledge from one cultural realm to another. She suggests that this was because they lacked "conversational currency" where they had limited experience in both translation and "academic conversation." Banda (2003:82) recognises the difficulties inherent in "academic literacy mediation" in multicultural and multilingual contexts and notes that the idea is not just to restate or repeat ideas, "but to redo within a different contextual frame, purpose, or audience" so that these students can learn to reconcile the different meanings and perspectives emerging from the two languages and cultures. This, she suggests, can be brought about by both educators and learners becoming aware of their own cultural assumptions. This done, they can then develop learning strategies that focus on *positive* differences in terms of power, information, socio-cultural and psychological norms between the cultures. This raising of awareness through self-reflection, particularly in terms of cultural norms and knowledge, implies a willingness of students to interrogate their presuppositions and so create something new, reflecting their own identity. Banda's inclusion of group brainstorming and self-chosen and personally meaningful issues as part of classroom intercultural learning is supportive of my approach, both in the reflective journals and the group discussions.

7.4.5.7 Accommodation for being disadvantaged?

One student indicated that seeing she was part of a disadvantaged group, leniency in marking should be considered: "taking into consideration that these people could have expressed more if they could write in Zulu." This comment was accompanied by laughter from the group and I later suggested to the student, that she had been 'chancing her arm'. Her work ethic in other courses was also questionable. Personally, I don't buy into this concept, particularly when I consider that this is a

degree programme. My job is to facilitate and enable students to learn and not to support the 'victim' framework. I did point out that the journal was self-evaluated as I think she had forgotten this.

7.4.5.8 The broader S.A. political context as a filter for classroom relationships

I have chosen to use Antjie Krog's (2003:127-129) interpretation of the phases of transformation, as I could identify with these when I considered my work with students of another culture. Her interpretation is in the context of the political transformation that has taken place in South Africa since 1994, but which impacts on all phases of South African life, and in this way, she has contextualised the place, space and time within which the management course operated:

"Transformation processes tend to follow the same pattern. There is a specific agent for bringing about the change, and this agent follows a specific route. The route usually crosses a boundary, leading from one domain to another, and creates a new structure, which may be very diverse or uneven

To begin with resources have to be unlocked. Society must be opened up to all who have previously been excluded from it. This 'liberalization of resources' often has unforeseen results (unrest, power struggles, violence.)

.....On the one hand, there was violence; on the other, a constitution was being drawn up to create a new shared vision for the country, a statement about who we are and what kind of society we want to live in. The opening up of resources is always accompanied by violent tensions.

The second phase has two facets: there is full participation in processes and power structures by everybody, and there is a demand for accountability to the people represented. 'Full participation was ushered in by our elections in 1994. We learnt that everyone has an equal voice.'

The third phase involves consolidation of democracy at all levels: economic, political and social...

'We do not use the word "transformation" in psychology,' says the psychiatrist I interview. 'We talk of personal growth or development. We assume that a person cannot transform, actually should not transform, or change his essence. That would make him no longer himself, make him lose his sense of self and disintegrate, fall apart. Accommodate a variety of identities, yes. Transform, no.'

It seems, then, that one can transform an institution or a country only by changing its essence. This essential change takes place on different levels and in different phases. As for the people in these institutions and places, they cannot transform, but they can change by integrating several social identities: you are no longer only white, but also South African and African."

7.4.5.9 Racism

The following explanation of the consequences of racism could help me with the interpretation of the focus group - but also with discussions on the issues of violence constantly noted and discussed by students in their diary entries.

Krog (2003:150-151) in her book, A Change of Tongue, has helped me to understand what it means to be a South African in her exploration of the myriad of themes that dominate our cultural context. Racism is a key issue and through one of her characters she describes the four psychological consequences of racism:

"The first is 'intense intra-psychic pain'. It is caused by internalizing the racist messages of the dominant group. Simply put: it hurts to be part of the dominated or

persecuted or despised group. This is a constant pain, a constant awareness of the self being different, not being 'like them', not being good enough."

Notes one of the black students, when asked if she had perhaps misinterpreted remarks made by a white student:

"Because to me, I will take it personally (and) believe they are saying because I'm black... I mean it is a common thing that comes to your mind when somebody of the other colour try to say something negative to you. I mean it is common."

Another student recognises that there are different experiences with different groups. The previous year, she noted, there had been no problems with the English speaking students. I wondered if perhaps if this was because the group was now heterogeneous in terms of nursing disciplines, whereas the previous year, they had been in a homogenous group discipline-wise. One student responded by noting that integration within the class was supported by having to change seats regularly. Apparently, the students felt that this would have worked in principle, but was high jacked by English speaking students reserving seats for friends, which created a further feeling of tension and alienation. I only organised the revolving seats for about a term, but perhaps I should continue this strategy on a continuous basis? One of the challenges I face, and one that hasn't been fully addressed, is how to integrate the class, so that they can move past the racial divide comfortably.

I recognised the tremendous difficulties created through miscommunication and acknowledged that it was often the seemingly 'small things' that could create so much damage. Did the students think that this racial divide could ever be bridged, I asked?

"Sometimes I think it happens unconsciously. It's not like I'm aiming to know – its how we grew up, it's how it happened. I mean we will not turn a blind eye in knowing

that we also feel low because we grew up knowing that people of other races are more better than us...Even when you are a sister with 5 bars, a young lady – lets say a young white girl with no experience, she can just turn you around in your own field just because you know that its this colour and its better than.. It happens not like it is something that is planned. It - as now, because we are talking about it because we have just (been) asked, otherwise we have just internalised it, its normal because that's how we grew up" explains one student.

This student echoes the social constraints ruling the norms of inclusion/exclusion so powerful in South Africa where "some voices are regarded as authentic and authoritative and others are not" (Mendelowitz, 2004:79).

Krog (2003:150-151) recognises

"That pain never leaves you, it pervades your getting up, how you wait in a queue, our whole bearing during the day, how you go to bed, what you dream, and you deeply desire to get rid of everything that causes you this pain of being regarded as different.' This desire to rid yourself of what you have been told makes you different leads to the second set of consequences: you try to defend yourself against the racist message. But those in the dominant group are seldom vulnerable, can seldom be attacked as the source of distress. They live protected by their privileges, whether near you or in far-away countries. It is then that the dominated turn inward against themselves and their communities. Men, humiliated in their jobs, internalize their impotence, and then turn on their wives and children. Often wives allow the abuse because they are acutely aware of the rage of hopelessness burning away in the men. Hence the high levels of all forms of abuse evident in many oppressed and marginalized communities...

The third consequence of racism is the 'psychological double bind.' This happens when it is expected of the dominated group to be 'agreeable' - agreeable in the workplace or neighbourhood, and the larger arena of nation-building. 'As part of a new dispensation, a white group appoints a black person. But they have carefully selected him. He is not aggressive, he knows his place, he will not make waves, he is more like them than the other applicants. They make sure that the appointee knows this. Now he is in a double bind. He must be "agreeable" even - and especially - when confronted by incidents of racism. The moment he is "agreeable", however, he knows that they think he is subservient, docile and acquiescent of his own oppression. This he desperately wants to avoid. On the other hand, if he is not "agreeable", he will be labelled problematic, angry, aggressive, dangerous and even racist, which again feeds into the stereotypical representations of the dominated, as part of the racist message'. 'In the works on psycho-pathology, there is agreement that "double bind" experiences of any kind are among the most psychologically disruptive a human being can ever be confronted with.'

I think about South Africa and how scarred we all are, how fraught these fragile new relationships and partnerships must be....

'One of the outcomes of this double bind is what is called the "killing rage" - the fourth consequence of racism. The repressed anger builds up in an individual until he starts lashing out in spurts of uncontrolled violence, either towards other victims of racism or towards members of the dominant group. Or it can turn inward and manifest in addition and other destructive behaviour patterns.

... "it all eats away at you. It is a fire that consumes your soul".

7.4.5.10 Ethnostress

Hill (1992) notes that 'ethnostress' develops when the reality of life experiences impact on the development of the aboriginal person. A major portion of our socialisation occurs in our early childhood, where unconditional love supports our belief in who we are – in the understanding that we are beloved, are totally accepted and have a place and space in this world that belongs to each of us. This sense of self is further shaped by the notion that we have a purpose and that our very being is beneficial; that we are safe and secure in a world that provides us with our basic needs. This sense of self is promoted by positive affirmation from others of our gender and our ethnicity (Hill, 1992:1). Our beliefs and values are passed on from our family and community through the generations, and are shaped by our experiences. "The level at which we are able to meet and fulfil our basic needs is what determines our sense of self; the more needs met, the stronger our sense of self. A strong sense of self in turn greatly affects the level of self-confidence and self-esteem we possess." This is evident when students note that the confidence to discuss issues across racial lines is problematic and where one student indicates a measure that would be considered normal for me, would require bravery from others:

Nkosi: I think it is our children who are going to see that it is different. Us, I don't think so.

Claudia: "It is like it is implanted in us. It is not easy to change it."

M: So, Claudia, do you think you will ever see me as Maureen? (Laughter from group).

M: Ever? No, I am serious. No, never? We put huge burdens on each other.

Bongi: Ya, I think talking about it will help.

Hill (1992) spells out the confusion that results from loss of faith and belief in the self, which costs the individual dearly in emotional terms. Unless these issues are resolved, these beliefs and the psychic pain continue into adulthood, allowing this self-same pattern to be re-enacted within our families. Hill (1992) recognises that negative experiences occurring either within or without our cultural group can result in "internalized racism", an internalised form of oppression where the behaviour of the

“oppressors” are in effect, mimicked. So, for example, in the class situation, where some students in another cultural ‘oppressive’ group are seen to be “whispering” – it is perceived as ‘whispering’ hurtful things against the ‘oppressed’ group. Hill (1992:3) suggests that “we often retaliate in kind and send out similar messages out of our fear and anger, sometimes hurting our own but usually aimed at hurting people of other races.”

Hill (1992:4) says that people need the fulfilment of the following basic human needs which are:

- “to be seen
- to be heard
- to know that we are accepted and believed
- to know that others have faith and trust in us
- to know our place and purpose in the world
- to feel secure, safe and at peace with one’s self
- to know that our existence is beneficial to the important people in our life
- to love and be loved”

Hill (1992) suggests that these needs are negatively affected for those “aboriginal” people already disadvantaged through a history of bad experiences and by having internalised negative messages about the self, leading to great pain and hurt. This in turn affects “our ability to feel good about ourselves and others, and which prevents us from being totally open and honest in relationships.” Hill (1992:8) identifies a number of different behaviours that result from “ethnostress”, but the one I have become more familiar with is what she calls “survivalist behaviour” as a means of coping. Hill says that this is the shutting down of feelings in an effort to protect the self against embarrassment and censure to prevent further pain and abandonment or being “trapped”. This in turn leads to isolation to a point “where we may not understand or be able to feel our own emotions. Survivalist behaviours

can be scary when in our attempt to protect ourselves, we fail to comprehend the feelings and emotions of those individuals closest to us. “ I wonder if the following extract from the transcript of this focus group is an indication of this process?

Liseko:

Another thing. I don't know whether its in us. Like in class – I don't know if it is the way we were socialised, or the way we have been taught – I mean, like responding: Sometimes you know the answer and you know how to explain (laughter from group) but you just don't feel like it. And so you wait for the others, knowing it, sometimes even say it to (colleague) – and then I just say the answer – and her also, she can do the same. I don't know whether it's a norm (she laughs) or its what did we acquire but it is in us – not that – whenever the questions asked, you know, and you have to jump, especially if there are those that jump – we give them that chance (laughter).

7.4.6 Recommendations

I take the point about Krog's (2003) notion of essence and transformation – that the essence of our country can be transformed, but that the essence of the individual cannot – instead that the individual comprises a number of identities and it is in the merger of these social identities, that one moves beyond one's colour to being more than one's colour and culture, to having a national identity. The aim of the teaching and learning would be to establish a nurturing environment that would support the identities of the individual students so that they can learn and grow as individuals and not clones of the thoughts and directions of others.

Tjallinks (2004:181) recognises that failure to consider certain cultural factors can lead to cultural barriers impacting on the learning process, the results of which would include cultural isolation, cultural erosion, conflict resulting from lack of understanding, learning difficulties, behavioural and

communication problems. It would appear that whilst the manifestation of these problems was not overt, the discussion with the students indicated that there was room for improvement.

Tjallinks (2004:177) suggests that educators should spend time recognising their own personal values and beliefs before entering the multi-cultural classroom in order to have a clearer understanding of prospective influences on students. She intimates that “multi-cultural education is about changing the nature of teaching and learning in order to create a suitable learning environment for learners from diverse cultural backgrounds.”

Tjallinks (2004) identifies the cultural factors that could influence learning such as socialisation, communication, learning styles, world view, and social values. As an educator, it become incumbent upon one to recognise these factors, understand the complexity of these issues and try to accommodate accordingly. Tjallinks (2004:185) offers useful guidelines to the educator to improve communication by:

- Active listening – not just to the words, but the meaning behind the words. As the students themselves recognized, use of English as a second language, requires a special focus of concentration by the educator for increased awareness of both the verbal and non-verbal aspects of the communication.
- Checking of perceptions – perceptions can be diverse and it is important to clarify meanings to ensure clarity of and mutual understanding of issues.
- Feedback – it is easy to jump to conclusions and make assumptions and it is only by obtaining feedback on understanding, that issues become clarified. This is a good place to consider revolving chair-places to promote ‘connectedness’.
- Suspending judgement – take time to listen and understand from a non-judgemental perspective, allowing for tolerance and understanding.

- Taking risks – sometimes it becomes important to talk about sensitive or delicate issues, to take a risk. This opens up channels of communication and establishes trust, depending on the sensitivity with which this is done.

Tjallinks (2004:186) offers an understanding that learners have individual styles of learning, and although there may be a cultural element within some of these styles because of socialisation, that the awareness should rather lie with the individual than with a belief that a learning style would fit a culture “learning style is an individual rather than a group factor”.

Tjallinks (2004:187) further recognises that multiple teaching strategies and techniques would be appropriate for multicultural education, given the diversity of learners and the range of learning outcomes. Nonetheless, she does recognise that certain strategies are likely to be more successful than others in that “teaching methods are culturally influenced”. Some of the strategies advocated by Tjallinks (2004:187) include

- Mastery learning (where material is deconstructed into its component units so that learning becomes sequential). The students’ learning course is thematically based and the tasks follow a sequential pattern.
- Co-operative learning “where small groups of pupils work together to assist one another in activities.” Tjallinks (2004) recognises that this approach does support social interactions, promotes language usage and development, limits language and cultural impediments and enhances learner achievement, particularly along the lines of higher-order learning. Given the fact that the students in the Management IV course are registered in a degree programme and given the fact that English is the medium of instruction at DIT and is recognised in South Africa as the language of international expression, opportunities to

support language practice need to be provided for the students. Reflective tutorials and class group discussion support the oral expression and the reflective journals, tasks and assignments, written language expression. The varying levels of difficulty required for expression is accommodated, from informal (reflections) to semi-formal (tasks) to the formalised academic style required in assignments. The care would come in the sensitive critiquing and feedback of students' work. I would also suggest timing the reflective tutorials so that second-language learners are scheduled to attend the first sets of tutorial sessions. This would be to establish trust relationships early in the year and give students permission or ways in which to acknowledge language difficulties.

- Experiential learning: "Learners will be able to learn from experiences if they see the educator as a real person with whom they can share their experiences, feelings and attitudes. The educators and learners must be able to trust one another and to accept each person as worthy of respect. Experiential learning will succeed if the educator can put him-/herself in the place of the learners in order to see and understand issues from their point of view" Tjallinks (2004:188). A number of strategies are put in place in the course to promote this sense of trust between the students and myself. The reflective journal, more than any strategy previously attempted, allows a 'window' into the minds, hearts and worlds of the individual students.
- Humour is a strategy noted by Tjallinks (2004) as a means of teaching, and as a coping mechanism. Humour is not necessarily universal, although laughter certainly is. I use a self-deprecatory style of humour, particularly if I am trying to be extra-sensitive and also use wit or comedy that focuses on universal elements e.g. parenting, gender, nursing antics etc. rather than culture-specific humour. I use it in class to improve creativity and defocus

anxiety. The Web CT discussion list has a humour section, which students can access or ignore. It was clear from the tracking system and the student responses that this was a frequently used facility, even when (or perhaps because?) the humour often had nothing to do with the learning context.

- Story-telling, particularly “Informal storytelling has always been part of the African culture in particular, and therefore should be used in the Southern African multicultural classroom” Tjallinks (2004:192). The students’ reflective journals allowed for this facility, as did the on-line discussion list and the tutorial sessions allowed for the further elaboration around these narratives. Tjallinks (2004:192) identifies the benefits of these narratives as a means of preserving history and for its therapeutic effects as it “builds self-esteem and rapport, extends care and support to all colleagues, strengthens health-care professional-client relationships, establishes connections between people and creates a shared history”. She also notes that it

“encourages critical thinking; serves to enhance learners’ capacity for compassion and empathy; equips learners to live within current society and expand their perceptions of self and the world they live in; generates collegiality and collaboration; gives learners a voice; exposes learners to language and encourages the further development of listening skills; makes health-care practice visible; addresses diversity; and facilitates self-help groups”.

Students, in their evaluation of the learning course, particularly noted their development of listening skills and self-awareness. Other important benefits of narratives is that they do provide a “contextual grounding” Tjallinks (2004:193). It allows students a particular lens with which to view their world, and so allows them a better understanding of this world. “It not only

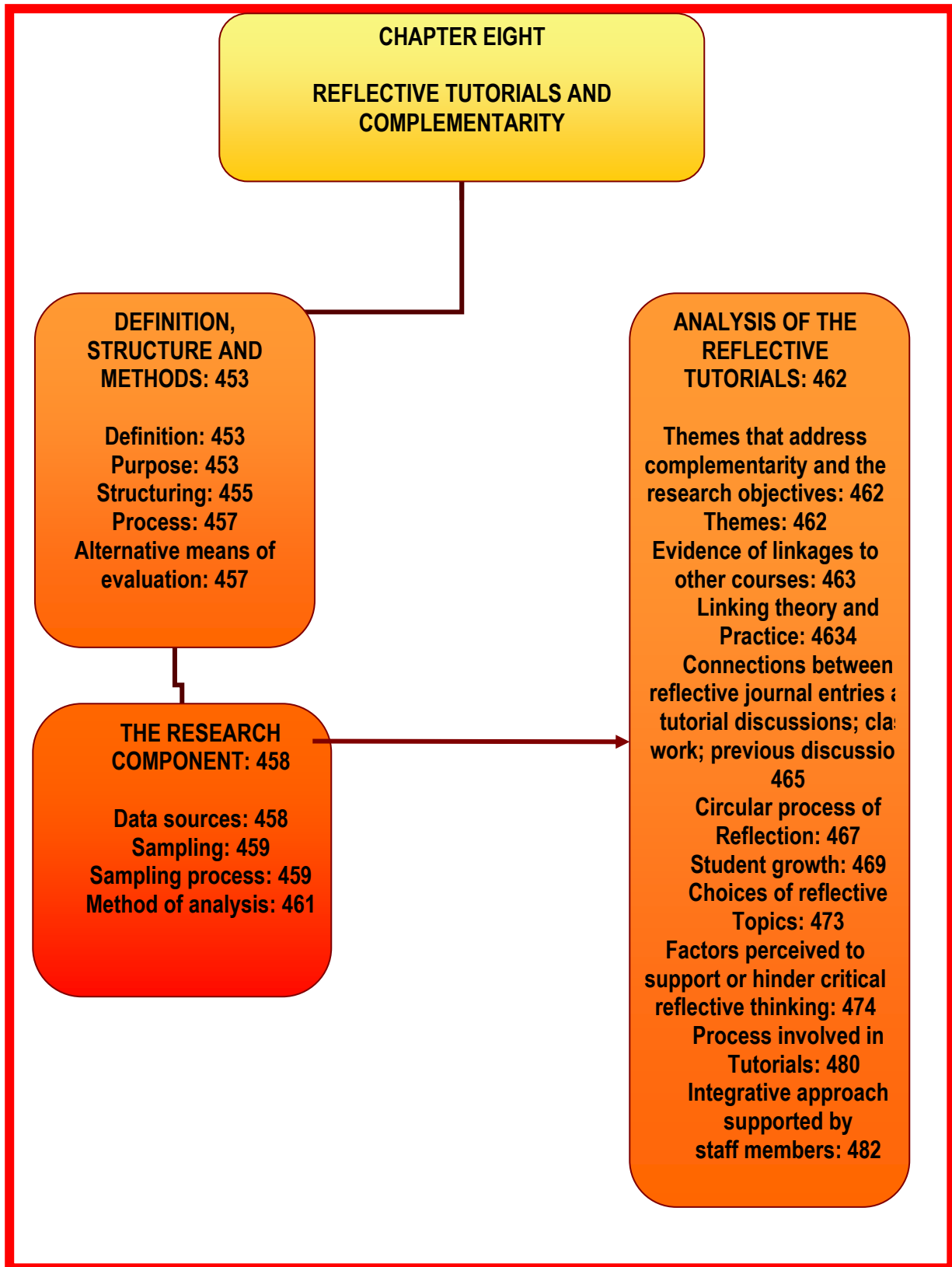
influences how we see ourselves and others, but also the choices we make and the ways in which we behave” and therefore is also a way in which students can clarify their values. Tjallinks (2004:194) also sees the use of narratives as a means of bonding and promoting group cohesion, as well as a means of validating and affirming students’ realities. Finally, but importantly, narratives are a vehicle which allow the students cathartic expression, and as the venting process could, she suggests, allow the story-teller to “repent in an indirect way”. This process is particularly valuable in that it can serve to “ease tension, stress and frustration, which is very necessary in the health-care professions.” All these processes are evident through student narratives in the various vehicles for expression in the management course.

“In storytelling, the emphasis is on learning rather than teaching cultural wisdom. It is not just the learning of cultural content that matters in these stories. What is described is the thinking, practical wisdom, and inherited traditional knowledge that belongs with the story. The importance and meaning of preserving cultural wisdom and traditional inherited knowledge occurs when stories are interpreted. Perhaps, it is preserving the stories of nurses worldwide that will bring to nursing education a conversation that points to the dangers of a modern science that is not based in cultural wisdom and traditionally inherited knowledge” (Negussie 2001:195.)

7.4 CONCLUSION

Communication is a vehicle of expression. The medium can be a liberating tool and a means to self-discovery and growth. But it can also be a burden and obstacle in the quest for learning. This chapter provides an understanding of the processes involved in reflective journaling and the consequent implications for implementing future courses where reflection as a mode for learning is being

considered. It takes particular note of the current South African context and bears in mind the ensuing repercussion for the offering of this type of learning course.



CHAPTER EIGHT

TRIANGULATION OF DATA – REFLECTIVE TUTORIALS

Reflective tutorial sessions provide a platform for connections of strategies to enhance critical thinking and critical reflective practice

8. INTRODUCTION

Reflective tutorials, as a teaching and learning strategy, were held to promote critical reflective practice in the Nursing Management IV course. During the course of the discussion that occurred in the reflective tutorials, students referred to issues that had been dealt with in their journals or in class – and so the discussion continued, since learning through reflection is a circular process (See Figure 8.1). Therefore, data triangulation (or complementarity) took place and through this, I was able to obtain a comprehensive view of the process and the development of critical reflective thinking. The analysis and discussions of the journals alone would only provide one aspect of the learning experience, whereas the programme design specifically incorporated multiple strategies that together, would enhance critical reflective thinking.

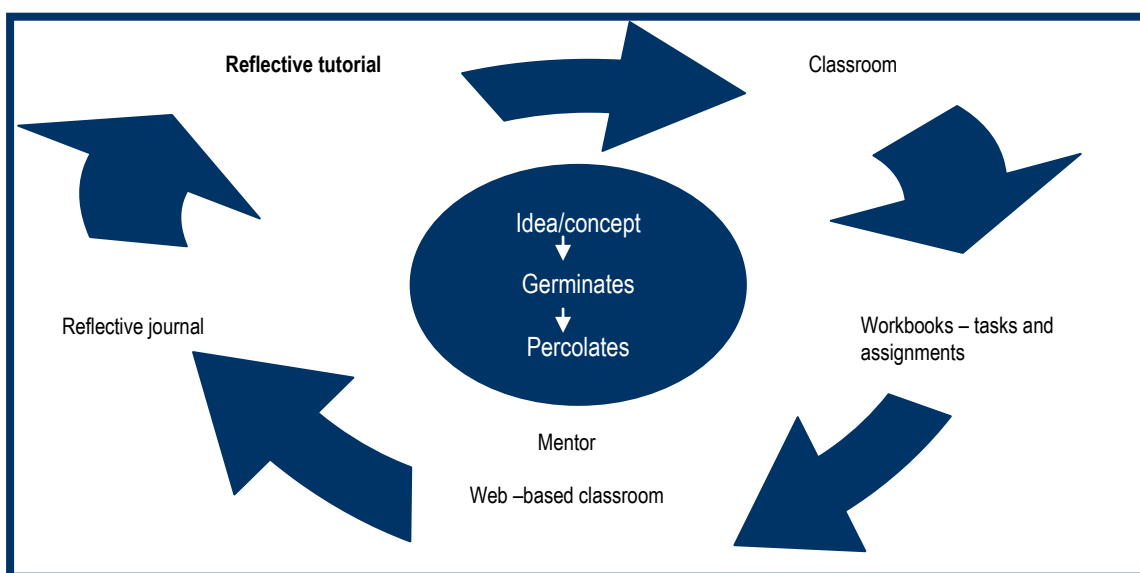


Figure 8.1: Complementarity: How integrated learning strategies work

Furthermore, the outcome for the objective relating to the carry-over of critical thinking into practice could only be met indirectly i.e. through students' narratives and dialogue. The purpose of this objective (Objective Four in Chapter Four, Section 4.11) was to monitor the process involved in reflective thinking evidenced from reflective journals and reflective tutorials and determine whether reflective thought had an effect on the resulting perceived attitudes and behaviours of post-basic nursing students in relation to health care practice.

8.1 DEFINITION, STRUCTURE AND METHODS USED IN REFLECTIVE TUTORIALS

8.1.1 Definition

In the context of *this* Management IV course, reflective tutorials are defined as small group discussions based on the learning needs of students who interact with each other informally for the purposes of connecting theory and practice and developing insights about themselves and their practice. These were pre-set, regularly scheduled discussions which provided a forum or platform for learning. Although these were student-driven, they included the facilitator. The collaborative learning was guided by structures and norms. The choice of facilitation style was an adapted form of the Socratic Method as described in Chapter Three, Section 3.8.3 and Chapter Five, Section 5.4.1. While there was no specific goal, other than those determined by the students at the start of or during the discussion, the reflective tutorial was not task-driven. Evaluation was informal and evidenced by a developing understanding of the process by both students and the facilitator.

8.1.2 Purpose of reflective tutorials

Cranton (1996) in Imel (1997) recognises three types of learning that can take place in groups:

- “instrumental (scientific, cause-and-effect information)
- communicative (mutual understanding and social knowledge)

- emancipatory (increased self-awareness and transformation of experience)“

The purpose of the small group reflective tutorial discussion was to provide a forum for dialogue, based mainly on students' journal entries, and the development of oral arguments making use of 'teachable moments' for individual students. The focus was on critical, reflective thinking and was process rather than outcome oriented, highlighting the examination of assumptions, expectations and perspectives. The facilitator provided a supportive but challenging environment using Socratic questioning, the technique of which is used to promote critical thinking (as explained in Chapter Five, Section 5.4.1). The aim was to support self-directed dialogue and equalize the power dynamics between students, and between students and facilitator as much as possible. This concept is supported within van Aswegen's model in Chapter One, Section 1.8 and a description of the student-facilitator relationship in Chapter Three, Section 3.6.3.

The dialectical nature of the discussion allowed students to see issues from multiple perspectives, to interrogate their own world view and give both voice and meaning to their constructions which would then result in emancipatory learning. According to Mezirow (1981:18) cited in Platzer, (2000:689), this is where learners "identify real problems involving reified power relationships rooted in institutionalized ideologies which (they) have internalized in (their) psychological history." Apparently, alternative perspectives will allow learners to analyse their assumptions.

The role of the educator was particularly important, in that it needed to be non-directive and not seen as one where the educator was the provider of information (Mezirow in Platzer, 2002). The idea was not to rush the discussion, particularly in view of the fact that many of the students were second-language English students, but rather to give students 'space' and the time in which to

uncover relationships and concepts. (The theme of 'space' and 'time' are motifs in reflective learning and are discussed in Chapter Three, Sections 3.4.4, 3.9 and 3.10.5, 3.12.4, 3.14.5.2).

According to Ziegahn (2001) this social construction of knowledge was promoted by collaborative group work in an environment encouraging negotiation, listening and care. This collaboration focusing on process and aimed at sharing information, ideas, and feelings accords with the communicative type of learning identified earlier by Cranton (1996) in Imel (1997). This then in turn further supported a culturally sensitive learning approach with the possibility of fostering inclusion.

The questioning approach was intended to invite decisions instead of implying criticism, which can limit participation (Picou, Cantrell and Barr, 1998). Questions were intended to open issues and challenge cognitive thinking, but needed to be introduced carefully so as not to threaten the integrity of the student. The Socratic discussion method encouraged learners to consider and evaluate their own thinking in relation to that of others. It promoted multidimensional thought and a sense of intellectual discipline and thoroughness. Those participating learned to appreciate the power of critical, reflective learning. This method used a series of questions to uncover or discover truth; it guided explorations of students, to perhaps deconstruct conventional ideas and understanding. Muscat, (1999) and Paul and Elder (2001) support this usage of questions.

The instrumental form of learning referred to by Cranton (1996) in Imel (1997) above was evidenced mainly in the form of practice supporting theory. As the discussions were largely self-directed, they were not based on facilitator-determined prior readings, but focused on student interests and needs. The purpose was to draw students out, sharpen their awareness of health and

management issues and their abilities and the use of critical reflective thinking to attain goals and avoid blocks.

8.1.3 Structuring of reflective tutorials

- Group composition: the groups comprised never more than five students and students generally chose their own membership, sometimes based on practicalities (i.e. continuity, if they had already been organized into a group for another course, for example, Nursing Research 1), and sometimes based on affinity such as previously established friendships. The group membership remained constant throughout the year, as the building of trust is progressive and should not be assumed (Boud and Walker, 1998).
- Venue: Tutorials took place outside of the classroom, generally in my office, around my desk or in a small meeting room around a table.
- Mutually suitable times, dates and duration: These were negotiated at the beginning of the year in consultation with both students and other teaching staff, so that programme times did not overlap, nor did students need to come in on other days or have to wait. The duration, an hour-and-a-half, provided enough time to engage in discussion on more than a superficial level.
- Environment: Generally, students sat in comfortable wicker-basket chairs in a circular pattern, the telephone was disconnected and the door was shut for privacy. First names were used, and humour encouraged. I strove to create an informal, psychologically safe environment of mutual respect, using active listening and a non-judgmental stance was promoted.
- Facilitation processes: I tried to motivate and empower students by:
 - ✓ offering an open, accepting attitude;
 - ✓ supporting and maintaining a positive group environment;

- ✓ recognizing the individuality of students by personal recognition of their circumstances (occupational, personal and academic);
- ✓ clarifying meanings;
- ✓ connecting ideas to theory or practice; and by
- ✓ making connections between previous discussions or written work, thereby integrating materials over time.

8.1.4 Process

Purpose, methods, norms, roles, dynamics, value and structuring of groups was discussed and highlighted during orientation to all learning programmes within the department, and then at various stages during the academic year. Students were mature, adult learners and had experience with group work as a teaching and learning strategy. Participation was a requirement, although there was no grade attached to the involvement. Students were told that the content and direction of the discussion was up to them and that my intention as facilitator was to initiate and support the discussion, but promote a student-centered rather than a facilitator-directed approach.

8.1.5 Reflective tutorials as an 'alternative' means of evaluation

The reflective tutorials were not evaluated formally in terms of allocating grades. However, these were evaluated in terms of mastery of learning which ultimately influenced grades. As Chabeli (2001) notes, reflective tutorials contribute towards integrative assessment as their focus is on the formative process where students actively reflect upon what they have learned and are learning. For example, a student (Lisi) notes:

"to me it is time for ventilating to get someone to listen. Secondly, you keep throwing things back to me and making me think. Afterwards you find that some of these

things that you are not aware but during the discussion you are motivating my thinking so that I think, oh, does this mean this? I was not aware. And there are suggestions that you make to me and when I am out I think about that. And also to see when someone else has the same problem which gives me the strength to me it is time for ventilating to get someone to listen..." (Lisi: Tutorial: 23 August, 2002)

Chabeli (2001:21) describes reflective tutorials as an alternative means of assessment (or, in other terms "authentic or performance assessment"). This is because they proceed from and allow for further processing of the authentic issues written about in the students' reflective journals.

8.2 THE RESEARCH COMPONENT

8.2.1 Data sources

As researcher, I acquired detailed evidence of students' experiences. Guided mainly by Objective Four, but also considering the other three objectives (Chapter Four, Section 4.11) I used the data from sampled reflective tutorials and my recorded observations from my reflexive journal to:

- attempt to gain new understanding of a situation, experience or process;
- learn from the detailed accounts that students described in their own words, or that I, as researcher recorded in field notes from participant observation in the academic setting.

Critical thinking, guided reflection and reflective practice have consequences. As researcher, I wanted to know what nurses were thinking about and how they were thinking – their 'lived' experiences, which in turn would give meaning to their ability to think critically and reflectively and thereby, affect their practice. Critical reflective practitioners are multi-dimensional beings, expressing their personal, educational, professional and occupational facets through their tutorial

discussions and reflective journals. So, although the focus of the research centred on the two variables, critical thinking and reflective practice, it also ensured that the study range was far broader than just a narrow consideration of only two variables. By taking the students' narratives into account, through their reflective journals and reflective tutorials discussions, my reflexive diary, as well as references to class work, I was able to triangulate evidence supporting the reflective thinking and the illumination of the content of the students' thoughts and practice, thereby revealing their attitudes and values. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) call this methodological triangulation, which is the use of multiple methods to study a single problem looking for convergent evidence from different sources. As I was intimately involved in this course, I also used as a source of reference my own observations, some of which relied on memory and was not documented, and so is perhaps less reliable. These are referred to in the text as 'Personal observations'.

The data sources included transcripts from 5 tutorial sessions, correlating themes with those derived from 3 key student reflective journals (Carol, Jena and Xolisi) and class work checked against class plans and topics identified in the 2002 study guide. Jane Tarr, a critical reader, gave a report on four reflective tutorials, excerpts of which are included for the purposes of triangulating evidence, but also to illuminate the findings. (The concept of the critical reader was introduced in Chapter One, Section 1.10.3 and further discussed in Chapter Four, Sections 4.6.1, 4.16.4 and 4.19). Raw data and supporting evidence for all data sources is available on the supplied CD-ROM.

8.2.2 Sampling

This is in the form of an overview in Chapter Four, Section 4.16.2 and is provided in more detail in the following section.

8.2.2.1 Sampling process

Tutorial discussion sessions complemented the journal entries and comprised 20 hour-and-a-half sessions taped in 2002, of which I sampled five using a combination or mixed sampling method (Miles and Huberman, 1994:28). The sample of five provides an adequate reflection of the type of process and progression of group discussion at this level of learning in the Nursing Management IV course.

The sampling decision was based on the following:

- Three students 2002 reflective journals (Carol, Jena and Xolisi) were used for analysis. This decision was made in July/August 2002, and so it seemed appropriate to sample two reflective tutorials from these students' respective tutorial groups as I would be able to triangulate data from their reflective journals, as these journals are included as the study's main data source. I also sampled one transcribed tutorial session from another group as a check. The transcriber, who had access to all the tapes, made a choice of convenience. No tutorial sessions were taped in 2003 as I had decided to make the 2002 group the main target research group even though I changed my mind at a later date to include selectively chosen data to deepen my understanding of the research study.
- Although I recorded and have access to all the tutorial sessions in 2002, the recordings from the available recording equipment was singularly poor. I was only able to buy a better recorder mid-way through the year, and so decided not to use the sessions recorded in the first half of the year.

- One group of students was not comfortable with having their sessions recorded, and so these were omitted. Another group only allowed me to record once they were comfortable with the process.
- In two sessions, the electricity tripped out and I only noticed this after the fact, so these sessions were omitted.

8.2.3 Method of analysis

This is described more fully in Chapter Four, Section 4.24.

8.2.3.1 Analysis organised in the form of themes that address complementarity and the research objectives

The analysis of the reflective tutorials addresses the research objectives outlined in Chapter Four, Section 4.11 and the themes identified in Section 4.24.3. Each taped reflective tutorial was transcribed and considered individually and then, in order to obtain a sense of 'wholeness', was summarised and organised in terms of the themes, along with the other reflective tutorials as follows:

(a) Complementarity in the form of

1. Evidence of linkages to other courses, because of the integrated approach to learning (Objective 1). The rationale for the integrated departmental approach to programme learning is introduced in Chapter One, Sections 1.6.
2. Evidence of linkages between theory and practice as these form key precepts of critical reflective thinking (Objectives 2 and 4 and rationale identified in Chapter One, Section 1.4.5, 1.5

and 1.11.1 It is also foundational to van Aswegen's model in Chapter Two, Section 2.3.1 and Chapter Three, Sections 3.6.4, 3.6.5, 3.6.7 and 3.7).

3. Evidence of connections between reflective journal entries and tutorial discussions (Objective 1).

4. Evidence of connections between previous reflective tutorials or class discussions and the current discussion. Learning through reflection is a circular process, which sees the learner returning to a notion time and again, from different angles, until the concept has been interrogated to the learner's satisfaction (Objective 1 and 4).

(b) Addressing the research objectives by identifying and exploring

1. Factors that supported or hinder critical reflective thinking (Objective 3). This component centers on the processes involved in the tutorials.

2. Evidence of students' attitudes and values – the 'meat' of the thinking (Objective 4).

3. Perceptions of student learning by:

- Identifying the process of critical, reflective thinking (Objective 2).
- Identifying commonalities in thought processes (Objective 2) .
- Identifying the issues chosen for reflection (Objective 4).

8.3 ANALYSIS OF THE REFLECTIVE TUTORIALS

Each table is divided into columns, providing descriptions of the summarised data and illustrative quotations from the respective tutorial. Each table is titled and so includes data from the five tutorials relevant to the table title. The columns within each table are headed by the date of the tutorial and the participants' pseudonyms. The data is categorized into themes and summarized

within the tables in terms of Section 8.2.3.1. The sequencing is not particularly important but has been organised chronologically. The reader is cued by the blue colour and the italicizing of the participants' names, indicating that these are participants in both the sampled reflective tutorials and reflective journals. Normal font and black colour indicates that the participants were sampled from the tutorials only. Selected extracts were chosen, along with supportive literature, to illustrate my interpretation. However, it should be noted that the analysis is not comprehensive. It merely provides an overview of the process and the outcome of the reflective tutorials.

8.3.1 Themes

As noted in 8.2.3.1, the data is analysed in the form of the following themes:

- Linkages to other courses
- Linking theory and practice
- Connections between reflective journal entries and tutorial discussions; class work; previous discussions
- Student growth
- Factors support or hinder critical reflective thinking
- Students' choices of reflective topics
- Process involved in the tutorial.

8.3.1.1 Evidence of linkages to other courses, because of the integrated approach to learning

Although Nursing Management IV formed a subject within the student's specialty, students were encouraged to think holistically and use the tutorial session as a means of making the learning within their programme more meaningful. This meant that the reflective tutorials allowed them a

means of thinking more freely and in an integrative way. I have noticed that frequently, when students attend lectures offered for a specific course, there is a tendency to mentally 'switch gears' and in trying to focus on the learning material at hand, knowledge is compartmentalized. The connections made in the reflective tutorials are in fact one of the ways that students learn to 'think outside of the box' and integrate previous learning with new knowledge constructs, an essential process in critical thinking (Broadbear and Keyser, 2000). Melville Jones (1999) discusses the concept of 'infusion' thinking, whereby critical thinking skills are not necessarily taught within a specific subject, for example, *Critical Thinking*, but in fact are infused across subjects so that students become aware of the skill (for example, causal relationships, analysis of arguments, reliability of information and sources, inferring from evidence), understand it and apply it across contexts. This promotes an integrated approach to learning which cuts across subjects. It is not clear if learning occurs in small, incremental steps or as what Eisen (2001), citing Mezirow, recognises as 'epochal transformation'. Who is to say when these realizations or insights occur? But by pointing out the obvious and making the connections allows for what Eisen (2001:36) recognises as "permeability between instrumental and communicative" learning. Figure 8.2 depicts the strategies within the course where such connections are made explicit.

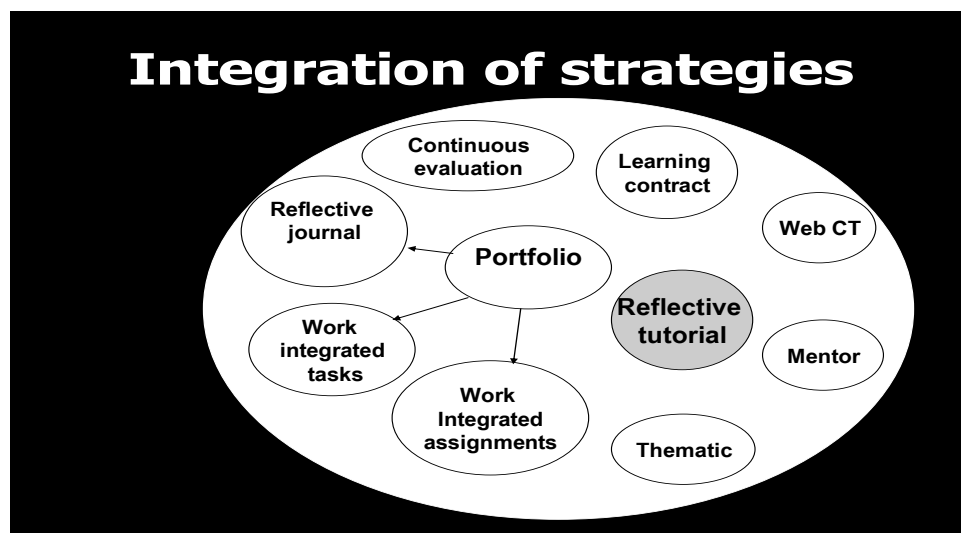


Figure 8.2 Integration of strategies

There is plenty of evidence of linkages, but only a few are shown as a demonstration in Table 8.1 in Appendix 8.1.

8.3.1.2 Linking theory and practice

Theory informs practice and practice informs theory. These notions are inextricable and interlinked and are supported in Chapter Three, Sections 3.4.5, 3.6.1, 3.6.4, 3.6.5, 3.6.7 and 3.7. The whole point of the tutorials was to reference the reality of the students' workplace settings and make the connections between the theoretical underpinning and their practice. This was not overt, and often occurred through self-discovery. Theory and practice are linked by storytelling (Nehls, 1995). When teachers and practicing nurses share their experiences, students learn to appreciate that nursing knowledge can evolve by reflecting on practice. Students learn to expect differences in practice based on experience and begin to recognize areas in which they need to focus their attention. Reflection on clinical practice is not only a way of learning nursing but also a way to contribute to nursing knowledge. This link between theory and practice can be explained further by acknowledging teachers-as-learners and learners-as-teachers within the context of the classroom and clinical experience. Also, by emphasizing reciprocity, a community of learners is built (Koenig and Zorn, 2002). An example of the theory-practice link is in the following excerpt dated 2nd August, 2002. The issue under discussion was assertiveness. It formed part of the course material that had been dealt with in class. I had asked Xolisi if she was comfortably able to say 'no' in situations in her workplace (she worked deep in the heart of a traditional rural area in the eastern Cape):

Xolisi: "Ja, I do. I remember one time we are the school health team, we had a social worker so she was kind of (I don't want to say lazy), but lazy. She actually didn't come (to the school). We had to go and pick her out from her office (laughter). So, we use to do, we can't do her work, but we used to see the clients and all that, until somebody said no, we must not work for her. Let us refer all these clients to

her. So, that she will see how it is to work alone, because when he was working, when we were working as a team, the load wasn't that much, even for her because we were there to help. Now that maybe seeing that the load is even more that she is working alone, it will change something in her and it really did. "

Xolisi had previously mulled over this issue in her reflective journal. It was a clear demonstration of putting theory into practice, and through relating her story, she was able to provide an authentic experience of this happening. I think that it was also a very creative way of teaching a lesson and allowing for the development of insight, without the social worker having to 'lose face'. Other examples of evidence of linkages between theory and practice are identified in Table 8.2 in Appendix 8.2.

8.3.1.3 Connections: reflective journals, tutorials; class work; previous discussions

Sometimes as the facilitator, I would remind the students about the connections between their reflective journals, tutorials; class work and previous discussions. One of the ways I accomplished this was by starting the tutorial with a summary of what I had recalled from a previous reflective tutorial. I was also very conscious of using 'teachable moments' and where issues connected with class work or diaries, I (or the students) would acknowledge and develop these. It was helpful to have a theme approach to the course, where the situational analysis of the student's workplace formed the spring-board for most other issues as topics of discussion in class, reflective tutorials and journals. (Table 8.3 demonstrates evidence of connections in Appendix 8.3). A sound situational analysis provided a context, from which I could then view the student's practice with understanding.

In another example, attention is drawn to Jabu's reflective journal:

Maureen: "What, what am I doing in your diaries? Are you handing in diaries? "

Jabu: "Yes. "

Maureen: "Okay, what am I doing in your diaries? What am I personally doing in your diaries? "

Jabu: "I think - to see our critical thinking and reflecting skills. "

Maureen : "How?"

Jabu: "I think sometimes it's helping because you do a diary entry or table, you analyse your diaries or the situation and then you reflect on it. Maybe than after you've marked it you come with some opinion and some other suggestion that you did not think of. So, it's sort of a two-way interaction, sometimes I do benefit from it. "

Maureen: "... do you realise that the questions that I ask, may not necessarily benefit you, but that your own reflections are maybe much, much more valuable? In other words, the fact that I'm asking questions might even not be important, but the fact that you are writing things down at all. ... there is a lot of time and energy that you are spending doing this. You know that? Of course you know that. I'm saying to you, do you, ... do you see the benefits to yourself at all in that process? Or are you sitting there and thinking, oh, oh. "

Boniswe: "Ja, sometimes, it depends on the maybe on the article, let's say newspaper article that you have chosen; because now when you have to analyse it you have to think of other things, not just what is written down. You have to think about of other things and you have to observe your own feelings about the story that they are talking about in the article. So, somehow, you improve your way of thinking and your way of analyzing things. "

My reflexive journal provides earlier and further thoughts on connections.

Reflexive journal: 31st October, 2002

Whilst reviewing the summative test, it struck me sharply that some of the students' responses rang true and others, not so clearly. I read their responses in light of their diaries, their input in tutorials and their reflections on their tasks, each of which has in a sense, allowed me to triangulate the truthfulness or validity of their responses. This has applied in the examples supplied in the test for example, when they wrote of improved problem solving skills, and gave an example of this process, and on a number of occasions I was able to match this up to previous work. This wasn't done deliberately. It has, however, been one of the interesting and unsought benefits of both the course, and my having to evaluate all facets of the course. Of course, this could prove not to be a benefit, if different people are working with different aspects of the students' work and we are not communicating about what we see or read with each other.

8.3.1.4 Circular process of reflection

The reflective cycle that takes place within the individual may be different to that that takes place within the group. It might take time to process thoughts until one is in a sense, ready for self-insight to take place. In the group, as the discussion was free-flowing, it was easier to raise difficult thoughts or thoughts that were perhaps uncomfortable to an individual, but were of little concern or a non-issue to others in the group. In this way, the group self-regulated the communication and therefore, the thinking that took place. Simpson and Courtney (2002) note that one of the cognitive critical thinking skills is self-regulation where one constantly monitors one's own thinking in line with the universal criteria of, for example "clarity, accuracy, consistency, logic, significance" etc. and take the appropriate corrective actions. In the reflective tutorial, sometimes members of the group took on this role. For example, in the circumlocutory tutorial on the 2nd of August, Rea was complaining about the lackadaisical attitude of the staff she worked with:

Rea: "It really gets to me because at the end of the day, even if I am limping or whatever, if you look at the stats (she means to compare patient numbers in terms of work loads) it's like you (Rea) now really (have) seen a lot compared to the rest (of the staff)."

Maureen: "So then let me ask you: "Why do you stay?"

Rea: "Because I love what I do".

Rowan points out the contradiction:

Rowan: "But you are moaning about what you do".

Rea justifies her position:

Rea: "I'm not moaning about what I am doing. What I am trying to say is that as you mention people are doing it (working as a nurse) for other reasons. So, people must understand if (that if) they are in this job situation, (they have a job to do and therefore) this is what they (are) meant to do. They need to pull themselves together and do the job, not leave it to one person or so... It has gone so bad now Maureen,

in the sense that the team leader decided that she doesn't want to be team leader anymore."

Rowan again points out that complaining worsens the work situation: "But you know, I think some of these team leaders don't want to be in charge when they've got such de-motivated staff, and staff that are just moaning and groaning. "

Rea: "You don't have a choice, you don't have a choice, if it is your time to be (Rowan: How come you don't have a choice?) be team leader, you have to be team leader. If it is your turn, you can either stay" (Rowan: "I will back that one up") (or quit, I think Rea means)

Rowan again questions Rea's stance. Jena joins the discussion:

Jena:"You know, I take an advantage of passive people, I am telling you. I do take advantage, because they are influential, you can influence them. "

Maureen:"How would you do that? "

Jena:"Well, I am assertive person. "

Rea does present herself in the role of the martyr, but gets short shrift from her colleagues. She is comfortable enough within the group to argue herself out of that role by removing the focus from herself to the team leader, but still the group doesn't let her get away with her passive stance or martyred role. Although the group have focused attention on dysfunctional work behaviour, Rea still feels safe enough to continue sharing in the discussion which moves on to another direction. Other examples of evidence of the circular process of reflection are identified in Table 8.4 in Appendix 8.4

8.3.1.4 Student growth

Chabeli (2001:25) notes that reflective tutorials promote clinical reasoning skills. The following extract demonstrates Lisi's recognition of her poor study technique and the logical way she has now approached this (this after previous discussions). Lisi (14/6/2003) is explaining how she is now trying to deal with, with what for her, was previously an impenetrable "mountain" of work in her new position at work and her studies, but has recognised that "one bite at a time" helps reduce the

mystery and burden. Carol remembers the critical thinking technique taught in class “use mind-mapping’, she suggests. I offered Lisi a way out by suggesting that the problem lay with me in the way I had presented the course initially.

Maureen: “You were given everything right at the beginning... you were given all the materials, all the assignments, all the tasks, all the dates were handed to you. The only thing I didn’t hand to you were all the workbooks... given as you have needed them... Maybe you have been overwhelmed by the amount?” But Lisi demonstrates self-insight and repudiates the excuse.

Lisi: “In fact it was not the way it was given. It was how I approached it. Because sometimes giving you the whole scope. It is good for myself to go through and see how much work you got. But it was how I approach it. That is where the problem lies.”

Both van Aswegen (1998) and the Foundation of Critical Thinking in Broadbear and Keyser (2000) describe intellectual traits essential for the development of critical thinking to include intellectual humility, intellectual courage, intellectual empathy, intellectual integrity, intellectual perseverance, faith in reason and fair-mindedness. I would suggest that Lisi demonstrated smatterings of these traits in this excerpt.

Both students recognise that there is limited place for rote learning in the learning process in the course, and that learning is more meaningful when it relates to life. In the tutorial of 23/8/2002, Carol notes that she had been discussing the Management course with another lecturer in the department as well as her difficulty in learning for the upcoming test:

Carol: “I found, I don’t know what to study. What do I study? Fine, I can read the work and read the textbooks, but I can’t study, study it. I think it is aimed towards changing your behaviour and the way you think. And that is the hard part.”

Lisi notes: "...it is a guide...these guidelines are going to help me, not only now... I have grown , I have matured, especially in the Management side, even in the Occ. Health...once you are in the situation, then you start to learn...for example, problem solving. I could solve problems, knew I needed to get some facts here and there, now it is becoming more structured. (Now, when I am in the situation) doing it, that is when you are going to internalize it and make it your own, not just for the exam."

Carol: "You learn through experience".

She discusses a previous educational experience, also a management course:

"I didn't have this interaction and that was the difficult part. I didn't change behaviour in that course... because it wasn't practical".

Adult learning principles as described in Chapter Three, Section 3.2, recognise that learning takes place when the learning is perceived to be relevant. Lisi notes her renewed interest in management, even though it had formed part of previous learning programmes because " now I am doing it, so it has meaning to me now ".

Table 8. 5: Student growth with regards to critical, reflective thinking

Carol, Lisi , Ria 14/6/2002
<p>Lisi focuses on self-identity and the theme of racial prejudice and the effect on her functioning. How writing her thoughts down in her journal allows her to distance herself and obtain perspective, rather than pursue her initial reaction of aggressive behaviour. Valuing of self. Willingness to consider reorganization/ restructuring of work to deal with load. "As I deal with the tasks, that makes me feel like I am going somewhere... It motivates me to do more. This mountain now, I have started a piece of it. Now, instead of taking on the whole world, I can start somewhere. I will make it." Carol: Comments on her setting of personal goals.</p> <p>Carol: " The problem with Lisi and I is that we have both experienced quite extreme changes this year: We have changes jobs, changed homes, relocated to different place. And for me personally it has been a huge challenge and the studies are that much harder and the changes that have occurred have had a huge impact on me physically, personally and emotionally. It is only in the past two weeks that I am beginning to surface. "</p> <p>Maureen: "That is quite a shock"</p> <p>Carol: "It IS. I thought I would be alright. I said to myself, in June I will be alright. The house will be livable and I will be able to get down to work. But June moved to July and then to August and I can honestly say that it is only in the past</p>

two weeks that I have my little space that I can do my work and I have never had that for the whole of this year. My life has been a mess. I have been living out of boxes and suitcases, so ya. But, I see the light at the end of the tunnel and for me it is not just a piece of paper. I have grown with this course since last year and I have said this to Judith (her subject specialty co-ordinator) as well. I have grown professionally a lot especially with the occupational health last year and the management this year. Because I was in the field and I didn't have the tools. I also look at it differently now and I have grown professionally."

...Maureen: "But what about your continued development? How do you ensure that the quality of service that you are delivering is appropriate?"

Carol: "That is why we are here!"

Boniswe, Bisa, Jabu

25/7/2002

Student growth: This is not directly observable from these transcripts. It was a process that had taken place over time. However, as I indicated, there was quite a lot of anger in the group as a result of working in, what for them, was untenable circumstances.

- Frustration at the lack of recognition given by the authorities to the work that the poly-clinic offers

Evidence from tutorial:

Thembi: "Our service, or our organization. It is not easy. Number one, that Clinic is part of the hospital, it is not like other things. And number two, as far as I can see, in fact I am quite sure - they not even aware of what Primary health care is, this is number two. And they are so stubborn even to take that Clinic out of the Hospital, so, that it can be an independent. Because of that now, everything is from the main hospital, and even with the staff like, this month we got these people moving back to the hospital for one year. "

- Frustration at the lack of teamwork

Evidence from tutorial:

Maureen: "But perhaps as a group, is there something that you, that (you could do), would you see that as a possibility and if so how? "

Jabu: " I have a problem. I don't have nothing, I don't have a group there a team or what. We are there but everyone is different with her own complaints, her own stress or whatever. "

Boniswe: "You can't even make a team" (laughter).

Jabu: "I don't even see a team maybe we can try to be a team. Maybe three of us or two of us (Boniswe: but with the rest) the staff as a whole, I don't even see how can you start. "

- Frustration with lack of boundaries and colleagues/management overstepping boundaries with little respect for the students – called "kids"

Evidence from tutorial:

Jabu: "And another thing, there is people who are Senior to us, we found them working there. The problems were there but they've never done anything. Even if you talking about this thing they seem, I think it looks like they used to it. It is no longer a concern, maybe it is for this moment and they are not concerned. So, being the juniors, if I can say like that, you feel like you are helpless you can't do anything, because you know they are all Seniors, what, what, and you are from school. And I am really a junior, even if I complain they are like used to it. But they are not concerned like me... I accept it, really, I am younger than them I can accept it. But in the working situation we are all Professional nurses. Worse in front of the patients, maybe if I am joking in the tea lounge, you can say that, I can understand, not in front of the patients. Calling me a kid, do that and that, Aai, aai, it doesn't sound right, it doesn't at all! "

- Fear of working with abusive patients; frustration with lack of management support for nurses' safety

Evidence from tutorial:

Boniswe: "Ja, it is difficult, because you know whatever happens between you and the patient, the patient is always right, no matter what happens. The patient is always right with the management, so, because they even attempt to assault us. "

- Failure to feel part of the institution; difficulty in identifying

Evidence from tutorial:

Boniswe: "And when the situation analysis was taking place we were not involved. "
 Maureen: "This means quite a lot to you to be involved? "
 Boniswe: "Ja, it does, because now we are working there, we know the situation and when somebody from Maritzburg is called to do the situation analysis. "
 Jabu: "Because there was that lady from Maritzburg. I remember the first time I met her I did not know she was doing this thing, from Maritzburg. She was treated like any other patient. She was sitting there in one of the rooms and she asked me: "Sister are you going home now", because I was taking my bag, I said no! You know, not even noticing who is that person asking me you going home. I said no, than I went out, only to find that she followed me with her card now. "No, I am a Doctor from Maritzburg. I am doing situation analysis". I was just amazed, I did not know there was somebody who was doing something in our Clinic, and we were not informed at all..."

I think that by getting them to recognise this anger, the students were able to see issues a little more realistically each time, mainly because of the questioning, some of which were meant as reality checks e.g. they complained that they were not involved or consulted about the situational analysis. However, on questioning, they recognized where the responsibility lay (with their institutional staff, not with the external person) and Jabu had approached Sr K early in the morning to ask what was going on. They were very afraid to commit to a decision and appeared to take a long time thinking about decisions – for example, Jabu or Boniswe (can't remember which one) finally wrote a letter to a senior manager complaining about the structuring within their service. This was only done after much consideration of possible consequences. Nonetheless, the letter was written, and a positive change resulted. Bisa, who spoke about victimization in racial terms, did take up this issue with the matron concerned and the matter was dropped after a decision to Bisa's satisfaction. While these actions took time to put in place, they did take place and are evidence of the students' growth.

Systems or practices they considered to be useful to try to manage the problems they faced showed a sound reasoning process:

- ✓ use of theory (knowledge base, protocols e.g. IMCI; correct use of statistics for motivation);
- ✓ knowledge of people;
- ✓ anticipation of potential problems (community assuming power);
- ✓ using the hierarchical system;
- ✓ trying different practices such as using a community member as an information giver;
- ✓ working as a team;
- ✓ quietly closing door to go to tea;
- ✓ identifying staff to rotate on tasks (writing of statistics);
- ✓ waiting (problem sister would be going on pension);
- ✓ Considering other options e.g. immigration.

Xolisi, Jena, Rowan, Rea
2/8/2002

I think that growth can be evidenced in the questions they ask; their ability to move the discussion forwards by challenging but with respect to each other; their ability to recognise multiple perspectives; their ability to analyse issues more deeply; their linkage of theory to practice and the ability to think for themselves. The fact that the group felt uncomfortable and even angry, to the extent of Jena walking out of a class on sexual education, but then participated in a reflective tutorial on this issue, is a positive one. Attitudes were challenged and there were moments of discomfort which is a start to the double-loop learning discussed in Chapter Four, Section 4.6.4.2.1.

Carol, Lisi 23/8/2002

Carol's reflection on her difficulties of working with her research group (Table 8.1): Maureen: "Have you ever discussed that with the others?" Carol: "No. No. I think that that is probably the problem. We never talk. We get together and we discuss the research... we never get to how we are as a group?" I posed a suggestion that perhaps there might be other reasons for the students in her group not engaging in the research process. Carol: "I must admit, it is not like the girls are not working. They all are working and pulling their weight, whenever they have to...In my chapter ... I just felt like I wasn't getting enough info. from them." ... Lisi: "We need to sit down and discuss what is needed." Carol demonstrates a willingness to be open, characteristic of a critical thinker. Her openness to other perspectives shows a maturity that is particularly commendable, considering her real frustration and earlier expressed anger.

Other examples:

Lisi: "Secondly, you keep throwing things back to me and making me think "

Carol's decision to buy a home computer indicating desire to support further learning.

Recognition of what stage of learning they are both at:

Lisi: Learning is "...aimed towards your change in behaviour and the way that you think. That's the hard part."

Carol: "It is only when you are truly engaged in this problem, that you internalize the knowledge/ learning, make it your own. "

Catharsis resulting in openness to learning

Xolisi, Musa, Zinzi 8/10/2002

I think that the discussion provided evidence of fairly sound reasoning processes, although evidence, particularly on the immigration side, was fairly shaky.

8.3.1.6 Students' choices of reflective topics

These have been categorized in Figure 8.3 into the following themes: (1) Self-identity; (2) Issues affecting the capacity to cope; (3) Work related issues; (4) Academic (learning) issues and (4) Issues related to nursing profession. The detail is identified in Table 8.6 in Appendix 8.5.

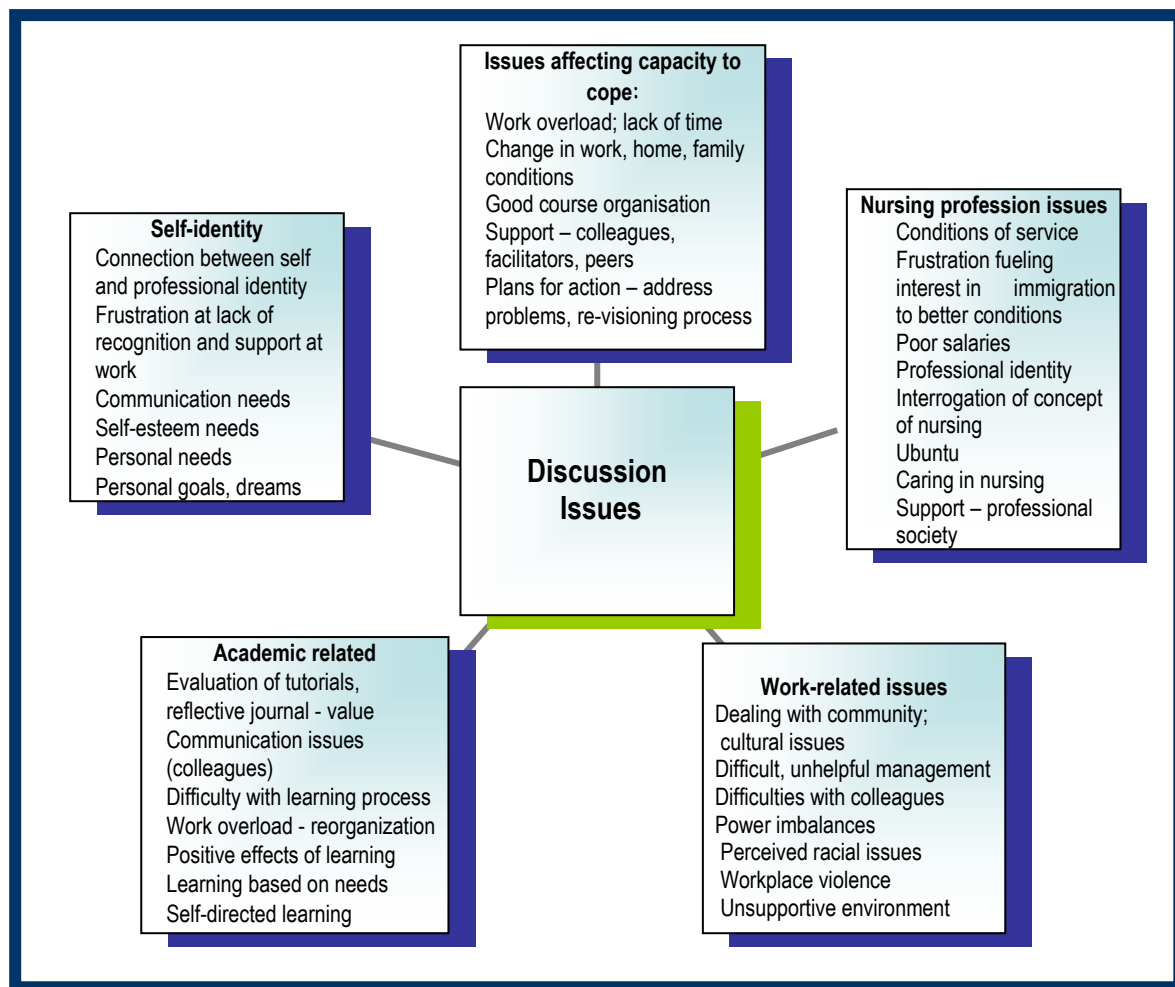


Figure 8.3: Issues chosen for discussion in the reflective tutorials

8.3.1.7 Factors perceived to support or hinder critical reflective thinking in tutorials

This section highlights factors hindering the process of the tutorial engagement that affect the thinking process. These factors could be within the group or with the process itself, or could be within the individual or even the relationship between the student and myself. Kuiper and Pesut (2004:384) cite Shell's 2001 survey of teachers involved in baccalaureate programmes which identified the following barriers: "student characteristics of resistance and attitude, inadequate time, perceived need to cover content and dispense information, resistance to teaching style changes, institutional barriers, lack of knowledge of the concept, and lack of self-efficacy in ability to teach critical thinking."

Barriers or issues related to learning environments and the process of reflection have been discussed in Chapter Three, Sections 3.4.4, 3.10.2.3, 3.10.5 and all of 3.10.6. Most of the work in this area has been undertaken by Boud and Walker (1993 and 1998). Others, such as Platzer, Blake and Ashford (2000), Mezirow (1991), Newton (1996) and Boud and Miller (1998) have added to this body of knowledge.

Table 8.7: Factors perceived to support or hinder critical reflective thinking in tutorials

Carol, Lisi, Ria 14/6/2002	Boniswe, Bisa, Jabu 25/7/2002	Xolisi, Jena, Rowan, Ria 2/8/2002	Carol, Lisi 23/8/2002
Supportive: Lisi rethinking her position on leaving, particularly when she deconstructs the workload. Offered tangible help on revisioning	Supportive: The students did open themselves to discussion and to trusting the process and were willing to answer the questions asked honestly. Hindrance: Initially, our	Supportive: freedom to ventilate; sharing of thoughts; alternate perspectives; appreciation of different cultural contexts; comfortable with each other evidenced by ability to challenge (non-threatening) , tease and laugh with each other. All from same discipline of nursing – so familiarity with	Supportive: Apparent group cohesion: fluid discussion indicating comfort with process and environment; comfort in deciding topic; comfort in being able to end discussion; Questions that looked for evidence; which promoted critical reflective thinking. Provision of workbooks and study guide as prompts "But right now I am in a

<p>work situation so that she is better able to conceptualise organization and structure</p> <p>Hindrance: work overload; time limitations; stress (recurrent theme). (See 8.3.1.5)</p>	<p>relationship and even perhaps the language and cultural barrier which did seem to have an impact on understanding. It took time for me to clarify matters.</p> <p>I also think that prior socialization, both as a result of the nursing hierarchy and as a result of certain rigidity in their previous education systems (questioning and challenging was not considered polite) impacted on their ability to freely reflect.</p>	<p>background.</p> <p>Hindrance: blockage of reasoning initially by strong feelings; set ways. As facilitator, had not been party to strongly felt experience so could only question. Difficulty in assessing 'reality' of feelings. Event very recent, so students did not have the benefit of distancing of the issues and leveling of feelings.</p>	<p>management position so that this information helps me a lot. And I am adding on my previous knowledge. It has meaning for me now and I am adding to it because I need it now"</p> <p>Supportive work organisation: Provides a generous loan for Carol to buy a home computer to facilitate her learning "2%." Both students' fees were being paid for by their organisation.</p> <p>High expectations of themselves-both supportive and hindrance.</p> <p>Hindrance: work overload; time limitations; stress; "extreme changes this year: We have changes jobs, changed homes, relocated to different place. And for me personally it has been a huge challenge and the studies are that much harder and the changes that have occurred have had a huge impact on me physically, personally and emotionally." Although both reflect on the value of working in groups, they also acknowledge the difficulty in working in groups (Table 8.1)</p>
<p>Supportive: Apparent group cohesion: fluid discussion indicating comfort with process and environment; comfort in deciding topic; comfort in being able to end discussion; evidence of laughter indicating ease in situation. Evidence of correcting my misperceptions with sensitivity and ease. Questions that looked for evidence; which promoted critical reflective thinking.</p> <p>Hindrance: Perhaps too much paraphrasing or clarifying or advice giving on my side?</p>			<p>Xolisi, Musa, Zinzi 8/10/2002</p>

In Figure 8.4, I have included the barriers to reflection that I have identified over the process of the study. These have included my observations of the selected groups' reflective tutorials as well as those observed in non-selected reflective tutorials and with other groups of students over the study period. Generally speaking, the tutorials have worked well and I have not experienced extremes in terms of negative behaviours (see Figure 8.5). As mentioned, these are adult learners who were well aware of the critical reflective methodology integrated within their course of learning. They had been well oriented to the process and had participated in determining the learning contract in

Chapter Five, Section 5.4.2.6. Many of these barriers that do affect the reflective process are usually in place in the early stages of the reflective tutorials. Sensitive interpersonal relationships as well as all the supportive elements within the process generally negate most of the limitations of the perceived barriers.

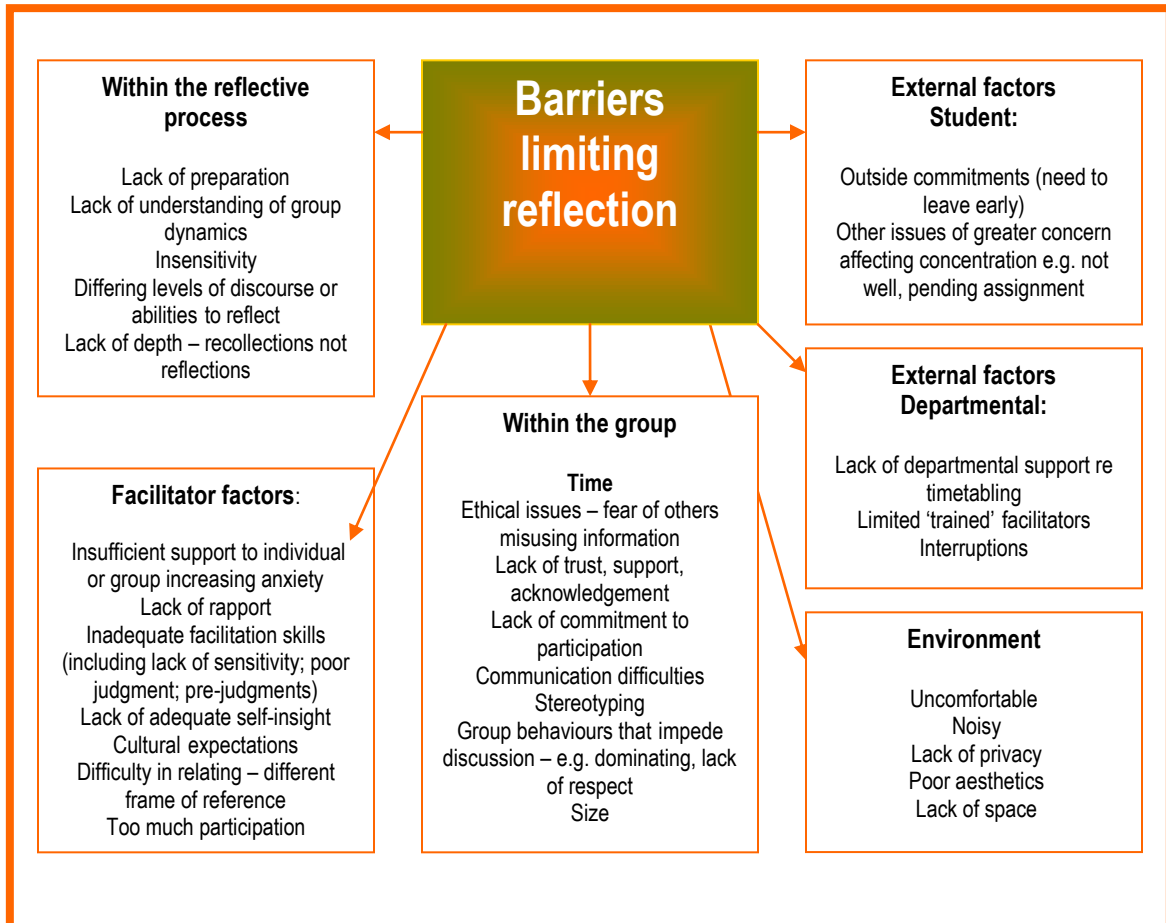


Figure 8.4. Barriers perceived by the researcher to limit reflection within the reflective tutorial

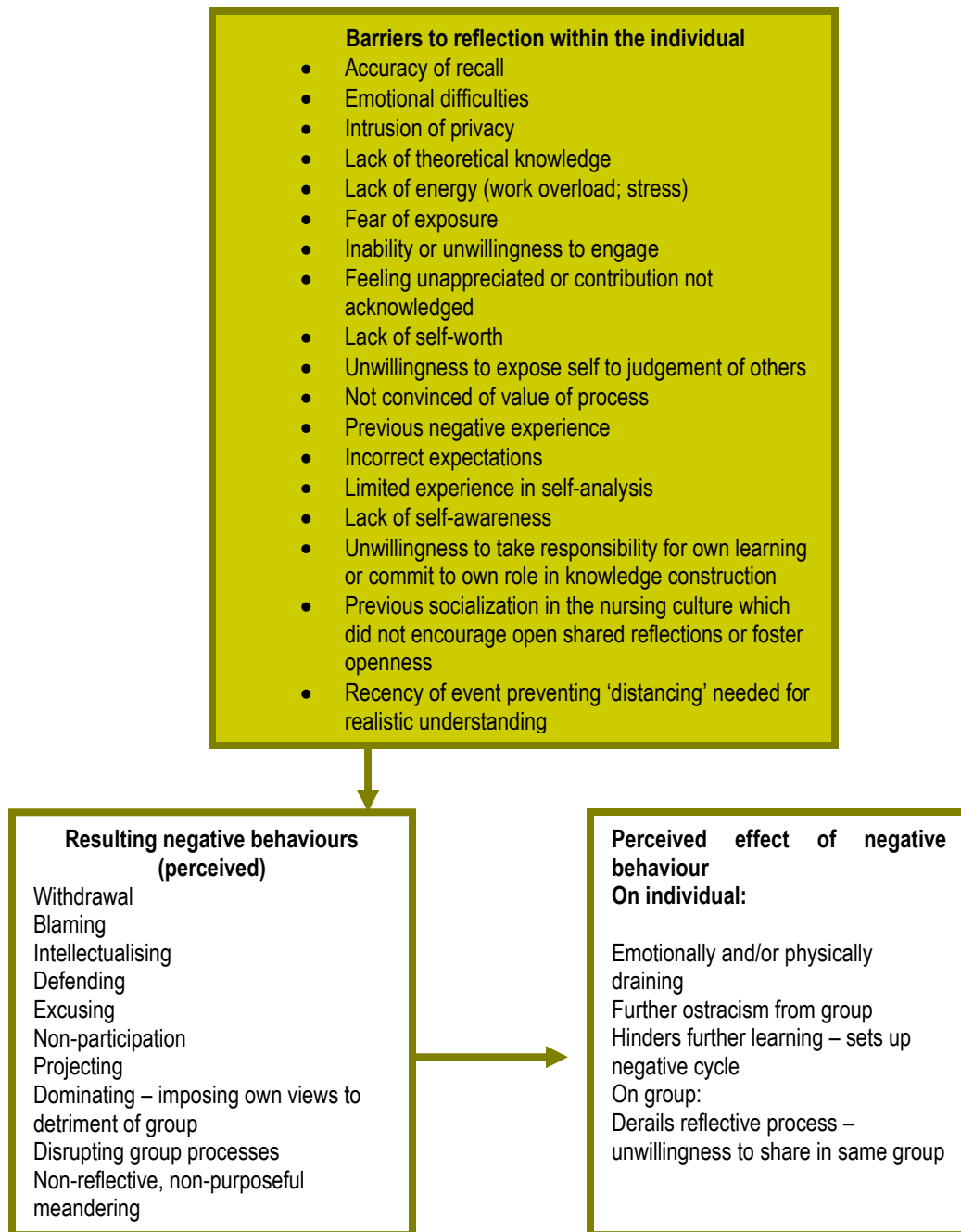


Figure 8.5: Perceived barriers to reflection within the student; perceived resultant negative behaviours and perceived effects of the negative behaviour

In a similar fashion, I also observed the factors that supported reflective practice, and again, these observations took place over the study period and included all the reflective tutorial groups with whom I worked.

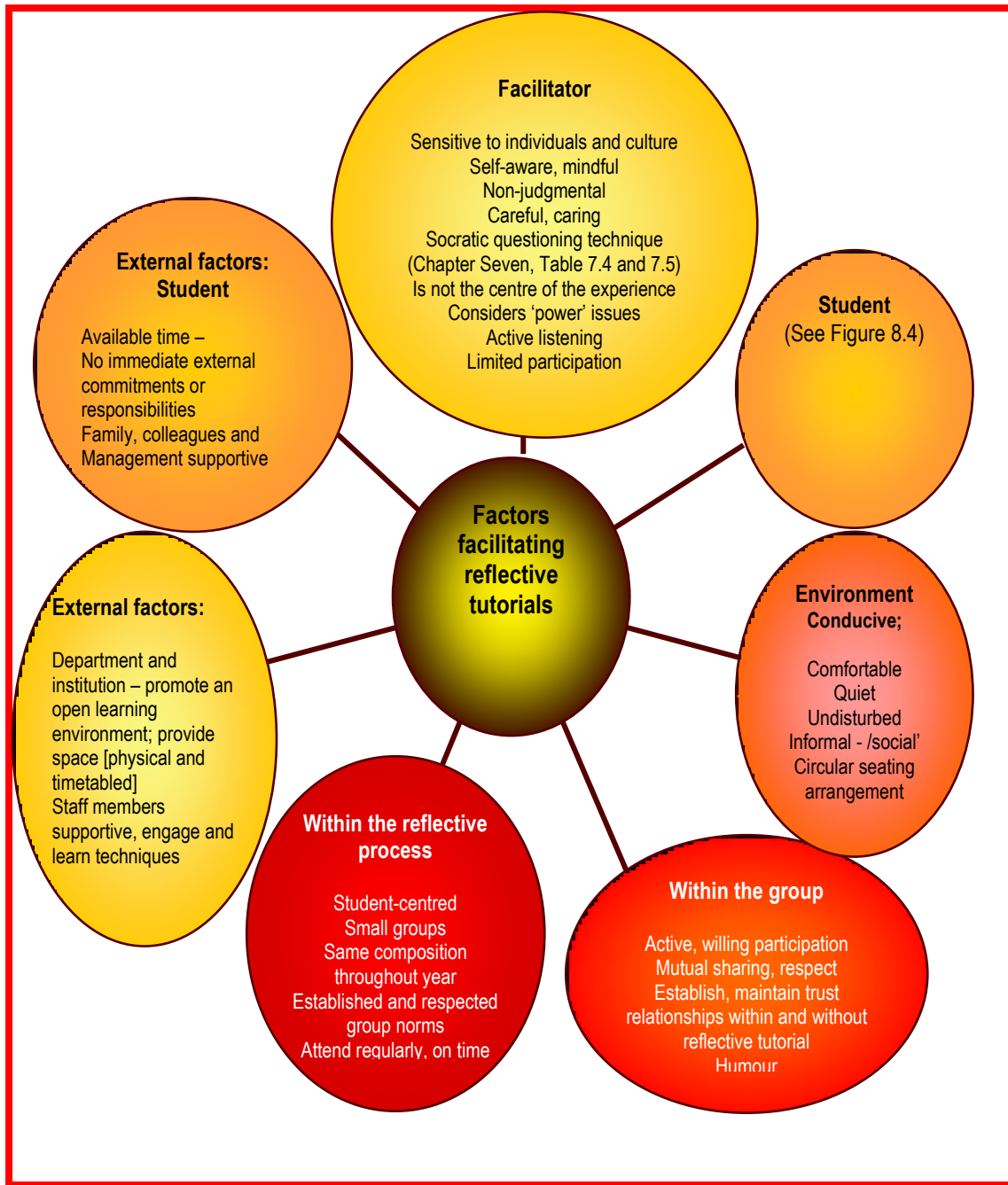


Figure 8.6: Factors perceived to support reflective tutorials

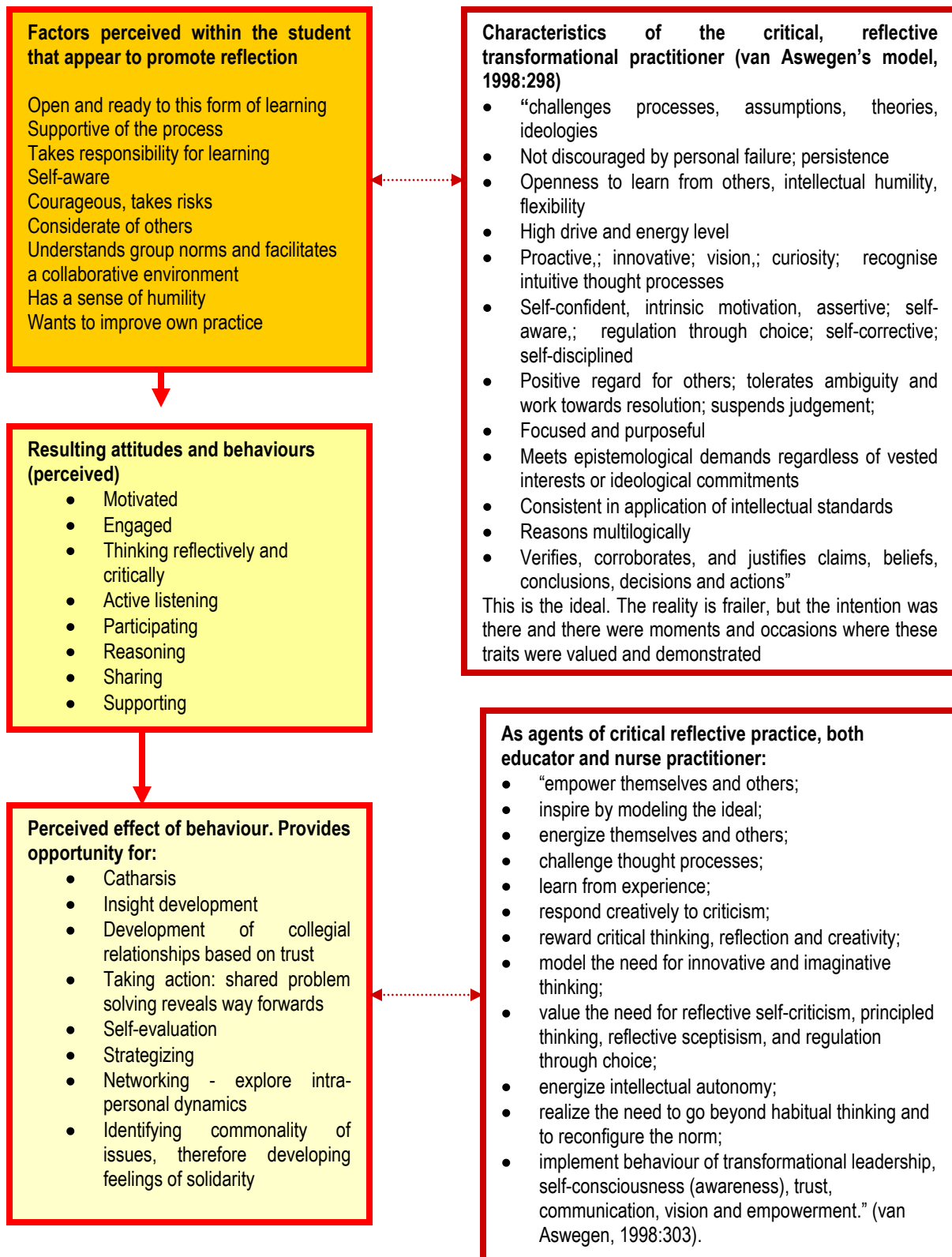


Figure 8.7: Perceived factors within the student promoting reflection; perceived resultant positive attitudes and behaviours and perceived affects of the behaviour - (in the light of van Aswegen's model)

8.3.1.8 Process involved in the tutorial

This addresses Section 8.1.4. There were a number of processes involved in the tutorial and as the facilitator, my guidance was determined by my understanding and appreciation of the role of facilitator. This is clarified in Chapter Three, Sections 3.6 and the whole of 3.8. Process is dependent on climate and as Eisen (2001:39) notes, for learning through peer dialogue to occur, “objectivity, openness, and equal opportunity for participation,” is required. She adds that, “Still, the most obvious ingredient is having one or more trusted partners with whom to dialogue.” I do not think that the openness with which the students spoke or the range of subjects or the delicate nature of some of the topics – could have occurred had there not been a climate of trust and equal opportunities to share. Table 8.8 in Appendix 8.6 describes the processes in each of these tutorials.

In Figure 8.8, I have included the processes that take place within the reflective tutorials that have been identified over the duration of the study. These have included my observations of the selected groups’ reflective tutorials as well as those observed in non-selected reflective tutorials and with other groups of students over the study period. These have been discussed in Section 8.1

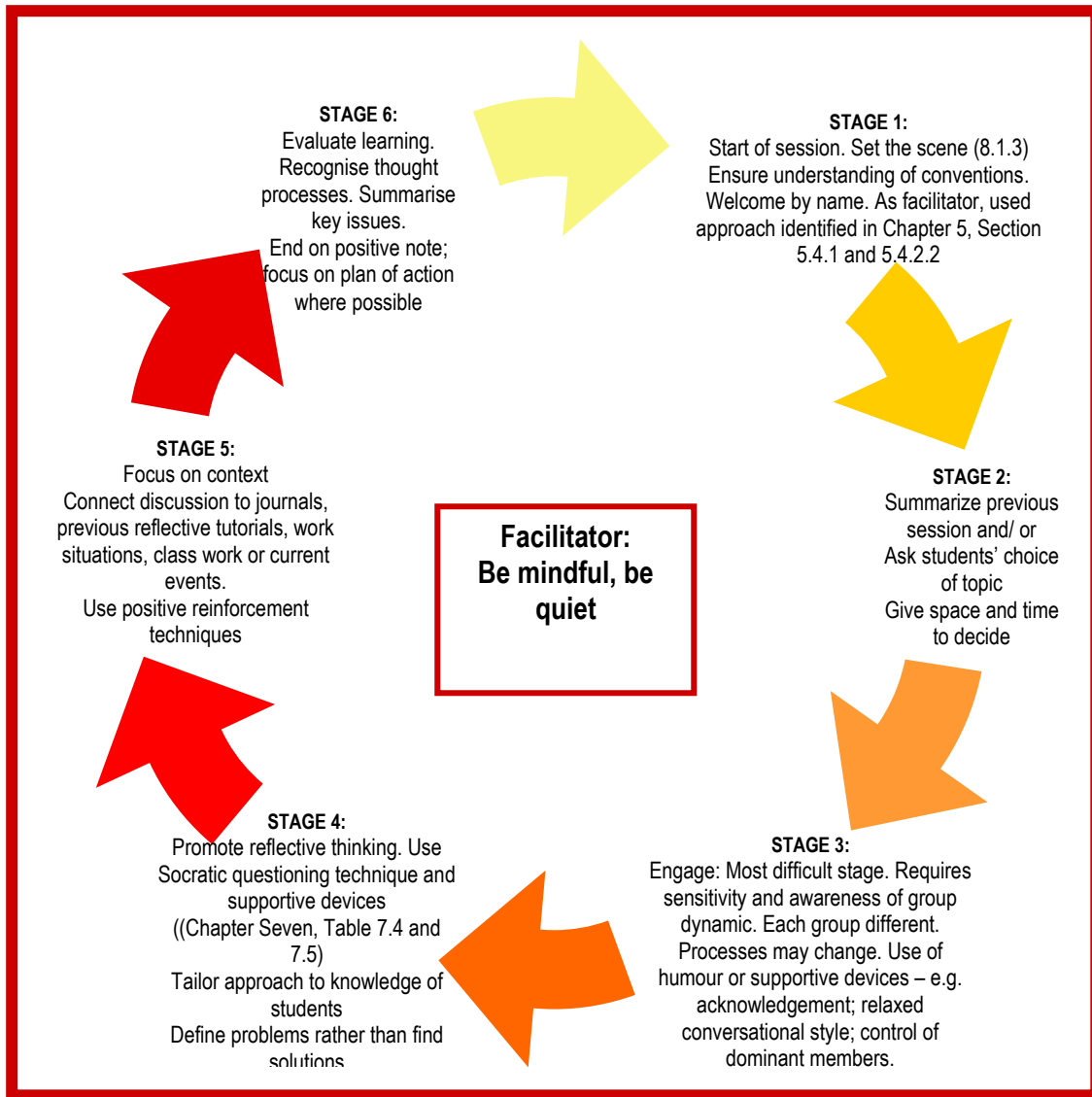


Figure 8.8: The reflective tutorial process

8.3.1.9 Integrative learning approach supported by staff members

Reflexive Journal: 12 June, 2002

Of note, a comment on the increasing amounts of information that nurses need to manage, therefore requiring different approaches to nursing education...Also, because of changes to the health care delivery context, and changing expectations, we need different approaches to learning.

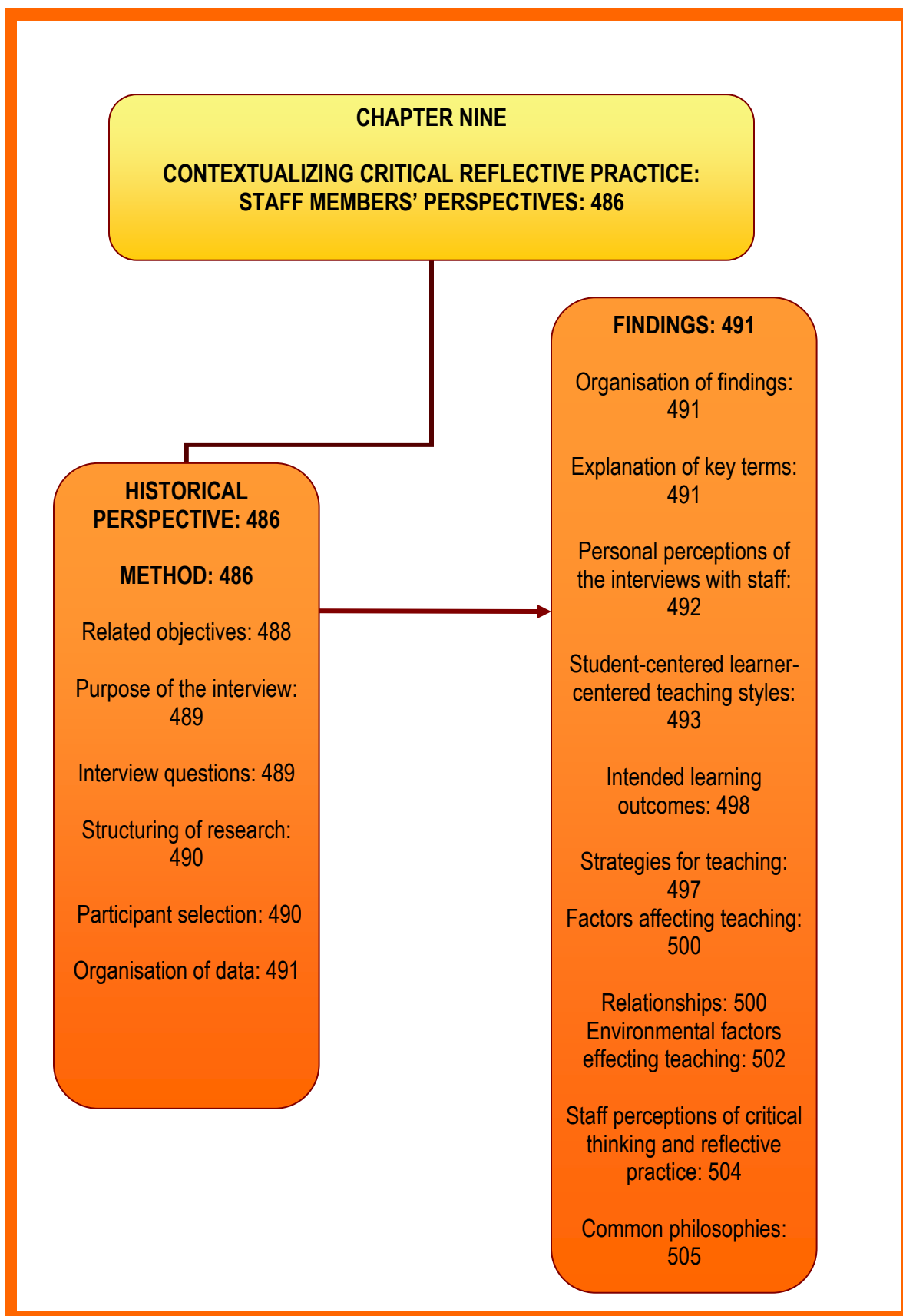
This is a general theme discussed in our nursing department. Finances, time, limited staff are constant issues. Also debated regularly are methodologies. Sometimes these are in response to problems, but sometimes in anticipation. For me, a very positive aspect of working in this department is that the team approach is strongly promoted. Over the past 10 years or so, team teaching, team support is a standard norm for programmes. Even when subjects are serviced by external departments or specialist lecturers, the nursing input or rather, the departmental input is a fundamental norm. It is very difficult to teach a subject in the department in isolation or for lecturers to teach ineffectively for too long, as there have been a number of measures put in place (informally, and seemingly unnoticeably because they are now part of the system). These include sharing notes, requesting information of specialties, sharing students' concerns. If I am having a problem in my class, it is almost inevitable that someone else will hear via a student. This is generally handled with much sensitivity and kindness as general concern for each other is markedly evident.

It becomes clear that the reflective tutorials offer the students opportunities to think about learning as well as opportunities to expand their reflective capacity by exercising their reflective abilities through reciprocal reflection. The feedback within these discussions is invaluable as it is part of the formative process, with the emphasis on development, rather than on evaluation (Eisen, 2001). This is done by considering the 'whole' person, and takes into account the various dimension of the individual – personal, spiritual, social, political, occupational. The reflective discussions do not have boundaries, other than those created by the situation and the participating students. Ironside (2004) focuses on the 'collective' working within the group, which, she notes, accentuates the "social embeddedness" of knowledge and supports the consideration of issues from multiple perspectives, and this was reflected in the students' ongoing discussions with each other.

8.4 CONCLUSION

As one of the vehicles of course delivery, the reflective tutorials provide evidence of student-directed learning. It is not possible to definitively state that reflective tutorials, as defined within the Nursing Management IV course, enhanced learning over and above other forms of learning. Nonetheless, they did support co-operative learning and as Johnson (1992:1) noted, "there is significant evidence that co-operative learning does produces higher achievement, more positive relationships among students, and healthier psychological adjustment than do competitive or individualistic experiences." As one subjective index of success, the active and non-conflictual participation of students in the process does appear to have encouraged a greater depth of understanding of issues, particularly when linked to other vehicles of learning, such as the reflective journals and class discussions. Reflective learning is a cyclical process and opportunities to explore issues on multi-dimensional forums can only but enhance the process, particularly for students who are more comfortable with oral rather than written

mediums. Through familiarity with and continued use of the reflective tutorials, perhaps these will come to be seen as a venture into just another territory, enriching the journey of self-discovery along the way. As Theodore Zeldin (1998:14) eloquently notes: "Conversation is a meeting of minds with different memories and habits. When minds meet, they don't just exchange facts: they transform them, reshape them, draw different implications from them, engage in new trains of thought. Conversation doesn't just reshuffle the cards: it creates new cards".



CHAPTER NINE

CONTEXTUALISING CRITICAL REFLECTIVE PRACTICE: THE STAFF MEMBERS' PERSPECTIVES

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This is a case study of a course, Nursing Management IV, which has carefully been constructed within a framework of critical reflective practice. This course, however, cannot be viewed in isolation as there are various contexts and role-players who have had an impact on both students and my thinking and behaviour. This context has been fully described in Chapter One, but Sections 1.3, 1.4.1, 1.4.3, 1.5 and 1.6 relate specifically to this chapter which considers some of these role-players, the departmental staff members, who had varying degrees of influence on the course offering.

9.2 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In 2002, the department of nursing at the Durban Institute of Technology was a relatively small department of nursing which had been in existence for over 30 years. For the first 20 years the full-time staff complement ranged between 1 to 3 staff members, with a focus on community nursing science, offering a full programme in community health nursing and a certificate course in occupational health nursing on a once-weekly part-time basis. In those early years, teaching was fairly didactic following traditional content-based programmes, but accommodating the adult-based nature of the students. The department had since grown, having spawned 5 more programmes and re-curriculated all existing programmes in terms of SAQA requirements. All programmes were offered at post-basic or post-graduate levels, from higher diplomas through to doctoral degrees. All

except one, the Advanced Midwifery programme, had a common element: the teaching focused on health services outside of the hospital sector.

Initially, perhaps because it was a small department, the few staff members had to become cognisant with all aspects of the programme and the team-work approach seemed inevitable. Even when nurse educator discipline specialists were brought into the programmes, they were encouraged to study further in other nursing related disciplines, to enlarge their range of knowledge and to support more rotation within the department within the programmes. Staff members had been encouraged to work in areas of special interest, but also to be sensitive to the needs, abilities and interests of others. The permanent staff members, six in number by the end of 2002, were complemented and supplemented by a number of part-time staff, sometimes up to 20 in number, involved in a range of activities, such as clinical supervision, marking or lecturing, for varying periods of time. While permanent staff members had their own offices, intimacy was promoted through the open-plan office complex with the communal, centrally placed glassed-walled tea-lounge and office doors opening onto a corridor surrounding the tea-lounge. Open access and communication was encouraged.

Perhaps because I had been a staff member for 16 years or so, I made certain assumptions, both as a colleague and researcher. I assumed that there was a common, active departmental philosophy and that the tenets of this philosophy drove the teaching and learning in our department. In 2002, I articulated the following philosophy which had emerged as a result of my understanding of the joint reflections by staff, offering it to students and staff members for comment:

The philosophy of the Department of Postgraduate Nursing Studies is to provide programmes that are student-centered, service focused and that will allow students to pursue evidence-based practice, develop insights, find meanings in ideas and experiences, explore creative modes of enquiry, examine assumptions, form values and ethics in keeping with the moral ideal of the caring scholar-nurse practitioner, respond to social needs, live fully and advance the profession. The learning environment is open and is intended to nurture, support and challenge students to meet individual goals of academic and clinical excellence.

On the whole, it was accepted, but it was agreed that we should also include a statement on staff development so that staff knowledge and skills remain current. Also wanted was a statement that would reinforce relevancy of programmes in keeping with health-service needs.

9.3 METHOD

9.3.1 Related objectives

I believed the philosophy outlined above was central to my perception of both my teaching and the research project. I could not view this project in isolation and the effects on the students as being purely as a result of my facilitation of learning within the course. I recognized that there were a number of variables that influenced the outcomes, not the least of which was the influence of key staff within the department.

Consequently, two of the research objectives were to:

- Monitor the process involved in reflective thinking evidenced from learning diaries; tutorial groups and staff reflections and whether reflective thought has an effect on the resulting perceived attitudes and behaviours of post-basic nursing students related to health care practice.

- Identify enabling and inhibiting factors within a department of a higher education institution that would support or limit the use of such a model for the development of critical reflective practice.

9.3.2 Purpose of the interview

Therefore, I decided to interview nurse educator staff to:

- Identify broadly, their philosophy and understanding of the concepts of teaching and learning within their own programmes. This would allow me to reference their theoretical basis for teaching and learning in light of the model of critical reflective practice.
- Identify their strategies for teaching. This would allow me to determine if there were points of congruence between staff, and between staff members and myself.
- Identify factors within the department and classroom environment that would support or limit teaching and learning. This would allow me to identify enabling or limiting factors, in general, within the department, that would impact on teaching and learning.
- Identify possible common philosophical constructs that would connect our teaching practice.
- Identify their perception of critical thinking and reflective practice and their values in relation to the process of teaching and learning. These secondary objectives would allow me to view the commonalities regarding teaching practice and concerns and would allow me to contextualize the teaching of critical reflective practice in terms of the teaching staff.

9.3.3 Interview questions

Therefore, the questions asked reflected on:

- Philosophy of teaching

- What staff members would like for students to achieve while in the programme (or after)
- Methodology of teaching used and why
- Value/ benefits of their teaching approach
- Difficulties / problems related to this method
- What staff members understood about critical thinking and reflective practice?
- How important was this approach for their teaching?
- Perception of my (Maureen's) programme and approach
 - (a) in their capacity as lecturer
 - (b) in their capacity as course coordinator - this question was for those staff members whose students were in my Management IV course

9.3.4 Structuring of research process, selection of participants and organisation of data

The research process, in terms of sampling, process, development of the data generating instrument, access to data and themes have been described in Chapter Four, Sections 4.12, 4.15, 4.16.2, 4.22 and 4.24.3. The whole of Section 9.3 provides additional detail.

9.3.4.1 Participant selection

The total permanent lecturing staff complement in the Department of Post-graduate Nursing Studies was six. I carried out unstructured interviews with four fellow permanent staff members, (whose names have been replaced with pseudonyms), Musa: 6/9/2002; Judith and Petro: 6/10/2002 and Brenda: 8/10/2002. The fifth and sixth staff members included my supervisor and me, and for research-based ethical reasons, were not included in this sample.

9.3.4.2 Organisation of data

The results of the 5 hours of transcriptions were paraphrased and collated. I then organised the findings into categories that naturally derived from the purpose of the interviews (Section 9.3.2) into Tables 1 to 5. The accompanying figures illustrate the themes formed from the categories. Actual quotes sourcing the summary statements were directly transcribed. In the findings, I have used (f=) to indicate where more than one staff member expressed a perception (frequency). My reflexive journal was further used to triangulate data, and the relevant sections have been included and identified by date, indentation and colouring of the text.

9.4 FINDINGS

9.4.1 Organisation of findings

The following tables highlight the staff members' beliefs and understanding of education within their teaching context in terms of their philosophy and methodologies of teaching (Table 9.1 in Appendix 9.1); the perceived learning outcomes desired or that resulted from their teaching approaches (Table 9.2 in Appendix 9.2); the teaching strategies or processes employed by staff members (Table 9.3 in Appendix 9.3); the environmental factors that support or limit teaching and learning (Table 9.4) and philosophies within the department common to the teaching staff (Table 9.5 in Appendix 9.4) and staff members' perceptions of the value or limitations of critical reflective practice (Table 9.6). In line with the qualitative research approach, it is not intended to provide for the generalization of findings to other nursing education departments, but rather provides a context for this broader study.

9.4.2 Explanation of key terms

As the terms 'teaching,' 'teacher-centered' and 'learning' and 'learner-centered' are used frequently, they need to be explained. 'Teaching' is the process of educating the student so that the student (hopefully) arrives at a stage of understanding knowledge, so that they are able to integrate this knowledge in a meaningful way i.e. 'learning'. 'Teacher-centered' is where the focus in this educational process is on the teacher and the methodologies used by the teacher in order to impart this knowledge. The teacher decides the 'how', 'when', 'where' and 'what' of learning. Learning, however, is an active process and the saying, 'you can take a horse to the water, but you can't make it drink' encapsulates the difference between the process of teaching and learning. The metaphor of drinking equates with that of learning. 'Learner-centered' is where the focus of the educational process is on the needs of the student. It is also perhaps, important to differentiate between 'needs' and 'wants' of students. A student may not be in the position to determine what exactly it is that needs to be learned and this may or will require the intervention of the teacher who might have a deeper understanding of student-learning requirements. But still the focus of concern is with the individual learner and working *with* the learner rather than *on* the learner.

9.4.3 Personal perceptions of the interviews with staff summarized in: Reflexive Journal: 9

September 2002

...In general, the responses from the three staff members are as anticipated... (However) my perceptions of our working relationships did not tally with their responses at this moment in time. I have been writing about teamwork and the positive sharing relationships within the department. All three said this had been the case, but was no longer so. Why, I asked? Perhaps because of the negative feelings engendered by the merger, suggested one. A need for personal survival, said another. No need, said a third.

I anticipated two of the three to speak positively about critical thinking and reflective practice and they did. Their spoken values about learning and students tied up with this. All commented on the amount of work but also believed that the level required the input...

9.4.4 Differentiation between student-centered and learner-centered teaching styles

The preparation of nurse practitioners who are able to think critically requires a culture where intellectual challenge and discussion are encouraged. According to Moore Schaefer and Zygmunt (2003) student-centered teaching styles promotes critical thinking, independence in learning, an interest in lifelong learning and creative problem-solving skills. There does not appear to be any dissent amongst the staff members that these are their intentions (see Table 9.1 in Appendix 9.1) – the difficulty or perhaps just the differences, seem to lie to a lesser or greater degree on how to get there.

According to Moore Schaefer et al. (2003:239) dependent learning is promoted by teacher-centered approaches where the locus of control is tightly maintained by the teacher. The student is a “passive recipient of information”. Generally, they suggest, one main teaching style is preferred, particularly where excessive content needs to be taught over a limited time period, and formal evaluation becomes valued above informal assessments.

In student-centered learning, teaching is determined by the needs of the student rather than prescribed content. It is characterized by an active engagement in the learning process by both student and learner in a negotiated, collaborative learning environment where a foundation of trust is created, promoting creativity, questioning and debate (Moore Schaefer et al., 2003).

It would appear, that generally speaking, staff members were more student-centered in their approach (Tables 9. 2 and 9.3 in Appendices 9.2 and 9.3). For some, this had developed with experience and others seemed to be more intuitive. Once staff member in particular, a very good teacher, enthusiastic and charismatic, while committed to excellence and to her students, was somewhat reluctant to hand over control for the learning process and this seems to be evidenced

in her possessive view of the students as 'her babies'. Her approach to teaching was highly structured and lecture focused. However, I recognise that she too, had changed with experience and I see this in her ability to recognise her role in student failure: "So we can moan all year... OR we can say, we need to change the way we have presented things so THAT doesn't happen any more and we can make the student change." I also see this in her movement to less teacher-centered teaching strategies such as group discussions and in a greater flexibility in her approach to students.

Although the propensity is for student-centered teaching, there were feelings of ambivalence, perhaps driven by a sense of responsibility for ensuring that all students performed to an acceptable level. Some staff members not only made time for problematic or slow students, but were sometimes very directive in the process, allowing the responsibility for student learning to fall back in their court. A good example of this is the staff member who recognises the value of prior learning: She

"tried to get them to read beforehand. We have given them readings so that they could get a bit of a background so that they could try and participate in the classroom. Some read, some don't. You can't leave those behind. You actually have to make a way of including those who haven't read otherwise there is no value of them even sitting in the classroom."

Moore Schaefer et al. (2003) suggest that teaching could be problematic in situations where staff members see their goal as instilling knowledge rather than in supporting students in learning how to learn. This, particularly if there is dissonance between their role as nurse and caregiver and their role as educator where they continue with the role of caring and doing *for*, as it may negatively impact on student growth. It was notable that two of the participants acknowledged valuing students as individuals and as important participants in the learning process, although this was

implicit in the statements of the other two staff members. Respect for the students as well as an appreciation of their sharing of their students' learning experiences was apparent. All staff members connected learning with personal growth. This was probably the one factor that helped ameliorate their expressed concerns about the effort and time evinced by the critical reflective approach in the Nursing Management IV course. The concern related specifically to the reflective journal "but then they gain from it and they are actually reading - which you can follow up - because normally they don't read and they don't see the value of reading. And they are actually starting to think about what they are doing."

Notes another: Students are "learning to criticize, learning to not accept exactly what is written own and to see different points of view. That is my perception really of critical thinking. Thinking about something at a little bit of a deeper level."

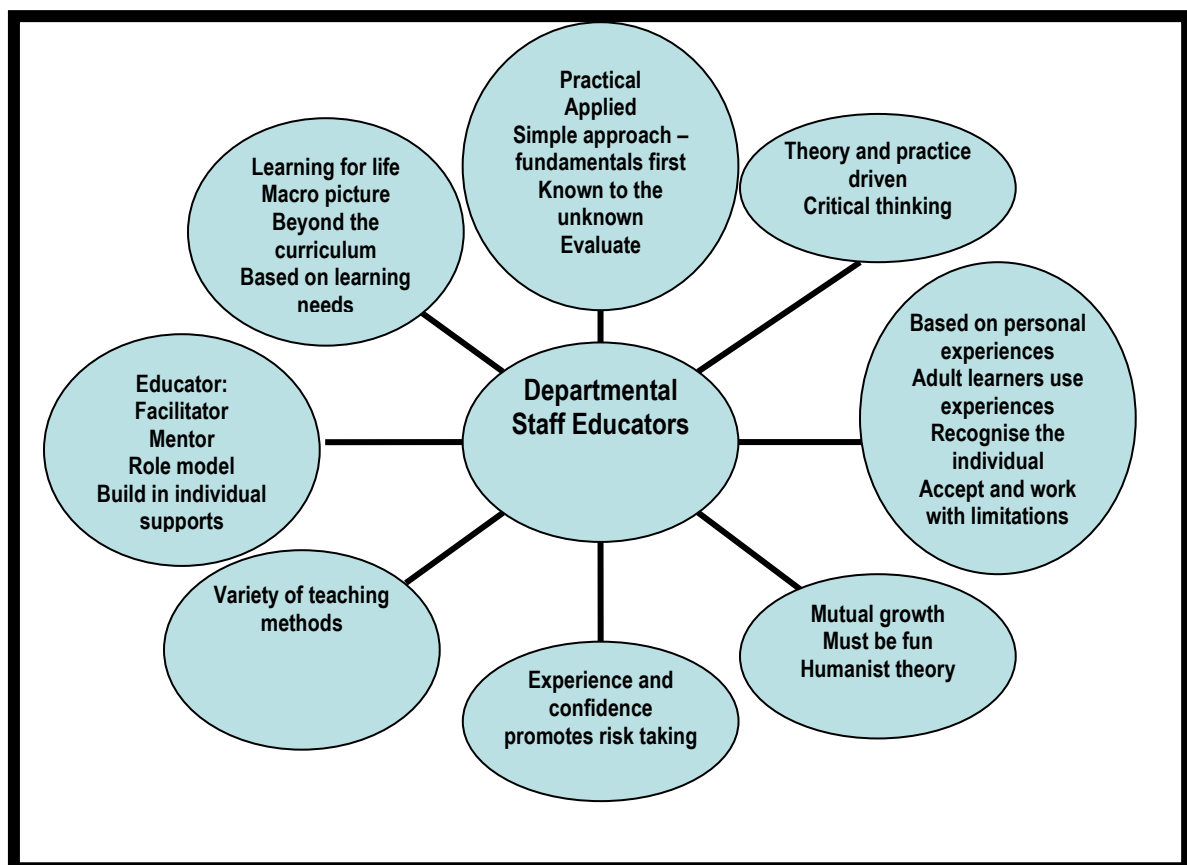


Figure 9.1 Philosophies of education and main teaching approaches of staff members

9.4.5 Intended learning outcomes

It would appear that there were elements of concurrence in desired student learning outcomes (Table 9.2 in Appendix 9.2). Staff members valued the concept of student growth, rather than paper qualifications and recognised that this was more likely to occur in an environment of openness and respect. The academic learning was valued in terms of its support of appropriate practice and there was a strong awareness of the connection between teaching, the student and the broader society. This is discussed in the following excerpts from my reflexive journal:

Reflexive Journal entry: 12 June, 2001

Petro (staff member) and I have often talked about the students and what we learn from them: It isn't necessarily theory and nor do they often have the power over the English language to express themselves or articulate in a manner guaranteed to place themselves in a good academic light. However, if we take the time and look beyond these inadequacies, there is a great deal that we learn that does not form part of our own knowledge base or our own understanding. We encourage each other a lot not to miss these nuggets of enlightenment, and share them whenever we meet with each other. I am not sure if I have expressed myself correctly, but the point I am trying to make is the need to be open; not to make absolutist assumptions about my own knowledge base; and to try and not be arrogant about my beliefs. I know that when I do this, there is so much that excites me when students reflect on their own practice. Their minds,... constantly worry me, thrill me and challenge me. I learn so much from them and I am constantly fearful that in my own ignorance, I may say or do something that will discourage any of their explorations. As I read this, I realize how idealistic I sound. The irony, however, really lies in my ambivalence: I have also become fairly cynical about students, and realize that there are a number of reasons why they pursue a programme. It is the few rather than the many who are truly here for an education. Many have other agendas. Perhaps it is because of this cynicism, that when there are demonstrations of keenness and insight, that this does give me joy.....

Reflexive Journal Entry: 24 September, 2002

Although we write in our outcomes the fact that core outcomes for lifelong learning are implicit in all our programmes, this personal self-growth is or could be valued in different degrees by different lecturers. It is still hard for many of us, I think, to move away from the purely content approach. I think that there is a feeling of safety when students have demonstrated in the academically acceptable manner, that they have learned specific skills etc. It is when that learning is indirect or not formally noted in tests, that this becomes problematic for us as lecturers. For me, it is also really important to understand that the outcomes that we, as staff or a profession, have denoted as key, may in fact, not be so for the student. Or that the manner of achieving these outcomes may vary in ways that we might not even recognise.

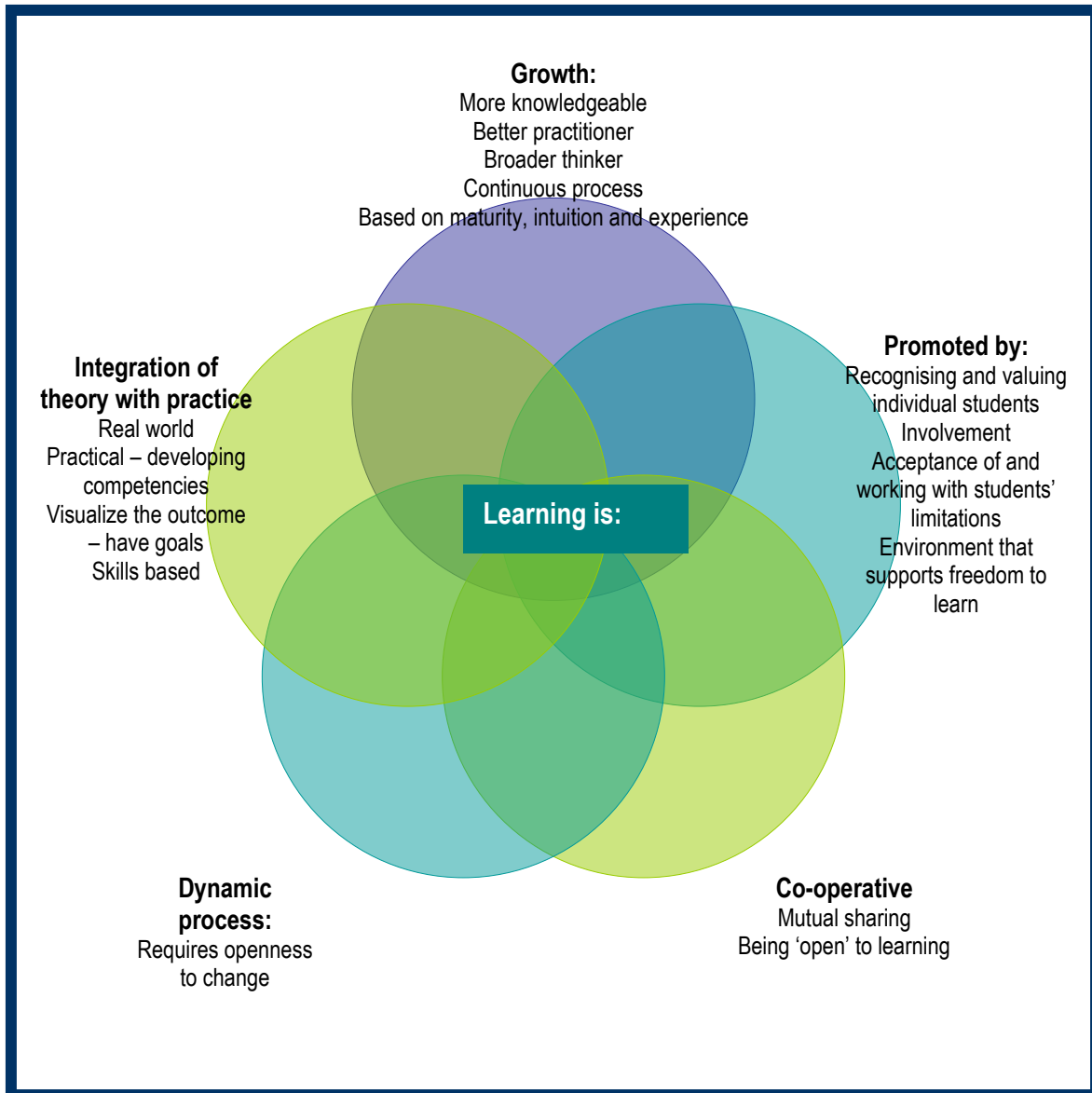


Figure 9.2: Staff members' perception of learning

9.4.6 Strategies for teaching

Staff members utilized a number of strategies to support learning and integrated a number of adult learning principles (Table 9.3 in Appendix 9.3). The use of the variety of teaching methods reveals that staff members understood that students required different methods to learn different processes. For example, by relating concepts to experience (and all students had had a number of

years of exposure to the nursing culture), they were able to shift students' learning from understanding the simple to grappling with complex concepts. According to Schaefer et al. (2003), this also allows staff members to use previously learned nursing knowledge and build on this for new, more complex knowledge gains. The valuing of the individual student was also revealed in the willingness of staff to use personalized instruction and support those students 'at-risk'. Higgins (2004) clearly acknowledges the role of the one-to-one tutoring in the success rates of these students. This recognition is described in the following reflexive journal excerpt:

Reflexive Diary entry: March 20, 2001

Our department engages in a strategic planning process on a formal basis once a year and informally on almost a daily basis. There was a very clear concern that Management IV was not being taught in a way conducive to the needed outcomes. Although most of our students did not reflect these concerns in their feedback of the programmes, the department was aware that a number of projects indicated a need for skills development.

As evidenced in Tables 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 in Appendices 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3, there is a very clear alignment between the staff educators':

- philosophies of education and main teaching approaches;
- perceptions of learning; and
- teaching strategies.

It is also clear that the staff members recognised and appreciated that they were working with adult learners, but they also appreciated that the learners had a diverse range of needs and that their levels of education also varied. This, then, impacted on the different approaches taken by the staff members and accounts for the importance attached to pre-determining students' existing knowledge foundation and learning needs. Strategies in accordance with adult learning principles were put in place, as were the number of scaffolding supports for those students in need. In general, these also align with the departmental philosophy. Considering the difference in our

natures and style of teaching, it is obvious that there were strong, supportive synergies in this department, of which I was a member.

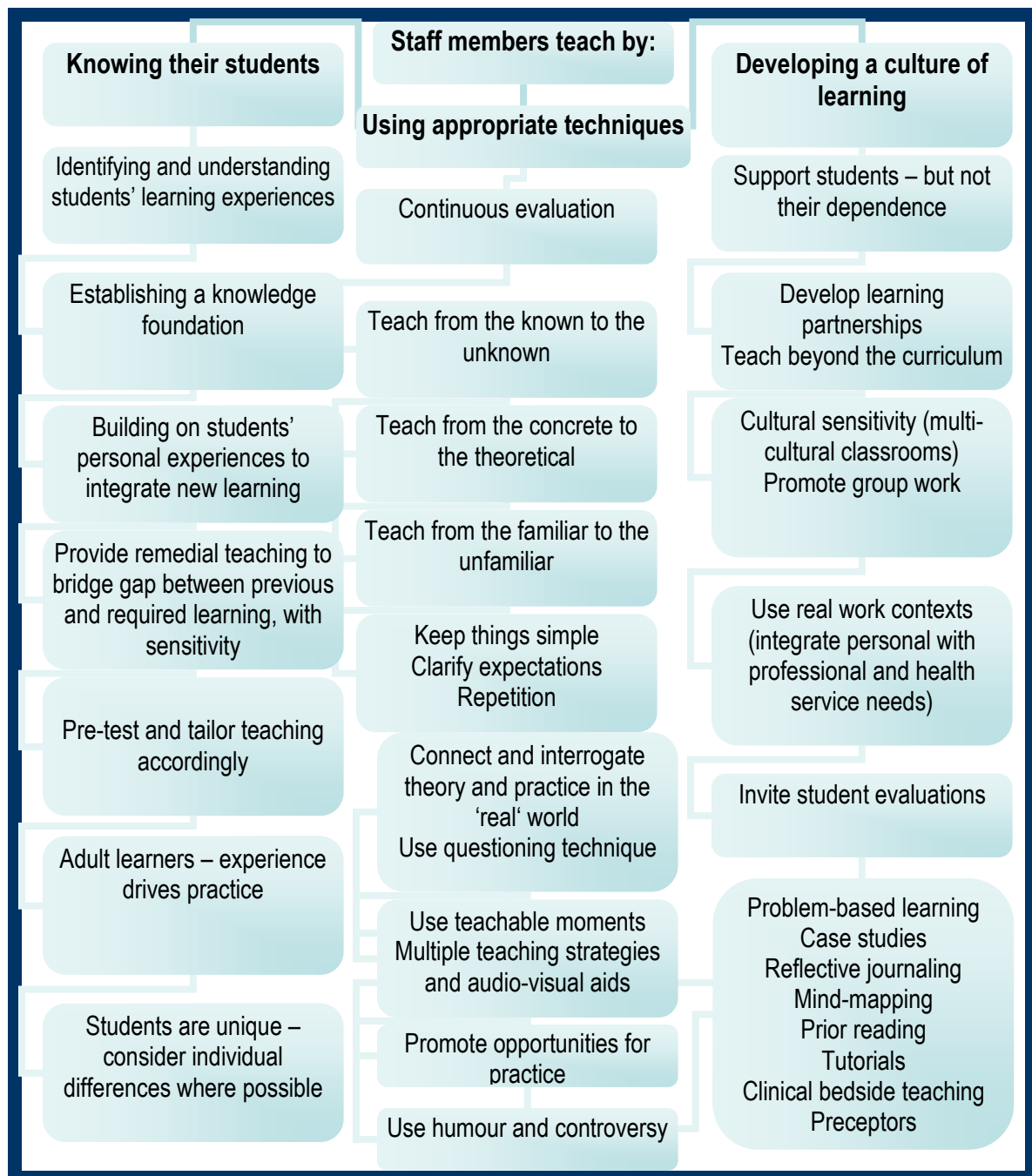


Figure 9.3: Key tenets to teaching utilized by the staff members

9.4.7 Staff perceptions of factors within the department and classroom environment that would support or limit teaching and learning

According to Moore Schaefer et al. (2003), a learning environment is created by teachers' views on learning and their teaching approach and can be affected by many factors (Table 9.4). One staff member reflected on a student-factor - prior content-based learning experience: "This is something that we identified this year. They can regurgitate theory, but they can't take that information and use it to the benefit of their working environment. "

She was most concerned by what she saw as questionable motivation:

"This year this group, the majority of them have come in to the programme for the wrong reasons – the majority have come in for an easy way out from the 7/7 shifts, the night duty, weekend work and things like that and they really don't understand what is involved – in a nutshell, what (the programme) is about."

9.4.7.1 Staff relationships and me

Staff relationships were particularly important to me, during the particularly difficult time of the merger, as I reflect in the following journal entries:

Reflexive Journal Entry: Document '6a entry6diary26 May 2001'

Once again, I should note how patient everyone in the department has been with me. They know I must be working, but they have seen very little in the way of results (completed research). Most of my work seems to be linked to the computer and not lecturing but they do not complain. They have also put up with my moodiness when I felt incapacitated without my computer, and generously allowed me access to theirs. They are all incredibly special people, from Thembisa, who endlessly fulfils my coffee needs, through to the secretaries and cleaners, and the rest of my colleagues. If they can find ways to help me work better, they do. This generosity of spirit is not because I am unique, but because this is how they all interact with each other. Our absenteeism rate is negligible, and I have often come in over week-ends, evenings or holidays, to find one or more staff members working voluntarily. This concept may seem out of place in my job, but in fact, it is fundamental to the issue of learning i.e. creating an environment that is stimulating, motivating and supportive.

Reflexive Journal entry: 31 October, 2002

Sarah suggested that it was critical that I note the effect the merger of Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan has had on our learning programmes, particularly in terms of this programme. When you live with a system, you tend to complain about it, fight about it but ultimately, if you want to survive, you try to adapt, sometimes wittingly and sometimes not at least, those are my thoughts. What is different this year that has affected the way I have operated this course and what would I have done differently? The big message, the unremitting message is: there is no money. Work with what you have.

On the one hand, as I pick up the phone, a message is being sung over the answering service that this is the Powerhouse of Education and that we offer exciting, creative programmes comparable to any of those offered globally.

On the other hand, computers ought to be a major feature in all faculties in this institution. The Faculty of Health has no common computer facility that will allow students to freely access Internet. There are pockets of computers in various departments and the Marketing Department has kindly allowed us access to its computers this year. These don't have open Internet access. Because the On-line Learning Centre had invested in training and the Web Ct programme, I asked them if we could use their facilities (about 7 minutes walk away under the library) and they have been great and most accommodating. I have such a lot of respect and liking for so many people in this institution. The mood is unequivocally one of depression, frustration, and uncertainty. Despite the element of conflict that pervades the campus, on an individual basis, people are still great. I am certain that the reports of dropping student numbers is real and it feels like a lot of people jumping ship. Things have got to be better out there, anywhere. Systems have tightened up and the creative element that was promoted by a more free enterprise system is being systematically stifled. Of course this has an impact on the department and staff is affected. We seem to be working harder with fewer rewards. The institution is larger and sometimes it feels as if we are being lost in the mega picture. While we probably represent the middle range of many other nursing institutions, access to resources (e.g. databases, internet, computers, student tea lounges, student tutorial rooms; a more aesthetically pleasing environment; a safer environment; easy access to transport and more importantly, safe transport) which many international nursing institutions take for granted, is not that easy here. Freedom of speech is being stifled... It is almost like a new order is inevitable, and one joins, puts up or leaves. This perception is not enabled by the constant battles being waged by the trade unions of both campuses, or by the fact that retrenchment packages, affecting retention of posts, are being offered and taken. Transform, transform, transform. Belligerence rather than co-operation seems to govern our communications. Our department stands to lose between one and four staff members (granted, one is a graduate assistant, whose time would have been up anyway). The sense of unease is pervasive. I know that I feel guilty (but not too much) when I photocopy additional readings for students whereas a year or so ago, this would not have entered my head. Amidst all of this is SAQA. Need I say more? We are constantly rethinking, rewriting our courses to meet changes being set by the Technikons, by the Department of Education, by the SANC (who provides no clarity of directions and who force many nurse educators to second guess teaching and learning processes). A climate of uncertainty pervades this arena. Where is the leadership? This, then, is the backdrop to the study.

It can be seen through staff member effort at climate building that members valued relationships with their students.

9.4.7.2 Environmental factors

I see the working environment as critical in either supporting or limiting staff creativity and output.

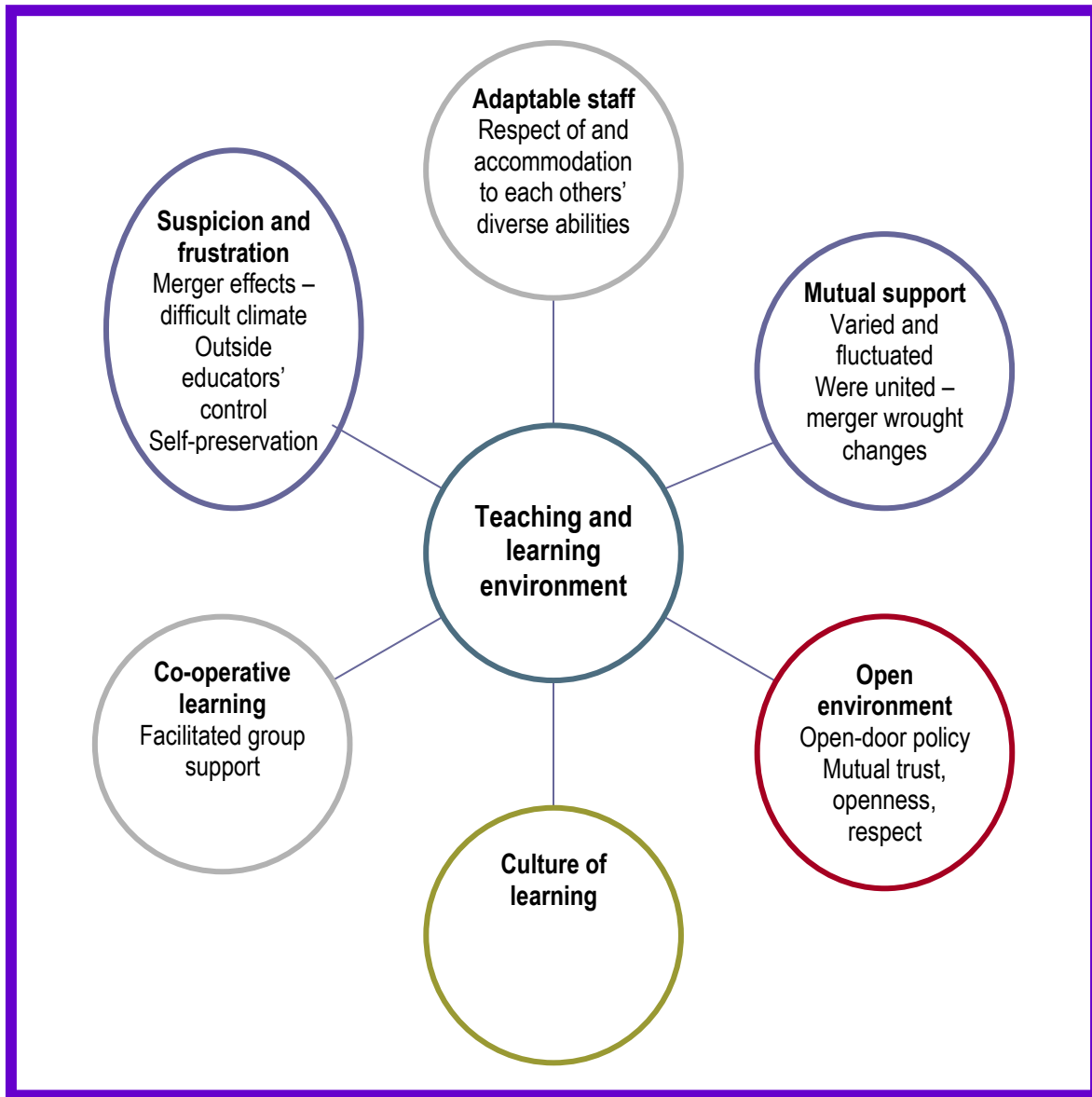


Figure 9.4: The environmental factors perceived by staff members to support or limit teaching and learning

Table 9.4 Environmental factors perceived by staff members to affect teaching/ learning

Teaching and learning environmental factors within the department and classroom context:

- **Affect teaching and planning:** "Setting the environment. Sometimes it is not easy. It is, it could be a big big challenge. There could be things that are beyond your control."
- Require adaptable staff. **Need to be creative and make the environment work for you** – adapt e.g. no air conditioner – classes outside. "You can even be creative – what if you go and sit under a tree?"
- Support an open-door policy – being approachable and available but ensure effective use of time (f=2) **Open-door policy – being approachable but ensure effective use of time.** "Using the open-door policy. That is one way of saying the environment is quite – we are approachable."
- **Create an environment of openness, trust and respect:** "I think that I try and make the course quite – not personal – but you know we have an open-door policy, for a start and that we are there, and I try not to have a big distance between me and the students, and I think that helps – that I am a facilitator more than just standing there reciting things. I also make them very aware that what they have to say is very important in class and that we value their opinion and we that look at those and will discuss around those. Just generally treating all the students with a high degree of respect and making sure that they know that they are very important and that we value what they say... That is one of the main issues for me to try and do that."
- **Providing a culture of learning:** "developed that culture that they work consistently."
- **Ensure a supportive environment by recognizing and facilitating group support:** "I don't structure it. I promote it, and it also happens by itself. People find somebody that they have got something (in common with)..., as they start talking, and getting to know each other, they find people that they perhaps latch onto, or is a mother figure or from previous experience, and they definitely find a lot of support. And I have noticed even in the groups, when one of the students when things are down, and she has voiced that in the class, she said: "I have got a lot of support from the group."
- **Produce an environment where departmental staff members impact upon each other because of integrative nature of programmes:** "we all do impact upon each other. I think that every person in the department has a role to play in each other's programmes and I think that is very important, because it brings to each of the programmes a different passion, a different dedication, and a different outlook."
- **Fluctuate:** "I think that the environment fluctuates and it definitely depends on not only where personally I am right now, and my needs but also where the other person is right now - what their needs are. I don't think that the dept is particularly poor in supporting each other in terms of teaching and growth, but I also don't think we are totally on top, and I think that it just, it depends where each person is individually at that particular time."
- **Are supportive within the department promoting teaching practice:** "I think possibly it is being exposed to many different ways of teaching because of our department and I can see (I have also sat in on a lot of lectures and I have also studied for a long time) and I can certainly see what has worked for me and have tried to take the best from each person and adapt my way of teaching...I think a supportive department has played a huge role."
- **Promoted team work within the staff on previous occasions. Currently, the climate is a difficult one – one of self-preservation due to affects of the merger:** "Lately, I have actually just been feeling that the department is not working together as a unit. I must be honest. I've got this overwhelming feeling at the moment, you know, we've got all these changes taking place in the technikon and if there is one thing we shouldn't be doing and that is fighting amongst each other and there is just – there is almost - there is almost a sense of self-preservation. I know that that's a very strong term, but it is almost a case of- you see people concerned that – that - not that **they're** going to be alright – I am not talking of -- it is a very difficult to

verbalise – it is almost - it is almost like a sense of “don’t enter my environment, don’t shake up my environment because that is the one thing that I am sure of at the moment.”: That is almost the sense that I get, and that as soon as things go wrong, there is a great deal of animosity and - or negative energy. There is an overwhelming... instead of trying to come together, and work together at the moment, I just feel there is a lot of disjointed... I know it is also a bad time of the year, but I never used to feel like that and I can only think it’s the impact that all the negative about the merger has made and brought about, because that was always one of the things that was always a pride about the department that everybody would always work together. I mean it will still happen, if someone is not available, somebody will go and stand in and lecture and that kind of thing, but I get this sense of self-preservation at the moment. And it is not entirely, I don’t entirely mean it as a negative thing, but there have been a number of events over the last couple of weeks that have... kind of stirred that emotion as opposed to other emotions. But, ya, at the moment, there is not the same degree of unity that we used to share.”

9.4.8 Staff perceptions of critical thinking and reflective practice in relation to the process of teaching and learning

Although there was no doubt that all staff members threaded elements of critical, reflective practice through their teaching programmes (Table 9.5 in Appendix 9.4), it was not always recognised or valued as such. Staff members, well qualified in their discipline but not in the formal theory of education, appeared to take a longer time to appreciate the value of process rather than outcome in teaching. However, as can be seen from their comments, that although they were still concerned about these issues, these have been qualified with an acknowledgement of the value of the gains (Table 9.6). Critical reflective thinking, as a consistent theory, requires process learning where results are not immediately obvious. This approach requires a long term commitment, perhaps because of the time and effort it requires. I would suggest, however, that although results of content learning may be more easily assessed in formal testing, this is often superficial testing, the nature of which is transient. In contrast, there are other less formal means of evaluation such as those seen in process evaluation, as in writing portfolios, which reveal the longer-term gains (Sorrel, Brown, Cipriano Silva & Kohlenber, 1997). The concern with testing is possibly because of the pass-on effect left by a system where standards of accreditation and curriculum development

for nursing education emphasize a content-driven approach. I discuss my attempts to bring staff members 'on-board' in the following journal entry:

Reflexive Journal 26 May, 2001

We have set up a structure to try and ensure that if students do have problems, it is brought to our attention. Both course coordinators, Nomsa and I, have been made aware that the class feels under pressure because of the workload. I first sat down with Nomsa and discussed their concerns: they related to workload; perception of workload; difficulty in establishing actual workload; too many readings. After some discussion, we decided to have a meeting with Sarah and the two course coordinators. Depending on the results of the meeting, we would then decide what to do in response to the students' complaints.

Nomsa and I were both concerned that the two course coordinators were not 'on board' with regards to the management approach or the reflective journal. We decided that as regards the students, the message would be: 'if you have a criticism, it must be constructive'. I also thought we should mention that we would be happy not to provide readings and that the students to locate their own. I was fairly sure that they wouldn't support this tenet, and as events transpired, they didn't.

The first meeting went well. We noted that our major difficulty lay in the fact that we had been given a compacted period of time in which to offer the programme, despite a departmental undertaking to ensure that the programme would be run throughout the year. Somehow, the course coordinators did not timetable this but were happy for the changes to occur next year. All agreed that the approach was the correct one, and that we were to continue along this path. I also explained the journal could be accessed in a way that accommodated other learning needs so that students did not have to duplicate work. I anticipate that we will receive greater support as a result of this exercise.

9.4.9 Philosophies within the department perceived to be common to the teaching staff

While each staff member did have a distinct personal philosophy (Table 9.6), there were certain elements identified as common to all which highlighted a supportive, collective, team approach to teaching with a focus on student centered teaching. This is discussed in the following journal entry:

Reflexive Journal entry: March 20, 2001

One of the joys or benefits of working in the department is that the staff does have different styles and approaches. Among other things we do have in common, however, is that we are all committed to teaching and try to set high standards for our students and ourselves...

All our programmes have course coordinators, and, generally speaking, these lecturers provide a major part of the teaching or facilitation of the programmes. Certain subjects can be taught independently in that a lecturer(s) is responsible for that section.

The philosophy of the department is to teach programmes in an integrated manner as possible, and the way I think this works most effectively is if those involved in the teaching/facilitation of the programme work closely together by constant feedback and discussion regarding future planning.

Because I (and many others in education) don't believe that any subject or component of a subject can be taught absolutely in isolation, by reflection and feedback, a constant cycle of awareness of exactly what students are learning or being exposed to feeds back into new preparations or adaptations of how material will be managed. An excellent example of this would be last Friday's (March 16) sessions. This however, is almost an unwitting example, in that it was only after discussions with Sarah (who covered research methodology in the morning) that the realization of what had occurred had in fact supported the later learning example.

In the morning, students had been introduced to nursing frameworks and models in terms of theory development in their class on research methodology. Subsequent to that was a discussion on families, using various models to explain ways in which to view or perceive families in terms of functioning/ roles/ dynamics /interactions etc. I consciously linked the concept of model/ framework development to research, not knowing that that had been discussed in the morning. Later on in the afternoon, my colleague, Nomsa, who is team teaching nursing management with me, was teaching the class to analyze situations in terms of a 'recipe,' a problem solving model. I then asked the group to identify the different critical thinking techniques they had used to do the situational analysis. They identified the use of personal experiences; associated examples; problem solving; visualization; debate; discussion; creative thinking; use of a model or framework amongst others. I picked up on the 'recipe' and related it once again to research frameworks and to their understanding of families.

I believe that it is these kinds of connections that will allow students to transfer knowledge more easily and to be able to identify the relevance of theory to application and the real world.

Table 9.6: Common departmental philosophy

The common philosophical elements include the:

- Departmental aim for collective approach: "there are some people who see things differently. But what I think happens, is that we try to come to a collective approach
- Sharing resources; respect for colleagues: "And I have always seen everybody photocopying stuff, sending stuff for photocopying, for her students over and above the things that you would normally do."
- Supporting others e.g. being aware of needs and providing these materials or support (f=3) "...we always share that information."
- Working beyond required working day to meet students' needs: "I find that working here and also taking that extra mile and also availing yourself, even after hours for your students, we do do that – if it means that you don't go for lunch or you don't go off 4, we do do that for our students...Students can phone them" (and me) over the week-end."
- Student-centered teaching: "Students should feel free to learn. The environment should be such that she is in a position to learn and I am only there to guide and support. A person should move... – there must be growth, there must be new experiences. There must be new knowledge that one gains out of that learning. It must also stimulate that person to think."
- Similarity of principles, although the delivery is different (f=4): "I think there is a common thread. We might all differ in our presentation and things like that but the philosophy is the same, in fact. I think we follow similar

thinking. It has leaned far more away from just pure theory to more problem-based and hands on. Maybe I have it wrong – but that is what I think. But the general principles of education are the same, I think”.

“I think that we all have the basic philosophy of providing a good health service to the clients out there. I think that’s the philosophy which underlies a lot of our teaching is one of producing excellence for the health services rather than just particularly for the student. Yes, the student is important, but what is our ultimate aim? Our ultimate aim is to improve the health of people and I think that that is the commonality that runs through all our programmes.”

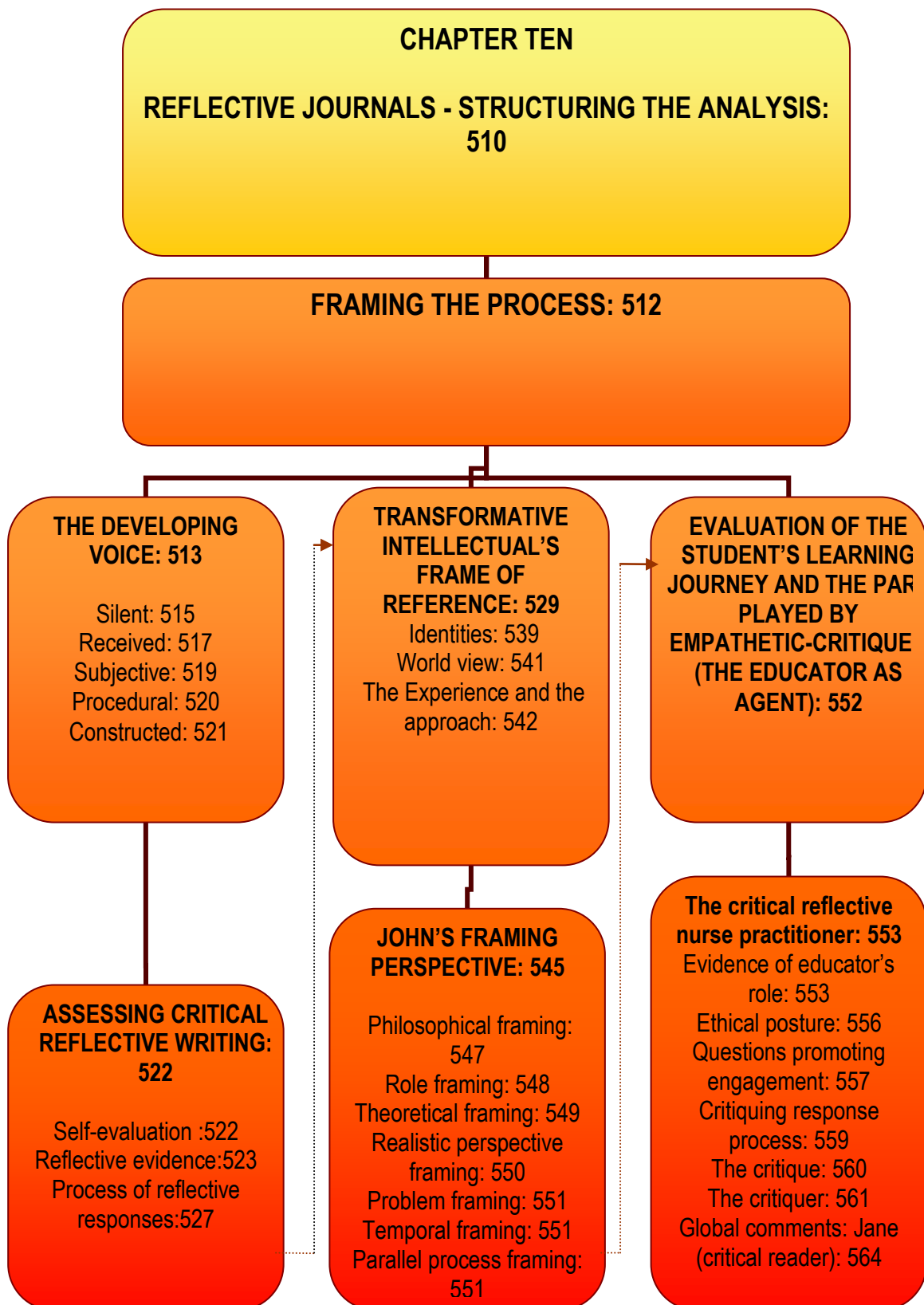
- Philosophy driven by recognition of the factors influencing student learning (e.g. prior experience, work and domestic demands) balanced by need for quality education.
- Common framework: “It has leaned far more away from just pure theory to more problem-based and hands on.”

9.5 CONCLUSION

Jackson (2004) asks the question “Who is the self that nurses?” She reminds us that nursing as a profession is more than being knowledgeable – it is the integration of the mind, body and soul which requires constant renewal and care. As nurse educators, we can sometimes be blinded by the “additive curriculum” as the body of knowledge of the profession expands, but if we do not invest in the long-term growth of the student, in all that the term ‘growth’ implies, we should not really be in the business of education – but rather, in one of training. The role of guide in the students’ exploration of learning is not just a vacation job, to be adopted in the hope of quick monetary returns, but a role that needs to be entered with care, with respect, with understanding and an appreciation that each student would ultimately become the driver of her own coach, caring perhaps, for our own loved ones.

This chapter has allowed me a broader understanding of the staff members philosophy and their understanding of the teaching and learning within their programmes, as well as their teaching strategies and the factors that they perceive to support or limit their practice. There are definite points of congruence between us, and the differences are not profound. From these interviews, it becomes clear that the common alignments in teaching philosophies are supportive of my teaching

of critical reflective practice. The real concern appears to be connected to factors outside of our control - for example, those instigated by the merger process. This can be illustrated by (a) the environmental disharmony brought about by jockeying for political positioning; (b) by having to re-negotiate and re-establish legitimacy in new hierarchical order or (c) the frustrations of having to cope with new systems and structures not necessarily perceived to be 'academically friendly'.



CHAPTER TEN

REFLECTIVE JOURNALS – STRUCTURING THE ANALYSIS

10. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a framework to underpin the analysis of the reflective journals in the following chapter, Chapter Eleven. The purpose of *that* chapter is to monitor the personal, professional and academic growth and development of eight students through their reflective journals. This growth and development through critical reflective practice is underscored by the study objectives 1, 2 and 4 in Chapter Four, Section 4.11.

To monitor this growth, I first have had to configure the viewing of these eight journals as a medium for critical reflective practice. This chapter therefore provides an overview of the structuring, organisation and purpose of the *analysis* of these reflective journals. It considers the students' various usages of the reflective journals, as well as an explanation of how these journals were characterized. It also considers the empathetic-critiquer/ facilitator's responses as part of this process. I have then provided a theoretical framework to explain the perspective with which I read and understood the journals, and which formed the basis for my analysis. The justification for the use of the theoretical constructs has been contextualized with use of explanations and examples relative to the Management IV course. However, from the outset it should be made clear that this is a tentative framework, based on my interpretation of the tenets. Because of the deep philosophical nature of the theories derived from some of the theorists who have influenced this development, my understanding and interpretation can only be partial – and therefore, tentative.

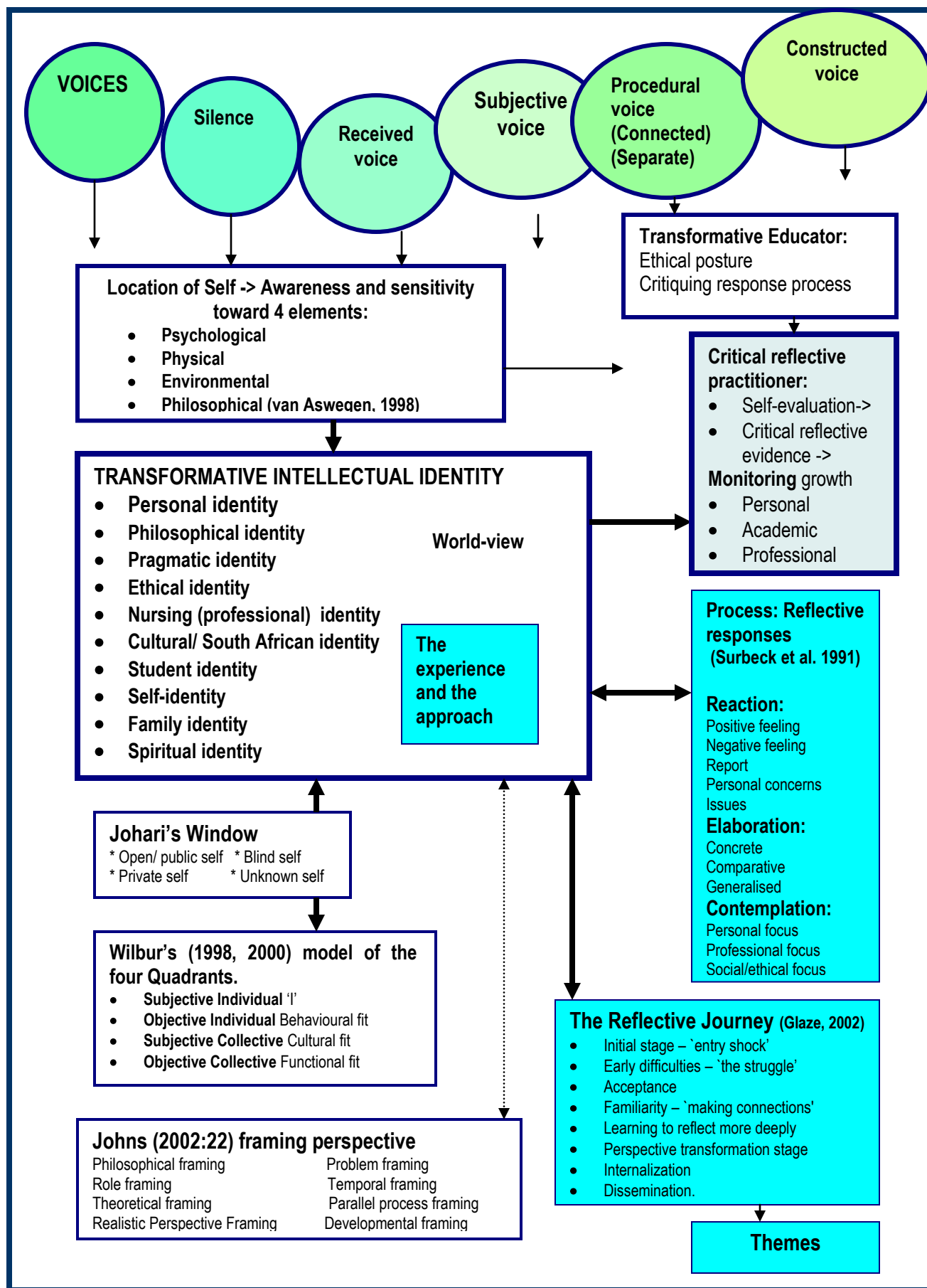


Figure 10.1: Theoretical Framework for Analysis of Reflective Journals

10.1 FRAMING THE PROCESS

While Chapter Four, Section 4.24 provides an overview of the data analysis used in Chapter 11, this chapter provides an in-depth explanation of the framing.

As the researcher of these learning journeys, I started out thinking about ways in which I could 'see' and interpret the reflective journals. As Johns (2002) warns, I had to be conscious of the risk entailed of 'seeing' the journals through a filter of my own interests, or my own established way of viewing the world. Accordingly, I used as one of my lens, the three research objectives where the two variables, critical thinking and reflection, formed a key theme.

I then decided to let the data 'speak' to me without regard to other frameworks or the literature. This produced an initial process of coding and categorization to create themes described in Chapter Four, Section 4.24.3., some of which have been dealt with in Chapters Seven and Eight. In order to explore these themes, I started to develop a theoretical framework (the final completed coherent framework is depicted in Figure 10.1). The purpose of this framework was to provide me, as researcher and educator, with an understanding of the student as a 'whole' person engaged in a critical reflective process, as well as an understanding of the context needed for meaningful empathetic-critiquer and facilitator responses. The analysis should be seen in the light of this framework.

At the same time, it should be noted that while each journal was broadly considered in terms of this framework, the framework was used in different ways. Certain components were:

- (a) Consistently and comprehensively considered, e.g. transformative educator (the critiquing response process), critical reflective practitioner (critical evidence), themes and monitoring growth;
- (b) Considered broadly and briefly e.g. location of self, voices and identity

- (c) Considered comprehensively only in certain journals e.g. location of self, voices, identity; or
- (d) Considered as part of the overall journaling process e.g. the experience and the approach (the reflective process and the reflective journey).

The completed framing was based on the research question, the objectives, van Aswegen's model and the literature. I could not find studies on the analysis of reflective journals although Smith (1998) through a 3-year longitudinal qualitative study does use data from written critical incidents reflecting on undergraduate student nurses' practice experiences and classroom discussions analysed using the constant comparative method. The literature was useful in providing various rubrics and theoretical constructs, but despite a reasonably thorough search, focused on process and outcomes rather than analysis of actual journaling narratives of students. This has been daunting as I was faced with so much text (the year's journaling work of eight students and the critiquing responses) and no clear way of how to collapse yet retain the authenticity of their experiences. I have been on my own in this regard and have had to rely on the data and my subsequent interpretation. So, in addition to the above, this framework was derived from the data and my subsequent analysis, which had been explored through my reflexive journal in light of my experiences as an educator. This framework is intended to demonstrate what worked for me, and which could perhaps be used by others interested in this approach, in the future.

While this chapter is the prelude to the chapter on the eight students' journaling narratives, the concept of reflective practice is interwoven throughout the Management IV course. Therefore, the following sections not only provide an explanation of the framing concepts for the journals, but also for other aspects of the course, for example, the reflective tutorials. Accordingly, I have highlighted this by providing brief relevant references and illustrative evidence.

10.1.1 The developing 'voice'

The concept of 'voice' is a powerful image, has featured throughout this thesis and forms a 'lens' to view the unfolding layers within the narratives. The voices indicate development in reflection, regardless of the method. It was through the students' voices (written and oral) that their practice, their values, their thinking and their feelings were revealed to me. The reflective journals were particularly useful as a method of revealing 'voice' and encouraging reflection. Those students, who expressed limited 'voice' in class, perhaps through technical inability, now were now 'forced' to use voice. Trust and revelation became mutually intertwined. While the ability to trust me as the facilitator did not necessarily indicate a concomitant desire to reveal the self, it did help. The very nature of the reflective journaling and tutorial process also encouraged revelation. While I cannot presume to believe or state that what was expressed was in fact, the essence of the writer or speaker, it did convey a sense of the person. This expressed voice therefore became the lens through which I 'saw' the student, the person.

In Chapter One, the reader is directed to the 'voices' present in the thesis. In Chapter Three, Sections 3.6, 3.11 and 3.12.11.1 as well as in Chapter Four, Section 4.6.3, voice has been identified with empowerment and self-expression. This theme is also woven through Chapter Six, Section 6.2.10.9, Chapter Seven, Section 7.1.4, 7.2.4, 7.2.6.5, Table 7.3, 7.3.6, 7.3.8. It continues into Chapter Eight in Section 8.1.2 and is again picked up in Chapter Nine, Table 9.5.

Christopher John's (2002) text, Guided Reflection. Advancing Practice is significant in terms of interpreting and guiding my own study - specifically his use of 'voice' and his 'theoretical perspectives.' John's (2002) analysis, based on Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) is particularly helpful in analysing the stages of development of student 'voices' in terms of their journals

and reflective abilities: It sets the stage for contextualising Duke and Appleton's (2000) marking grid for reflective evidence table, which is clarified in Section 10.1.2.2.

Through Belensky et al. (1986) Johns (2002:38-40) identifies 5 stages of the developing voice: "silence; received voice, subjective voice, procedural voice (connected and separate) and constructed voice." I have depicted this in Figure 10.2.

10.1.1.1. The silent voice

The first level of development is the voice of those who remain silent, or who have no voice and are dominated by authoritative others. I was particularly aware of those in my class who listened without active interaction and had difficulty in expressing themselves or who chose not to express themselves. While this remains a generalized statement, this appeared to be more prevalent amongst the black African students.

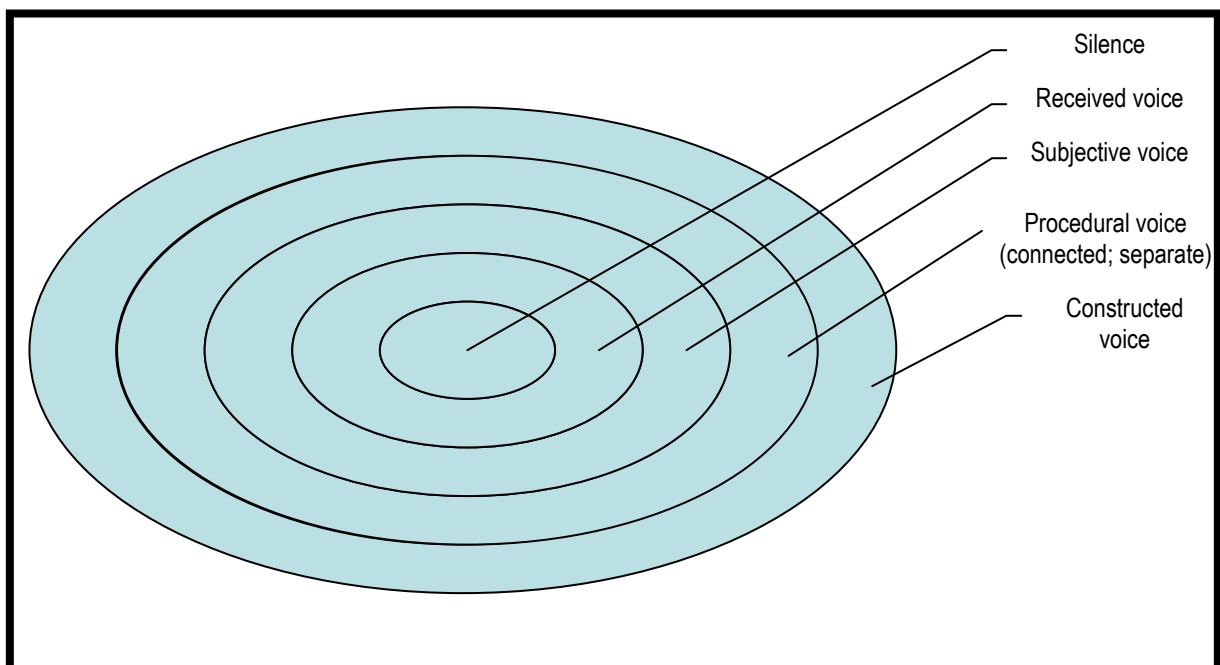


Figure 10.2: The developing voice

In a focus group on 31 October, 2003 (Chapter Seven, Section 7.4.3) specifically focusing on black African students, with respect to second language issues, the group affirmed “In class, we don't respond - even when we know the answer. In us not to answer - especially if there are those who will respond.” In other words, even though a student might have a ‘voice’, she would knowingly choose not to use it if there were others who would fill in the void. Learning to voluntarily verbalise, discuss and debate as a means of reflection and a movement to further understanding was generally not part of their previous socialised educational experience. In fact, as intimated in Sections 7.4.5.2 and 7.4.5.10, this process would have been actively discouraged in both the home and in the educational setting, perhaps because as Banda, (2003:80) notes, in “most African societies the younger person is not expected to initiate or appear to control the direction of a conversation, with an older person.”

Johns (2002) however, does note that although the ‘voice’ is silent, it has the potential to be realised through the reflective process, and in the case of the students, through their reflective journals and the tutorials. Johns (2002:39) correctly realises that even though there is the means, this does not mean that the potential could be unleashed. Many struggled with this activity. One of the reasons for this, Johns suggests, is their technical inability to reflect as they could only use the voice of others (the received voice) having denied their own “intuitive sense”. Students, in their journals, had a choice in the type of entry they made i.e. a reflective entry, a reflection on a health related news item or an analysis of a journal item. I had hoped that they would use their journals and not be the ‘silent voice’ as in the class situations. Through their writing, I wanted students to unleash their voices and find themselves in their practice. I also wanted them to read and become more conversant with the world around them and link theory to practice. It is a choice that they themselves had to make. I became aware that second language black African students tended to opt for the news article, as it provided a concrete means of support. The technical inability to reflect and the language barrier were

fairly obvious reasons. The following reason is more concerning, suggests Johns (2002:39). If a student did not know who she was, she would not be able to express herself. He raises the concern that the empowering intent of reflection could in fact result in disempowerment for those who were unable to effectively engage in the reflective process, resulting in the apprehensions identified earlier in Chapter Seven, Sections 7.2.6.6 and 7.2.6.7. This was a risk I took as an educator and so tried to ensure a number of supportive strategies to scaffold that risk i.e. a supportive environment, self-evaluation, a collaborative contract and tutorials.

10.1.1.2 The received voice

The second level, the 'received voice' is the voice of authoritative others - where the student takes the information on someone else's authority but, because she does not question this authority, is unable to process the knowledge in terms of her own 'knowing.' So the student is able to accept and even question or reproduce the expertise of acknowledged authorities, but without the ability to critically understand. Johns (2002:39) suggests that it is extremely difficult for the student on this level to reflect, as she is unable to respond to

“reflective cues beyond simple description. They lack the resources to be critical of self. Reflection is experienced as confrontational and threatening. At this level practitioners want a didactic style of guidance that fits with the experience of being filled up. Yet they resist being emptied because the words of others have become embodied”.

At this level, he suggests, that the work of the guide is to gently “plant the seeds of doubt” and to try to act as a mirror or reflection for the students to enable them to see themselves within the process. This phase and Johns' description resonates with me, as this is the level I found myself working with many of the students, and gently, gently did I pose questions - not with authority, but almost

hesitantly, from the voice of the non-expert trying to establish my own knowledge base. Initially, I was concerned that I might be at a disadvantage in that while I felt I could identify with the students as nurses, I was not practicing within their specific fields. However, as Johns (2002:31) clarifies:

“A good guide will always challenge the practitioner to access an appropriate technical literature or steer the practitioner to access relevant sources for such information. Indeed the resourceful guide can ask for copies of such material in order to expand her background, and then use this literature to challenge the practitioner as appropriate.”

I did this on a number of levels with the students: (a) through requiring them to attach news or journal articles which formed the source of their discussions or reflections; (b) by directing them to internet sites or library sources; (c) through considering their reflections and reading up on and attaching additional material to support or refute or question their conclusions or (d) asked the student to share the entry for a class, on-line or tutorial discussion. I also recognise, as does Johns (2002:31) that

“a guide with a similar background may be at a disadvantage if the guide subsequently over-identifies with the practitioner’s experiences or responds in the light of their own experiences. A lack of shared background will enable the guide to ask more naive questions which may otherwise be taken for granted within a shared background”.

I found this lack of identification to be particularly useful in the light of the students’ workplace experiences. Although these workplaces were sufficiently generic in that they were health care contexts and there were patients, and nursing did take place, this similarity was also marked by the strong contrast offered by the dissimilarities of the workplace contexts. Our department was not attached to these sites and was not answerable to anyone in healthcare management, other than the

obvious politeness required by visitors and users of the health care facilities. I had no authority in these contexts, nor was I personally familiar with the personnel, and so had no vested interests in these sites of practice. This independent autonomy from the student workplace sites allowed me to question freely without the normal political constraints experienced by on-site nursing colleges and therefore, my questioning of systems and conditions theoretically, was without overt prejudice. My concern was generally, for quality nursing practice, and specifically, the development of the student's nursing practice, and therefore, my engagement with the students, was a focus on the process rather than the outcome.

In discussing the voices from the multiple aspects of the course, Johns (2002:33) notes that the listening (as in the case of the tutorials) or the reading (as in the case of the journals) requires "an awareness and suspension of personal ambition, dominant perspectives, values, defensiveness and weight of tradition." This is validated by a student's response to the critiquing process in Section 7.2.6.7 "M..'s approach is constant in that her critiquing encourages your thoughts, not hers. "

10.1.1.3 The subjective voice

The third level of development 'subjective knowing' is where understanding is derived from highly personal interpretations and value filters and is where the student begins to listen to her inner voice, questioning the validity of some of the "knowledge" that is presented to her. She thinks in simplistic, concrete terms and sees information as "good" or "bad", as "true" or "false," rather than being able to consider the complexity of a situation in all its gradients or levels. Of enormous value in this phase, is the perceived permission the student invokes to express the self freely, voice her own opinions and connect with others. However, as Johns (2002:39) warns, "at the subjective level, the practitioner's voice is unsubstantiated."

10.1.1.4 The procedural voice

The fourth level is that of Procedural knowing where the student is “able to realise self within the simultaneous and complementary processes of separate and connected knowing” (Johns, 2002:39). Knowing comes from fitting pieces together in logical and rational ways where the student applies objective procedures for receiving and conveying knowledge. This voice is divided into two levels:

(a) **‘Separated knowing’** is a level of knowing where theory connects with practice in a way that is meaningful to the student. Students begin to see that authoritative sources do not always have the answer and learn to doubt and question. They use impersonal procedures for establishing truth and begin to respect their own abilities to think, reason and form conclusions. “The voice of separate knowing is argument” (Heiber, 2003).

(b) **‘Connected knowing’** is the level of respecting one’s own views, feelings, and opinions, and at the same time focuses on understanding and appreciating the different beliefs and perspectives of others. It emerges from the context of personal experience (rather than in established authorities) and is grounded in empathy and care (Heiber, 2003). This connection to the experiences of others gives meaning to the student’s own experiences and allows the student to value herself and feel empowered. I found that by sharing incidents and stories on-line through Web CT that this self-valuing did take place. “I gained a sense of friendship, part of the family where I can share my feelings about any issue and get responses within a moment and good ideas to solve that problem or feel good afterwards” noted one student. Another identified that this sharing “Definitely helped change way of thinking, connected one’s thoughts to one’s feelings, and therefore one’s actions are more structured and slower.” Students found this process enabled them to identify with each other “I was able to understand some of the difficulties the others have to endure especially in Government.”

Johns (2002:39) suggests that “people who experience self as predominantly separate tend to espouse a morality based on impersonal procedures for establishing justice, while people who experience the self as predominantly connected tended to espouse a morality based on care”. I think that this is a key statement and has significance for my study.

I have been wondering a great deal about the entries I saw in journals, and it is notable that students did not identify easily with patients, nor did they appear to establish relationships of any length of time. Most of the students in our programmes were involved in fields where the relationship with clients was ephemeral - for example, the primary health care nurses would see patients on a consultancy basis e.g. assess, diagnose and treat and were unlikely to meet with these clients again. If and when they returned to the clinics, they would, more than likely, be seen by colleagues. Even those nurses who worked in hospitals would not necessarily get to ‘know’ their clients. Care was still task based (on the whole) and not primary care centred. Journal entries appeared to be more concerned with the system that supports the care giving, rather than with the individual. Most of the nurses we taught were bowed down with the process of survival or mechanistic nursing, as opposed to the specific care of the individual patient. It is no wonder that many of the reflections dealt with their disenchantment with the system, rather than the joy of the nursing process. Nonetheless, the sharing of experiences had a major effect in enabling students to view different perspectives, and this was a notable, common outcome of students’ evaluation of the process of sharing, dialoguing and debating “It motivated me to look into other perspectives”.

10.1.1.5 The constructed voice

Constructed knowing builds on the subjective and the procedural levels to arrive at a constructed knowledge stage which allows for thinking to occur in a very flexible and sophisticated way enabling

the practitioner to speak in an informed, passionate and assertive voice (Johns, 2002). Intuitive hunches are integrated with rational and complex thinking. Students understand that 'truth' or 'knowledge' is continuously 'under construction'. Knowledge becomes contextualised and students recognise themselves as creators of their own knowledge through their experiences, and that their understanding and knowledge gained and built or 'constructed' is of and through these connected experiences. Constructed knowers integrate all parts of the self in knowing.

10.1.2 Assessing critical reflective writing

A reason for initiating reflective journals was to promote critical reflective writing and practice. I needed a mechanism that would enable students and I to assess if and how this process was occurring and allow me as educator and researcher a means to monitor the process of this development (Objectives 1, 2 and 4).

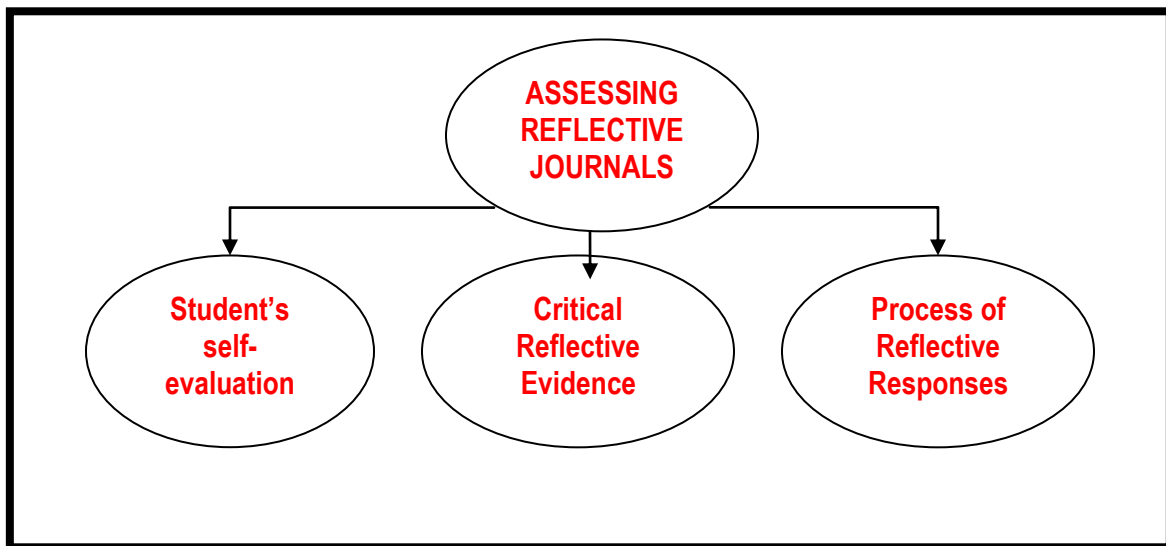


Figure 10.3 Assessing Critical reflective writing

10.1.2.1 Self-evaluation

There is extensive debate around the area of assessment of reflective writing, some of which is discussed in Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.4. Section 7.2.2 sets the ground rules and rationale for the

students' self-evaluation of their reflective journals but it is worth reconsidering the rationale for self-evaluation (Teekman, 2000:1129). Reflective writing brings its own criteria which fall within what Teekman (2000: 1128) notes as Sense-Making philosophy.

“Sense-Making proposes that information is a product of direct and indirect human observation, and does not exist independently, and external to, human beings (Dervin,1992). Human interpretation and knowing is always connected and situated in a historicized context of people, settings, activities, events and power relationships. Sense-Making assumes that structures such as community, culture and social organization which are created, maintained, challenged, reified, changed, resisted, or even destroyed in human communication, influence the actions of the individual.”

Accordingly, the notion of self-evaluation is justified because it is based on the Sense-making philosophy as follows:

- Description of the events are viewed from the student's perspective
- Perspectives have a space and time element and therefore are situational
- Because the perceptions are those of the student, they should be examined from the student's perspective.
- The meanings are in relation to and not independent from or external to the student.
- Students should have the right to write what they want without external pressure.

10.1.2.2 Reflective evidence

The purpose of initiating the reflective journals was to provide a mode of supporting and developing critical reflective thinking and practice. I needed a framework with which to view the journals in order

to see whether this was happening. I included an amalgam of the following frameworks in order to arrive at *Table 10.1: Critical reflective thinking criteria*. These criteria were based on Duke and Appleton's (2000) Reflective Evidence which has been amalgamated with van Aswegen's Table of Reflective Evidence (1998:138) and combined with key criteria statements of Facione and Facione's Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric (HCTSR) and the Levels of reflectivity from Richardson and Maltby, (1995):235-242. This marking grid (or rubric) for a reflective evidence table is mostly derived from Duke and Appleton's (2000: 1557-1568) quantitative study assessing the development of nursing students' reflective skills in a palliative care programme over an academic year.

Rationale for using Duke and Appleton's (2000) Reflective Evidence Rubric as a guide to *monitor* rather than as a specific tool to *measure* critical reflective writing

In considering Duke and Appleton's (2000) categories of reflective evidence in the light of the students' reflections for the purpose of analysis, I frequently wished to add riders to the coding e.g. the category 'describing the situation.' Yes, the situation was described, but could have been described more fully. Or the category 'Raise and pursue root questions.' Questions were raised, but there were differences with respect to *how* they were raised and *how fully* they were pursued. Also, there is a big difference between a *formal assignment*, where students are expected to consider all aspects of the issues – and these *reflections*, where students could choose what to discuss and choose the level for the discussion. The fact that they chose to pursue certain elements within their thinking allows me to make broad judgments about their abilities to think critically or reflectively – rather than about *the level* of their reflective thinking. It only allows me to determine if they were using specific components of critical reflective thinking – which is one of the reasons for choosing not to fully use the extended rubric, such as the one offered by Duke and Appleton (2000).

So, while this grid was extremely useful, I had to adapt my usage of the grid by omitting the gradients (the different levels of performance listed in the table were graded from the positive to the negative) as I found the multi-levelled gradients too refined for my purposes. Had this been a single essay that was being graded, the refinement of the different levels of performance would have been appropriate – but not on a student's whole year's entries. I found the rubric too complex and difficult to use, having tried it with one set of journal entries.

The criteria for the adapted marking grid are organised in a logical progression, moving from description to analysis, to judgement and arriving at action. Those criteria in-between indicate the gradients between the different levels. This resulting grid has been used for the analysis of the students' reflective journals.

Table 10.1 Critical reflective thinking criteria

DIMENSION OF THOUGHT. Ability to:	FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPT
1. Describe the event or situation	Explaining and illustrating the incident or experience Richardson and Maltby (1995) Level 1
2. Analyze event	Ability to use knowledge from a variety of sources in order to analyze the situation
3. Examine assumptions	Not taking anything for granted: checking suppositions.
4. Identify and focus on salient issues from the situation	Recognising and centering on the most important matters, concerns or questions of the experience
5. Distinguish relevant from irrelevant facts	Being able to separate the important from the insignificant aspects of the information
6. Clarify issues and conclusions	Simplify and explain the issues and deductions clearly, in a way that is easily understood.
7. Raise and pursue root questions	Core questions that deal with the origin or core of the problem. Ability to ask questions that delve to the heart or the essence of the issue
8. Analyze emotions connected to event	Ability to analyze own feelings and those of others Richardson and Maltby (1995) Level 2
9. Question and consider a wide variety of points of view	Analyze alternative perspectives
10. Use knowledge from a variety of sources in order to analyze the situation	Ability to take information from a variety of sources in order to examine a situation
11. Use knowledge broadly	Ability to make lateral, creative connections with knowledge

12. Makes interdisciplinary connections	Ability to look beyond the nursing perspective, and make linkages with and to relevant members of the health team.
13. Compare perspectives and theories	Contrast concepts and suppositions about issues
14. Analyze contextual issues	Ability to place the event or situation in the context of broader social, political and professional perspectives and to analyze how these perspectives influence the event or situation.
15. Synthesis for new perspective	Ability to draw together and summarise description and analysis in order to present a new perspective or to revision an existing perspective
16. Transfer ideas to new context	Taking ideas from a familiar, accepted context and using them in a different scenario or setting
17. Generate novel ideas	Ability to be creative and arrive at new or different solutions or thoughts
18. Fair-mindedly follows where evidence and reasons lead	Impartially and rationally pursuing the facts of the matter
19. Evaluate arguments, interpretations and beliefs	Comparing and judging the reasoning, explanations and beliefs that form the basis for the contention. (Interprets evidence)
20. Draw accurate conclusions	Make precise, correct deductions based on evidence
21. Justifies key results and procedures, explains assumptions and reasons	Give good reason for the main solutions and course of action, clarifying theories and grounds for thought
22. Defend positions and issues	Providing support for standpoint and concerns
23. Solve non-routine problems	Get to the bottom of unusual dilemmas or predicaments
24. Identify and discuss the implications for practice that arise from analysis & synthesis	Ability to identify and discuss the implications for practice that arise from analysis and synthesis
25. Compare ideals with actual practice	Ability to contrast 'perfect' with practice in the real world setting
26. Explore implications and consequences	Investigate the possible inferences and repercussions of potential action (or consequences of actual behaviour)
27. Draw up and/ or implement an action plan based on the implications raised	Ability to draw up a plan of action built on evidentiary support
28. Write clearly and coherently	Clarity of written expression
29. Accurately cite sources of knowledge used	Correct usage of referencing techniques
30. Evaluate the credibility of sources	Correct use of personal judgement in assessing the reliability of informants or data bases
31. Use own thinking to come to conclusions and solutions	Independence of thought in deducing answers
32. Self-evaluate own work	Ability to self-assess
33. Openness to change or possibility for change	Ability to consider the need for change or other options - being open to other possibilities Theory of possibilities?
34. Come to terms with contradictions and inconsistencies	Recognise and accept the ambiguities and incongruities thrown up by the exigencies and 'messiness' of life.
35. Judgmental reflectivity	Awareness of value judgements and subjective nature (Richardson and Maltby, 1995) Level 4
36. Identify learning needs and learning achieved	Ability to identify learning achieved and learning needs - (also known as conceptual and theoretical subjectivity (Richardson and Maltby, 1995) - reaching a level of critical consciousness as well as identifying a need for further learning. Level 5

While Table 10.1 has been used for my analysis as the researcher, a simplified version of this table is suggested for student usage for self-evaluation of their reflective journals as in Chapter Seven, Figure 7.1 and Table 7.6

10.1.2.3 Process of reflective responses

A reflective response refers to the reflective manner in which students respond in writing in their reflective journal to social, academic or professional issues, situations or feelings relative to their learning experiences.

Surbeck, Han, and Moyer (1991), in studying journals of student teachers through naturalistic research, developed a framework of categories and subcategories of student entries to better understand the thinking of students and encourage them to become reflective practitioners. They knew that the students' responses would reveal their thinking about their profession. The categories of responses reflected the way in which students had written their entries in response to their thinking.

Table 10.2: Framework of student responses (Surbeck, Han, and Moyer (1991:26)),

<i>Reaction</i>	<i>Elaboration</i>	<i>Contemplation</i>
<i>Positive feeling</i>	<i>Concrete elaboration</i>	<i>Personal focus</i>
<i>Negative feeling</i>	<i>Comparative elaboration</i>	<i>Professional focus</i>
<i>Report</i>	<i>Generalised elaboration</i>	<i>Social/ethical focus</i>
<i>Personal concerns</i>		
<i>Issues</i>		

- **Reaction:**

These are student responses to class content, including peer teaching, discussions, activities, lectures, environments, instructors, peers, and articles read.

Sub-categories:

1. Positive feeling: described feelings of satisfaction about themselves, others, or class activities
2. Negative feeling: described feelings of dissatisfaction about themselves, others, or class activities
3. Report: described factual events - happenings in class (no personal feelings)
4. Personal concerns: described issues that affected themselves personally that had an impact on their class activities
5. Issues: concerned educational issues, problems and related information.

- **Elaboration:**

This is an expansion of the students' first reactions by explaining their feelings, verifying their thinking, giving examples or referring to other situations

1. Concrete elaboration: elaborating on a specific instance which evoked a reaction
2. Comparative elaboration: comparing their initial reaction with other situations e.g. previous experiences, (working or personal)
3. Generalised elaboration: Expansion by referencing theories, general principles or philosophical context.

- **Contemplation:**

These are the students' initial reactions linked with further elaboration and including thinking about personal, professional, social / ethical issues.

1. Personal focus: thoughts about themselves or personal problems
2. Professional focus: thoughts about their teaching, their students, educational issues, practice, goals and attitudes as teachers
3. Social/ethical focus: thoughts about social, ethical and moral issues

Surbeck, Han, and Moyer (1991:27) found that there was common sequencing - reaction-elaboration-contemplation - at least partially developed in most journals. The contemplation category was the least applied. When the entire sequence was used, they noted "a greater integration of information." They recognise too, that behaviour is very much directed by thinking, and the journals allow for an exploration of deeper probing into their practice.

On reflection, there are very similar processes and sequencing that take place in my students' journals, but perhaps because of the key question "What are the implications for your nursing practice?" contemplation receives an increasing focus as the journals progress.

Themes: The themes that were derived from the journals fell into similar categories as personal, professional, social / ethical issues were considered.

10.1.3 Transformative Intellectual's Frame of Reference (with allusions to van Aswegen's model)

This framework was developed in response to a coding analysis of the data generated by the first student journal (Carol) and then subsequently, with the other students' journals. It was corroborated with van Aswegen's (1998) model and also drew on the literature.

10.1.3.1 Identities

Exploring and locating identities: Johns (2002) clearly observes that it is within the experience that the individual sees herself and others, and that this experience is contextualised. It became apparent as I engaged in reading and responding to the journal entries, that not only were there different ‘voices’ but that there were different layers expressing the multifaceted identities of the writers, which resolved into the identities noted in the Transformative Intellectual’s Frame of Reference (Figure 10.1). The layers of this experience are sometimes clear, with specific boundaries, and sometimes juxtaposed, where the identities become blurred. Kroge (2003:155) describes this:

“An individual’s identity involves a complex interplay of multiple spheres, such as the interpersonal, the ethnic, the occupational, the economic, the political etc. These parts of a person coexist dynamically to create a continuous conception of life from past through present to future. Ideally, the individual should simultaneously have free psychological access to and movement within all these identity dimensions.”

Location of self: In order to find identity, the self needs to be located. A key concept in van Aswegen’s 1998 (271-272) model is the self.

“The role of the self can be explicated as the source of the practitioner’s perception, affect and behaviour. The metacognitive, cognitive and affective aspects of the self are subsystems of the self and under control of the self as agent”.

Key to the issue of critical reflection is the ability of the reflective practitioner to engage in reflective self-criticism, which, she notes, can only result from a positive self-image. A high level of self-

consciousness is a prerequisite for true reflection. This self-consciousness or self-awareness comprises an awareness of one's location and sensitivity to four elements:

- ➔ psychological (the inner being, the emotive, the drive, the personality and the self-concept, all of which require a sensitivity to the inner and outer world),
- ➔ physical (the body, its physiology, sensations and potential),
- ➔ environmental (a relationship between the self and the social environment) and
- ➔ philosophical [one's world view and the meaning of life for the individual – which also accounts for one's values and ethics: (van Aswegen's 1998:272)].

(A) Personal identity

In developing the theoretical construct, personal identity, I have been influenced by the writings of others who have helped me in weaving together the pattern formed within Figure 10.1.

- **Wilbur's (1998, 2000) model of the Four quadrants**

Johns (2002:7) is particularly helpful in his suggestion that "*experience* is the way an individual perceives self and others" in relationship to a particular situation or event. Clearly the perception and conveyance of this experience and the self within is highly subjective for how can such an experience be "known"? Johns (2002:7) partly bases his understanding of the reflective practitioner and her experience on Wilbur's (1998, 2000) model of the Four quadrants which allows for the integration of "partial views of knowing self within experience" as demonstrated in Figure 10.4.

	Subjective (left hand path)	Objective (right hand path)
Individual	Upper left 'I'	Upper right Behavioural fit
Collective	Cultural fit Lower left	Functional fit Lower Right

Figure 10.4: The four quadrants as a model to integrate partial views of knowing self within experience (Johns, 2002:7).

The left side reflects the subjective self and the right, the objective. As Johns (2002:8) notes, the model helps “to place the “I” in context ...of inter-subjective cultural meanings, within existing social systems and contradictions between interior thoughts and feelings and observable practice. It is the peeling back of layers to reveal the integral core of the experience.”

The individual subjective view: The intent of the reflective process is to explore the subjective world of the experience in order to reveal the inner nature of the self. There are many theorists, particularly in the therapeutic field (Freud, Luft and Ingham, Jung, William James and Wilbur to name but a few), who have used a similar process where the individual is able to move beyond the conscious level to the deeper subconscious levels, searching for insights about the self. To or for the reader, these experiences are not directly observable and so I have to trust that this conveyed reflection is reliable. However, the writer may unwittingly distort this reflection as a result of many subconscious influences – and it is for this reason that both Johns (2002:7) and van Aswegen (1998:298) place such emphasis on the traits required for true critical reflection such as intellectual

humility, integrity, empathy, authenticity, sincerity, courage, perseverance, commitment, faith in rationality and sense of justice.

The individual objective view: As the educator, it is possible to see the student in a different light to that perceived by the student herself. This may be as a result of different cues given by the student, or through triangulating with other situations which reflect an altered view of the student or through insights shared by others e.g. staff or colleagues. This perspective may not correlate with the student's own perception of the experience and my job would be to help support and guide the student to viewing the experience in a more objective light.

Collective subjective view: The way the world is experienced is strongly influenced by societal cultural norms and mores, which in turn, affects the way in which one responds to the world. Reflections would reveal this collective subjective view and allow the student access "to understand these patterns of relationships and ways they have influenced (you) within experience" (Johns, 2002:8).

Collective objective view: Reflections enable students to interrogate the cultural and social systems that impact on their everyday lives. By reflecting on their working environments, they learn to understand the health care system on a macro and micro scale, and how nursing, as a cultural system, fits within the larger system. By interrogating the different elements, they begin to see patterns emerging and the value or problems inherent in the systems.

- **Johari's Window**

Johari's Window is a conceptual model for describing, evaluating and predicting aspects of interpersonal communication (Luft, 1970 in Jordaan and Jordaan, 1989). As a metaphor, we both give and receive information about ourselves through the window. The information flowing is dynamic as this model supports movement from one pane to another as trust ebbs and flows and participants exchange feedback. The relationship between the student and me becomes bound within these windows and we both view each other within this model.

Open/ public self Things you know about yourself that others do	Blind self Things you don't know about yourself and others do
Private self Things you know about yourself and others don't	Unknown self Things you don't know about yourself and others don't

Figure 10.5 Johari's Window (the basic structure)

- **Open/ public self**

This window symbolises the free and open exchange of information between the self and others; it is the individual's public behaviour that is available to everyone. The pane increases in size as the level of trust increases between self and others, as more information - particularly personally relevant information - is shared. The 'openness' of this area, indicates a sense of trust. As the empathetic-critiquer and discussion facilitator, it is important to correctly gauge whether or not the student is open and able to receive feedback, as misreading the cues or signs of openness, could result in conflict with or withdrawal by the student.

- **Private self**

For some reason or another, the individual keeps this information hidden from others. There is a fear of risking too much, with exposure to criticism and uncertainty. This masking is a form of protection for the self and revelation is controlled by the individual. The problem with this window is that the reality of the situation leading from a true understanding of the individual may remain blocked. I see my role as empathetic-critiquer in facilitating this unblocking, so that both student and I are working from the same page as it were and that there is an honesty in our relationship that allows for 'truth'.

- **Blind self**

It is quite possible in relationships with others to communicate all kinds of information of which the self is unaware, but others pick up. They do this by verbal cues, gestures, the way things are said, the tone or timbre of the voice or the style in which the self relates to others. The extent of this insensitivity to one's own behaviour and what it may communicate to others can be surprising and disconcerting. How others respond to one's behaviour is very dependent on their overall attitude towards the individual and their capacity of tolerance and flexibility to accommodate this behaviour.

The blind spot is very important in terms of personal development and demands considerable self-awareness and control. If affection is felt, threshold of tolerance will be high, but distancing will take place if no affection is felt. In a working relationship low affection/esteem for the other and blind-spot behaviours is a recipe for interpersonal conflict. It is for this reason (if I have interpreted Luft correctly), that relationship building between facilitator and student is so important and where reflection influencing self-awareness is so powerful. This type of personal learning involves the

difficulties of building new, consistent modes of behaviour. The focus of critical reflective thinking is on nursing practice, and students are not conscious that this learning, in fact, addresses their own personal behaviour. The very same strategies implicit in reflective practice are inherent in changes of the inner self. These include firstly, awareness about the blind spot behaviours. There has to be a need and willingness to do something about it. This culminates in action. Again, my role as facilitator is to promote this self-awareness and support the types of thinking and behaviour that promote self-development. Nevertheless in many life situations, people have to and do accommodate to the behaviour of others and if 'others' behaviour is impulsive or irresponsible, they can do considerable damage.

- **Unknown self**

What affects me as empathetic-critiquer and the reflective writer may be below the surface of awareness of both parties. Previous experiences may give rise to aversions learned through experience. Both parties may have unrecognised resources and traits. Learning opportunities and exchange of feedback in a supportive settings may allow for these influences to surface and be opened - but only if the desire is there. I am very aware that as empathetic-critiquer, I am moving into a very sensitive realm, which requires self-understanding.

- **Giving Feedback**

People wittingly or unwittingly hurt others by giving critical feedback about blind spots. As empathetic-critiquer, I could also be exhibiting my blind self also - using my critique to service my own needs (revenge, humiliation, misguided intolerance). Feedback comes from the Private Self and it is important that the timing and circumstances are appropriate and that the receiver is not only

open but also requests the feedback. It is likely to come best from someone who is acting in the Open Arena. Such feedback is only likely to be useful if the relationship of both is within the open areas where there is limited distortion or ambiguity of meaning. The openness and constancy of feedback, as well as awareness that feedback processes are taking place, is supported by my research into the critiquing process.

Both the model of Four quadrants and Johari's window provide insight into the concept of personal identity, and although they have some common elements, they are different:

- The first, because it considers the person within her experience.
- The second because it focuses on communication, through which the conscious and the unconscious aspects of the self are revealed through interpersonal relationships.

The following identities were themes revealed through my coding of the journals and developed out of my understanding of the data:

(B) Philosophical identity

This is the student's personal philosophy on life (life view) and attempts to connect the past, present and future. More than this, it tries to relate the student's individual experience to the more universal experiences of mankind and incorporates the student's values, principles and morals

(C) Pragmatic identity

This relates to the individual's practical, down-to-earth, realistic perception of the world as it is. I see the philosophical and ethical identity as values the student aspires to – but the pragmatic self is the

one that lives in the real world where idealism sometimes gives way to pragmatism. The conflict arises when there is cognitive dissonance between the reality and the individual's morality and the individual is not able to reconcile the two.

(D) Ethical identity

Nursing is a moral enterprise, and the core of the profession is its moral tradition. Nurses are taught that respect for the dignity and humanity of their patients is deeply bound to the service tradition. Ethics, morality and philosophy of the profession need to be congruent with the personal code; otherwise this can result in conflict. It became clear during reading and analysis (the coding) of the reflective journals, that this was an area of concern to students. Moral and ethical issues crossed boundaries between work ethics and personal ethics and were generally rooted in the ethical conflicts that arise in a world of rapid changes, requiring the students to constantly reflect and review attitudes and beliefs in their application to new situations.

(E) Self-identity

Self-identity refers to the individual's personal sense of self. It is subjective and linked to her experiences of those aspects of self-identity that allow the individual to perceive herself as a unique, whole person. This is clearly incorporated within *personal identity* – but self-identity goes beyond the individual (while still incorporating the sense of self) to include others in their understanding of this self.

This concept of self-identity is closely related to the *self-concept*, the difference being that the self-concept is the self-evaluation of the individual characterising herself, whereas the individual identity is closely linked to how the person views herself in relation to others and her social environment.

Both concepts are fundamental to the development of the self-identity. Therefore, the individual identity is both identifying self with others as well as defining the self as a unique person with unique characteristics, traits, needs, drives, attitudes, beliefs, interests and values (Gerdes, Moore, Ochse and van Ede, 1998). These descriptors can be identified in the student journals through their relationships with family, client, doctor, colleague, health care worker and community; by traits exhibited by the students reflecting the identities of the students and by recognition of their needs. Emotional security is closely tied to self-acceptance and self-disclosure, a key element in the reflective process. This is linked to the ability to express feelings openly, but with due regard to the feelings of others. This sharing of the inner experience with self and others is fundamental to self-acceptance, which in turn influences the individual's ability to accept others (Gerdes, et al., 1988).

There is a certain amount of overlap with the revelations seen through Johari's Window.

(F) Nursing (work) identity

Work plays a fundamental role in determining the identity of the individual, and in fact, could be said to define the person. It impacts on the individual's position in her community, where she lives, what relationships are established and the daily pattern of her and her family's way of life. The individual's potential as a human being can be realised through work and can determine how she views herself. Part of this can be identified in the journals through issues on Batho Pele (responsiveness to clients) and good practice; the student's personal philosophy on nursing; how she views poor practice (stories about poor health care practice) and how she sees herself or others managing health care problems.

(G) Cultural/ South African identity (social identity/ ethnic identity)

South Africa, as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society has emerged with a complex social system, and our historical development has shaped our core values. Particularly in the wake of the post-apartheid system, the influence of country, culture, politics, history have formed a frame of reference for individuals in South Africa that are critical to their self-perception. Public messages on who they are, how they rate as well as the legislation that supports the way that the individual is perceived, impacts on self-perception. These issues are identified in the journals through the students' choice, understanding and interpretation of their national being and issues that are being discussed are South African life issues, racism, cultural concerns, political issues and concern regarding broader issues e.g. at community, national or global levels.

(H) Student identity

The students we work with are adult learners, many at different stages of their lives. They are professional nurses and most are studying to improve their qualifications, skills and professional practice. Their motivation to learn is varied and the factors that influence their student identity focus around their learning needs, the difficulties they encounter such as time issues, understanding of requirements and materials and workload pull. They are also affected by relationships between peers and teaching staff, as well as the resources available. (These have been highlighted in Chapter Six).

(I) Family identity

It is possible that the family identity affects the students I work with more than perhaps in undergraduate programmes. Most of these students are strongly affected by their family commitments and as noted in Chapter 6, Section 6.6, many are single parents and are the main or strong contributors to the maintenance of the family system. Families can provide either a support or

a burden to the student. Each student who charts her learning course must take her family needs into account.

(J) Spiritual identity

The act of reflection requires the art of introspection for the purposes of transformation, to whatever degree, so that the old and the new self-views are integrated within a new self-definition. Wade (1998:714) suggests that this transformation, is in a sense, a process of psychic and spiritual self-healing, where one extends awareness “beyond the outer mind” to an expanded state of consciousness. Pierson (1999:297) observes that nurses work with clients in everyday relationships that range from the mundane to the sublime and she suggests that while focusing on “restoration of inner harmony and potential for growth”, they do not rely on technical knowledge but intuitive, creative, aesthetic and “spiritual and experiential approaches of knowing, being and doing.” Nurses enter the profession with a clear concept of the definition of health as “a dynamic state and process of physical, psychological, social and spiritual well-being” (Pierson, 1999:295), and so it stands to reason that well-being does not just apply to their clients. A holistic awareness and acceptance of the integrated self can lead to a heightened and healthy awareness and sound world view.

10.1.3.2 World view

A world view is the particular perspective with which an individual sees the world. Perception of the world depends on multiple factors and influences, from socialization in early childhood through to simply frame of mind at a particular point in time.

In 4.6.4.2 I explored the concepts of single and double loop learning. Greenwood (1998) indicates that the serious reflective practitioner goes beyond basic problem-solving into the realms of double

loop learning where she doesn't just look for a means to an end, but also explores the consequences and appropriateness of the intended action. In this way, values and norms underpin the reflection as do the social structures within which they function. Greenwood (1998) believes that only by reflecting on this 'world' of their creation, can their intended actions become meaningful as they connect their behaviour with their purported values and beliefs.

10.1.3.3 The experience and the approach

This component of the student's frame of reference involves the journey undertaken. It describes the actual experience and how they have approached the reflective journey. This is identified in the journal in terms of their rationale for reflection, their evaluation of the process, insights developed about their reflections and their valuing of journal as summarised in Tables 7.7 and 7.8.

(Again, these identities (A to H), the world view and the experience and the approach were uncovered during the coding process of the data, and were interrogated within my reflexive journal. They are outlined in Table 10.4 as the Transformative Intellectual's Frame of Reference).

Additionally, the journey also incorporates the framework developed by Glaze (2002) to neatly describe this process, although she does note that there is no clear delineation between stages, as they frequently overlap one another and nor do all student progress through all stages:

The Reflective Journey (Glaze, 2002: 265-272)

- **Initial stage – 'entry shock'**

As in Glaze's study, as my students were introduced to their assignment on reflective journaling, the students both verbally and in writing, articulated their concern and dismay about the amount of

prospective effort required (as demonstrated in 7.3.6.18). As the journaling assignment progressed, there was a growing awareness that the task required far more of them than they had initially anticipated.

- **Early difficulties – ‘the struggle’**

In her study, Glaze recognised students’ earlier struggles with the reflective process as they were more comfortable initially with concrete learning styles and structured format, as opposed to the narrative. However, as the course progressed, students found the reflective process also fostered their academic skills. While I personally did not worry about grammar, syntax or spelling, I did focus on argument development and this, along with narrative style, too was difficult for a number of students, as seen in Chapter Seven, Section 7.3.6.20.

- **Acceptance**

Again, I find similarities with Glaze’s experience. Students in general recognised the need to have a safe environment and to negotiate the process in order to establish a relationship of trust with the ‘empathetic-critiquer’. This took time, as seen in Section 7.3.6.18.

- **Familiarity – ‘making connections’**

Glaze required students to base their reflections on “appropriate reflective literature”, in other words, literature that supported what they were thinking and saying. She was, however, working with students at a master’s degree level.

I did not require this for their reflective narratives, although this was an expectation with the sections linked to news and journal articles. Those who did ground their reflections did find them valuable, as

seen in Sections 7.3.6.12 and 7.3.6.13 and as Glaze (2002:268) notes: “This process fostered awareness that the literature was beneficial in helping them to illuminate difficulties experienced in practice and in confirming and validating their feelings”.

- **Learning to reflect more deeply**

Glaze used Goodman’s (1984) levels of reflection, whilst I used van Aswegen’s (1998) Question Prompt in Table 6.2, both of which served the purpose of helping students to reflect more deeply. Notes Glaze (2002:269): “It encouraged students to consider broader social forces, issues such as emancipation and justice and political factors”.

- **Perspective transformation stage**

As Glaze notes, this is very similar to Schön’s concept of framing and reframing, which allowed students to ‘see’ the situation in a new way, through the process of reflection and analysis. Glaze (2002:270) supports this by explaining: “Students identified how analysis of their critical incidents enabled them to change their thinking. They became much more aware of how social forces shaped behaviour.” Chapter Seven, Section 7.3.6.7 exemplifies this stage.

- **Internalization**

While Glaze identifies integrating the reflective process within the students’ current thinking, I identified this process in 7.3.6.2 under active learning.

- **Dissemination**

This component of Glaze’s reflective journey found no reference to my study. Glaze (2002: 269) describes it as one where

“Most practitioners were keen to promote reflective practice. However, they perceived that the majority of their colleagues had superficial perceptions of what was involved in reflecting effectively. They were concerned that colleagues considered themselves to be reflective when in fact they were not.”

Table 10.3 Transformative Intellectual's Frame of Reference

1. Identities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal identity• Philosophical identity• Pragmatic identity• Ethical identity• Self-identity• Nursing (work) identity• Cultural/ South African identity• Student identity• Family identity• Spiritual identity
2. World-view
3. The experience and the approach

(Key factors, internal and external, identified within the journal, influencing and guiding the practitioner's reflections)

10.1.4 John's Framing Perspective in relation to and influencing my perspective

Johns (2002:22) developed a framing perspective, mainly for the guidance of practitioners wanting to fulfil the scope of potential learning. His is a comprehensive approach with each perspective forming a cue to challenge the practitioner to explore her potential for reflective practice This is not too dissimilar to the **Transformative Intellectual's Frame of Reference** which I developed and which is

shown in Table 10.3 John's Framing Perspective is useful in that it can support, elaborate or add to my own framing.

Johns (2002:21) notes, "Philosophical framing helps the practitioner to know the nature of desirable practice". Johns has developed a Model of Structured Reflection, which is not that dissimilar to the Question Prompt I adopted from van Aswegen (1998) in Chapter Seven, Table 7.2. There is a significant difference in our approach however. Johns used a *guided* reflective approach where the process of reflection was key. Each student had a specific purpose and was guided accordingly. My intent was different in that the purpose of these reflective journals was to:

- Provide a means for engaging students in a learning process on a continuous and regular basis, particularly in light of the limited student/lecturer contact
- Promote critical reflective practice
- Provide a forum for an awareness of current events as a macro context for nursing practice and support critical thinking
- Encourage academic literacy through practice and the provision of a psychologically safe environment
- Promote self-directed learning

This has meant that my guidance has been more in terms of technical assistance, in orienting students to the framework, structure, process and rationale of reflective journaling and acting as an 'empathetic-critiquer' by using a questioning approach to support and challenge their thinking processes. The students were free to choose the direction, the topic and the process and were limited (depending on how one views this) by a self-evaluation rubric on critical reflective writing as well as being asked to respond to the question "What are the implications of this reflection on your

nursing practice?” However, the fact that he used a different approach does not affect the validity of its use for my purposes. The focus for both is on promoting reflection.

10.1.4.1 Philosophical framing

Although our approach is different, we both would agree,

“the effective practitioner requires a clear and valid vision to give purpose and direction to her practice. I emphasise *valid* because beliefs and values are confronted for their appropriateness within a wider, contemporary view of the nature of nursing and health care” (Johns, 2002:22).

This forms the basis for Philosophical framing. I see that the philosophical perspective that underpins the practitioner’s personal philosophy must impinge on her work philosophy – and if there is harmony between the two, I believe that her work practice will be sound. It is quite significant that one of the first tasks the student undertakes is to determine personal and work philosophy and identify congruence between the two, or find an approach that will harmonise the two. This is included in the **Philosophical Identity** of the **Transformative Intellectual’s Frame of Reference**. Initially, this task is theoretical and idealistic, but students are constantly challenged to understand, appreciate or reject conflicting philosophies so that at the end of the learning process, they should have determined who they are and why they function in the way that they do. This lies clearly within the boundaries of van Aswegen’s (1998) model in that the transformative intellectual’s energy source for critical reflective practice lies in:

- Recognition of the importance of intellectual humility, intellectual courage, intellectual empathy, intellectual integrity, intellectual perseverance, faith in reason and an intellectual sense of justice

- Concern for and emotional involvement in *care* for, growth of, and *empowerment* of others
- The ethical norms and values of the nursing profession
- Recognition of the need for *expert* nursing practice (van Aswegen, 1998).

10.1.4.2 Role framing

Johns (2002:23) recognises the boundaries that are formed by the practitioners in terms of their understanding of their roles and relationships. This is particularly important in the South African context where role clarification becomes somewhat blurred as a result of an overburdened, understaffed health system (Lehmann and Saunders, 2002). The role of reflection, suggests Johns (2002:23) is to “clarify role boundaries with others and enhance the practitioner’s sense of autonomy, authority and responsibility, besides developing effective ways of working with others towards mutual goals”. Again, this is clearly within the scope of van Aswegen’s (1998) model.

The roles that I have identified so far, are the practitioner’s role as a nurse within the community of nursing; a nurse as a staff member working within a health care organisation; a nurse within a nurse-client relationship; a student at DIT; an student with collegial, staff and mentor relationships; a woman; a nurse within an interdisciplinary group of staff members and an individual as part of a family and community context.

These are delineated in the various identities of the **Transformative Intellectual’s Frame of Reference**. The issues of concern lie within the role boundaries, the power and authority relationships with others, suggests Johns (2002).

10.1.4.3 Theoretical framing

Theory underpins practice and where reflection finds congruency between personal knowing and theory, this enables theory to be assimilated more easily and acceptably into daily practice, suggests Johns (2002:24). Theory is not just accepted “at face value but critiqued for its value to inform or frame emerging practice issues.” One of the challenges I faced as an educator was precisely this questioning, understanding and integration of theory with practice. I chose to approach this issue by using the workplace as the context for praxis and focused on students’ understanding of theory through experience, identification and integration (Chapter Five, Sections 5.3.2.2 and 5.4.1). As an educator, I commonly found that students in general were comfortable with learning theory by rote and so chose to approach this issue simply and practically. I believed that many students are disconcerted by the technical language and format of theory and so reduced the focus on labelling, tabling and referencing theory. Instead, I chose the narrative format of story telling by a questioning technique in their tasks and tutorials. In other words, I asked students to tell me about what they did and how nursing management (as this was the subject) was approached in both their workplace and home in their own words. These tasks were supported by readings, which provided a theoretical underpinning of the tasks but were not a focal part of the outcome – and in fact, became almost incidental to the process. In this way, theory became part of the process – but in a subtle, unobtrusive way. This same approach was used in the reflective journals. The theoretical framing of Johns (2002) connects to **Student Identity** of the **Transformative Intellectual’s Frame of Reference**. John’s (2002) focuses on accessing this theoretical perspective through the practitioner accessing, critiquing and assimilating relevant theory within the practitioner’s personal knowing in ways that make sense of her experience and that inform her practice. van Aswegen’s (1998) model supports the intentional use of *deep* learning approaches as the cognitive and affective skills needed to engage in critical reflective process which must be taught, practiced, refined and reinforced.

10.1.4.4 Realistic perspective framing

Very simply, Johns (2002) recognises that in order for practitioners to become not merely passive recipients dominated by external events or factors or, as van Aswegen (1998) would suggest, not become autopilot nurses, they need to understand the forces around and within themselves in a realistic manner. These social norms and forces need to become transparent and then the practitioner needs to find a healthy way of living within the system that will be congruent with her own value system. This realistic perspective framing finds resonance in the **Pragmatic Identity** of the **Transformative Intellectual's Frame of Reference**. As Johns (2002:24) notes

“Just because we can understand something differently does not mean we can change it. In response the guide supports the practitioner to ‘live with and chip away these forces’ as a process over time whilst keeping in focus a strong vision of what she wants to achieve.”

Johns (2002) also warns that the guide has an ethical responsibility in attempting to push the practitioner through inflexible obstacles and that sensitivity is required. Again, this is supported by van Aswegen's 1998 model where the educator as transformative intellectual sees critical reflection during teaching and learning as a significant step towards developing an antidote for *autopilot* functioning and reliance on others. This is where the educator allows learners to search for ideas, manipulate knowledge and experience; tries various approaches and occasionally breaks rules and encourages self-responsibility and self-critique in learners by questioning self-limiting beliefs (habits of mind). Johns (2002) focuses on the concepts of acceptance and understanding that issues in practice that may appear immutable, may in fact be immutable, or only open to slow change through different approaches by means of challenging and supporting the practitioner.

10.1.4.5 Problem framing

Johns (2003:25) uses guided reflection to enable practitioners to clarify issues and problems within the problem solving process of a “reflexive spiral.” I have accommodated this section under Reflective Evidence in Section 10.1.2.2.

10.1.4.6 Temporal framing

Johns (2003:25) looks at the experience in terms of how it “loops together to give the narrative its distinct pattern, coherence and reflective dimension, linking the present with the past whilst anticipating the future.” This is reflected in **The experience and the approach** in the **Transformative Intellectual’s Frame of Reference**. This also finds resonance in van Aswegen’s 1998 model in the context of critical reflective practice where the interaction between the external and internal environment is dynamic, dialogical and complex and is expressed through the narratives in the reflective journal.

10.1.4.7 Parallel process framing

This is an interesting form of framing whereby Johns (2002) draws a parallel between the journey taken by the practitioner in parallel to the guided reflection – both in terms of the guided reflection experienced by the practitioner and her practical experience as well as the guided reflection by the guide and the student. I can relate to this through the parallels experienced in my reflexive journal and the reflective journals of the students. Johns (2002:25) notes, “In parallel process framing these dynamics are surfaced and worked with consciously even though they operate on a more subliminal level. This also reflects the way guided reflection and clinical practice mirror each other as holistic practices.” How I experience the students’ reflective journals and other participation in the Management IV course has developed through this reflexive process, which is part of the research

process. At the same time, how does the student perceive the connection between the process of journaling (or other forms of reflective guidance) and their practice? This is reflected in **The experience and the approach** (with particular reference to evaluation and valuing the process) in the **Transformative Intellectual's Frame of Reference**.

10.1.4.8 Developmental framing

Johns (2002:25) final framing culminates in the practitioner realising worthy practice by either “constructing appropriate framing structures within the unfolding research process or by accessing and juxtaposing structure from extant theory.” In my study, the students do realise worthy practice, but in terms of their self-evaluation, which is a far looser structure than that envisaged by Johns. However, one needs to keep in mind that John's students are operating on another level (mostly at Masters' level).

John's Framing has provided a useful mirror for viewing the journals, as well as a very good framework for viewing reflective practice. While it does not directly impact on my analysis, and so has not been directly used as such, it has presented me with a sounding board to consider my theories.

10.2 APPROACH USED TO EVALUATE THE JOURNALS AS A MEDIUM FOR CRITICAL REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND THE PART PLAYED BY EMPATHETIC-CRITIQUER (THE EDUCATOR AS AGENT)

The purpose of the reflective journals was to support critical thinking and reflection, to enable students to journey through a medium of learning that would promote their development as critical reflective practitioners. The means of evaluating this development is partially addressed by the Theoretical Framework for Analysis of Reflective Journals (Figure 10.2). Van Aswegen's model and

the research objectives must also be included. But the analysis, to be comprehensive, must also include the critique of the journals. As critiquer, I was part of the journaling process, and so I had to consider *how* and *in what form* my critiquing took place. So, two tables were developed in Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.6.7, one on types of *supportive responses* to student entries (Table 7.4) and one on types of *questions* to promote student responses (Table 7.5). As I was the empathetic-critiquer, and crucial to the process, I analysed and interpreted the part I played as agent, but I then also had to find a way in which the findings could be authenticated and checked for accuracy. So, I decided to use critical readers to authenticate this process and have clarified this in Chapter Four, Section 4.20.

This study has been guided throughout by van Aswegen's model, in which reflective journaling was an acknowledged teaching and learning strategy. Therefore, the model also provides a medium for analysis of the journals in the following chapter. Because the model too, needed to be tested, I have included the criteria for both the critical nurse practitioner as well as the nurse educator as the agent, in the role of the empathetic-critiquer.

10.2.1 The critical reflective nurse practitioner

The explanation of this section of the model can be found in Chapter Two, Sections 2.4.2.1 and 2.4.4.1 and 2.4.4.3. According to van Aswegen (1998:297-298) the critical reflective nurse practitioner does not accept her practice or that of others at face value. She is not afraid to confront the processes of nursing practice and proactively tries to find ways to improve practice. In this way, she is both a role model and an inspiration to other as she shares her vision and is constantly searching for opportunities for self-growth and empowering others in creative and flexible ways. She achieves this through "open communication and trust."

Monitoring growth (personal, professional and academic):

I have used van Aswegen's (1998) model to support learning that will promote this form of practice and the critical readers, Mari, Sarah and Jane, were asked to review the student journal globally in terms of the following questions:

(1) Has this student demonstrated growth through her reflective journal in terms of van Aswegen's (1998) concept of a critical reflective practitioner in her professional, personal and in her academic capacity as a student of learning? (2) What evidence is there to support this?

Van Aswegen (1998:298) provides a comprehensive overview of the critical reflective transformational practitioner (i.e. the nursing student) and the professional nurse as agent of critical reflective practice (i.e. the educator) which I have summarised in Figure 10.6:

Characteristics of the critical reflective transformational practitioner <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenges• Persistent• Openness and humility• Purposeful, forceful and energetic• Search for knowledge and answers• Proactive, innovative, intuitive• Self-confident; self-aware, self-disciplined• Tolerant; suspends judgment• Focused• Multilogical thinker• Consistent intellectual standards• Academic integrity• Positive regard for others• Reasoned thinking• Courage, empathy• Sense of justice• Moral integrity	The professional nurse as an agent of critical reflective practice: <p>She is a practitioner, manager, role model, leader and innovator, functions in an integrative way. Her practice is self-regulated, independent, empowered, and caring. To realise this role she consciously uses critical reflective skills to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• engage in critical reflective withdrawal• promote quality nursing care and caring attitudes in other nurse practitioners• promote sufficient self-knowledge, skills and experience• function in an interdependent and interrelated way• practice, through critical self-awareness and reflection• interrogate theory as a basis for nursing interventions• promote a nurturing environment which supports growth, autonomy and self-actualization. While accepting and respecting others, she takes control over her own destiny
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Figure 10.6: The critical reflective transformational practitioner (Van Aswegen, 1998)

10.2.2 Evidence of my role as the empathetic-critiquer

The educator's role in the student's reflective journey is to dialogue with the student, through an empathetic mode of critique in the student's reflective journal. (This is further explained in Chapter Two, Section 2.4.4.2 but summarised in Figure 10.7). The purpose of the empathetic critique is to

promote, support and enhance the student's ability to think both critically and reflectively, and so empower the student through the learning process. It requires intuition and judgements so that the critiquer can, as John's (2002) notes, read the signs and help the writer surface the issues. The three critical readers, Mari, Sarah and Jane were asked to review my role in the light of van Aswegen's criteria of the transformative educator and provide corresponding evidence to support their contentions.

10.2.2.1 Conceptual definition: the transformative educator as agent

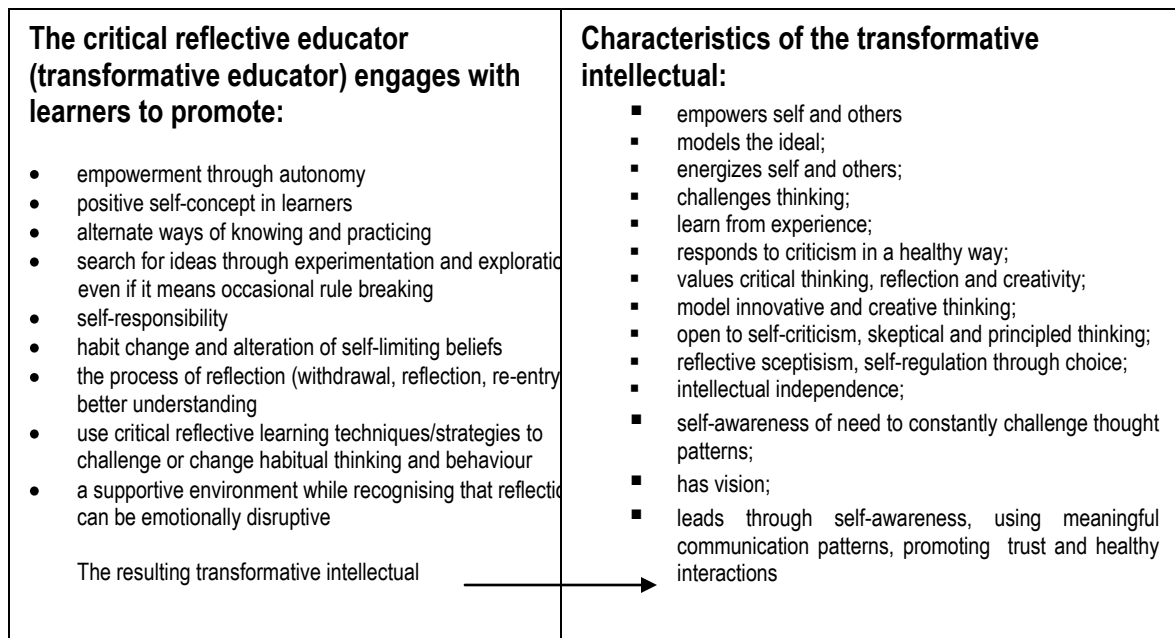


Figure 10.7: The registered nurse practitioner and educator as *agents* of critical reflective practice and transformation (van Aswegen, 1998)

According to van Aswegen (1998:301-302) the transformative educator is one who marries “the language of critique with the language of possibility”. She demonstrates professional maturity and her concern and obligation lies with a desire to improve practice. Her focus is on fostering innovative, flexible and creative patterns of thinking, with a major emphasis on challenging predetermined and rigid modes of thinking – “including principles, theories, policies and “right” ways of thinking and

behaving.” She endeavors to enable students to become empowered to become “responsible agents” by encouraging critical reflective thinking.

10.2.3 Ethical posture: Perspective on ethical student/educator relationships

Both through responding with written dialogue through the reflective journals or verbal dialogue in the tutorials or class discussion, I have become increasingly aware of the need for sensitivity and care or ‘mindfulness’ of my relationship with students, a concept further elucidated in Chapter Three, Section 3.9 and Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.3. Much of my engagement is as a result of an intuitive awareness, but how to share this with others or in fact, monitor myself, is not so easy. Rich and Parker (1995) support this concern, warning that supportive reflective sessions can evoke uncontrolled emotional responses through cathartic sharing of personal stories and strongly advocate a humanistic Rogerian support for these students. This requires a comprehensive and explicit preparation of those in control of the sessions. If not, it is more than likely that these experiences may be harmful, or at the very least, counterproductive as deep seated vulnerabilities may be exposed and threatened.

A text by Freedman and Combs (1996) titled Narrative Therapy, within which a chapter titled *Relationships and ethics*, struck a chord within me. Narrative therapy deals essentially with the world of clinical therapists who use the narratives (stories) of their clients’ lives in order to help their clients arrive at meaning and fulfillment through the understanding of these experiences within a therapeutic relationship. I, on the other hand, am not involved in a therapeutic relationship with my students, but in a sense, am desirous of setting up a relationship within an educational context that will also allow

the students to understand how their social realities, specifically their personal, occupational and educational reality, have been constructed. This requires trust and sensitivity.

Freedman and Combs (1996:268-269) offer a question guide provided by Michael White and David Epston - that directed them in their choices of theory and practice. I have modified it to fit with van Aswegen's Critical Reflective Practice model for learning and education:

10.2.3.1 Questions promoting engagement with and understanding of student perspectives

1. How does this model allow you to see the student?
2. How does this approach compel you to engage with students so that they are empowered?
3. How does reflective dialogue through reflective journaling or Socratic discussion affect the way that students relate to you?
4. How does it have them view themselves?
5. How is the student being redescribed/redefined by it?
6. Does it invite students to see the facilitator or themselves as experts on themselves?
7. Does it divide and isolate students or give them a sense of belonging and collaboration?
8. Do the questions you ask "lead in generative or normative directions (e.g. propose alternative or conserve dominant social practices)?"
9. Does the model require the person to enter the educator's "expert" knowledge or does it require the educator to enter the "world" of the student?
10. What is the model's definition of "professionalism"? Does the idea of "professionalism" have more to do with the educator's presentation of self to the student seeking to learn?

The insights provided by Freedman and Combs (1996) on the processes resulting from this questioning framework resonate with me.

I have been struck by the value of questions as opposed to pronouncements of right and wrong or directions indicating a specific way of doing things from the early stages of this project – which is also why the Constructivist approach to teaching and learning holds so much appeal. Questions, suggest Freedman et al. (1996) invite examination, which means that those following this educational process are not given directions on how to respond but rather, are invited to consider their practice, their own process of response and the results of their response. This approach pays respect to the individual, rather than compliance to a set of rules.

Freedman et al. (1996) suggest these ethics are about relationships and people and do not indicate absolute truths. This should then allow the valuing of the individual student whose ‘voice’ is being heard. It enables a sharing in their experiences, which requires an ethical stance of acceptance for their thoughts. It is the students’ thoughts that are central – the empathetic-critiquer’s questioning and responses are peripheral.

Freedman et al. (1996) indicate that ethics are about effects on people’s lives. There is a micro picture in the intent of the journals, but the macro picture focuses on students developing an insight and understanding of themselves, and through this, becoming better practitioners.

If students are to trust their teacher, a relationship that supports this trust is important (and so I return again to the echo of Johari’s Window). Which leads me to a central issue: if this relationship between student and teacher demands more of one than a teacher is willing to give, it is not appropriate to

teach in this particular way. Perhaps as Freedman et al. (1996) suggest, it is time that ethics dictate the relationship.

10.2.4 Critiquing response process: A way of 'seeing' and understanding the reflective journals

There are certain questions asked by Carey (2004) in her Narrative workshop on *Re-authoring*, that complement White's and Epston's Question Guide and coalesce around some of my thinking on how I viewed the students' reflective journals. Yes, I developed a frame of reference using the filters of the students' 'voices', my understanding of their sense of self and how this was defined within the journals. But I did more than this and Carey has encapsulated this with her "Questions to ask of the outsider witness" – the outsider witness in this case being myself as both the empathetic-critiquer, but also as the researcher:

Critiquer response process: Processes that would enable the empathetic-critiquer to facilitate understanding of the reflective journaling process

1. **Identifying the expression.** Here I was caught by what stood out for me in the relationship between the student and I and it usually helped me to initiate my interpretation of the student's journal. There were certain things about the student – a characteristic, an incident or a series of incidents that allowed me to see the student in a specific, unique light.
2. **Describing the image.** Once I had remembered and considered these 'pictures', I then thought about how I saw them and how these events or pictures affected my image of the student. As Carey (2004) asks "How did it shape your thoughts about who this person was in

terms of what is important to them? What was suggested to you about this person's purposes, values, beliefs, hopes, dreams and commitments?"

3. **Embodying responses.** Once I had thought about describing the image, I frequently reacted personally to the student's thoughts and ideas, especially if they touched a personal chord of my own. While I understood the need to see issues as the student saw them, I could not avoid thinking about the entries in terms of my own values and what moved me.
4. **Acknowledge transport.** As I processed the entries and the thoughts that bound them together as a cohesive whole, I found my thoughts shifting. I had returned to these journals a second time in a different way, and often saw things more clearly or in a slightly (or markedly) different light.

10.2.5 The critique

Feedback is a critical part of this reflective process and has been discussed in Chapter Three, Sections 3.12 and 3.12.2 as well as in Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.6.7 and Table 7.4. The type of feedback in the reflective journals is different to the constructive critique required in a formal academic exercise, for example, the assignment.

I developed a framework, **Critiquer questioning and responses to students' reflective journals** (Table 10.4) or the analysis of the type of written questions and comments I had engaged in with the students. The following is an excerpt from this table, providing an example of just one of the types of questioning included in the journals.

Table 10.4: Example of critiquer questioning and responses to students' reflective journals

Critiquer-Questioning to promote different levels of thinking (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation)	Examples from Students' Reflective Journals
<p>Socratic questioning: Probe assumptions questions- Many questions can center around the concept of assumptions. The student may be asked for clarification, verification, explanation, or reliability of the assumption. Students may also be asked to identify another assumption which might apply to the particular case.</p> <p>What are you assuming? What is Karen assuming? What could we assume instead? You seem to be assuming _____. Do I understand you correctly? You seem to be assuming _____. How do you justify this as your position? All of your reasoning is dependent on the fact that _____. Why have you based your reasoning on _____ rather than _____? You seem to be assuming _____. How do you justify taking that for granted? Is that always the case? Why do you think the assumption holds here? Why would someone make that assumption? (Paul, 1993 in TRA)</p>	<p>Carol 6 March 2002</p> <p>What does invasion of privacy mean to you? Who, specifically, in the company, did you and your General Manager apologies to? Were the specific employees aware of the breach in confidentiality or, only top management? What are the implications for this, do you think?</p> <p>In terms of the first question, do your new procedures fully address this issue, do you think?</p> <p>Carol 5 September</p> <p>What are the results of your interactions with Dr P? Do you get the results you want? Do you think that because 'you have always worked towards the best interest of the company' that this allows you to override his values or beliefs? How can you anticipate and manage his way of 'always being in a hurry', do you think?</p>

Although the critiquing is important, the focus of this research is on the promotion of students' critical reflective practice. Therefore, although I have analysed my critique in terms of the Critiquer Questioning and Responses framework with corresponding evidence to illustrate the process, it has been moved to Appendix 10.1. (A simplified version of this framework has already been introduced in Chapter Six in the form of Tables 7.4 and 7.5). I have, however, retained the critical readers' comments in order to verify my own interpretation of my practice.

10.2.6 Critiquer/facilitator as transformative educator. Global comments: Jane (critical reader)

"From the outset in my analysis of the journals, the Facilitator has demonstrated that she is a Transformative Educator, applying the principles contained in van Aswegen to positive effect.

Embodying a Holistic Approach to this exercise, the Facilitator encouraged students to encompass the global concept of including all stakeholders and relevant factors in this exercise. This involved

not only students, staff and Management, et al, but also considering more deeply the communities they serve, as well as keeping in touch with the global concept and current affairs by accessing articles or information – not only Nursing Literature - for their journals, and commenting on them.

The selection of the articles is wide ranging, as can be seen from the journals and referenced on the Journals Listed Entries Section. Insofar as tutorials are concerned, the Facilitator as 'prompt and goad' looked at challenging issues that had been referred to, such as the video for children, abortion, HIV/Aids, and recognition of professionalism, others.

Through the Facilitator's comments and questions in the dairies and tutorials, she has constantly urged students to consider their assumptions, beliefs, and practices, through a process of rigorous reflective practice – evidenced in the Socratic Debate on the issue of changing the system, a Tutorial (Bisa, Boniswe and Jabu), and in the Tutorial involving Zinzi, Musa and Xolisi. This has not only enabled students to extend their understanding of their Nursing practice, but of other issues that directly or indirectly impinge on their practice.

Circular questioning, the discussion and returning to issues, both professional, personal and academic, both in the journals through comments and pertinent questions, and as evidenced in a current tutorial, or at another date, was effectively handled, often with the matter reaching a satisfactory resolution.

The increasing challenges offered by vascillating parameters in this country, and its effect on the country, economy and practice as a whole, was a major theme in this exercise. Cultural practice, traditional values and their impact on the way that people think were issues sensitively handled by the Facilitator.

On the theme or issues of HIV/Aids, this elicited in-depth inter-action. Sometimes this was based on public generalisations and mis-information, and it was here that both the Socratic and Circular Questioning were most effective. The Government's attitude towards treatment, the negative effect on the economy where the wage-earner's have been most severely affected, the enormous burden of caring for children who have lost parents, lead to profound debate among the students, with the

Facilitator urging reflection on these matters and possible solutions. Most students appeared aware that the problem was not just a one-on-one thing, but that there was a need to take action: all were truly concerned and even more so those practitioners most directly affected.

It was agreed that condoms were not all that reliable (Jena – questioned this in a tutorial), and that abstinence was a positive behaviour but that ways of encouraging abstinence had been tried, using all forms of media – but with little success. The Facilitator's guidance was very useful, encouraging students to express how they felt after thinking the matter through, by comments and questions in the journals and challenging issues in the tutorials.

This issue also encapsulated sexual behaviour – and the need for education of all parties from children to adults wherever possible. The thorny issue of the 'very' explicit video for children, led to much debate and conflicting opinions. Here dealing with moral principles, including abortion, the Facilitator appeared to face a difficult decision in encouraging objectivity among the students. It is to her credit that a level of this was obtained and the contentions issues if not totally resolved, appeased!!

By applying theoretical constructs such as those of the exploration of mind set and identity, the deeper understanding of the self, extending the multi-layered aspects of this exercise, some students appear to have accepted that both within and without the self, we are all composites, and that whilst some people seem easily identifiable and classifiable, it is not that simple.

...The Empathetic Critiquer, ... (referred to as the Facilitator in the journals and Tutorials) formed a crucial link in this practice, and the flexibility afforded the student, was instrumental in their development: the responsibility for achieving was shifted into their court."

10.2.7 General comment

I have come to the realisation that I have approached the analysis of all journals using a similar approach – a positive, optimistic approach. My perspective on these students' journals is a positive

rather than a negative one, where I have looked for evidence supporting development and learning rather than evidence to the contrary. Initially, on first using/ developing the reflective evidence table, as I analysed the student's entry, I would cross-link the item with the student entry and occasionally make a mental note that I had not set up the table to reflect what the student was NOT doing or what the student could/ should be doing. And then I would remind myself about my brief to the student: They could write about whatever they liked and how they liked as long as they noted the implications of the reflection for nursing practice, and considered the evaluation rubric as a yardstick for global evaluation. This rubric allowed them to reflect that aspect of critical reflective thinking they *had engaged in* rather than the thinking they *had not engaged in*. It did not note or value the permutations of thinking in the reflective writing for each entry or the counts of critical reflective thinking. It merely required the students to keep the rubric in mind in evaluating their entries in an open-ended evaluation. I too seem to have adopted a very similar approach to that I use as the sympathetic-empathetic-critiquer.

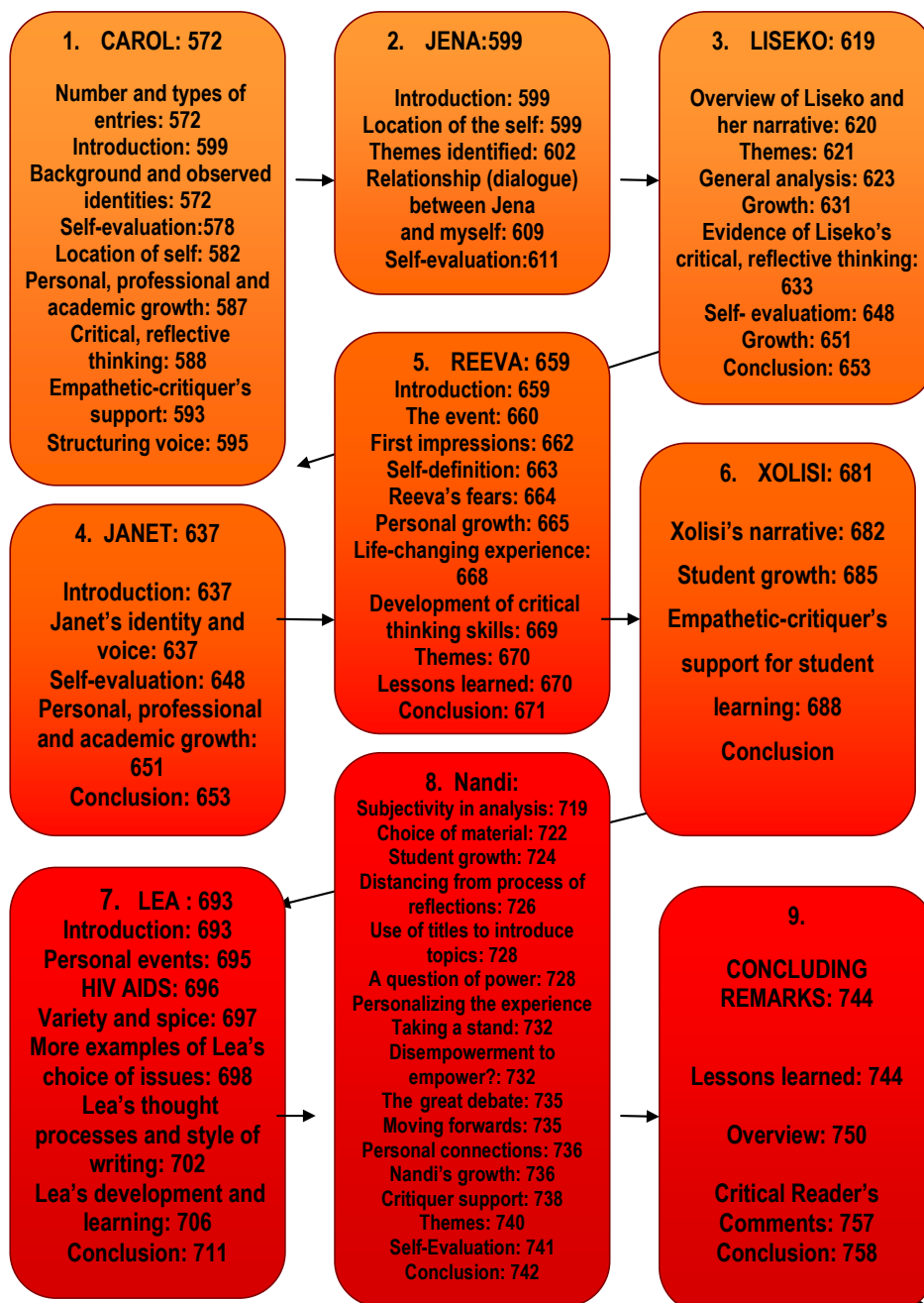
10.3 CONCLUSION

Johns (2002:51) notes that there are a number of different models or theoretical frameworks that can help frame research and that can help focus on discrete elements informed by the data or frameworks that provide a more global perspective of the theory. He describes frameworks as having the ability to be "imported from extant theory or constructed within the analysis of experiences as the research unfolds". However, the important thing is that he recognises that the framework must be able to allow for the construction and testing of theory for improvement of practice. Such a framework, he notes, must be sufficiently responsive to be able to incorporate the complexities, contradictions and nuances implicit within practice, yet sturdy enough to accurately delineate the pathway of the research in a manner that convinces the reader of the authenticity of the process.

But Johns (2002) also recognises that frameworks can provide an erroneous impression that the research is far tidier and more orderly than it is in actual practice. I have tried to marry the need to reduce the complexity of the journals and the analysis into categories and themes, but at the same time, I have not wanted to lose the essence of the personal journals and so, have tried to weave selected entries in a way that reveals the individuality of each student. Because there are a number of 'voices' reflected in each narrative (the students, the 4 critical readers and myself), I have tried to cue the reader through the use of single spacing, either prefixing entries with the name of the 'voice' where appropriate or used consistent font colouring as a means of identification. I have also retained the students' original phrasing and spelling, and only corrected the spelling in minor instances when it might confuse the reader.

This chapter then has provided an overview of how the analysis for the eight student journals is framed and an explanation of the theoretical framework. The following chapter sees the application of the theoretical framework in terms of the reflective journals, and hopes to demonstrate how the relevant objectives driving this study have been met.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
THE REFLECTIVE JOURNALS OF EIGHT STUDENTS: 567
 Analysis: 568 Organisation: 569 Presentation: 570



CHAPTER ELEVEN

11.1 INTRODUCING THE JOURNALS OF EIGHT STUDENTS

Every time I read a student's journal, I became deeply moved and aware of how fortunate I was to participate, albeit indirectly, in their lives on so many levels through the journal 'window' into the very souls of these unique and special human beings.

All students' entries affected me in some way or another. I found that on first reading, I experienced an emotional response 'transport'. I have felt enraged at word pictures of blind uncaring bureaucracy or mindless bullying of a student. I have smiled at the pleasures shared and noted. I have felt the warm glow of pride and joy, through vicarious participation in splendid deeds or heart-warming experiences. I have also been moved on occasion, to tears. I felt like I had stumbled across an unexpected and enormous gift and cannot fully express how appreciative I was to be sharing in the lives of the students. The reflective journals filled me with enormous hope and optimism and this at a time when nurses were openly disillusioned with the health care system. There have been and are many types of responses by nurses in general, to this disillusionment, and the resultant behaviour often described in the media was and is disheartening and worrying. And then I read the journals. It is hard to disguise one's value system as the choices of entry, the manner and choice of the reflection and the choice of action expose these. I started to understand the reason for the writer's choices, and in general, these were usually comprehensible and reasonable, given the context and constraints of the systems within which these nurses work. My frame of reference was frequently different to that of the students, particularly when I took into consideration culture, age, educational experiences, fields of practice and professional practice experience factors. Through the journals, I was often able to understand and appreciate the different frames of reference and celebrate the commonalities.

11.1.1 Analysis of journals and choices of inclusion

The following chapter comprises the analysis of the reflective journals of eight students. If this thesis only included these eight journals, I would have no hesitation in providing a comprehensive analysis of each journal in the text of the thesis. However, in the interests of the reader in terms of rendering this chapter more manageable, I have made the following choices:

- Each element of the framework for analysis (Figure 10.1) is covered in one or the other of the students' reflective journals so as to provide an example of how the analysis took place. These selected elements are illustrated at the end of each journal analysis in Figures 11.1 to 11.8. Sometimes these elements are discrete and clear, and other times, they are interwoven within the narrative. The initial journal, Carol's journal analysis, is the longest, as it is the most comprehensive.
- In the interest of the examiners, each journal and its' more complete analysis is documented in the attached CD-rom dealing with raw data.
- The critical readers' completed analysis is incorporated in this CD-rom and only selected illustrative aspects are included in the thesis. I have prefaced those sections indicating the commentary of the critical readers with their names and use of different colour fonts.
- The memos originally used to interpret the journal entries included my references to the literature within the text of the memos. I have chosen to retain this process as it provides a sense of the immediacy of the analysis *within* each entry. Global analysis retains the correct referencing format.
- A data trail comprising the retyped journals, with corresponding memos and data coding, is available in electronic format on a CD-rom.

- Students' quotes either follow the traditional presentation (quotation marks, indentations and 1½ line spacing as apposed to 2 line spacing).

It needs to be borne in mind that my analysis reflects positions taken at the time of the students' reflections and so that although, for example, the government's stance on various issues such as making ante-retroviral treatment for HIV AIDS more accessible has changed since the writing of the journals, I have only dealt with the issues as they stood during the time of the journaling.

I consider this to be the most critical chapter of the thesis as it contains the essence of the students' journey in critical reflective practice. But it has been the most difficult chapter to present as I have wanted to do justice to *each* of the students. This is therefore the longest chapter of the thesis.

11.1.2 Organisation of sections and choice of presentation style

As already explained, certain components will be considered in selected journals, but overall each of these components will have been considered in depth. The choice of the flow of the presentation has been partly guided by the framework for analysis (Figure 10.1). However, I have also tried to stand back and allow the writing to flow, consciously considering those elements within the student and her narrative which rose to the surface and jostled for place in my narrative. In order to do this, I used the *Critiquer response process* (Figure 10.1) as it formed part of the framework for analysis as a way of 'seeing' and understanding the reflective journal. The components included (a) identifying the expression; (b) describing the image; (c) embodying responses and (d) 'acknowledging transport' or the emotions brought about by the change in perception. This is a qualitative study and as this component focuses on personal reflections, I have used a discursive

reflective style of writing deliberately in this subjective, expressive component to allow for the revelation of the authentic characterization of each individual journal. Therefore, the presentation of the journals will vary. Journal analysis will however, cover the following aspects:

1. The 'essence' of each journalist is highlighted in italics at the start of each journal
2. Introduction and contextualising of student and reflective journal
3. Observed identities
4. Self-evaluation of the reflective journal
5. Location of the self
6. Themes
7. Personal, professional and academic growth
8. The student's critical, reflective thinking
9. Relationship with empathetic-critiquer
10. Empathetic-critiquer's support
11. Student's 'voice'
12. Journaling process – the reflective journey and reflective responses
13. Overview with accompanying graphical illustration in light of the framework for analysis.

11.1.2 Presentation of evidence selected from journals

The essence of this chapter comprises an introduction to the student narratives, the written journeys of the students, which give substance and colour to the individual learning experiences. The students' narratives are powerful and have evoked strong responses from their readers:

(Pat, Critical Reader, 2004): "Journals are a delight to read. In all journals I got the impression of an internal process, journals did not appear to be written with 'eye on the publisher' or in this case the facilitator. It seemed to me that the students felt 'safe' in the environment of the journal... I felt privileged to be given an insight into these special people who were honestly grappling with ethical/practical ways of delivering their very essential services."

Carol's journal

11.2 CAROL

Striving for excellence despite the challenges of displacement – the consummate professional

11.2.1 Number and types of entries

Carol made 50 reflective journal entries and analysed 10 news and journal articles, which in effect went far beyond the prescribed requirement.

11.2.1.1 Introduction, background and observed identities

The narrative is in the present tense to correspond with the excerpts from Carol's journal.

I first met Carol at the end of her first year of her Bachelor of Technology: Nursing (Occupational Health). She was a petite 32 year old South African Indian woman who appeared both confident and competent. Although Carol did not discuss her appearance at all, this does form part of the self she portrays to the world. She dressed elegantly and professionally and was an attractive person with a bubbly, appealing personality - slender and delicate looking but with an iron bar in her backbone. She was absolutely dependable and presented herself in the same way as well. She was organized in person and presentation and took pride in her work and her profession. Integrity, reliability, order, structure, excellence are words I would use in describing Carol - and these are reflected in her journal.

Carol has a strong family identity. She was a mother of two daughters, 7 and 3 years of age. (15 March Carol):

"Today is my daughters third birthday and I feel sad that I cant spend the day with her. I usually take the day off or even a half a day off on my children's birthdays and we spend quality time together. I have their portraits taken, we go out to lunch etc..."

Carol's reflection is indicative of the working mother's pull between family and work needs - and the associated guilt. The focus in most of Carol's diary is around work, studies and her family. Carol's family is very important to her - and this includes her extended family back in Durban. It relates a lot to her Indian culture and the closeness of the extended family. Part of the struggle of moving to the new town arises from the physical break from her extended family. She struggles a lot with the guilt of trying (and not always succeeding - in her own mind) of being a 'good mother, a good daughter, a good wife, a good student and a good worker.' Many of my questions (both within the text and in discussions) relate to what is enough - or can she ever be enough to all? There is a slight hint at the source of her guilt being the fact that she has made a choice about coming to class as opposed to continuing a 'good tradition'.

"Other than my immediate family & work, I don't belong to any group. I have a few close friends i.e. my parents, brother, sister, aunts, uncles and cousins whom I am close to and I socialize with them." (Carol, Questionnaire One: February, 2002). At the beginning of 2002, Carol was in the process of transferring from her Durban-based work branch to another branch in a northern city, three to four hours travelling distance from DIT. The uprooting of herself and her nuclear family from her extended family and all that was known and familiar to her was extremely traumatic and had a major effect on all aspects of her life – her marital relationship, her role as primary care giver to her children, her new job and her role as student. Carol chose to explore these at length in order to come to terms with this change and developed a deeper understanding through the cathartic process of journaling and discussion. (23/08) "...REFLECTION

I am not sure that this is what Maureen expects from us but I do know that I have to be honest. I have most certainly benefited from these tutorials in that I have a better relationship with Maureen and I have benefited from talking about my concerns as it forces

me to reflect on my actions. I have changed my attitude towards the workload as I have to move forward and complaining is not going to get me anywhere. I will make every attempt possible to get my work up to date and will look at every thing that I do positively, and this will enable me to grow professionally. I have my diary entries up to date even though they are not typed, I feel like I have achieved something. “

Her identity as both a woman and a South African Indian resonate throughout her journal. (18

February Carol):

“...Reflecting on this issue ... I wonder if racism is still the issue. I once remembered reading a survey of the pathetic customer service here in South Africa. I had the feeling that I was treated the way I was, could be because I was an Indian female. Indian females are generally very passive and don't usually fight back. I really don't know.....”

Carol, who has a very clear sense of what is required by clients, feels slighted when she in turn is wrongly served. Carol is Indian, and fairly naturally, as a South African, considers the race issue, as a reason for behaviour.

Carol was one of the few students to write so extensively. Carol notes that she and her colleague use the tutorials to 'vent'. Sometimes the issues in themselves, may have seemed insignificant and Carol talks about 'complaining'. Just as counselling sessions allow clients to develop insight through the process of circular questioning; these tutorial sessions achieve similar insight development. If Carol is to develop a better balance in her life, she needs to reflect on those aspects that cause imbalance or disharmony. She sees it as complaining. I see it as exploring as a means of understanding, and thereby starting the process of coming to terms with herself, her lifestyle choices and her decisions.

Carol was also a wife and the occupational health nurse practitioner in-charge for a pathology laboratory in a major region in Kwa-Zulu Natal. In her role as wife and mother, she describes this role as

"I am the Primary player in this family. I do the housework, cook, see to the kid's homework, extra curricula etc. I do the shopping; paying accounts, even take out the dirt. I also do the functions of my husband, like sort out the rates, sort out the filling, organize the tax claims etc. I am always the one to take the kids to doctor when may one sick, spend night awake when they are sick, take them to the clinic etc. I also get up at 04:00 o'clock to give my 3 year old bottle. Dad does never does this." (Carol, Questionnaire One: February, 2002).

This role and relationship with her husband formed a major theme and source of confusion and uncertainty throughout her journal, often in terms of what Carol failed to say, rather than what she actually said.

Carol's work and student identity were interconnected: Carol was a registered nurse, midwife, community and psychiatric nurse, having completed a four year integrated nursing programme through an Indian nursing college (before nursing colleges had become racially integrated). She had partially completed a B.Cur degree with a distance-based university, but had suspended her studies in order to complete the occupational health based degree at DIT (then Technikon Natal), as occupational health nursing was her work-related discipline. She went on to complete her B.Cur the year following the completion of her B.Tech. degree. When I met Carol, she had sufficiently met the requirements for the Nursing Management IV course to qualify for an exemption. However, after discussing the components and the proposed approach to the course, she decided that it would be in her best interests to register for the course. This decision probably typifies Carol's

whole approach to learning – she was focused on promotion within her work, yes, but her primary interest was

“To ensure that I have the knowledge and skills to carry out my function as an occupational health nurse. I look at every experience either good or bad as a learning experience and I believe at everything in life happens for a reason.”

Her reason for ongoing learning was “For self-improvement and providing a more professional service. (a) My inner desire to achieve my goal. (b) My belief that knowledge is power (c) My family motivation.” (Carol: Questionnaire One: February 2002). Carol's responses to this questionnaire formed major themes for her journal. She described herself as

“I have a strong personality, in that I am a “go getter” and I stand strongly in the things I believe in. I also have a soft side to my personality in that I am very emotional and cry easily and I don't like to hurt other peoples feelings...I am a very ambitious and I strive for excellence.”

I think that Carol's description of herself, reflects her self-identity.

“In our lives we come across many people that are just carried along through the years and never really perform or make a difference. How can I as a manager deal with people like this? This takes me back to management by objectives and staff empowerment plays a major role. I think it is essential for a manager and employee to sit down together and plan their goals and objectives together” (Carol, 3 July).

Traits such as efficiency are very important to Carol. She is one of the students who has been able to internalise the concept of 'being a manager' and she is constantly looking at all avenues and areas of life that will provide her with material to manage better. She works hard, she is efficient - yet caring and doesn't ask of others more than she would ask of herself. Her ability to constantly question her own practice and her own value system are illuminating. She sees herself as an 'enabler' which is why she so appreciates the management style of the one manager (the humanist - democratic style) as opposed to the autocratic style of management. She recognises that the personal factor is the one that enables and motivates herself.

Evidence of Carol's student and work identity are clearly identified in her approach to learning and work. (8 February Carol):

"I sat down later that evening and tried to plan how exactly I am going to plan my time and my year, and realized the only way to do this is to work from day one and I got out a diary and physically wrote this entry in bed. It gave me the opportunity to reflect at the end of a hard day. Nb. I have decided that this is how I will be doing my diary entry and it will be typed at the end of each month. This will enable me to enjoy what I have to do."

Carol spells out how she is going to manage this assignment - many of her reflections deal with issues around organisation and timing - ways in which to facilitate the maximum usage of both. By spelling them out, she concretizes them and this helps to make them manageable.

(15/7) "I flew to Johannesburg this morning. I am on a 4 day "Internal Auditors Course". As I read and analyse Carol's diary, I become increasingly aware of the number of courses and workshops she is taking to improve on her professional knowledge and practice. She writes about these workshops in a matter-of-fact way and reflects on a portion of what she has learned along the way. It is also clear that her company has invested quite a lot as it is supporting her financially and other ways.

"I desperately need to buy a computer in order for me to get through this year. I am backwards with my tasks and assignments and I have come to the realisation that I have to do something about it immediately. So I applied for a loan from my company for R6000.00 and I was told that the money will be in my account by Thursday, 22nd August 2002." (Carol, 20 August).

Carol is clearly constructing her own learning needs and environment.

Carol is organised - and structure and direction provide stability and a sense of purpose. While she believes in herself, the fact that her new boss also believes in her is a motivating factor. "Dr. E, my

new boss is very supportive and she believes in my capabilities.” (Carol, 24. June). Rather than battling against - she is now working towards something.

11.2.1.2 Carol’s self-evaluation of her reflective journal

There is congruence between Carol’s self-evaluation of her journal, the criteria and my perception of her journaling process. Carol meets the criteria required (Figure 7.1 in Chapter Seven) on critical thinking

“I found that together with the knowledge that I had gained from the lecture room I had grown professionally and personally. ... A typical example were the steps in problems solving, I used this both at home and at work with great success.” (See also Table 11.2)

She met the requirement for number of entries despite the pressures of work, home and her specialty subject “I had to systematically keep a diary from February 2002 until September 2002. This involved a minimum of three diary entries per week, two newspaper articles per month and one journal article per month”.

While she discussed current professional and /or health issues, “The entries encouraged me to relate on experiences and situations and interpret these using the knowledge gained in the classroom and through recommended readings” she also used the opportunity to reflect on issues affecting her personal growth,

“The diary was also critiqued on a monthly basis by our lecturer and this helped establish a more personal student /lecturer relationship. I found myself discussing personal issues as well as professional issues and being able to open up more easily.”

While Carol was not asked to reflect on the journaling process, it can be seen that her comments place her squarely in the context of the model where the initial stages indicate ‘the struggle’

"I started this assignment at the beginning of the year and looked forward to it although I at the time did not really understand the real purpose for the assignment... Submitting the entries to the lecturer on a weekly/monthly basis was tough, as I could not get organized despite having a plan. I was totally disorganized and did not have a clear path to follow. (Not having a personal computer added to my problem). I was annoyed by my lack of ability to get organized and only found my footing in June 2002."

She then moved on to the stages of acceptance and familiarity with the process allowed for the making of 'connections'

"A couple of months down the line I started to see the benefit of looking at situations in my personal and professional life and reflecting on my decisions and choices, and being able to see my faults and praise my good judgment with the help of my lecturer".

She has learned to reflect more deeply, "I feel that I have done so much and definitely have a better understanding on reflection and its benefits and perhaps deserve a good evaluation. I also realised that this self-evaluation is reflection."

An example of the perspective transformation and dissemination stages is provided

"As I put my diary together at the end of the year I compared my diary entries from initial months to later entries as the year progressed and I found that the later entries were more in keeping with reflective thought and thinking and not merely a straight forward account of what had occurred".

A process of internalisation can be seen in the following entry

"In July I came to the realization that this course is aimed at changing behavior into a "manager". I found that I was making decisions and using concepts and knowledge learnt without even being consciously aware of it."

Here Carol meets other criteria by reflecting on the relevance of her reflection to her professional practice and demonstrates where she changed some aspect of her practice resulting from the reflection. Of particular importance is Carol's recognition and self-insight on issues that plagued her time and again as self-insight is a major step to change

"The important thing is knowing my shortfalls and where I went wrong i.e. poor planning, poor organization and taking on more than I can handle."

She has considered the criteria concerned with presentation and did present her reflective journal in a neat, logically presented manner and a "table of content is however included to guide the reader."

Carol also considered the problems that she encountered and is honest about what she did and didn't do

"The assignment was long and time consuming and in order to follow the guidelines appropriately would require a full time dedication through the year. I did not follow the guidelines as instructed as this was impossible considering the workload with assignments, tasks as well as other specialized subjects. I did not attempt to fill in the gaps at the end of year as I felt that this was a waste of time and defeated the purpose of the assignment...

...Another shortfall was that I had not responded to comments or issues raised by the lecturer and this may have been at a disadvantage to me. I am also aware that she expected a response but never responded as I took each day or incident as separate issues and never really discussed previous experience as much as I should have. I have completed the evaluation form and found that this difficult and frustrating as I know that I don't deserve a good evaluation as I have not fulfilled all the requirements but on the other

hand I feel that I have done so much and definitely have a better understanding on reflection and its benefits and perhaps deserve a good evaluation..”

Carol is overly harsh with herself, but this is in keeping with her critical self. As she herself notes, she sets herself high standards, and I am not sure if she would ever be totally happy with the outcomes. She does however recognise the values inherent in the exercise, or I doubt whether she would have put in the effort or revealed so much of herself, “My overall view is that I have enjoyed this year and have grown into a manager and look forward to putting what I have learnt into practice. “

She also recognises her personal learning and professional growth. Much of her work related to problem solving and in this way, she was able to marry theory with practice and reflect on the results. For example, (3/09)

“...As I sat in the foyer of the reception waiting to start watching this video on safety the maid was busy mopping the floor. There was no sign to say the floors were wet, the water in the bucket was brown and filthy and she was not mopping properly.

REFLECTION: Companies spend so much of time and effort on health and safety that they often forget the most important aspect of health and safety and that is housekeeping. Good housekeeping in my opinion is the key to a successful health and safety programme. In management focus on the simple things is just as important as any major issue. “

Carol has been well taught. She is both observant and she can and does make connections between what she sees and the theory underpinning practice.

11.2.1.3 Location of self leading to awareness and sensitivity toward 4 elements:

Psychological, physical, environmental and philosophical

It became increasingly clear as Carol's journey progressed that the physical, psychological and environmental elements within which she had located herself were closely entwined, each impacting on the other. Physically, Carol was well aware of stressors that impacted on her feelings of anxiety and she called upon her physical reserves in order to meet her work, family and study needs. This affected her sleeping pattern and her levels of irritation appeared to rise with the demands. The harder she felt that she was required to work, the tenser and more demanding of herself, she became. **(10 April):** "I felt very unsettled and irritated with the change." Carol uses the word "irritated" a lot - for me, this reads as if her threshold for tolerance is limited, which in turn affects her opportunities for happiness. However, she has now taken to include a section on Reflection - which is where she is now taking time out to try to analyse her feelings. She says 'I "could" learn a lesson from this - thereby allowing herself at least the possibility of the opportunity for change. The reflective tutorials and her reflective journal became her means of catharsis and this becomes more evident in her following reflection: **(17/5):**

"We had a management tutorial today and I find these sessions quite interesting as we discuss issues affecting us personally and professionally, it is a kind of a stress breaker.

REFLECTION: I find like all I do at these sessions is complain about my busy lifestyle. I need to do something rather than continuously say I am drowning with work. "

This does seem to be a theme - however justifiable. I note that Carol is structuring her life - but as time goes on, it seems that she is letting up on herself a bit. It must be very hard to be a perfectionist and not have enough time to see everything through - no wonder she feels frustrated. I too, have noticed that the tutorials tend to relieve stress in that her perfectionism is constantly questioned.

(16/7): "Johannesburg is cold and I am lonely and miss my kids terribly." Not the first time Carol has connected the weather to her state of mind. She uses the word 'lonely' and once again, there is the notable omission of husband (and friends) from the equation. Carol also talks about not trading her "busy hectic family life for anything" - and I am wondering if by keeping very busy, that she is able to paper over the void created by this loneliness? Or does the business prevent her from other relationships? The environment was also demanding, in that she was torn between two worlds, that of her parents and family in Durban, and that of her two children and husband in Richards Bay. The need for a new home in Richards Bay seemed quite symbolic, representing the break between the two worlds, but also the centre for her quest for stability. Throughout the early stages of the journal, I get a sense of the lack of belonging, of rootlessness. Family is important as it provides us with roots. Here Carol talks about being uprooted "we have to move out" and the feeling of being unsettled. While this is a usual experience for most people, I can sense it is very hard for Carol as she appears to like to control or have control over her destiny. A home of her own symbolises her ability to provide controls and stability in her life. (7/7):

"My house is finally starting to take shape. The tiling is now complete except for the kitchen. The company that I had got to do the cupboards has caused major disaster and I have thrown them out. The job is half done and in absolute mess. I am now having a problem finding a carpenter to finish the job. NB: The kitchen is incomplete since May 2002.

REFLECTION: Quality of service delivery is essential for customer satisfaction. I think it is very important to do what you say you are going to do and never lie or make idle promises.

Also, "Do it right the first time every time!"

This entry signals quite an aggressive phrase. Carol is using extreme words such as 'absolute' and 'major.' This house means more to Carol than just bricks and mortar. She is rebuilding her life, and trying to find clarity about who she is within this metaphor. Her previous entry discusses the need

to be assertive and differentiate between assertiveness and aggressiveness - and her skills are clearly been tested here. She herself believes in and values traits such as responsibility and reliability. Her house is an extension of herself and those external builders do not conform to standard. She justifies her stand by noting the time period being given in order to complete the job - and I get a sense of her living in this disorder for two months and getting really frustrated. Carol does everything she can to create order in her life. It must be very hard for her to hand over the 'building' to others - especially when they are not competent.

Philosophically, Carol notes: "...I realized that I am really afraid of death and dying. " Carol's concerns and the raising of these concerns seem consistent with the uncertainty she was experiencing in other avenues of her life. I would suggest that the trauma of moving had created a crisis in her life - which threw a lot of other issues (normally disregarded) into sharp relief. She had, in a sense, lost her extended family, and so her fears turned to her immediate family. **(9 April)**: Carol asks the question "Will I be happy' and then names that that makes her happy - personal growth and professional growth. She has ambitions - will they be stultified in a smaller town - where she has no support systems? I can relate to and feel her apprehension. Carol: "...Will there be a back slide in my life in terms of personal growth and professional growth? I guess only time will tell. I am generally very resistant to change. I become comfortable and hate to be disturbed from it." Carol makes reference to the need for stability. It seems that she works hard to create a structure that will bring stability. Carol makes numerous references to her resistance to change - and discusses this quite openly and frequently in the tutorials. For me, this resistance is more a fear of the unknown and is a reasonable reaction.

However, Carol does have a pragmatic identity and much of this is related to her self-awareness 1/05: "Richards Bay is very laid back. Nobody seems to be hurry to get anywhere and shopping is obviously not a priority. Perhaps this will help with my stress levels." Carol realises the need for a positive approach, and a connection between this and stress reduction. I do find her connection between the slower lifestyle of her new home town and her need to reduce her stress levels hopeful.

(4/09): "...I wondered how can I not feel guilty for not being able to always satisfy everybodys needs and wants. This is a tough one as I am very aware of other peoples feelings. I think being non-judgemental is the most important aspect and also to make decisions based on facts and to be able to live with the consequences of decisions." I am reminded about Carol's courage. She is sensitive and thoughtful, but the premises she bases her life's philosophy upon are not easy and uncomplicated. She is someone I would trust to appreciate the human factor, but look beyond that to a more Utilitarian philosophy of acting in the interest of the "greater good".

Carol's world view is not just located within her own sphere but it is affected by her own references:

(2/8). "Went on a field trip to Cato Manor settlement area and I was horrified at the way these people live...

REFLECTION: "I realized that I am so fortunate. I don't have to think twice about where my next meal is coming from or if I want something I just buy it without giving it a second thought, or having to dream about one day having a particular luxury. I have a house with 5 bedrooms, 2 lounges etc. and these poor people live in a shack with 5 families in two little rooms. There is no electricity, no running H2o and no sanitation. This was a real eye

opener. I would love to take my children to see this as they are also so spoilt and don't know hardship... "

MAUREEN'S QUESTIONS:

ØWhat kind of advantages does this life style bring?

ØIs it possible that there are benefits to living in Cato Manor?

I have included the empathetic-critiquer questions as they form part of the rationale for the component in my framework for analysis in Figure 10.1. (Section 10.2.3.1 *Questions promoting engagement with and understanding of student perspectives*) in which I try to 'see' the students position and connect my understanding of Carol's perspective to promoting insight with the intention of empowering the student.

Carol is judging the living conditions based on her own frame of reference. While there is no doubt that the conditions are very disparate, she is making assumptions that conditions equate with misery. She has not looked at the notion that people living in this area actually are closely connected to each other, something she is missing in her own well-appointed home - hence the questions. Some irony reflected in this perception. Carol expresses her ongoing concern with these issues: (23/9): "What can be done to cope with this high cost of living? People are battling to merely survive. I really am at a corner with this issue. I don't know how to deal with it." Carol has spoken about four times about the issue of the 'haves and others have-nots'. It is a dilemma for her - how to live in a world where her job exposes her to others who live different life styles to her own. There is a certain amount of guilt expressed through her observations.

Carol's diary forms a pattern - she connects work, life, studies, and as she reflects on issues, she writes about them. The purpose of this journal assignment was to provide students with the

opportunity to enrich their aesthetic knowing and acquire the meaning of their practice and their sense of self within a context by reflecting on their narratives of choice. Whether Carol is finding out more about herself in her various roles, or is providing me with the opportunity to learn more about Carol could almost be seen as one and the same thing.

11.2.1.4 Themes: I have chosen excerpts from the various entries reflecting the themes on identity and factors affecting identity: dependency and family relationships; roots; professionalism and nursing; striving for perfection; pressures; learning; the South African identity. Sarah (critical reader) identified the following themes: Empathy – Maureen for Carol (10/9); Carol for patients (15/02); Constructive criticism – (9/04); Positive reinforcement – (22/03); Strong work ethic – (26/03); Problem-solving – Carol writes letters when things at work go wrong. (30/04) – “I was furious as this is totally unacceptable practice. I immediately logged a major investigation.”

11.2.1.5 Carol's personal, professional and academic growth as evidenced through her journal

Table 11.1: Characteristics of the critical reflective transformational practitioner and examples of evidence as noted by critical readers, Mari and Sarah.

Characteristics (Van Aswegen) & Evidence of Growth	Critical readers (Mari and Sarah) examples of evidence
Challenges processes, assumptions, theories, ideologies	Mari: “I was furious as this is totally unacceptable practice and I immediately logged a major investigation. Ethics/ professionalism/ self-identity” (Professional)
Not discouraged by personal failure, persistence	Mari: “I have looked back at the stress, rushing around as well as extra work and I have decided that this is a learning experience.” (personal, professional and academic)
Openness to learn from others, intellectual humility, flexibility	Mari: “Children generally adapt more easily to change than adults do...I could learn a lesson from this.” (Personal)
High drive and energy levels	“There is so much to do but I am enjoying every minute of it.” (Professional) “...motivational talk, which truly inspired me” (Academic) Work ethic – “I reflect on my days at work and I love what I do and I am self-driven in my job...”

Pro-active, innovative, vision, curiosity, recognize intuitive thought processes	Mari: Reflects about the way she handled a problem – confident. "I would not have changed the way I handled it, even though it bugged me tremendously." (12/02)
Self-confident, intrinsic motivation, assertive, self-aware, regulation through choice, self-corrective, self-disciplined	Mari: "I love what I do and I am self driven in my job" (professional) She is assertive about instilling self-esteem in her daughter. 25/9 – "Many people frown at the thought of Ritalin, but studies have shown that Ritalin is extremely safe and has no long term effects. Reflecting on my this issue and management, this makes me realise that sometimes decisions or choices have to be made on gut feeling and philosophies and values. I also realised that human beings need to be praise and recognised and their self esteem rules them."
Positive regard for others, tolerates ambiguity and work towards resolution, suspends judgement	Mari: 3/06 – "I learn best by talking and discussing issues, especially with occupational health as not much is known about many issues. We learn through experiences and other peoples' experiences. Therefore I am all for professional groups, viz. SASOHN for professional growth and development."
Focused and purposeful	Sarah: 22/03 – "I have looked back at all the stress, rushing around as well as extra work and I have decided that this is a learning experience. If there are findings/non-conformances then I will look at it as a learning experience, and use these findings to my benefit."
Reasons multilogically	Sarah: 31/07 – "I know my job of marketing is going to be tough and these are the sort of problems I will encounter, but I looked at WHY/"Why do these professionals act so irresponsibly?"
Verifies, corroborates, and justifies claims, beliefs, conclusions, decisions and actions	Sarah: 2/8 – "I think I need to do a general health evaluation and include basic needs in the questionnaire and thereafter plan health surveillance as I do know that the home environment affects the employees work performance."

11.2.1.6 Carol's critical, reflective thinking

Table 11.2 Carol's critical, reflective thinking and supporting evidence

Critical Reflective Thinking	Evidence from Carol's Reflective Journal (my analysis)
1. Describe the event or situation	A busy day at the office with preparation for the external audit. There are several last minute issues to attend to EG. Health and Safety Training, First Aid Training etc. I have been working long hours with no breaks in between. I reflect on my days at work and I love what I do and I am self driven in my job, so I actually should not be complaining. However I sometimes have to do the jobs of others that are being paid to do the job. EG. One of our laboratory managers had been given the task over a year ago of obtaining a clearance certificate from the municipality for disposing of effluent into the municipal waste. He had not done it and I have had to visit the Etekweni Municipality, get a pollution officer to visit the lab and thereafter a clearance certificate was issued. 11 March
2. Examine assumptions	10TH April 2002 It was M's first day at her new school (Arboretum Primary). She was a bit anxious and at the end of the day she said to me that she enjoyed it more than her previous school. It was also my first day at my new office. I did not have a computer or

	<p>much to work with. I felt very unsettled and irritated with the change.</p> <p>REFLECTION</p> <p>Children generally adapt more easily to change than adults do. Perhaps adults are more afraid of the consequences of change eg. Fear of the unknown. Children usually take change in their stride and enjoy the situation rather than focusing on merely the outcome. This is probably why they appear to adapt more easily.</p> <p>I could learn a lesson from this. Take chances in life. Change is innovation and growth. ie personal and professional growth.</p> <p>One would never now what is on the other side of the fence until on climbs over and falls into a river or falls into the garden of Eden.</p>
3. identify and focus on salient issues from the situation	<p>Part of my job description is to market pathology to industry. Today I visited a sister at a chemical industry and did not get a very good response as she complained bitterly about the service that we provided. She complained that she never got results on time and that she did not trust the accuracy of the results etc.</p> <p>Remembering at the back of my mind that "the customer is always right" even though they are sometimes not, I was calm and answered her questions honestly and clarified any misconception that she had. I also explained in detail how our testing is conducted and the Quality control that we have in place, and the possible reasons for delayed reports. Back at the office I thought about the events of the meeting and I would not have changed the way I handled it, even though it bugged me tremendously. I felt confident that I had given it my best and I have confidence in the company I work for and the quality of its service. I guess I have to learn to cope better with rejection and not take work issues too personally. 12 February</p>
4. Analysis of event	<p>12/08/02</p> <p>One of our technologists sustained a needlestick injury as a result of sharps (i.e. used needles) being received in a shopping bag from a doctor's rooms. The employee had to be put on anti-retrovirals for a month, and the psychological and physical stress from this is dreadful. The HIV status of the host is also not known (s there were over 100 used needles in the packet).</p> <p>I have sent out a letter to this doctor and awaiting a response.</p> <p>NB: letter attached.</p> <p>REFLECTION:</p> <p>This seems to be a recurrent problem. I have had a few similar incidents which I have previously reflected on. We have tried educating our customers (Dr's.) and this has been unsuccessful as it was unrealistic. We have to now look at readdressing our own staff. The following steps were taken:</p> <p>1. All couriers picking up used sharps from doctors rooms will be "retrained" on the company's policy and procedure. (Attached) Their training logs will be signed and attendance registers filled. There after should a courier pick up sharps that is not properly packed, they will be issued with a major non-conformance.</p>
5. Analysis of contextual factors	<p>Attended an Environmental Management system course at Deloitte & Touche. It was very enlightening and an eye-opener.</p> <p>REFLECTION:</p> <p>The National Environmental Management Act No. 107 of 1998 is an excellent piece of legislation, but what good is it if it is not enforced? 25 June</p>
6. Distinguish relevant from	<p>Another common occurrence that makes me wonder about the</p>

irrelevant facts	knowledge of doctors is how much do they really know about health and safety. They often call me when their staff or themselves have a needlestick/sharps injury and they are in a total frenzy not knowing what to do. 30 April
7. Fair-mindedly follows where evidence and reasons lead	The sister insisted on seeing me personally and she had several complaints and problems. She was furious that she had personally received an account for a patient's blood test and she was furious. On investigation I found that she had used the wrong request from which drove the billing to be incorrect. I had to re-educate her on which forms to use and when to use them. REFLECTION: A part of the job as "Public Relations Officer" is to rectify problems and mistakes of others. I sometimes find this quite frustrating as if people did things right the first time, every time this would make life so much easier for all concerned, i.e. customer, employee and organisation. 25 June
8. Evaluate arguments, interpretations and beliefs	It was a terribly mishap on our part and I together with our General Manager had to visit the company and all we could do was apologise, we were wrong and we promised that every attempt will be made to prevent a recurrence. I had to also issue major non-conformances to the persons concerned, and a whole new procedure had to be put in place. EG. All occupational health account queries were to come to me first. Dictionary setups on the computer had to be changed etc. 6 March
9. Justifies key results and procedures, explains assumptions and reasons	It is my daughters 8th birthday. She had a party at the Spur with 6 of her closest friends which she chose. I fetched them from school at 13h30 and a little girl came up to me and said that she also had a birthday coming up and that she was having a pool party and "M's name is first on my list" I felt awful as M had not invited this little girl and had never mentioned her in any of her conversations. Perhaps she and M are not really friends and she wanted to express her disappointment of not being invited. REFLECTION In life it is not always possible to satisfy everybody. Children are very honest little creatures and also very sensitive. They are affected very easily by rejection of any nature, but then so are adults. I wondered how can I not feel guilty for not being able to always satisfy everybodys needs and wants. This is a tough one as I am very aware of other peoples feelings. I think being non-judgemental is the most important aspect and also to make decisions based on facts and to be able to live with the consequences of decisions. 4 September
10. Defend positions and issues	Left my kids at my mum's place in Durban as I am scheduled to leave for Johannesburg for two days at 18:00. REFLECTION: Our jobs are just jobs and the most important people are our families. They can't be replaced and neither can we. At work nobody is indispensable. We are just a number and will be and can be replaced at any time. My focus is going to be more on my family from now onwards, although I will do my job and fulfil my objectives and put in a full days work for a full days pay. 25 June
11. Solve non-routine problems	Reflection on my practice: We don't dispose of any hazard into the atmosphere/environment. Our chemical hazards and biological are disposed of via a registered disposal company and I have visited their disposal site in Ixopo to ensure that they do what they say they are doing (re: according to legislation). 13 June

12. Identify and discuss the implications for practice that arise and from analysis and synthesis	<p>I flew to Johannesburg this morning. I am on a 4 day "Internal Auditors Course".</p> <p>REFLECTION:</p> <p>In-service Education is vital for the customer (quality service), the company (growth, quality service & increased profits) and the employee (Personal and Professional development).</p> <p>It is impossible for every professional to know everything, that is required for a job and in-service education helps to bridge the gap in the formal education. This is a typical example. I am an Occupational Health Nursing Practitioner expected to do Health and Safety audits. This is not focussed on in my formal training and the company has acknowledged this and invested in my doing the training.</p> <p>The knowledge I gain on this course will be a big advantage to me professionally, as it is practical and focuses primarily on my job as OHNP and marketer. July 2002</p>
13. Compare ideals with actual practice	<p>But reflecting back on my day I will have to do something about the poor response even if management is not very supportive as I am the occupational health nurse and I must comply to the Nursing Act and the occupational health and safety act.</p> <p>I have decided that I will address the Head of Department monthly meeting on this issue. 13 February</p>
14. Analysing feelings	<p>This is what I am afraid of losing when I move to Richards Bay. My family plays a very important part in my life.</p> <p>They are my support structure and I am so fortunate that I have such a close knit family.</p> <p>I am afraid that I will not be able just get into my car and see them when I am feeling down or need support. 1 April</p>
15. Explore implications and consequences	<p>I handled the issue by reporting it to the pathologist and managers concerned and unfortunately they did not give me much feedback, all they requested was that I submit the names of the persons that did not pitch. No feedback was given to me. I feel that management are not supporting me enough and I have worked very hard to get health and safety of the ground at Lancet Lab and sometimes feel that I am fighting a losing battle. 13 February</p>
16. Identify learning achieved and learning needs	<p>REFLECTION:</p> <p>I learn the best by talking and discussing issues, especially with occupational health as not much is known about many issues. We learn through experience and other people's experiences. Therefore I am all for professional groups viz. SASOHN for professional growth and development. 25 June</p>
17. Draw up and/ or implement an action plan based on the implications raised	See No. 4
18. Ability to use knowledge broadly	<p>Attended a mental health workshop and the definition of a "Mentally Healthy Person" made an impact on me. Being mentally healthy involved 3 aspects:</p> <p>Viz:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feeling good about oneself. 2. Being comfortable with other people. 3. Being able to meet life's demands. <p>REFLECTION:</p> <p>I looked at my own mental health and tried to identify whether I met all of the above and realised that I am mentally healthy. 25 June</p>
19. Write clearly and coherently	All entries

20. Accurately cite sources of knowledge used	<p>Started collecting data for my research.</p> <p>REFLECTION:</p> <p>I am amazed at how little compliance there is to the existing draft standards in spirometry based on the American Thoracic Standard Patient preparation is almost non-existent. July 2002</p>
21. Evaluate the credibility of sources	<p>Reflection on my practice, we don't dispose of any hazard into the atmosphere/environment. Our chemical hazards and biological are disposed of via a registered disposal company and I have visited their disposal site in Ixopo to ensure that they do what they say they are doing (re: according to legislation).</p>
22. Use own thinking to come to conclusions and solutions	<p>Dr P was not very impressed as he had shcedule to be in Pietermaritzburg on Tuesday and I was assertive and arranged the meeting, and if he could be present would be a plus however these problems must be resolved and My job is to ensure that my clients are happy.</p> <p>REFLECTION</p> <p>Firstly I get the impression that Dr P does not like my style of dealing with issues. I am very dedicated to my job and have always worked towards the best interest of the company. I once said to him that I am here to do a job and get a full days pay for a full days work and I am not here to make friends. I will never do things just to please him or any other person in authority. I work according to my objectives and my professional and legal responsibilities. 5 September</p>
23. Self-evaluate own work	<p>But reflecting back on my day I will have to do something about the poor response even if management is not very supportive as I am the occupational health nurse and I must comply to the Nursing Act and the occupational health and safety act.</p> <p>I have decided that I will address the Head of Department monthly meeting on this issue.</p> <p>13 February</p>
24. Openness to change or possibility for change	<p>I am not sure that this is what Maureen expects from us but I do know that I have to be honest. I have most certainly benefited from these tutorials in that I have a better relationship with Maureen and I have benefitted from talking about my concerns as it forces me to reflect on my actions. I have change my attitude towards the workload as I have to move forward and complaining is not going to get me anywhere. I will make every attempt possible to get my work up to date and will look at every thing that I do positively, and this will enable me to grow professionally. (Carol: 23 August)</p>
24. Come to terms with contradictions and inconsistencies	<p>REFLECTION</p> <p>Firstly I get the impression that Dr P does not like my style of dealing with issues. I am very dedicated to my job and have always worked towards the best interest of the company. I once said to him that I am here to do a job and get a full days pay for a full days work and I am not here to make friends. I will never do things just to please him or any other person in authority. I work according to my objectives and my professional and legal responsibilities.</p> <p>Dr E on the other hand has been very supportive (she is the pathologist that I report to as of the 01/01/02, and she manages issues very much like I do. She is also in charge of marketing and understands marketing better than Dr P.</p> <p>Reflecting on these two managers and their style of management. Dr P is more the autocratic manager who is always in a hurry and never gives me the chance to say my bit and when I do say any thing I get the impression that he listens but does not hear. He has his mind made up and is not</p>

	<p>very open to suggestions. He irritates me and demotivates me in many ways. I feel that he is not very concerned of growing the business so why should I bother so much.</p> <p>Dr E on the other hand has her faults however her management style empowers and motivates me. She is always there when I need advice or help with an issue and gets me very involved in decision making. We have set my objects together and has left me to get on with the job. 5 September</p>
25. Synthesis for new perspectives	<p>10TH April 2002</p> <p>It was M's first day at her new school (Arboretum Primary). She was a bit anxious and at the end of the day she said to me that she enjoyed it more than her previous school. It was also my first day at my new office. I did not have a computer or much to work with. I felt very unsettled and irritated with the change.</p> <p>REFLECTION</p> <p>Children generally adapt more easily to change than adults do. Perhaps adults are more afraid of the consequences of change eg. Fear of the unknown. Children usually take change in their stride and enjoy the situation rather than focusing on merely the outcome. This is probably why they appear to adapt more easily.</p> <p>I could learn a lesson from this. Take chances in life. Change is innovation and growth. I.e. personal and professional growth.</p> <p>One would never now what is on the other side of the fence until one climbs over and falls into a river or falls into the garden of Eden.</p>

11.2.1.7 Empathetic-critiquer's support

(Mari): There is plenty of evidence that (a) the critiquer has demonstrated support of student growth in critical reflective thinking through her critique and (b) provided evidence as a transformative educator (Van Aswegen). Some examples appear below.

Table 11.3 (Critical Reader: Mari and Sarah): Critiquer support of the student's growth process

Characteristics (Van Aswegen) & Evidence of Support	Evidence: Maureen's questions and responses to Carol's entries
Mari: Marries language of critique with the language of possibility	"What is it about you that motivates you to walk the extra mile?" "If you were a manager, what would be your concerns? What would you do if you couldn't solve these issues in their entirety?"
Mari: Demonstrates professional maturity	"For me, the challenge is: how to keep both you and your family safe while meeting your other demands." "I can see how traumatic this move is for you and how very afraid you are."
Mari: Desire to improve practice	"How important are consequence for behaviour change?"
Mari: Fostering innovative, flexible and creative patterns of thinking, with a major focus on challenging	"I could learn a lesson from this. Take chances in life. Change is innovation and growth. I.e. personal and

predetermined and rigid modes of thinking	professional growth."
Mari: Endeavours to enable students to become empowered to become responsible agents, by encouraging critical reflective thinking	"What are you going to do to prevent this from happening again or to prevent yourself from being used in this way?"
Sarah: Yes, the critiquer has demonstrated support of student growth in critical reflective thinking through her critique. Proof: Asks many questions -	12/02 <u>Procedural</u> – "How did she respond to your explanation?" To promote action – "How would you manage the situation yourself?" 15/02 <u>Open Question</u> – "What do you like about being a nurse?" <u>Anticipatory problem-solving questions</u> – "How would you have handled this situation had the results been negative in terms of the client and in terms of yourself?"
Sarah: Maureen encourages Carol to reflect upon her behaviour.	23/02 – Constructive suggestions on a personal, professional and academic level.
Sarah: Emotionally understanding	21/03 "I can see how traumatic this move is for you and how very afraid you are."
Mari: Praising,	"you continue to impress me with your approach to life."
Sarah: Good evidence of Maureen's own critical thinking. <i>What worries me though is that I see no proof that Carol has answered many of Maureen's questions – what use are they then?</i>	9/04 – "So, positive speak was just a cover up?"
Sarah: Puts herself on an equal footing with student and admits to mistakes.	12/4 – "I am not renowned for my organisation and planning (seems ironic that I teach in the management programme) and it was a comedy of errors kind of day."
Sarah: Links Carol's research to her job.	26/04 – "what is it about the research that you most enjoy and why, do you think?" "What impact will it have on your professional practice?"
Sarah: Makes constructive suggestions.	2/07 – "What if you tackled this side of life (social side) as rigorously as you do work or studies?"

Sarah asks a reasonable question: Carol did start submitting her journal late, but as I read, I responded. Additionally, many of the issues raised in her journal were raised again in the tutorials. During one tutorial, I suggested to Carol that perhaps my comments, coming so late, were of little use and that it might be better if I reserved my questions for the tutorials. Carol was quite adamant that although she did not necessarily respond to me in writing, the questions and responses were valuable triggers. This supports findings in Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.6.4. Carol also acknowledges that she reviewed her journal in its entirety at the end of the year, where the responses were an integral part of the process.

11.2.1.8 Structuring of Carol's reflective journal and Carol's voice

I find Carol's train of thought fascinating in that she reflects upon situations - and then makes connections and linkages outside of but related to the original situation or thought. This synthesising for a new perspective is where Carol constantly uses experiences to look and make new connections and provide new perspectives.

Carol has a notion of professionalism and is proud of her own practice within this category. She is also not afraid to take action and deal with issues. She is not concerned about issues of intimidation - which seem to be more prevalent in areas or centres where black African nurses work. She has a keen sense of 'self' and the power of her position and operates on the basis of a moral imperative - Deontological ethics - where to act morally is to do what is rational, universal and desirable for the whole human race without regard for the consequences. She sees her practice in terms of theory and is constantly reviewing both – in some cases, practice brings to mind the theory and at other times, theory informs her practice – but they are linked. An example of this is her journal entry dated 5 September, 2002:

“Reflecting on these two managers and their style of management. Dr P is more the autocratic manager who is always in a hurry and never gives me the chance to say my bit and when I do say any thing I get the impression that he listens but does not hear. He has his mind made up and is not very open to suggestions. He irritates me and demotivates me in many ways. I feel that he is not very concerned of growing the business so why should I bother so much.

Dr E on the other hand has her faults however her management style empowers and motivates me. She is always there when I need advice or help with an issue and gets me very involved in decision making. We have set my objects together and has left me to get on with the job.

I have used her as a sort of mentor this year. I have often learnt things by just watching her and observing her style. She has once said 'A good manager can go on holiday for 6 weeks and his department will run smoothly'. "

She has moved beyond the stage where she allows the voices of others to determine her practice. To inform, yes, to dictate, no. It is at these times that I would suggest that Carol's 'voice' is constructed.

11.2.1.9 Conclusion

Figure 11.1 provides an overview of the analysis of Carol's journal in terms of the Theoretical Framework for Analysis of Reflective Journals as defined in Figure 10.1.

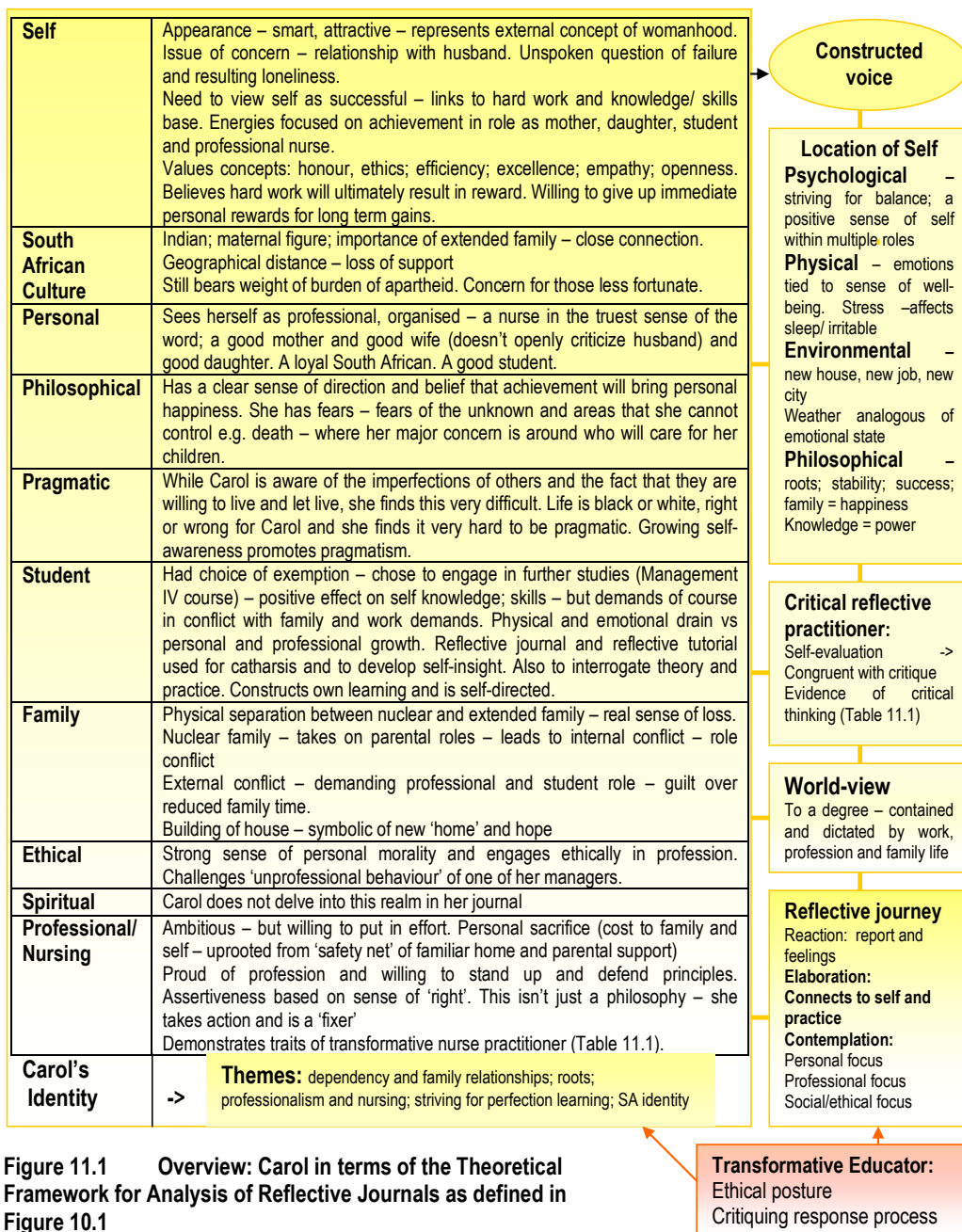


Figure 11.1 Overview: Carol in terms of the Theoretical Framework for Analysis of Reflective Journals as defined in Figure 10.1

Jena's journal

11.3 JENA

*Adhering to a deep-rooted value system (highlighted by her active pro-life stand on abortion),
coupled with professional practice*

11.3.1 Introduction

Jena submitted 56 journal entries in 2002. In my raw analysis, I included 23 reflective entries taken directly off Jena's computer disc, and analysed 20 of these because they describe a segment of Jena's life and the 'real' issues she grapples with. These span the academic year and include a couple of news articles. The rest of Jena's entries included journal and other news articles.

11.3.2 Location of the self

Jena was a second year part-time Primary Health Care student, completing her B. Tech. nursing programme. She was in her early thirties, single and had emigrated about 7 years prior to the study from Switzerland. (It is notable that English was her second language and while she was more prolific, and perhaps more sophisticated in her writing than other South African second language students, her phrasing, syntax and spelling were just as confusing). She lived in a major city, about an hour's traveling distance from class, had independent financial means and held down two part-time jobs. One was a night position in a busy ward in a private hospital and the other was a part-time day job in a privately run primary health care clinic, where the doctor, a woman, was also the district health surgeon and a missionary too. She became Jena's mentor.

Jena's geographical location in effect, locates her in all of her spheres. Environmentally, she had a foot in two worlds. She had distanced herself from her first world home, Switzerland, to live and work amongst the poor (the PHC clinic), which, in effect solidified once she has completed her degree providing her with her needed PHC skills. At the same time, during her studies, she worked night-duty at a private city hospital, which provided her with both experience and funds. On completion of the course, Jena ultimately gave up her home in the city (but not her common sense – she needed the income, and so rented out her home) to live on the grounds of a boarding school in exchange for some of her nursing skills, and went to work full-time in the clinic of her mentor, the missionary (personal knowledge).

Physically, Jena was a softly-spoken but prepossessed woman who dressed fairly conservatively but well. She carried a state-of-the art laptop computer with her to class and came to class prepared. She planned in advance and her work was always on time. Her basket contained everything she needed for the day. Psychologically, Jena was self-confident, but it was of the quiet variety, underpinned by a questioning hesitancy reflecting the possibility of a certain vulnerability. Jena never presumed on relationships and seemed to have a fine sense of boundaries. She seemed to have a tremendous respect for the personhood of others (see entry Feb 17 in Section 11.3.4 below), which sometimes made her assertive positions seem surprising. However, if I think that this self-confidence came from a deep introspection and self-understanding and a strong religious and moral core, (her philosophical location) it is then not at all surprising.

Unlike most of the students, Jena was single, and also unlike most of the students who would leave after the class had finished at 17h00 to get back to their families and do the things busy

moms do, Jena would often stay behind and chat. The class had nominated her as class representative, mainly because of her organisation, commitment and self-confidence. It isn't, however, a prestigious title. It is more to do with the person who doesn't mind passing on messages, representing issues fairly as delegated by the class or just locking up the classroom after class. This meant that Jena would pop in to hand in student journals or tasks and would stay a while, often discussing issues arising from class discussions. I enjoyed Jena, who had a mind of her own and didn't mind contradicting me or engaging in further debate. I found her principled and pragmatic and dogmatic only on 'right-to-life' issues. She was judgemental, and I recall her saying the same of me, which influenced some deep introspection on my side! She was staunchly Catholic, an active member of a group supporting 'right -to- life' and was inflexible about her position on abortion.

May 3: Abortion:

"To discuss the issue "abortion" is difficult if the point of discussion is the fundamental question weather or not to do abortions and the two sides debating are standing on different shores. No point of agreement can be reached unless one wins the opposition over. The simple biological truth that live starts with conception and that the right to live is a fundamental human right marks the abortion "wrong". In arguing that a women "has the sole right over her body" and "what about the quality of live of a women in distress who cannot afford the child to be born" becomes nullified if we take the right to live seriously for all mankind, also for the ones which cannot defend themselves or argue their own cause. Unfortunately some people overlook that the Unborn has an independent Life with the right to be defended and the equal right to live as his mother. The unborn cannot speak up for himself and is invisible, hidden in the whomb."

While it did seem to me that she was blindly inflexible on this issue, at the same time, she had read widely on this issue and had many sources to support her stance on abortion. Initially, I tried to play

devils' advocate, but this issue was too close to Jena's heart and principles. Too close, at times, I thought, for as she became more emotional, her ability to argue appeared to me to be more illogical. She must have addressed at least 6 journal entries to this issue and I finally decided not to respond with questions and suggested to Jena that she move on – which she gracefully did. There were many other issues to explore. Jena truly did engage in introspection and I know that it was often a painful process for her. She seldom took stances without prolonged reflection and agonised at times, about her decisions. I think that when Jena took her nurse's pledge, she meant it with all her heart.

11.3.3 Content themes identified

The number of counts where I coded references to the various themes must be seen in context. The number of counts just reflects the type of issues she was reflecting upon at the time and the number of times that she returned to these issues in my selections of the sampled journal. It can only provide a general perspective of the issues she was considering, but nonetheless does provide a fair depiction of her concerns. This concept applies across the board with all the students.

Table 11.4: Content themes identified in the selected entries of Jena's journal

Second language issues (f=3)	Cultural references (f=1)	Work related issues (f=4) – although there were a number of sub- categories	Management issues (f=4) although there were a number of sub- categories
Relationships: (f=11) Colleagues, clients, management	Batho Pele – issues on concern with good nursing practice(f=10)	Concern with poor nursing practice (f=10)	Personal philosophy of nursing (f=3)
Issues related to the reflection on conflict in terms of the external environment (f=2)	Issues related to the reflection on conflict in terms of Jena's internal psychological environment (f=1)	Moral ethical concerns/ (f=7) Work ethics (f=1) Reflections on value system (f=9)	Learning and practice (f=11) Link to own life (f=1)

Power issues (f=17)	Factors leading to personal fulfilment (f=2)	Reflections on self-identity and traits (f=11) Openness to change (f=6)	Recognition of self-value (f=2) Self-worth
Work organisation (f=1)	Client's attitude to care (f=4)	Abortion/ religion (didn't count but Numerous)	HIV AIDS/ (f=2) PHC (f=6) Health issues (f=2)
Communication(f=4)	Insights on life (f=13)	Voices (f=4)	Challenges (f=2)

f = frequency of references coded in selected entries.

It becomes fairly clear from the table that the themes Jena explored were mainly fixed around preserving her moral integrity. She clearly identified with the concepts of a 'good nurse' and saw herself reflected in the accepted characteristics of a critical reflective nurse practitioner and transformative intellectual and tried to behave accordingly. She engaged in discussions around issues of power, was concerned about its use and misuse, particularly when it affected those more vulnerable. She recognised abuse of power and was very comfortable in managing the issues and situations with confidence, as she was comfortable with herself. But she didn't wade gung-ho into situations but rather, weighed up options and reflected on implications and consequences.

23 Feb: "...I do not believe what is wrong and right changes in this world although some believe that and "adapt" readily. But I do think we have to be open to necessary changes and are often not only answerable to response to new courses of actions but are also obliged to bring changes about. "

She had considerable self-insight which is why I am not sure if her stance on abortion is a 'blind-spot' or in fact, merely a strong moral position. She was willing to take risks (her sometimes unpopular defences on issues) and was clear about issues that mattered to her. Unlike some of her more vulnerable colleagues, Jena knew what it meant to be what (Kelly, 1998) calls a "moral agent" – in her belief that she had power of decision and action.

“Patients visiting the clinics come often their preconceived ideas about the treatment they would like to receive. E.g. a mother asks me: May I please buy an injection for my child for his scabies?

The child is already crying from the moment he sees me, as he was obviously told by his mother before hand, that she would “by him an injection”. The child has scabies and mild impetigo, no fever or swollen glands. All he need is topical treatment and good health education for his mother.

It is sometimes difficult to resist such appeals. It makes one feel one cannot please the person by rejecting the request. This mother was perhaps used to receive the treatment she asked for in past clinic visits.

Reflection

As health care worker we have to agree and if possible adhere to guidelines to uniform treatment. Otherwise the patients go “shopping” to different clinics until they receive what they ask for. It will also make the “resistant” health care provider appear the “bad provider” in the eyes of the community. No doubt the “give in” strategy is the easier way, but not the better solution.”

While Jena had a high regard for relationships (between her clients, her peers, her work colleagues) and generally reflected before she acted, she did not appear to be easily influenced by others in her life choices. This did not mean that she did not open herself up to different perspectives – on the contrary as an entry in my reflexive journal (27b 6 December) reflects:

Jena came to see me near the end of term and said that as a result of one of my comments in her diary that she had gone to her research group to ask for feedback (she had been concerned about her role in her research group and wasn't sure whether she had read the situation correctly). She said that this had resulted in 'sweet nothings' from the group except for P's analysis. Jena said she recognised herself in P's responses, which were fairly blunt. I continue to be impressed with Jena's courage and honesty.

11.3.4 Examples of Jena's journal entries, the critiquing and micro-analysis

Jena's first journal entry is included as an example of a complete entry. I have also included an excerpt from a later entry that links with this, demonstrating Jena's reflective process. The inclusion of these entries is to provide a sense of Jena's thinking and writing style as well as my empathetic-critiquer questions and commentary. It also includes examples of my micro-analysis of her entry, bearing in mind the (a) *Critiquer response process* and (b) *Questions promoting engagement with and understanding of student perspectives* elucidated in Figure 10.1.

Jena: 17. Feb. 2001, **Entry 1**



"There is always enough food for reflective thinking of problems and experiences encountered in the nursing field. I can choose an actual problems without having to invent them" [Maureen's comment/ questions: Good](#)

"The following problem in a particular team on night duty weighs on the shoulders of managers, from me a team leader to night matrons and chief matron. I work every weekend night duty in the medical ward of a private hospital with otherwise two alternating teams, (one staff nurse and two nursing assistants each).

The history:

I found the particular "problem team," never as easy going as the second one. The staff nurse and one nursing assistant were very close to one another. I had to watch my "moves" to keep a good team spirit. Via the night matron I was informed, they had a particular problem with me and expected me to "address them". I found out it was about the round about way via the matron." [Maureen's comment/ questions: And?](#)

"The staff nurse was very eager to share in my responsibilities, which I recognised as her special need and granted. We settled reasonably well as a team."

My interpretation: Jena is the professional nurse in this scenario and therefore the senior person in the ward. However, while she has status as in the seniority of her rank, she is a part-timer, which also affects her power position. Jena chooses to use her power to empower her colleague

Jena: "After about a year, after I came back from a short leave I noticed a change in "atmosphere". The two above described member had become "sworn enemies". From reports from the night matron I was informed how they "inundate" her with complains on every shift about one another. Team leaders have a very difficult time with the two fighters and stand-in and temporary staff does not want to come back to work with the team. They feel very uncomfortable. The two members tried to involve my into their fight as well. During my absence the staff nurse had implemented ridiculous new rules, which thought to be true by newly or not permanent employed professional nurses and other staff members. She tried to convince me too, that the rules where true: "New orders from the matrons", she said. Of course I found out soon that it was not the case and rectified matters swiftly."

My interpretation: I want to smile at Jena's response. She takes very little at face value and is not afraid of the system and believes in verifying information.

Jena: "Though the matrons seem to side rather with the staff nurse in this fight as she presents herself more polite and mature, I am careful not to side and to show by example (and a few words when opportunity arises) that work and teamwork matters more than their personal grievances against each others. But still: From being the better working team of the two I work together with, they have become the worse. As communication fails largely (except when bickering), work suffers."

My interpretation: When Jena says she rather 'shows by example' – this is an important philosophy for her. She lives the life she believes and has a great sense of fair play.

Jena: "During my shifts there are no mayor eruptions of the fighting. They realize my expectations. When one of the two comes to me in private to tell me about her misery I encourage her to use her goodwill towards all team members, perhaps by telling one two examples I had in my work experience about these matters. By all this I avoid to come across as "preacher" or to get involved into the petty details of their fight."

My interpretation: I think it is quite significant that Jena recognises the manipulative possibilities inherent in this situation and recognises the manipulative technique of attempting to draw her into

the situation through involvement in the details of the fight. I also think that Jena could moralise and to her credit, resists.

Jena: "The management in the hospital refuses to change the member of the teams. Because in consequence other teams would have to be torn apart, which function very well. I thought it was inevitable that something would follow. The atmosphere in the team is too uncomfortable, especially for the once involved in the fight. Either one of them would resign (which I believe management hopes) or be absent on sick leave. Not long after the nursing assistant was booked off for about two to three weeks with "backache".

Maureen's comment/ questions: Good anticipation on your behalf.

Jena: Reflection

In a team work situation the interacting of the members plays a key role in the quality of work. As we all see the next ones weaknesses and strength, we also have to recognise ours. If we remain constructive in our critical thinking, we are to complement each other and form a good team, which enhances each others motivation and work performance.

Though the management's attitude is: The well functioning of the team lies in the hand of the team leader, in the above situation I can only make difference by good example and grabbing situations where I can bring about change of attitude in the rest of the team. If they are totally unwilling, I can do little.

I believe my reaction at the beginning of my work relationship with the team when I easily gave in to their special requests without making a long face plays out in this situation."

Maureen's comment/ questions:

This was a very interesting response to a potential power-play situation (i.e. routed through the Matron) I get a strong sense of your being someone very comfortable with yourself – and not needing to be "boss".

How do you feel about the way the matron handled this situation?

What do you think would happen if the member come to you regarding her grievances, and you used something called circular questioning? (Talk to me and I'll explain how it works).

My interpretation: I think that my comments reflect how I feel about the way Jena handled the situation. It is a complex, albeit common, situation, and I think that Jena's reflections on the process indicate a maturity in her thinking and managing the situation. I asked the question about the matron because she does not come off very well in her managing of the situation. The comment on circular questioning is to provide Jena with an enabling tool to process a similar situation. It is often used in Family Therapy to good effect as a means of promoting self-insight.

Jena: "Further thoughts, management

Speed up work this does not always mean lesser quality. Set priorities, delegate.

Very holistic e.g. to see the other person to be just as valuable as one self but with more needs. Beautiful, the patient realise that above many other things.

The surgery's' patient load has picked up markedly."

My interpretation: I love this short entry which briefly maps out some ideas. It provides a reflection on her own personal belief system where she sees patients in a holistic light ' to see the other person to be just as valuable as one self but with more needs' and notes that the patient recognises and appreciates her valuing of the patient in this way – and she uses the word 'beautiful' to acknowledge this. Jena does this in the same way someone would value their own artistic contribution and so her nursing is an art – and patients are the canvas, to be valued.

"22 August 2002, Entry 24



Diary Entry no 37

Jena: My very first entry was about a team problem in the medical ward on night duty.

Things have settled down now. The two people involved in the fight, as staff nurse and an auxiliary nurse are now prepared again to work together. They are however not the close friends as they had been."

My interpretation: Again, Jena returns to an original reflection and considers the status of the situation. I notice Jena's willingness to think well of people where she can although she does seem to have a realistic perception of the situation.

Jena: "They keep at a distance make have perhaps even a more "professional" relationship. They deliver really good work quality and are actively involved in running the ward and are taking responsibilities. The nursing assistance had been accused being lazy. I find no such signs now and she is an intelligent observer." **Maureen:** I remember.

Reflection

"I believe that the situation, as it is know, is better than before the conflict came about. They are not so "buddy-buddy" anymore, which prevents them from teaming up against me as a team leader. This is often a real danger, especially if there are strong-headed members in a team. A reason to criticise a team leader can almost always be found".

Maureen: Sad, but true. Why, do you think?

"The symptoms of the problem that had existed in the days of conflict I can now recognise as the signs of the burnout-syndrome, in this case do to "internal sources" namely team conflict."

11.3.5. Relationship (dialogue) between Jena and myself

Each student is different and responds to a different approach. Their reflective journals go the 'heart' of who they are, their very identity and so it behoves me as their empathetic-critiquer to find a way to respectfully communicate with the student so that I am supportive, but not unconditionally accepting; challenging, but constructively so and directive, but obliquely so. This is a key concept in *Questions promoting engagement with and understanding of student perspectives* in Figure 10.1

5 b 20 June, 2002. Reflexive Journal entry:

Jena: One of the students, Jena, stayed behind after a class. She helped me to return audio-visual aids to the department centre, and, for some reason or other, became engaged in a discussion on the abortion issue. As I was in no hurry, we sat down, had something to drink and the discussion became quite lively. I am well aware that J has strong feelings about 'right-to-life' and has expressed these in her diary. I have explored my own feelings about this issue and, on the whole, am still ambivalent. There are so many arguments on either side of the spectrum, and I suspect that if I am ever personally affected i.e. through my family, I might not be so ambivalent. The point that I am making is that my position is not firmly fixed and I am definitely open to the fact that others can and do take strong positions, and that that is fine. Nonetheless, I am tuned to questioning and challenging, no matter what the position and the discussion was based on this perspective. Jena, however, is passionate in her beliefs and she informed me that she had explored all possible aspects of this issue, and as a result, had developed a fixed position. In that case, there was no point in further argument and I felt we had ended the discussion on a friendly note. In a follow-up journal entry from Jena, it would appear that Jena had felt that I had overstepped my boundaries, and although she was careful of her phrasing (she used the third person), she challenged my role. Jena followed this up with a note to say she hoped we could still be friends. I had to think long and hard about this as I valued Jena enormously, and needed to respond to this challenge in a way that would clarify my position and allow her to continue to be forthright and honest. I remember feeling very proud of Jena for having the courage to pen this entry, and later discovered that she had discussed whether or not to do so with a colleague. This was my response:

Dear Jena

Firstly, I need you to know that I appreciate your frankness - truly. Also, of course we will still be friends! I have thought long and hard about your response and how best to reply to you. You are absolutely correct in noting that I must ensure that you apply the critical thinking process in your topics and that my personal opinions do not matter, at least, not to you. My job in my written critiques is to do just that - critique i.e. question, challenge, support and enable critical thinking. Additionally, I need to ensure that you feel sufficiently supported in order for you to continue to write freely and without feeling confined by the opinions of others: This is your truth. I don't have your original entry with me and so I can only comment on what I remember (which may not be entirely accurate). I am fairly sure that I used a questioning technique as regards the article you discussed and I am also fairly sure that I commended (and not bemoaned) your position taking into account your rationalization and justification for your perspective. That, in fact, was the reason for my verbal commendation to you. I wanted you to know that I was pleased with you. I do remember your asking whether or not you still had to defend your position on abortion and my asking if you had considered alternative perspectives.

You said you had and I noted, in that case, there was no reason for you to follow up on your entry. I do remember telling you that the diary entries were entirely for your own benefit, and not for mine. (I do ask a lot of questions and only when these questions trigger off a reason for you to answer, do you need to do so. Otherwise, they are only questions, my questions).

I need for you to differentiate between your diary entries and a discussion: A discussion assumes that there is more than one point of view - and that is what we had, a discussion. As a result of the discussion, I felt challenged and interested and thought quite a lot (as it seems you did) after the discussion about the validity of my own perspectives on abortion, and more interestingly, on my own perspective on moral ladders or moral positioning. I probably need to thank you for your honesty and hope that I will be more self-aware. As I made very clear right in the very beginning, I am not all knowing and nor am I always or even, often, correct. As you so correctly note in your entry ".....that science was "value free" and only giving "raw" material about things to which we add "philosophy and ethics". I have learned since that this is not true. Now the Government wants us to believe that this can be done in education. Is a teacher able to separate his own moral from his "value free" teaching?"

You may not specifically have been referring to me in the above (on the other hand, you might have) - but your question is valid. Of course I bring value judgements to my class/ tutorial discussions. The question is: do I encourage/ support your right to make alternative decisions based on critical thinking and reflective practice? If, and when I don't, I need to be challenged. I also thought it might be appropriate to paste in a short section from the pointers given to you early on this year on critical thinking for reflection and reconsideration: ...(omitted here) Jena, I value your contributions, both through your diary entries and in discussions - in class and tutorials. I hope you will continue to be frank and question as you do.

This response seemed to have a positive affect on our relationship and Jena's entries.

11.3.6 Jena's self-evaluation of her reflective journal (November, 2002)

I read Jena's diary evaluation on conclusion of my analysis and think it is a fair reflection of what I have read. She has encapsulated key issues and concerns dealt with during the year, and has focused on the value of the reflective process for her own growth, learning and development.

"The diary was a valuable tool, enabling me to connect management theory with practice of management at work.

The diary entries helped me to analyse and reflect on problems. As a team leader on night duty in the medical ward and also in my clinic work where I am the only qualified sister, management issues come up frequently. The diary has increased my understanding and consideration of co-workers in the team. One or two entries at the beginning had rather unrealistic conclusions and needed revising during the course of the year. In this way it has assisted me to find better solutions."

Jena identifies something that does happen with all students, but has not been made explicit.

"Keeping a diary increased my observation powers, as working through an incidence afterwards in form of a diary entry has helped me to see and understand things better."

She reinforces what other students have also identified in Chapter Seven, Section 7.3.6.3 – making the implicit, explicit.

"By reflecting in a written format I could recognise problems, which perhaps otherwise I would not have seen. It also encouraged me to analyse my actions and reactions. During the year I was confronted with new ethical (some rather unethical?), concepts in the solution seeking for problems in the South African population, concerning health and life stile. The diary has helped me analyse concepts, ideas and arguments. It has also enabled me to strengthen my arguments and to give them clearer definitions and meanings. In order to be able to produce reflections on news and journal articles I was forced to work through newspapers and journals. This little persuasion has caused me to be better informed and created the habit of looking out for articles relevant for my profession."

Jena considers the limitations of journaling from a generic angle and suggests that these “depend on the other person who reads and evaluates it.” She confirms that the relationship between the empathetic-critiquer and the writer is critical. “The relationship to that person determines how free one feels to express feelings and views. It also matters what input comes from that person. It can be encouraging and helping to find the right direction in management.” Jena then acknowledges our relationship and where it has been effective in her journaling process “Maureen has been very valuable as “diary-assessor” and has often given me good direction without hindering me”.

11.3.7 Conclusion

I get the sense that Jena seldom goes for the ‘easier’ answer. She practices by a seemingly inflexible code when her own principles are on the line. There is a willingness on Jena’s part to question herself and her assumptions. She demonstrates a humility that is genuine and has a great sense of obligation to her clients. It is very easy in her position to be prescriptive and authoritative and Jena consciously questions herself in this regard and opens herself to her clients, who, while certainly less educated in the field of health care, come with experience and the knowledge born of life experiences, to which Jena herself has not been exposed and which she recognises and values.

14 March: “The people I deal with have their own life experience and can discern between valuable advice and *“the other sort”*. To gain credibility I have to examine my own knowledge, correct it and also be sensible for the needs of the people”

Hers is a world of theory and some practice – and she is aware of the gaps. At the same time, she doesn’t just accept wholeheartedly their requests but opens them and herself to scrutiny. Jena anticipates situations and responses and is far more proactive than reactive

In terms of Jena's thinking, she is able to provide good descriptions of situations, placing them in context and linking issues from previous reflections, demonstrating her use of the reflective cycle. I note as I read Jena's entries globally that she returns to issues and concerns on a number of occasions and looks at these from different perspectives. Jena writes concisely and key issues are addressed. She examines assumptions and looks to her practice to test those assumptions. Where original theory does not answer needs, she looks beyond the box.

Jena's observations deal with her daily work and a number relate to her relationship with rural Zulu patients. I like the words Jena uses about her relationship with her clients – 'negotiation' and 'partner' (30 March). They reflect much of what I am trying to achieve in my relationship with my students and so I am particularly appreciative of her approach. Her approach is also congruent with the Primary Health Care approach to health care management. Her reward lies in the mutual acceptance of this approach and the mutuality of respect. This notion of care is reflected in many entries but is beautifully depicted in her entry dated June 2, Entry 13 where she reflects on a journal article on the notion of caring and draws a connection to the "Cross cultural relationships (which) present a challenge to learn to understand a different reality for a different people". She writes: "Real concern cannot be put on like a piece of clothing. It will be artificial and the other person will see through it. But I believe it has to do with determination and can be learned." Jena's metaphor of concern and clothing are particularly poignant and remind me of the story of the emperor and the invisible cloak.

Jena's reflection on her difficulties of working with Zulu clients and a translator (30 March and 22 April) spoke directly to me, and in some ways helps to answer my own dilemma of working with second-language students. We do not speak the same language or have the same culture – and

this affects my ability to “obtain a person’s confidentiality”. There is no way I can truly ‘know’ the student from within – the ‘implicated’ self, for, as Jena says, “In a person’s language the culture reveals itself. One can gain knowledge of the other person’s way of thinking.” But I can observe and learn from students’ reflections and behaviour and as Jena notes, can “realise a person’s distress or happiness and many other moods just by observation” in the same way as they can, suggests Jena, “sense(s) my impatience or genuine concern”.

Nursing is a physically and emotionally draining profession. The pandemic of HIV AIDS is all encompassing and affects and drains those who work with patients with this debilitating condition – and at this stage of Jena’s reflections (Entry 9, 13 April), there is very little other than palliative care, that Jena and her colleagues can give. It is no wonder that nurses resort to the coping mechanism of distancing (Kelly, 1998). The danger, as Jena correctly notes, is that the behaviour or response becomes habit forming. Jena reminds me and herself of the emotional and physical investment as she revisits her philosophy and professional code of practice.

23 March: “For my practice this means I am learning to listen to requests and to become sensitive to different circumstances with their different needs. It however does not mean to be stepped over by the community seeking help and to give in to malpractice as the easiest way out. “

I have to admire Jena. She is clear about her role as a nurse and can differentiate between herself as a person and herself as a nurse. What more could be asked of her? I also have to admire her definitive stance – which she has not taken on blindly – although I think she is now at the stage where she has developed sufficient argument and collated adequate evidence to support her position and is no longer open to change. Her thinking appears to be solid – and even if it weren’t, I am delighted that she is thinking and mulling over the issues. Many of her reflections deal with the core of her morality and her sense of self and she is not afraid of whom she is or the directions her

morality takes her. I don't always agree with her but I salute her integrity and her passion and her willingness to spit in the wind.

After analysing Carol's diary, I developed the Framework of the Transformative Intellectual's frame of reference and under the section on Personal identity, I included Johari's Window. Jena's entry resonates in terms of the window of the Open Self. Her reflection also brings to mind John Donne's Devotions No.17:

No man is an island intire of itselfe, every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is lesse, as well as if a promontorie were, as well as if a mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any man's death diminshes me, because I am involved in Mankinde

In entry 5, 14 March, Jena reveals her 'voice'. She approached an issue from a logical and analytical perspective and provided a base for her rationale, and reasons for her initial assumptions.

"... Without my own personal experience of weaning a child, I adhered faithfully to the "fresh food teaching". When I ask the mothers to list the food they gave to their child, I often hear brand names of "shelf food" from supermarkets catering for the small child. My rather stereotype answer to the rural mothers would be that this products where rather expensive and unnecessary and she could easily cook her own pumpkins or other mashed food..."

But, she has taken her approach to this issue further by checking for herself and not merely accepted current thinking.

"The other day I actually took an effort to look at the different product of "first solids" for infants in a supermarket. I was surprised how cheap they are It is easy to "gobble up"

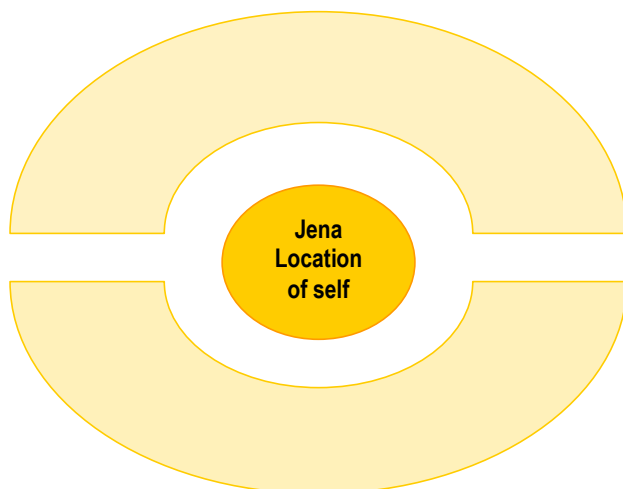
conceptions unchecked, perhaps even with a wrong understanding, and pass it on. The people I deal with have their own life experience and can discern between valuable advice and “*the other sort*”. To gain credibility I have to examine my own knowledge, correct it and also be sensible for the needs of the people. It is also easy to fall into the trap that lesser educated people are less capable. Is it right to presume a mother cannot work out her own budget just because she is rural?”

She makes a sound case for checking out the validity of her assumptions by noting that she herself is not a mother – and this process of analysis enables her to speak with far more authority (the Procedural voice – of Separated knowing – where she connects theory with practice in a meaningful way).

A recurrent theme noted in Jena's entries was concern with the passing on or sharing of knowledge. This is ingrained in every South African nurse from the initial stages of their training, and although it is inculcated within all nurses, not all nurses show the same generosity in the sharing. Jena doesn't jump to negative conclusions, but rather seems to give mankind the benefit of the doubt. It is her respect for and sensitivity to others that can change situations. She is also not afraid to discuss issues with others. Hers is a continuous learning process. Mentoring was one of the strategies put in place to support students and Jena worked constantly and continuously with her mentor. This was a positive and successful relationship clearly seen on the occasion when Jena brought her mentor to the class workshop on mentoring and thanked her for the richness of the relationship, which she valued.

Physical

Self-contained
Lives on her own
Personal
boundaries
Softly -spoken



Environmental

Switzerland 1st world

South Africa

- Rural clinic – primary health care setting (specialty and interest) – 3rd world
- City hospital- tertiary care – income – 2nd world

Psychological

Pre-possessing
Confident but unassuming
Fixed moral code
Awareness of and sensitivity to others
Self-aware and open on most issues (not abortion)
Self-directed – constructs own learning

Philosophical

Deep religious and moral core
Strong sense of 'right' and wrong
Desire to nurse in true sense of word – but belief in client's right and ability to choose for self -> 'moral agent'

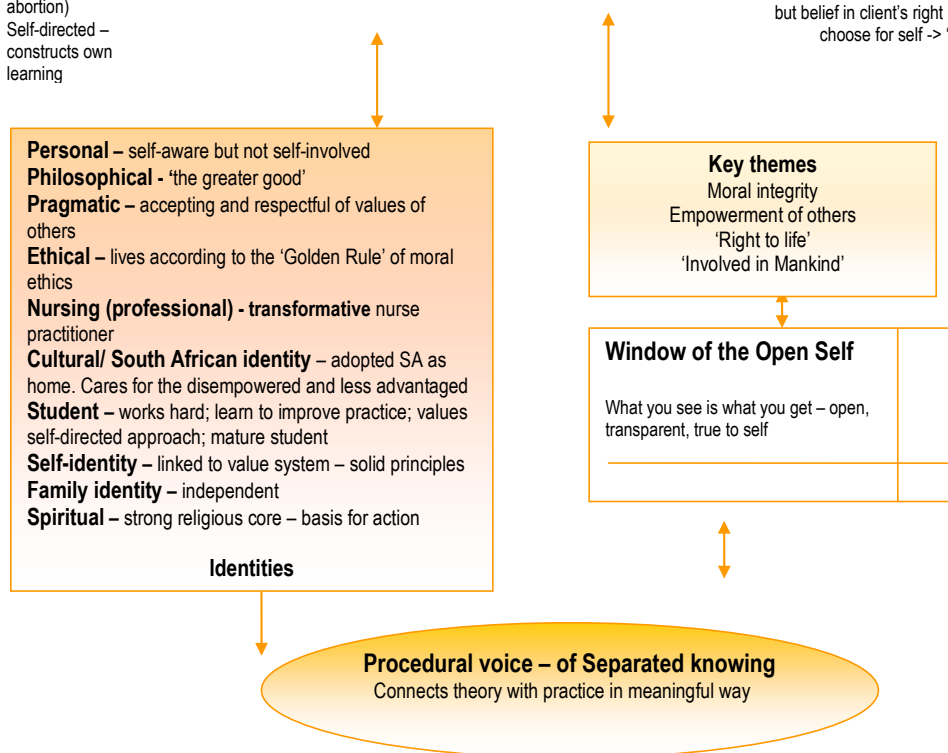


Figure 12.2 Overview: Jena in terms of the Theoretical Framework for Analysis of Reflective Journals as defined in Figure 10.1

Liseko's journal

11.4 LISEKO

“Sound professional practice, tempered by empathy” (Jane).

11.4.1 Introduction

Liseko's journal was fairly easy to analyse within her actual text, but much more difficult to present as a narrative, the main reason being that the majority of the entries were not really narratives, but rather, commentaries and analyses of journal or newspaper articles. Mari (critical reader) also comments on this difficulty:

“This student's growth is more difficult to track due to the way in which diary entries are ordered (not chronologically). It was also a more difficult task to analyse this piece, as language obstructs logic and hampers her ability to express her points clearly. Initially Liseko's arguments are simplistic, e.g. “Government should provide...every clinic should have a counsellor so that clients can have an access and long waiting has will be limited.” It is only in September that Liseko reveals some of her personal circumstances and expresses concern for a patient, who, like her, is vulnerable because of no close relatives.”

Although the crude analysis centers on 20 entries, which are included in the raw data, I have chosen to summarise some of the issues she dealt with, with accompanying quotations and analysis. This is to provide a sense of her writing style, approach and thought processes.

One of the limitations of my study was my failure to repeat all the same questionnaires presented to the students from the previous year (2002), which meant that I did not have access to the same demographic information on Liseko. So I did not get to 'know' Liseko in the same way as the 2002 students, and my 'knowing' depended on what she revealed in her journals and tutorials. Initially, I

had not intended to extend my study beyond the 2002 group, but the study took on a life of its own and became a participatory action research study.

11.4.2 Overview of Liseko and her narrative

Liseko was not a student who claimed my attention. She was not as timid as Nandi (one of the other students whose narrative is included in the study) but was quiet unless called upon. She too, was young, in her early twenties, and seemed quite self-contained. She did not seem to need to be noticed or want my attention but she was probably one of the most conscientious of students. Work was handed in timeously and corrections were done without argument. In a class of many individualists, I remember her as a pleasant, reliable student. She was originally from Swaziland. Xhosa was her home language and English her second language (Chapter Seven, Section 7.4.3). Liseko did form part of the focus group discussion on second language students and her thoughts on journaling are revealing:

Liseko: "Ya, with diaries, there is a requirement about what you write about. You go there and try to understand what is it you are supposed to write about but you won't understand even the words that are put in there. You try to get a dictionary. You try to simplify the words but it's really difficult" (Focus group, 31 October, 2003).

She revealed little about her personal life to me and seemed more comfortable surrounded by her colleagues than with me on a one-to-one basis. I don't think I could say that I 'knew' Liseko – it was more her actions and text that were revelatory – and then only, to a degree. As Mari (critical reader) notes "it was difficult to "get to know" Liseko, since she reveals little of her own thoughts, feelings and experiences. But she leaves some clues – she is a marathon runner, and her mother taught her that she can do anything if she puts her mind to it. "

Reflecting on the work we did in small group discussions, I remember feeling quite frustrated in an initial tutorial when I discovered that she was working in a similar environment to three previous students, and was experiencing a number of the difficulties that they too had experienced. I had hoped that their experience would have been helpful in resolving issues, particularly practical issues. It reminded me that understanding how to resolve something did not necessarily mean that steps would be taken, and this notion again raised the issue of power relationships and how these impact on decision making in hierarchical systems. I asked Liseko to visually map out the problem related to clients having to wait in queues and visually determine the barriers impacting on this problem. Through questioning, I tried to help her determine the workflow pattern and potential solutions. It seemed so easy to me and I could see that she could see the solutions. But I could also see that the solutions would probably go no further than the paper exercise because we had not discussed or worked through the biggest barrier – the inequity in power relationships in the unit and the fear of the unknown. The invidious power of the hierarchical system and the invidious positioning of the junior professional nurse practitioner were powerful barriers. I wanted Liseko to challenge not only this, but also her own cultural norms. Challenging seniority, age, experience and the status quo does not come easily. There is a Zulu term that I had to come to terms with - 'gashle' – meaning 'go slowly'.

11.4.3 Content themes in Liseko's journal

Thematically, Liseko reflects on personal, professional and academic issues as evidenced through selected excerpts from her journal.

Learning New information	Cultural factors	Work ethics/ Conflict	Motivation	Achievements
Management	Relationship with:	Power /	Dysfunctional	Health issues:

issues- unprofessional conduct/ lack of leadership	colleagues / clients/ managers	disempowerment issues	health care environment	Dietary HIV AIDS
Gender issues	Good/ poor nursing practice (Batho Pele)	Impetus to leave Nursing in SA	Child abuse Family issues	Clinical learning
Personal philosophy	Value system	Self-identity	Valued traits	Self-value

Table 11.5: General themes identified in Liseko's journal

Liseko uses her journal to try to come to terms with her concept of nursing and the profession balanced against the reality of a sometimes iniquitous system which permits unethical behaviour. As Jane (critical reader) notes, her "faith in her profession and the need for maintaining standards, as with other diary entries, is evident, and incidents such as the stealing of drugs, entry 6, and that of equipment, Regional Experience 2, as well as that of negligence, are issues reflected in other diaries." She uses the concept of Batho Pele (good practice) as her benchmark and as Jane (critical reader) observes "'blowing the whistle' appears anathema to her". Liseko appears to try to understand the issue of power imbalances by looking at the issue from different perspectives – but this is not easy and her frustration and feeling of powerlessness is evident in entries where she discusses work overload; limited staff because of the effects of emigration, HIV/AIDS and promises not kept. Against this backdrop, one is aware of the sensitive nurse. Jane (critical reader) observes: "Her relationships with patients are explicit in her empathy and compassion for the Nigerian who is dying of Aids. Evidence of cultural associations such as 'burial is a critical factor' have resonance here. Her humility and humanity, firmly based in her religious beliefs, enables her to put herself in his shoes, and her wish that he see his family before he dies. She shows a professional commitment to consider the patient's welfare above all else."

11.4.4 General analysis

Selected examples of Liseko's journal exemplifying the process and her individual style.

Topic 14 Date: 2003 / 04/ 10

Liseko: "One of these days, a patient was seen by one of the primary health care sisters with history of painful leg. Even though a patient visited the private doctor, there was no improvement on her condition. According to the sister's assessment the patient's condition was stable. The sister referred the patient to the doctor. And on this day, the advantage was on the patient's side because her number reasonable enough to be allowed to register for the doctor as she was number 45. So there was no excuse to send the patient home.

While the patient was still waiting in the hall for her file and to be called to see a doctor, she suddenly complained about shortness of breath in so much that the patient had to be given air as she felt sweat. Patient taken to room 4 where the vital signs were done and one of full time doctor was called.

The doctor just made one eye on the patient and shouted (at) the nurse who called her as she said she was for (a) cold case and the patient looked stable. While the doctor was still busy shouting the sister, the patient started again when she left with shortness of breath and gasping respiration. Imagine in that tension between the two, they have to see the dying patient, resuscitation was done and another doctor was called but eventually patient died in the clinic while she came to it walking and talking to herself.

At that point in time I just wondered how life is unpredictable. How can one die without saying goodbye to her family and loved ones and how are they going to take the news? How do they think about the staff who delivers the health care to their community?

Coming back to the doctor who perceive the sister who called her as stupid, I wonder what she thinks about herself now, does she feel great about her immediate action or does she feel guilty or is she that kind of person who does not care?

Why do doctors always perceive nurses as stupid, where did the problem start? I think it the high time now that we show them what we capable of and we not victims of submissiveness let alone humiliation among patients.”

This story conjures up a picture of our health services – long queues of passively waiting patients, who have either walked or taken a long time to get to the clinic and then must wait their turn. If there are too many, they might not be seen. Staff members are overloaded. It is hard to imagine any reasonable human being responding angrily to being called, as in the case of the doctor. If I consider the patient/doctor ratio in the South African health services – it becomes more understandable. The rift between the medical profession and nurses is once more raised through this story. Both disciplines are working towards the same goal, but team work and respect towards each other is not evident, nor does there appear to be any understanding of each other's perspectives. It seems to be very much a we/they situation and an appearance of disparities in power relationships. Liseko uses the word “submissiveness” and if the relationship between doctor and nurse is such that the nurse does appear submissive and non-challenging, it is also understandable as to why it might be seen that doctors “always perceive nurses as stupid.”

Maureen's response: You make some excellent points and you ask very good questions.

Question: What kind of follow up is there after a death in your work?

Have you ever considered staff multi-disciplinary meetings to discuss special cases-such as these - as a learning tool?

How can you prevent something like this happening again?

Do you use a form of triage in your work?

The purpose of these questions to Liseko is to promote a better understanding between doctors and nurses and to be able to use incidents such as these to improve quality of care. It seems to me that accountability of health care members is missing unless a process like this takes place – a

post-mortem conference, as it were. It also worries me that the questions Liseko raises about the family members is likely to go unheeded unless there is a formal process that forces this type of discussion.

1.Liseko Regional Experience: I Date: 2003 / 05 /15

Liseko: “Recently there was a patient who came to my consulting room, complaining of abdominal pains without any relief from the treatment that was given by private doctor four days ago. I send the patient for registration so that she can be seen by the doctor and fortunately for her, she had a reasonable number, meaning she could be seen by the doctor. One of the sisters was doing then screening of the patient in the hall and it was round about 12h00 this time when I saw the patient with many other standing in the room 2 door where I am working. I asked what was the matter? They said they wanted to ask something. I told them they must go to enquiries / in the hall where there is a sister who is responsible for questions. Fortunately the sister was coming to room 2, I called another patient on the queue, leaving the others at the door as they were also asking the same thing from this sister. I thought she told them the same thing “To go and wait in the hall as she would have address their questions.”

While I was still busy I heard the rough exchange of words between the sister and the patient that I saw in the morning and there was some barging of doctors. When I came out sister and the patient were in real fight. As I wouldn't go out, I quickly phone security man but fortunately the security man came by as he could see the chaos at the door. The sister had a swelling above the upper hip and the patient was still hot looking forward to the fight, irrespective of being separated by security and her boy friend. The sister took her bag and marched out of the clinic and the patient followed her asking where she was going and she said she was coming back as she was going to town and she told the patient to wait for her as she was coming back. The sister in-charge of the clinic was attending the meeting at matron's office when the incident happened. We tried to ask the patient involved and the boyfriend and the spectators, what happened. The patient said she wanted to get inside the consulting room and asked me if it was possible to get a note that say she is still

waiting in the clinic as she was expected to come back (to work) and resume her duties but the sister couldn't allow her as she told them to go the hall. Its then ugly exchange of words and swearing came in and those that were watching said it was the sister that started by hitting the patient.

What I know is that this sister is the one who does everything that she wants. No one can confront her including the sister in charge. If she happened to be allocated with to see the patient, just make sure that you'll be the one who will see to finish..."

My interpretation: This reflects Liseko's own sense of lack of power and resentment. If she (or anyone else, it seems) is allocated to work with this nurse, she (Liseko) will end up doing the work.

Liseko: ... "She can sit in her room without seeing patient, she can go to town anytime of the day and do her shopping and come back with her home grocery. The amazing part is that her register is always full just like everyone's as if she saw patients.

Sister in charge came back from meeting and she was told about the incident. The patient was called again to narrate the story. Seemingly not everything went well as the patient was attacking the sister in charge and another sister saying that they were taking her side.

What I can say is that, the incident was never reported to the matrons simple because the sister who was involved was still sitting home booked off sick by her private doctor. Seemingly this was not the first incident where the same sister hit the patient before. As the sister in-charge is afraid of her, she couldn't dare report her without her concern."

Maureen's Response: Where do the responsibilities lie in this situation?

What are the consequences if the patient or anyone else reported the assault?

What do you understand about the concept of 'whistle blowing'?

My interpretation: The issue of aggression and lack of professional behaviour towards patients as well as the intimidation of nurse on nurse is again raised in another descriptive incident. Liseko's

description is both evocative and confusing. I cannot clearly follow the story, perhaps because of the difficulty in language usage and the lack of clarity in the naming of the characters. Nonetheless, the gist of the story is clear as is Liseko's judgement, although it is obliquely stated. Liseko makes inferences rather than clear judgements and is quite careful about not taking ownership of these judgements. She might be aware of the implications of this behaviour, but she stops short at naming these. By not taking ownership, she does not make a choice about her role in this debacle, which has been fairly low key (although she did call Security and did try to ascertain the facts of the matter). But she has not involved herself. I get the feeling that if she (Liseko) behaves in a professional manner and is honourable in herself that is as much as she is willing to risk. It is fairly easy for me to make these judgements for I have never been in this situation where my person is at risk. I have heard enough stories from different sources to be aware that this level of aggression and intimidation is apparent in sectors of our health care services and so cannot dismiss Liseko or her colleagues' fears as being unrealistic. As a nurse, my blood boils and I feel outraged at the behaviour of the nurse and those who allow for her continued poor behaviour. It is a fairly typical, recognised response for nurses (and others) to 'get a sick note' when things don't go well. (Personal experience from stories recounted by student nurses) and avoidance tactics are required. Liseko infers that this nurse cheats "The amazing part is that her register is always full just like everyones as if she saw patients" and that this incident was not even reported further because the nurse in charge "is afraid of her". It is incidences such as this, which support the concept that health care services are being undermined. These types of incidences also reflect on the moral turpitude of some nurses, and the fact that they continue to practice without being challenged seems to me to be indicative of the lack of nurse leadership, and social systems that support this behaviour. While patients did respond with aggression, the fact that their complaints were not channeled further through the formal system for correct address indicates either their lack

of faith in the system or the lack of knowledge in how the system works or in a passive acceptance of the system at higher levels. Wurzbach (1999:94) suggests that nurses have difficulties in defending patients' rights because of potential job loss, initiation of adversarial relationships or because of a trying work environment. Other constraints to establishing or maintaining a moral culture in nursing include conflictive interpersonal relationships, poor role definition, and "societal ambivalence. All are tied to nurses' past experiences, with other practitioners (primarily physicians), experiences in the institutional hierarchy, and lack of individual respect, autonomy and choice."

Liseko's dilemma with her colleagues is what Kelly (1998) and Freshwater (2000) refer to as horizontal violence. This intimidation of colleagues is not just the term for inter-group-conflict or general bullying, but, says Freshwater (2000) it is also an embodiment of how groups of disempowered people direct their frustrations as a result of being excluded from the empowering process.

2.Liseko Regional Experience: II Date: 2003 / 05 /15

Liseko: "Recently, equipment has been missing in the room, where observations of patients that are acutely ill are done. Some of these patients that wait in this room are waiting for registration but cant wait in waiting room because of their conditions. This room cant cope without being fully equipped with instruments such as defibrillators to shock patients that are resting, Bamanometers, Thermometer, Glucometer machine etc.

The problems have been identified and reported to the sister in-charge. Those days it is difficult to get equipments from stores as motivation for that goes through motivational statement and a registration has to be done before the equipment is issued. Meeting has been called among professionals only to discuss the ways that can be implemented to

prevent this so as to allocate someone who will investigate this matter. What is demotivating in all these task is that the sister in-charge discusses all these problems with all her friends starting from porters, general assistants and enrolled nurse and the manner in which she talks about it is demoralizing in stealing the equipment. Imagine their reaction, even with investigation it won't be successful because the one who is stealing will be on the lookout for the investigator. What I can say is that, maybe she does not want the culprit to be caught because it is possible that it might be here "Boss or friend".

My interpretation: Liseko nails the problem. The person in charge should, but does not have, a clear authority boundary. Live and let live, seems to be the prevailing motto – and it is this attitude that will and apparently does, allow moral turpitude, both by herself and her staff, to prevail. Mari (critical reader) observes: "Professionally Liseko sees where the faults in the healthcare system lie all too clearly...Her critical thinking process has led her to analyse her situation accurately, but the dilemma is what action to take to try and correct this without putting her own person in danger. Is this a failure of imagination, or is it the fault of an inflexible system? Probably a bit of both. As Maureen has noted Liseko is a junior nurse in a very hierarchical system where bringing about transformation is difficult, if not impossible at times. She has succeeded in seeing and naming the flaws in the system, where she needs to do more work is in finding strategies to improve her workplace."

Liseko: .. "The reason why I am making the accusations is because one day when I was looking in the same room, the sister in charge came looking for one of porters that is close to her but unfortunately he was not there and this day she was in a hurry to go home and her wallet was kept by this man. Now she had to open his bag and take out the wallet. The unfortunate part is that one more sister was in this room when she opened her bag. We all got the shock of our life when she found the bag was full of drugs such as Colestomine, Bicillin and Berotec. To our surprise she left the things in the bag, saying that she is afraid to take them out as this man will ask her what she was doing in his bag. Until today the

matter was never forwarded to any authorities, it was left like and I don't even think that she reminded the man.

What does one have to do in such incidents? Do you commit yourself in improving these conditions knowing that there is no background support of the local authority?"

Maureen's responses: Have you considered discussing this with DENOSA?

Is there any way that you can take this forward on your informal level?

Perhaps we should discuss this in class?

My interpretation: I sense Liseko's feelings of powerlessness. In a study undertaken by Kelly (1998:1134) on how new nursing graduates adapted to the 'real world' of the hospital in terms of their ethical and moral integrity, she found that they went through 6 stages: "vulnerability; getting through the day; coping with moral distress; alienation from self; coping with moral distress; and integration of new professional self-concept." Kelly (1998) suggests that in an effort to maintain moral integrity, the nurse had to redefine her self-concept and identity mainly because their perception of their own criteria of what it means to be a good nurse was not reconcilable with current professional conduct. This is particularly relevant when nurses enter new professional arenas.

Mari (critical reader) also comments on the issue of power raised in Liseko's journal. "Liseko narrates incidents of oppression of nurses, not her own experiences, but mostly as witness or as a reader of articles. This probably means that Liseko resonates with these victims. Liseko expresses her concern with many power issues, and this is a good first step, even if she doesn't take on the issues."

11.4.5 Liseko's professional and academic growth

A global review of Liseko's journal indicates immaturity in some of Liseko's thinking and this has been identified in the micro-analysis. Mari (critical reader) connects Liseko's thinking and my analysis in an overview of the findings: "However, there are also examples of where critical thinking has failed to happen. For instance in Topic 4 Liseko argues, having read an article about the importance of VCT for HIV sufferers, that: "Every nurse in a clinic should be able to counsel the client and appropriate equipment for counselling so that if the patient is willing to test can be done immediately." As Maureen accurately notes, this is not possible in a developing country like SA where clinics are understaffed as it is.

Similarly, Liseko occasionally misses the point in her analysis of articles and understanding of her own role as a nurse. She focuses more on her experience of being a nurse than on how her behaviour impacts on the patients she is meant to be helping. Maureen, "When I now read Liseko's response to the article, I think she has missed the point. The point relates to the system that works for the client whereas Liseko is more concerned with the nurse and her burdens." As Maureen puts it: "A dilemma indeed. I didn't know how to solve your problem, perhaps we should take this to class? I do know that in life, situations are never simple- and you are going to need to resolve your dilemma between - What is right and wrong (your own morality) - Loyalty- and intimidation, It is of course easier when there are proper systems in place."

It must be noted though that Liseko does think of strategies to empower nurses – there is a noticeable improvement in her thinking through the diaries. All she needs to do by the end of the year is implement them. "A lot of work need to be done by nurses themselves to reclaim their lost

pride and dignity by putting our house in order – to be professional, friendly and perform our jobs satisfactory.” Maureen: “Good argument!”

However, I do not think Liseko has grown enough personally in that she remains passive when confronted with wrongdoing in her workspace. When describing theft she writes, “Until today the matter was never forwarded to any authorities, it was left like and I don’t even think that she reminded the man.” Maureen asks “What does one have to do in such incidents? Do you commit yourself in improving these conditions knowing that there is no background support of the local authority.” I hope that Liseko does take action – albeit in a small way – in the future when aware of the unethical conduct of her colleagues.”

“Liseko’s recommendations are not unrealistic – but there as with her previous analysis of articles, fairly simplistic.” I agree with Maureen that Liseko has accurate but simplistic intellectual insights into healthcare issues. There is room for growth in the complexity of her argument. “At a superficial level, her analysis is fine.” She needs to learn to analyse issues more deeply – looking at issues from both sides. For instance considering why the government does not want to make HAART easily available, and also, in her complaints about the impact of patients’ behaviour on nurses, she needs to try to understand the patients’ points of view. As Maureen observes, “When I now read Liseko’s response to the article, I think she has missed the point. The point relates to the system that works for the client whereas Liseko is more concerned with the nurse and her burdens.”

Similarly, Maureen notes that Liseko’s logic is shaky when she analyses an article on preconceptual counselling. “I am querying Liseko’s logic here. In essence, Liseko has grasped the fundamental concept of generalizability in research in that two clinics are insufficient to propound

this concept. However, she doesn't really understand the concept of a reliability study where the researchers were checking on the reliability of a tool for eliciting information – a pre –appointment questionnaire compared to history taking by a doctor. The clinics Liseko mentions, there would be limited opportunity to test this approach for the reasons I have noted.

However, if I think of Liseko's reasoning in terms of whether this method of preconceptual screening should be considered, her argument is valid. This approach may be useless in the SA PHC context. The tool may be valid but other changes in the health care system might need to be put into place in order to ensure its usage." Liseko is getting there in terms of developing more complex reasoning but she needs more practice. 'I do see Liseko moving into a more complex mode of reasoning'."

11.4.6 Evidence of Liseko's critical, reflective thinking (See Appendix 11.1)

11.4.7 Liseko's self- analysis of her reflective journal

"In many diaries I used my own thinking in order to come to conclusions and solutions." Liseko then goes on to label the other thought processes ("Defending positions and issues...", "Action plan based on implications drawn"..., "Examinations of assumption...", "Exploration of consequences and implications...", "Generate novel ideas...", "question the situation and brings about new opinions...") and identifies where these are demonstrated.

11.4.7 Conclusion

Has Liseko grown? What kind of a voice does she present with? Liseko was one of the few people who took the criteria, named them and provided examples of how these were included in her journal. Her organisation of her journal was precise and she met the requirements of the

assignment correctly. Most students did a bit more of the one type of entry and a few less of others and were more casual in their approach to the assignment requirements – but not Liseko.

I do sense that Liseko has grown. In general, I felt that Liseko focused mainly on the descriptive aspects of the reflection. The determination of actions as a result of the reflections is not obvious and generally has been proffered as a suggestion rather than a fait accompli. On reflection and on reviewing Liseko's entries, I think I have been too hasty. I think that she has used the space to try to understand the issues with which she is faced (see Figure 11.3), and the fact that she returns to the same issues on more than one occasion, indicate that these issues have given her pause to reflect. Conway (1999:1) cites Usher, Bryant and Johnston (1997):

“Successful reflective practice entails engaging in a continual rescripting of one's own practice, not in merely having it rescripted and played back by others. In ‘practical’ terms, keeping a journal (and sharing its content with others) is the key to this”.

She has at least named, although not moved to the point of managing her demons, as they are not easy to deal with in a fairly harsh system. This is a big step, I think, for Liseko. I get the feeling that Liseko, being at junior level, knows that to fit in with the system, she has to pay her dues and do her job unquestioningly. It does not seem as if there is anything wrong with Liseko's clinical nursing skills: It is the environment within which she works – the people and the structures – that present her with the greatest challenges. I do not know whether she thinks it worth the effort to accept those challenges. I am reminded of the ubiquitous monkeys – see no evil, hear no evil and do no evil. If Liseko tries her best to do her best (and ignores the actions and effects of others) she will survive. For me, the hope lies in Liseko's description and understanding of these situations and the effect these have on herself and others, with the accompanying recognition that she needs help.

Kelly (1998:11) sounds a warning note citing Dwyer (1994) "Habitual silence in the face of perceived wrongs results in permanent changes in ethical values." It could become easy to fall into the trap of engaging in behaviours that dehumanise patients without the accompanying ethical and moral conscience that are considered to be part of the transformative practitioner's caring framework.

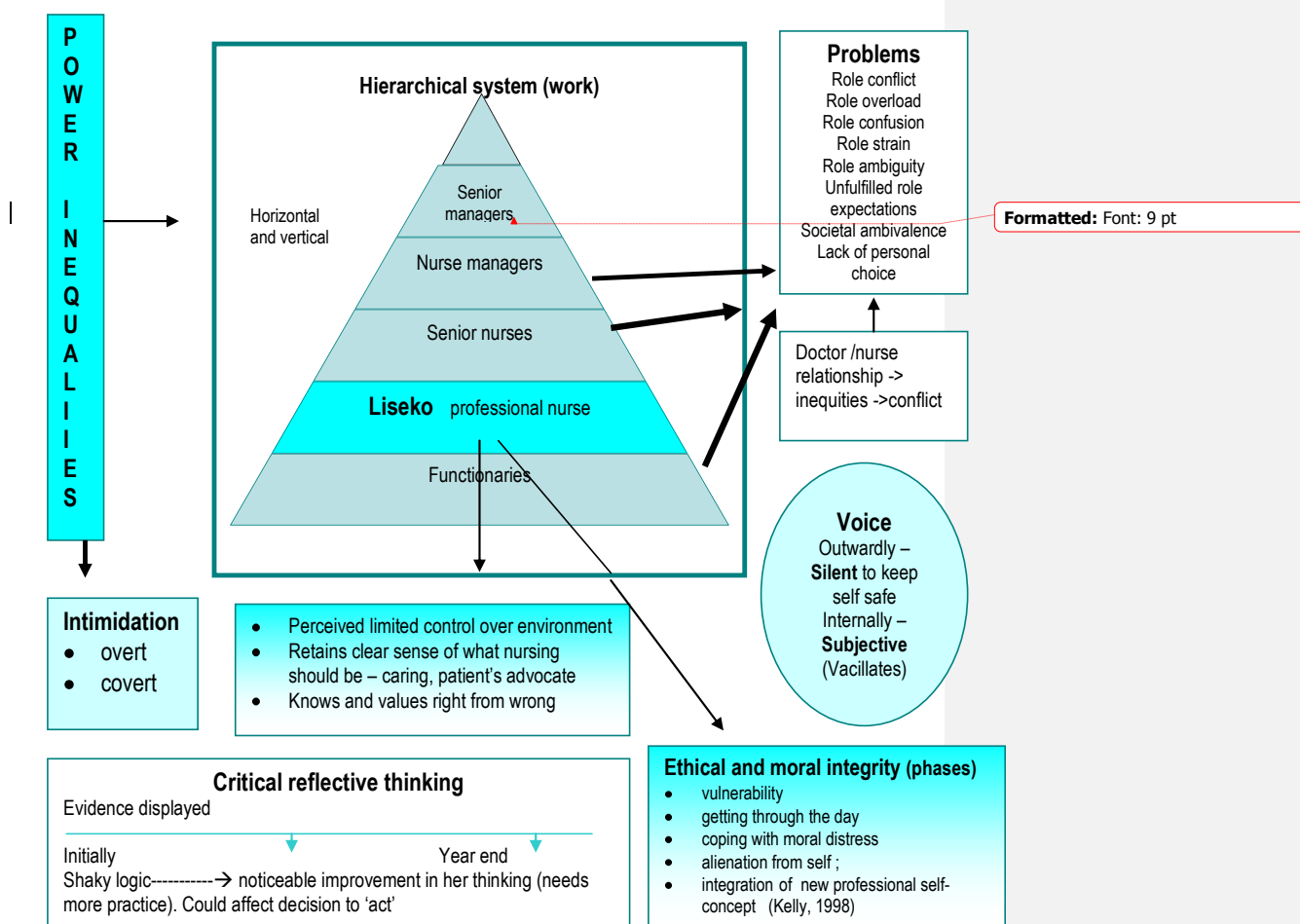


Figure 11.3 Overview of key theme (Power) and Liseko's dilemma

Janet's journal

11.5 JANET

"Maintaining a balance between professional, personal, and academic life, with humour and grace"
(Jane, critical reader).

11.5.1 Introduction

In this journal, I have chosen to interweave the analysis rather than separate it out into categories.

11.5.2 Janet's identity and voice

Janet was a mature woman on the early side of fifty, with two grown sons. Janet returned to work after a considerable period of being a housewife and mother. She had a basic nursing qualification and returned to her studies the previous year for a Bachelor of Technology degree in Occupational Health Nursing. This transition could not have been easy (I am assuming - as we did not discuss this) and while on the one hand, she was almost overwhelmingly confident about her abilities - and with good reason as she was an excellent nurse and had many years of life experience - at the same time, she demonstrated great vulnerability and constantly questioned herself. This vulnerability was demonstrated in her unwillingness to practice as an independent Occupational Health Nurse practitioner (she worked for an agency rather than the organisation, although the management of the organisation had indicated willingness for Janet to change status. Janet put this reluctance to change down to her sense of loyalty to her agency, although the agency was clearly benefiting unfairly). In an effort to live up to her own high expectations, Janet put in twice the effort and a number of our tutorial discussions revolved around this need she had to excel. Good enough was not good enough for Janet, although, interestingly, she had different expectations of others. She made tremendous demands upon herself. I played devil's advocate on more than one occasion, challenging Janet's need for perfection (particularly where it seemed to be

bordering on an obsession). It was an area that Janet did not wish to address. Initially, in trying to understand Janet better, I discussed my perceptions of Janet with two colleagues who had also taught Janet and knew her in her work capacity. This process allowed me to be more sensitive with students at times where I might otherwise overstep boundaries.

Janet used a colloquial style, informal, friendly and with a wry touch of humour which made me immediately amenable to wanting to read more. Through this style, she brought a personal, very human element which, almost unwittingly, drew me to her, not to mention that she initiated her entries with "Dear Maureen." I loved Janet's humour. As Mari (critical reader) observes "It was characteristic of Janet and defused many situations for her, I feel sure. Janet uses humour throughout, to comment on life as a satire. Her tongue-in-cheek perspective helps her to make sense of the daily grind and its accompanying problems and hardships: "I'm on the Mayo clinic diet at the moment and I can't comfort eat. I thank God for Prozac!!!"

Janet ends her diary with an adaptation of one of Shakespeare's poems

"My diary, my diary, my Degree for my diary!!! Modification of King Richard III written by W. Shakespeare.

To write a diary or not write a diary - that is the question.
Whether it's nobler in the mind to suffer
the onslaughts of reflective thinking,
Or to take arms against a sea of bad marks,
And by opposing end the chance of a degree? To search, to write -
Plenty more: and by growth to say we end
The heartache and the professional stagnation
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a communication
Devoutly to be wish'd. To learn, to grow,
To grow, perchance to succeed, Ay, there's the rub:
For in that professional growth what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this resistance to diary writing,
Must give us pause. There's the respect
That makes sweet sound of so long success."

...: This is another prime example of Janet's advanced approach to problem solving through humour and creativity."

I think that her humour allowed me to respond equitably to some of her more outrageous comments (and Janet could be outrageous at times). It also allowed me to tease her back freely and promoted a healthy relationship. Not everyone's humour is similar to mine and sometimes my jokes appeared to come amiss with some students. I 'got' Janet. She made me smile and it was part of her charm. Her humour, however, did not subsume her intellect but allowed her to explore issues in a lighter hearted, less pompous manner. Her tongue-in-cheek conclusion indicated her ease with herself and others. Her conclusion also indicated her ability to condense and integrate the concepts she has noted in a cheeky summation. Throughout our relationship, I was aware of the subjective nature of my interest in Janet. She made me laugh but she also exhibited a number of traits that connected with my own value system. She reminded me of my first two years of teaching where it was very difficult to separate the personal from the professional - and I had to learn to move beyond this if I was to survive. Most importantly, I recognised in these early stages of teaching, that yes, it was important to relate to students, but if I was to facilitate their learning, I had to also be more objective and ensure that there was a part of myself - distanced - so that I could observe the process, reflect and facilitate. So I know that with all the students I work with, I look to find that personal something that I can connect with and to. For me, this is part of the building of the trust relationship. In terms of Janet, it has been our e-mail diary relationship that I have especially valued.

Friendships were enormously important to Janet and the fact that she reflected on relationships and the importance of relationships time and time again, demonstrated this. 6/03 – "Tenacity is

what counts. We all need to be a source of encouragement to each other. On occasions we need to feel not so alone, and know that there are others in the same boat." These relationships were also supportive in the work context "Lastly, how would I survive if I didn't have the constant encouragement of my colleagues? Often I feel tired and wonder if the workload is too much. It's then that my colleagues at work come and visit." Janet would regularly distribute quotes, pictures, or comic expressions and share these with peers on the web. I think she saw her role as the optimist and the motivator - and being liked was also important to Janet. She was extremely frank and expressed her opinions forcibly but with good humour. Her close friends in class were mainly white and were comfortable with her frankness and humour, because I think that they understood the 'heart of gold' that underlay all her expressions. I don't think she was aware that this openness, loudness and frankness was not culturally acceptable to some black African students - who were not quite sure how to take Janet (my perception is based on comments of a focus group of black students at the end of 2003 in 6.3.4.1).

Janet was an excellent nurse, and believed in proactive measures. AIDS was a major issue in South Africa and she planned her occupational health programmes accordingly. This understanding of mine is corroborated by evidence: she obtained the national Occupational Health Nurse's prize for the best outstanding student the previous year. Her clinic, where she operated as the only health practitioner, received a high NOSA (National Occupational Safety Association) rating. We raised both these issues in our tutorial discussions and Janet was highly regarded in the department by other staff members.

Janet was an active member of SASOHN, the South African society for occupational health nurses. It is a politically active and viable society and used as a forum in South Africa for change. It has a

fairly strong political lobbying clout with the South African Nursing Council. On a personal level, I don't believe that South African nurses are nearly as vocal or active in the political agenda of health care in South Africa, in comparison to, say the United States nursing fraternity. So Janet's suggestion in one of her journal articles of using this group as a forum for change is particularly noteworthy.

Janet, 2/5/2003: "Nurses are primarily concerned about the health of their nation. Employment and a healthy environment impact positively on the health status of the people... The potential income source encourages more people to rummage in household garbage bags and scratch on garbage dumps. This is an area that could result in many diseases being spread.

Suggestion: Legislation needs to be passed to make households separate paper waste, tins and glass so that collection poses no risk to these people's health. This is an area where SASOHN could become active... Suggestion: For waste collection, especially medical specific legislation needs to be considered for the micron measurement of the bags. SASOHN could be active here... I will continue to reinforce the significance of recycling on their health. Where many of our employee's families are unemployed I will be able to encourage them to channel their ways in the direction of recycling."

Janet intrigued me. On more than one occasion she took on the unasked-for responsibility for the organisational culture in her industry and on more than one occasion, she found ways to bring this to the attention of the various members of the management structure.

"The most important issues at the moment are that the employee's morale is down and they feel rather insecure about the future of their Jobs. As I have reflected as to why they should feel insecure I think it is mostly those employees who have not done their absolute best in all situations. They have probably taken chances and gotten away with it, in the past. The general feeling is that if you don't perform you will be shown the gate! ... I've spoken to the Operations Manager about this as it has been of concern to me" (Janet, 20 March, 2003).

I have noticed this with other entries from other Occupational Health nurses. I didn't explore this with them, but I am wondering if this phenomenon is because they do work independently, do not necessarily attend management meetings but have a bird's eye view of proceedings because of the nature of their practice i.e. they meet and treat all staff members, irrespective of level, without (seemingly) vested interests. Perhaps this wide view allows them to be more objective? Janet worked in a male-dominated world and was comfortable with her femininity. Janet uses a combination of these factors and her desire to ensure appropriate treatment of an HIV infected client:

"Knowing that Terrance's CD4 count was low and that he was deteriorating rapidly and having the knowledge that X Industry has a special fund for the HIV / AIDS programme, I went to see Paul the HR Manager. I told him I was beginning the process for a medical board of an employee. I could not contain myself; as I was telling Paul of the case I started to cry. X Industry did not want to set a precedent and treat HIV / AIDS employees with anti-retroviral for fear of there being too many cases and then not being able to maintain the costs within the budget. The budget is R100 000.00 per year and has been the same for the last two years. X Industry had spent a minimal amount on VCT and immune boosters over the last two years, and the money is in the bank. I told Paul that we could save a life or at least give it a try if only we could use the money and send him to McCord Hospital where the treatment was available at a much reduced cost. If the employee recovered enough to come back to work he could take responsibility for half the cost of his treatment. I was told that the cost of treatment would soon be coming down to approximately R300.00 a month. Paul went and spoke to one of the three Directors and then gave me consent to send Terrance off to McCord Hospital. X Industry would pay for treatment and blood tests. This decision applied only to this specific case, and all future cases would be decided on their own merits..."(Janet, 10 August)

This is a wonderful story about a nurse with imagination who has the courage of her convictions. By Janet's juxtaposition of this story and of the news article about a hospital which had "gained a

reputation as a place where people with HIV are treated with dignity and compassion, (so that) the hospital was flooded with destitute patients," (Janet) encapsulates much of what has been happening on national level. HIV AIDS has been prevalent in this country for at least 20 years. For years, both government and the private sector have been slow to respond to what has become pandemic. The South African government (and I would also suggest the global community at large) have become inundated with statistics and arguments about the causes, affects and management of the disease. South Africa (and other third world countries) have become embroiled with big Pharmaceutical organisations (and because of their lobbying strength, countries producing the pharmaceutical agents) in a debate about the patent rights and usage of generic drugs and the moral or immoral effects of the high costs of drugs for impoverished communities. The common citizen was left with the impression that that both government and big business believed that this problem could just be swept away under the carpet and out of site. Planning for the effects of the pandemic up until recently had seemed ineffectual and at best, only window dressing. The issue, however, can no longer be avoided. There are those who have taken their moral responsibilities seriously and have engaged in proactive planning and others who just don't have the finances or wherewithal to do so. I can appreciate the dilemma experienced by Janet's company.

I can just imagine the impact of Janet's tears – a feminine, emotional response. However, Janet is plucky and determined (I think of her as a bantam cock) and, I would imagine, seldom if ever, resorts to tears. When she does, it must have a big effect. I would believe that Paul (and the director) would realise her commitment to the Company and to the staff and appreciate the alternative options she had made available to them. It must be very difficult when a relationship of

trust and respect have been established, to reject the emotive effect of tears, particularly from one of the opposite sex, or the plea that “we can save a life”.

Just a comment on Janet’s thought of using prayer to help with the recovery of Terrance.

“What will the future hold? I wish and pray that Terrance would recover to the extent where he could come back to work. Not only for himself but also so that others too would be given the opportunity to receive anti-retroviral treatment. In addition, if Terrence does well, then management will also see the economic benefits to implementing this program and give it greater support.”

The theme of the spiritual runs strongly through Janet’s reflections and she finds solace and support from this source. Also notable is her sense of purpose and hope. Although she constantly engages in reality checks, her sense of hope and optimism seem to take her (and concomitantly) her clients through some very dark places into the light. I feel very safe about Janet’s journey through life because of her positive attitude.

“Under the apartheid government, institutions for blacks were perceived to be inferior, and this stigma has remained with them even post 1994. In a merged scenario institutions would lose their individual identities, resulting in a new identity of the merged institution” (Janet, 21 April).

Janet uses a news article to comment on the merger of local technikons (highlighted in Chapter One, Section 1.4.1). I don’t know why I should be surprised by Janet’s choice for analysis. I think it is because she is the only student to move outside of her work / study/ health/ personal environment to focus on this issue. She has taken the merger, and considers the implications of a further merger with the third and remaining technikon campus. She uses the present merger between ML Sultan campus and Technikon Natal as a basis for analysis. She has encapsulated

some of the major issues and presented the case in terms of advantages and disadvantages - which provides for a good basis for an argument, as she has taken perspectives from both a positive and negative view. She has also looked at potential consequences, and then, implications of the merger from both student and lecturer perspective. She has also taken both a micro and macro view - and her focus on the issues is realistic.

Janet mentions the environment in slightly different ways in other entries and describes the effect on her senses, for example, being near a pool of water calms her senses, and she buys a plant for her clinic. She has an aesthetic awareness and uses poetry to connect with her senses. She talks about the warmth of the sun on her face and the pleasurable (and downfall) effects of food in her life. I find her very open and responsive to her senses, and while she uses her intellect, she relates to the sensuous and the emotional components of her life.

I was struck by Janet's use of the phrase "busy taking time out" as it connected with me. When I contemplate a memory of Janet, she is always "busy". I conjure up an image and can see Janet as she sits in the curve of our circular seating arrangement in class. She is surrounded by bits and bobs and by her mere presence, calls for attention. She is very short and talks fairly constantly. I hear giggles and laughter from her corner. She has friends on either side of her and feels quite comfortable engaging in discussion with anyone. She is a natural leader and her friends appear to be quite protective of her. I almost feel that class is an outing for her, another occasion for social engagement. But she takes the class sessions seriously and engages her quicksilver mind to matters at hand. Words pop out of her mouth without her thinking, I think sometimes she seems, unwittingly, to offend some of her quieter, black colleagues who appear slower and even more quiet in her presence. She is quick to praise her colleagues and I think, sees herself, as fairly

sensitive. But with Janet, I keep getting the feeling that 'there are places to go, things to do' and for those who keep up, there is a place on the train. 'Hop on board' I hear her calling, but the train isn't stopping for those who hesitate. Janet didn't just let life happen, she engaged with it and would engage with it even when it would be uncomfortable or demanding. Each of life's obstacles she seemed to take as a challenge and she was much challenged in the year of her studies. Her son became ill with a terminal disease and her husband was forced to take a job in Central Africa to help meet their financial needs. Religion, faith, friends and family were important supports for Janet. She did not talk to her class about her personal trials, and I think many of her colleagues believed that Janet's life was perfect. Her social mask belied much and I think it was important to her to be seen as capable (the private self in Johari's window). She was not one for wallowing in self-pity, nor did she invite this.

"Symptoms usually begin between the ages of 5 and 15 but can, on rare occasions; appear as early as 18 months or as late as 30 years of age. The first symptom to appear is usually difficulty in walking, or gait ataxia. (This how Son's condition started) The ataxia gradually worsens and slowly spreads to the arms and then the trunk. Foot deformities such as clubfoot, flexion (involuntary bending) of the toes, hammer toes, or foot inversion (turning inward) may be early signs. Over time, muscles begin to weaken and waste away, especially in the feet, lower legs, and hands and deformities develop. Other symptoms include loss of tendon reflexes, especially in the knees and ankles. There is often a gradual loss of sensation in the extremities, which may spread to other parts of the body. Dysarthria (slowness and slurring of speech) develops, and the person is easily fatigued. Rapid, rhythmic, involuntary movements of the eyeball (nystagmus) is common. (Son has this) Most people with Friedreich's ataxia develop scoliosis (a curving of the spine to one side),(Son has mild scoliosis) which, if severe, may impair breathing..." (Janet, 15 August)

I think that the way Janet introduced her personal story by first describing the disease and the disease pattern, and then connecting the known symptoms to those her son was experiencing,

without first introducing or contextualising her son and his disease, was all the more moving or disturbing, because of this approach. I had a sense of someone holding on tightly and that by describing the details of the condition; it would make the condition more understandable and finite, and therefore, something that could be dealt with. When I teach students about problem solving, I emphasise the need to define and reduce the problem into units that will allow them to then understand the problem more rationally. It seemed that Janet had gone for this approach, which in a sense, allowed her to protect herself from the horror of the reality. It is the distancing and the emotional withdrawal that would allow this for Janet (at least, in the short term).

This entry had a profound effect on me. Normally when I read a student's entry, I think about it usually in the here and now and dash of a response, or check a fact with a colleague or the Internet or other reference material. This entry, however, caused me to do more than just pause. I had to absorb the blow and try and assimilate the meaning and effect of the writing, first on myself. I had to think about how I felt and then I started worrying about how I could respond in a manner that reflected my concern but would not cause Janet discomfort or further pain. I felt very similar to the way I feel at funerals - any words I have to say seem meaningless in the scale of the immensity of the pain. I stammer and my body reaches out to comfort and then I withdraw for I don't want the moment to be about me. There is such an extent of pain and I feel so helpless. I reflected for over a week and then e-mailed Janet. Up until this point, ours was a joshing relationship - a controllable one. How to retain the dynamics, respect and respond to Janet's revelation about her beloved son and keep Janet safe in terms of our relationship? I also wanted to retain the boundaries that defined our relationship. The response followed on the e-mail.

Maureen's response: You mention how your husband, mother and yourself feel and are dealing with Son's illness. You also note how important God and prayer is for all of you. What things comfort / support Son? How is he dealing with this process?

I see you intellectualizing his illness so that by understanding the process and progress, you at least know what to defend yourselves against.

I am no psychologist, but I do know that there are stages and emotions that are sometimes unbearably painful to deal with – I am really glad that you are on anti-depressants and I hope you are protecting yourself. Again, I urge you to think of a psychologist to allow you the space to express the depths of those emotions without feeling that you are letting anyone down. I think you have a remarkable gift and you are very blessed in the love you share with your family friends – and that they share with you.

Keep writing – keep talking and keep doing the things that make sense to you. I also urge you to give yourself permission to make mistakes. Your life is changing significantly and you need to take care.

It becomes clear that Janet's identities, in terms of the framework, are multiple and rich and clearly identified within her journal: Elements of all aspects of these – the philosophical, pragmatic, ethical, professional, South African, student, self, spiritual and family identity – are touched on to various degrees within her journal. She also moves beyond herself to a wider, more encompassing world view and just as clearly these are located and experienced within a psychological, physical, environmental and philosophical context.

11.5.3 Janet's self-evaluation of her reflective journal

Janet starts her diary in a light-hearted vein,

"Good morning class of 2003. One of your assignments is to write a diary." She acknowledges one of the issues that all students grapple with:

"I thought that I came to DIT to study occupational health, and suddenly I was confronted with this new task of having to write a diary. Write a diary...? I didn't even write a diary as a teenager! So at 50 years of age, and fast nearing the prime of life having to write down my thoughts and experiences was not going to be a breeze. How was this leopard going to change its spots?"

"I live on the fast track, eat fast food, drive a car fast and I like to make immediate communication. Diary writing was very challenging, and beyond my comfort zone... Did I say a new task? Let me correct myself - a new found, arduous task."

As with most students, after the immediate shock, she starts her reflective journey. As the months go by she finds challenging articles and issues and as she applies the Questioning Prompt to promote her critical thinking she finds that "diary writing became easier."

She notes in the early stages "I have cried many tears" and moves to empowerment:

"I have enjoyed the advantages of becoming a little more computer literate these last two years. This has meant I can now surf the net !!!!!!!."

She recognises the value of the process and makes the connections:

"I have accessed and benefited from information that I would never have had the inclination to, or the opportunity to realise. To my advantage, I have accessed the Mail and Guardian on-line and the Health Systems Trust and have used their articles knowing that they are a reputable and recommended source. Both these sources have serious issues to consider and provide plenty food for thought."

Journaling becomes more than problem solving on the personal front. Janet moves to developing her social awareness "There are an incredible amount of various very serious issues that have arisen with today's growing social problems".

Janet's tongue-in-cheek connection with Systems Theory is used to appreciate her learning:

"I have benefited from the reflective, critical thinking and analysis of the events that I have discussed in the diary entries. This has facilitated my professional growth and development by giving me the opportunity to integrate the theoretical knowledge and the practical. I have learned to implement these critical thinking techniques to assess, plan and

evaluate situations in my work and home life. The more I reflect the more critical I become, and the more critical I am the more reflecting I have to do. Has this got something to do with INPUTS and THROUGHPUTS and then OUTPUTS?"

The appreciation of the 'messiness' and complexity and the issues presented daily justify the depth and effort of the journaling process, and that Janet has learned this is expressed in her naming of the processes she has engaged with in her journal:

"I live an incredibly busy life with a multitude of simple versus complex issues, happy versus sad issues, solitary times versus chaotic, resolvable versus those issues that cannot be resolved ??? and to have the answers to every problem, every query, on every occasion and to every troubled soul is a daunting and draining task; it is on these issues that I have had to write about. I have had difficulties in putting it all into words. I have had to come to terms with contradictions and inconsistencies. I have had to interpret and evaluate arguments and beliefs. I have had to raise and pursue core questions, and solve out of the ordinary problems and deal with extraordinary situations. I have had plenty to write about."

Janet writes about the value of introspection:

"This self-examination of my thoughts, feelings, and behaviour has helped me recount key factors in specific experiences and has helped me to learn valuable lessons. Specifically how to better handle those exact circumstances differently".

Janet recognises the cathartic value of the process. "When writing a diary it can provide a person with emotional support." She notes its value transformative learning - "The purpose of the diary and the discussions around critical thinking and reflective practice was to aid in a critical education..." She validates my approach as empathetic-critiquer in positive affirmation, "It provides another source of encouragement and another person's perspective or re-evaluation of the occurrence that has been written about." She has used her journal to reflect soon after an event in order to analyse

situations and develop solutions. "Prompt reviews of the learning situations, what is known, what is not yet known and what has been learned, ensures that incidents are well reflected upon and solutions more readily found or worked through."

Janet was one of the students who appreciated an open learning environment that seems to work better with mature students who value structuring their own learning, "It certainly helps to have a less structured learning environment that prompts students to explore what they think is important and worthy of discussion."

Janet looked beyond the paper-based journal to reflect on the social dimension derived from on-line sharing of entries:

"Posting diary entries provides a social learning environment where students can write about their own way of thinking, give reasons to support their way of thinking. It gives an opportunity and an awareness of opposing opinions and perhaps the weakness of their own way of thinking."

11.5.4. Janet's personal, professional and academic growth

Pat (critical reader): "The last diary – Janet - what to say? Started thinking her a little flip/glib and ended up bawling my eyes out. I really can say nothing of any use, except the world is made up of extraordinary people."

Mari Pete (critical reader): Student growth

"My first impression was that this student is that she is exceptionally well-organised – hers is the only diary with a detailed index page, followed by an introduction and a reflection section. When, towards the end of the diary, I became aware of the student's terrible hardship (during the

journaling period her son is diagnosed with a terminal disease) it almost seems as if this very organized presentation of the document is a way of making sense of a crumbling world.

Growth

Early in the diary Janet is already operating at an advanced level of critical thinking (e.g. she starts off by analysing the “minimum wages” article thoroughly, from different angles). She is able to see her own weaknesses (“I have very high standards maybe to the point of obsessive...”), she displays confidence and initiative, and is comfortable with herself (“I have lost the need to look ‘the part’”).

As far as I can see, Janet's growth occurs in the areas of computer skills, language, and a deepening of her already advanced abilities in critical thinking...”

Sarah (Critical Reader)

“Janet demonstrates admirable self-awareness. She can take time to be with herself – 28/04 – “Anyhow I enjoyed my outing today as I had a few minutes to sit and be peaceful next to this little dam in the middle of a Nursery.” Similarly, her faith provides an important support for her. When faced with her son's terminal disease Jane reflects on what “God's plan could possibly be for us and what the future holds.” (15/08) and “we are praying and trusting for God to be with us in every area of our life – to touch Son physically and emotionally, and to help us to live positively and with hope.”

Interestingly, when discussing abortion, Jane focuses on and analyses general attitudes, and then she brings in her own specific experience. Although she herself cancelled an abortion, she does not judge others for ending unwanted pregnancies. I find her attitude far more mature and accepting than Jenny's – another nurse whose diaries I read critically, who gets stuck in dogma. Even as a committed Christian, Janet does not judge others. “My role as a committed Christian is to help people get to a place of holistic healing irrespective of my own personal convictions. (18/05)

Janet also demonstrates a sharp political awareness beyond the scope of nursing, which shows an enquiring mind. E.g. 17/05 – discussion of the cartoon satirising Bush.

In her analysis of an article on retrenchment Janet puts a lot of thought into the implications of the process. She does not simplify the issues and shows an understanding of the complexity of the arguments. "The stress levels are running high at every level in the organisation, from management to sweeper."

11.5.5 Conclusion

I think that as I reviewed Janet's diary as a single entity, I became very aware of the range of areas and interests that Janet covered. Janet had not been afraid to tackle a multiplicity of issues and demonstrated her political literacy. She wrote about current political issues that affected her, in her personal and/or professional capacity directly, or indirectly. She has written about recipes and the values of certain foods. She wrote about her professional life as an Occupational Health nurse and her relationships with clients and management. She discussed her involvement on one-to-one levels in the institution and she also took a more macro perspective of the place she worked in and the people she worked with, as well as her profession. She wrote about her personal life, her family and her friends and she worked through some fairly profound issues. She reflected on issues raised in the classroom. She reflected on her desires, interests, concerns - and her growth. I think that her range of interests and ability and inclination to read broadly, allowed her to bring a depth of understanding to her analysis. For myself, I certainly felt that Janet was engaging in a dialogue with me and this became important to me as well.

Janet 's technique was also very interesting. She quite frequently cut and pasted the original article so that the facts were as they appeared. Then, as she considered the issues in each section, she typed in her analysis in a different colour. She reflected on different perspectives; she looked for the pros and cons in the arguments and she contextualized the issues. She frequently made connections outside of the context and used her knowledge more broadly. An issue would

sometimes spur Janet on to exploring and finding out more about the issue - than only focusing on the article at hand. She has moved very comfortably within Surbeck et al's (1991) process of reflective responses, identified within Figure 10.1 in Chapter 10.

Janet wrote far more entries than required and I remember in a tutorial, where we were discussing stress levels and Janet's need to be in control and 'on-top' of things, that she might want to consider reducing the number of entries – but she didn't. I think that writing became quite important to Janet and her evaluation reflects this. Her approach to writing also varied - she has been serious about certain issues and delved deep emotionally; she has written tongue-in-cheek and mocked both herself and institutions; she has used humour as a cover to analyse quite serious issues and the result has been effective. She has written clinically, using evidence-based practice and the literature to support conclusions. Is there a consistent pattern? I think that no matter the approach, Janet's values surface - the values of excellence, caring for others and wanting to share in relationships with others. She was plucky (or truculent) and she didn't give up. She could be obsessive and she had frailties. Her emotions roller coasted at times but when she was down, she picked herself up and looked for the light. People were important to Janet - her family, her friends, her clients - and even the man-in-the-street. Janet was "involved in mankind" and chose to involve herself. She could no more avoid picking up those who had fallen on the wayside than she could ignore the exigencies of life. She had strong coping mechanisms and supports and I was constantly aware of the spiritual supports in her life. When I think about students, I often reflect on whether or not I would like them to care for my family if the need arose. Janet I would trust implicitly to do what is right and best.

I think that this was reflected in her own observation:

" If we live out of fear and our actions are determined by the potential negative outcomes of our actions, then I think that something in the human spirit has died. Indeed, I think at that point we have ceased to display the one quality that makes us different from every other species on earth - the ability to go beyond our needs and reach out and meet the needs of others, even at the expense of our own preservation."

Using a framework to 'see' Janet:

The voices of Janet? She clearly had her own constructed voice. She was passionate about her life and the elements comprising her life. She brought her years of experience (she was 50) that provided the context for the issues she considered and the manner in which she engaged with these issues. Although she recognised the strength of her stance on the issues and was clear about her moral 'ladder', she had the flexibility and openness to allow for other possibilities.

How does Janet's reflective journal allow me to place her within the Transformative Intellectual's frame of reference? When considering the models I have used to enable me to 'see' the student's personal identity, there is congruence between Janet's self-perception and mine. Janet was very aware of the context she lived and worked within and the different roles she played and she allowed for the scope and range of these differing elements. In no way was Janet a one-dimensional creature. She was very feminine in the world of men, she was a mother and a daughter, she was a wife, she was a student and was not loathe taking on the fun aspects that this role presented her with. She was a professional nurse and she was a friend. She was a citizen of this country. All of these roles presented Janet with responsibilities and challenges, which she accepted with verve.

Philosophically, Janet had a clear vision of her world and determined her own values. They both

supported and advanced her, but she lived in the real world and was able to reconcile her values with the pragmatic reality of life's constraints, retaining and promoting a strong ethical stance.

In terms of van Aswegen's model (statements for the recipients of critical reflective practice in 2.4.4.3), there is clear evidence, both in terms of the student's self-evaluation as well as from the reflections, that Janet was a critical reflective practitioner. Jane (critical reader): "Janet's persona, her interest in and sharing with people, her ability to cope with a most distressing personal experience – plus her sense of humour, shows a well-rounded person.

Her professionalism is never in doubt and neither is her critical reflective practice. Her comment at the beginning on the value of this and of keeping a diary, is justified in the reading. She is an admirable woman."

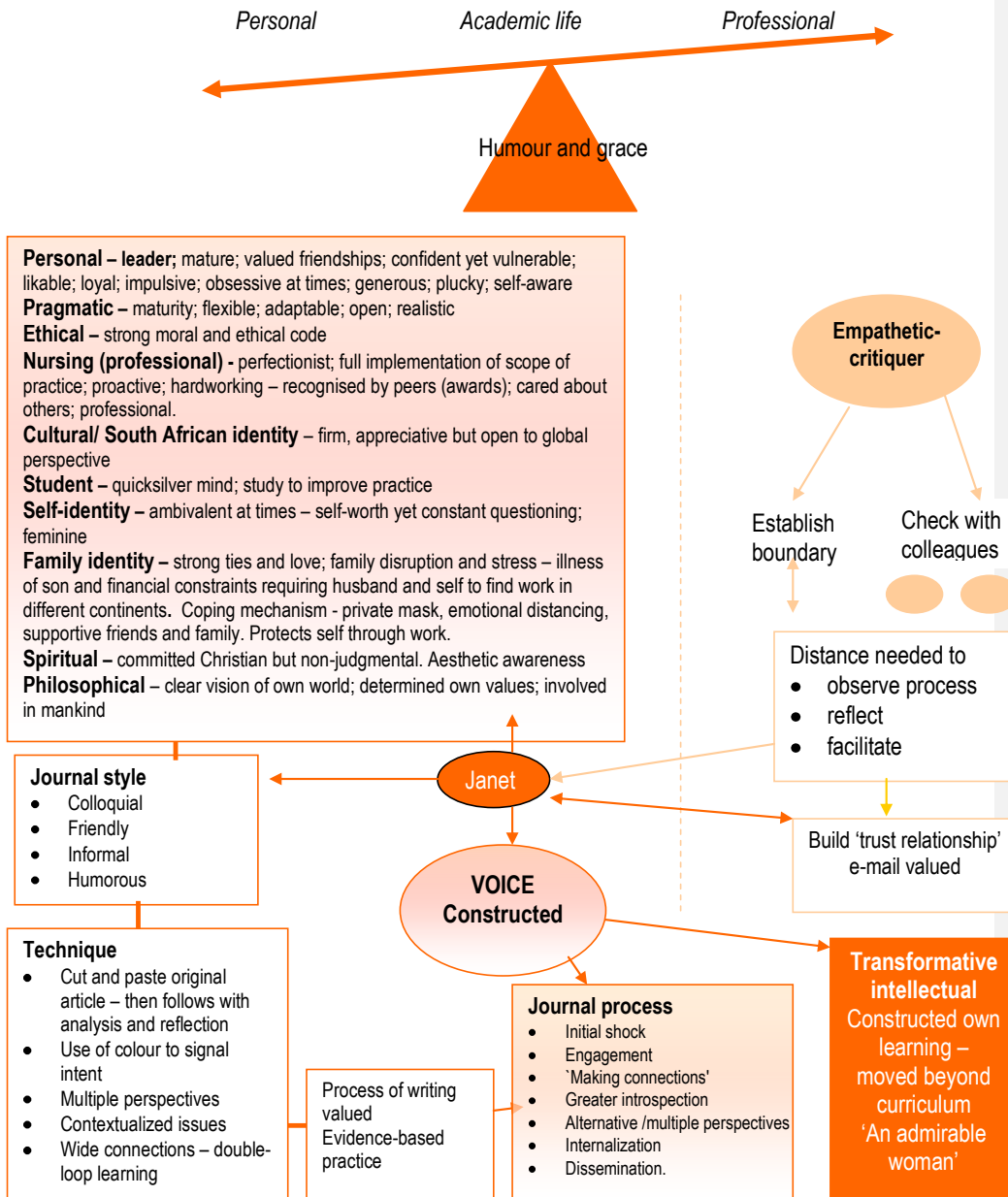


Figure 12.4 Janet's journaling experience in terms of the Theoretical Framework for Analysis of Reflective Journals as defined in Figure 10.1

Reeva's journal

11.6 REEVA

Disequilibrium versus the private self: Development of reasoning and writing skills, deepening of understanding of self and professional practice while searching for balance amidst the fears

11.6.1 Introduction

I have chosen to start my discussion of Reeva in the middle of her diary, early June, 2003 with a discussion of an incident which affected our relationship. Reeva was an attractive single woman. She was a second-year Primary Health Care nursing student in her late twenties, South African borne of Indian descent. She worked in a government-based comprehensive primary health care clinic in the Durban (eThekwinini) metropolitan area.

She exuded an air of quiet, almost arrogant confidence and I remember feeling somewhat intimidated by her. If I think about why I should feel this way, it was because she seemed aloof and did not appear to embrace either my teaching methods or the course structuring. She had just successfully completed her Primary Health Care (PHC) nursing course and her course facilitator was extremely competent. I felt that my discursive, non-structured style was not altogether satisfactory in her eyes. I had a strong impression of someone who had registered for the course in order to complete her requirements for her PHC degree, and both the management course and I were incidental, or even irrelevant to this process. She seemed to be holding judgement of us both in reserve and it was most disconcerting. Of course, this is merely a perception based on her manner and lack of enthusiastic acceptance. I don't mean that Reeva did not get involved - she did, but she appeared off-hand, and the sense of her boredom with the slowness of the process was patent. In fairness to the quicker students, remembering that first language speakers were in the minority, there was quite a lot of repetition and the pace of progress as well as the choice of

material for discussion was very dependent on the will of the majority of the students. It must not have been easy for those students who were used to a structured and rapidly-moving pace of delivery of lecturing or discussion, to be faced with discussions focusing on the work-based problems of students. Sometimes these same problems were raised again from different perspectives. The afternoon sessions were open-ended and not split into the traditional period format. The class itself was fairly large (19 students) and if a question was asked of all students in a round-table forum, so that each student was consulted, this process too, could slow down the session. I didn't do this often, and generally split the class into smaller discussion groups after general explanations and class discussion - but the few occasions could be frustrating. I remember asking the class in early June to evaluate their progress and their perception of the course. They discussed this in groups of three or four. Although the following isn't an excerpt of Reeva's diary, I included it because it was integral to my understanding and appreciation of Reeva and was the turning point in our relationship. It should be remembered that this programme was taught in an integrated manner, where I often triangulated information or concepts derived from other elements of the course (tasks, assignments, class discussions)) in order to appreciate (or allow the students to appreciate) the learning process as a fluid progression. Reeva's following excerpt is derived from a *task* response on assertiveness subsequent to this class incident (11 June, 2003) and underlies the explanation of where our relationship was, and to where it progressed.

11.6.2 The event

Reeva had completed an assertiveness quiz and a task on self-analysis and used this platform to deal with an incident that had occurred in class: After discussing their evaluation in small groups, Reeva responded but on behalf of what she felt was a reflection of the whole group's views and indicated that the pace was too slow and that discussions on issues were being repeated. This

immediately seemed to be perceived by a number of students to be an attack on (a) themselves in that some of the students assumed that she was belittling their intelligence as they had indicated that the pace and structure suited them. Most of these students were black African. Some, including myself, saw this as (b) a criticism of my teaching method, which in fact, is what she really meant, and which of course, could be fairly easily be dealt with. It was not a comfortable situation for Reeva and others, and all credit to her that she used her task to reflect on this issue:

“From the readings I have gathered that I need to build on being assertive without letting the situation get out of control or reaching crisis level. My actions are governed by needs and these needs have to be met in a more diplomatic manner without the feelings or rights of others being impinged on. I have recognized that anger and frustration are destructive elements and thus can hinder these needs being met... Enhancing my assertiveness skills can assist in the listener perceiving the intended message correctly. It is not comforting to realize that individuals feel threatened or intimidated by my attempts of voicing my feelings or thoughts. It is important for others to know what I want without feeling attacked thus giving my needs consideration.”

This event was a major turning point for both of us in the relationship I think, and the easing into a trust-based ‘accord’. It related to the way we both responded to each other in the text, and then in a subsequent casual conversation walking together on the way to the Web CT classroom. It also connects to the focus group discussion on student feelings of inferiority discussed in Chapter Seven, Sections 7.4.5.1 and 7.4.5.2. I included this excerpt as it touched on issues affecting Reeva, her identity and sense of self.

I think that it was important to Reeva that she both perceived herself and was perceived as someone who was competent, intelligent, independent and sensitive. Reeva appeared to have a great deal of pride. For Reeva, nursing was her chosen profession and being a nurse of excellence

was central to her inner core. She did not reveal her inadequacies lightly and so public written reflections touched me a great deal in that I do believe Reeva reflected on her position with intent and care, and the self-revelation and ensuing self-insight were acts of inner courage. The management of the 'event' also allowed me to move past my own assumptions about Reeva's independence and aloofness, and forget about how this intimidated me, and 'touch' Reeva, without trying to be the teacher I thought she might like me to be and so, not compromise my style. I just tried to be more sensitive to Reeva and more careful and mindful.

11.6.3 First impressions

My very first impression of Reeva at the beginning of the academic year was that she was young, attractive, somewhat reserved with a clear sense of where she was headed and she was ambitious. Her boyfriend, a doctor, was on his way to New Zealand, and was waiting for Reeva to complete her studies so that they could go together. Her capacity to function was stretched in her own place at work, as she was one of the few nurses who were skilled in clinical diagnosis and treatment. Much of her discussion in the tutorials revolved around communication and how to improve the functioning of her health service. She frequently felt frustrated by the 'system' and the perceived lack of competence of some of her fellow health care workers in managing the system. In addition to the workload presented by both her work context and this management course, she was also completing an onerous clinical component to upgrade her certificate in PHC to diploma status, as well as meeting the requirements for Research 1. "After those first few days of orientation to what's expected of me this year, I beg to differ what's worse: the volume of the work or the course content" (Reeva's first entry, 13th Feb). As can be seen, Reeva wasn't too thrilled about the course per se. She had registered for it in order to complete her degree. "At first I must admit that I was skeptical about writing the diary articles. This predominately emerged from the fact

that I am not the person who can put their thoughts and views to writing.” (Reeva, self-evaluation). I could see then that I was going to have to do a lot of work in the motivational department. During the year, she was beset by health problems, which she kept private from the rest of her classmates, and probably only shared with me as a courtesy. Reeva was a very private person.

11.6.4 Self-definition

In class, I felt I had to proceed fairly cautiously as Reeva, while ostensibly calm and open, seemed ‘prickly’ and sensitive. I was worried that I would not connect easily with her. Reeva’s journal, in fact, was the key to establishing an understanding about each other. It provided a few clear indicators about how Reeva saw herself and what she valued:

- She could and did connect lessons learned from one context to another.
- She noted that she has ‘chosen’ nursing as a profession - it was not just a job for her and was part of her definition of herself.
- She indicated that she would never have dreamed of journaling - but if it was a means to an end - she would do this.
- She was open to the concept and linked it to improving her documentation skills, something she learned to value.
- Another trait which defined her sense of self was endurance - she had overcome a setback before through endurance.

Reeva had a sense of humour - a key to opening one’s self up, and it proved helpful in the academic year.

“Little did I imagine that I would also learn on diary keeping, something that sounds both weird and wonderful to me. The introductory lectures to diary keeping soon began to give me nightmares. Images of my lecturer looming over my bed, hovering with a pen in her hand

saying "Write! Write! Write!" drove me to search my memory and retrieve vital information" (Reeva, 13 Feb).

11.6.5 Journaling valued

It would seem that fear of the unknown, with the possible outcome of making mistakes and looking foolish, is the "stuff of nightmares" (even though the phrase was written to amuse), particularly in the light of my perception of Reeva as a proud woman. I do think that it was this pride that made her all the more vulnerable. I was quietly pleased that Reeva had embraced the concept of journaling as a means to reflection, and particularly like her understanding of the process as one of self-nurturing. "Fears are dispelled and the task of diary writing is well under hand. What better way to grow intellectually and spiritually than to nurture myself!" (Reeva, 13 Feb)

On reflection, I do see that journaling is a nurturing process. I don't know that I fully appreciated this notion prior to reading Reeva's journal. Van Aswegen (2002:54) writes "guided reflection can nurture sense of awareness and commitment...Guidance to critically reflect on practice enables practitioners to become more conscious of their existing qualities and skills and aids purpose and direction towards the goal of effective work." She warns, however, that the person guiding "should be committed to the same values and offer positive encouragement. Without commitment and encouragement the reflective practitioner may become increasingly stressed".

11.6.6 Reeva's fears

In the early stages (Reeva, 6 March) Reeva faced the confusion raised by ambivalence. She was not certain she had made the right choice in her life's path – and both choices were important to her – on the one hand, following the person she loved and on the other, completing her degree, an

important factor in terms of status, recognition as well as a basis for furthering her career and learning opportunities. She was also not clear whether the courses she was undertaking that year would offer her what she wanted. It was also a bit late for her to throw in the towel and back out. She reassured herself by stating that this was her course (taking ownership) and therefore also her responsibility for ensuring that her learning would (must) turn out well. A major part of her concern was her lack of time. She saw time as a precious commodity and I get a sense of her wanting to make the absolute most out of it.

"I have lost control in determining my path," writes Reeva (10 April). Again, the thoughts that concerned Reeva embraced the fear of the unknown. Reeva saw herself as strong, but with something very precious to her testing the very fabric of her being (boyfriend leaving, and although voicing his intent to return, Reeva was still unsure whether distance and time would make this a lie), she voiced her inner fear and recognised that she was not as strong as her outer-mask indicated. She returned to her coping strategies - endurance, determination and rationalization.

"It is in any relationship that compromise is required! I guess its time for me to step back and wait for what's to unfold in the future. It's never always that one can determine ones actions with absolute advantage. Some things stepped down for can be greatly rewarded especially if endured with patience!" (Reeva, 10 April).

In a journal entry (Reeva, 10 April), she used the evocative metaphor of a journey "pathway" - and then the light - and then the revelation. I think it is such an exciting way to experience learning - to start in the dark in some trepidation and doubt, and to move into the 'light'. For Reeva, fear of the unknown is scarier than an adventure.

11.6.7 Personal growth

I would like to return to the journal article cited by Reeva in an earlier entry by van Aswegen (2002) who states:

"Journal writing is an introspective tool individuals use for personal growth, in educational applications, and in group settings. It connects thought, feeling, and action - a synthesizing tool that brings critical reflection and action together. When used purposefully, it is more than a means to an end, more than recording what has happened, it becomes, according to Lukinsky (Mezirow, 1990:214), an "objectification of the inner search, and anchor from which to make further explorations."

A colleague of mine expressed her concern about students writing about personal issues, and although she recognised the value of this for personal growth, she was not at all certain that it was appropriate in the educational setting. I think that van Aswegen (2002) answers these doubts. I also believe that the more comfortable one is with oneself, the easier it becomes to move beyond the self to other regions and concerns. I do not see it as being possible to separate out the personal identity from the work identity from the student identity and other identities in a totally compartmentalised way and on a continuous basis. Each flows into the other to make the whole. It is for this reason that I think creating a 'space' for the personal, allows later for a healthier 'space' for the professional. Gilmartin (2002:1533) recognises that the exploration of self-awareness through reflective dialogue improves reflective practice, with particular mention of the interpersonal skill component. She notes that it is critical for nurses to become "critically aware of psychological assumptions, engage with feeling states and examine interactive patterns." Her qualitative study focuses on the consideration of how nurses engage with or resist the learning process. While I would need to be cautious about making connections between the reflective dialogue in Gilmartin's work which focused on the dialogue emanating from interpersonal tasks between peers in the

classroom, and the reflective dialogue between Reeva and myself in the form of journaling, I do think that the central premise – reflective dialogue improves reflective practice – holds true for both. I would also like to follow up with one of Gilmartin's (2002:1533) resulting proposals in terms of nursing education – that those educators working with an interpersonal skills component

“show greater sensitivity in the use of experiential learning theory, balancing the use of novel stimulation with the students' behavioural signals. Rogers (1993) suggested that teachers who were highly sensitive to their students and who were emotionally expressive, were likely to encourage exploration. Freire (1970), who empowered illiterate people in Brazil, showed radical insights on educational strategies which might be helpful in enabling student nurses with poorly developed interpersonal skills” such as small group work (Gilmartin, 2002:1540).

However, she does warn that group work that challenges defensive behaviours requires a great deal of sensitivity, flexibility and insight.

11.6.8 Life-changing experience

Reeva became ill, which seemed to have quite a profound effect on her. I knew that she had formed a close relationship with my colleague, who taught her in her PHC course the previous year, and was currently her research supervisor, and so, while I was prepared to be very open to Reeva, I was not unduly concerned about her well-being as she had appropriate supports. For me, it was an added bonus if and when she did share, probably because Reeva was such a private person and protected herself by this self-containment. She reminded me so much of a cat I have, who allows me to stroke her only once in a while. She lives in my home, uses its' facilities and makes herself at home - but keeps the family at a distance. She chooses when to be friendly and dictates our response. Reeva had to take some time off from class, but did not share the reason for

this with her colleagues. I think it was politeness that prodded Reeva to explain to me why she was taking time off. I was very careful with Reeva - open, but not inquisitive, and because of the structuring of the course, was also able to be flexible in terms of Reeva meeting her course requirements i.e. a more flexible timing schedule.

“So much has occurred in such a short space of time. This year seems to be rolling on fast! Somehow I feel its because I have been consistently occupied with work, studying and conducting a social life. Being physically and mentally occupied seems to make time move on fast as there is very little time to actually watch the clock. Meeting deadlines for the assignments and tasks simply takes me through to the next that needs to be done.

Since my recent illness, my boyfriend is no longer going to New Zealand. His unselfish decision to stay and support me has proved his worth to me. Yet again he has risen as my pillar of strength and this has added to me being dependent on him emotionally. Through all of this I have accepted that I am human and from your previous advice I am willing to open up to experiences so as to look at things from a different perspective. I have found that our lives play out by the experiences that mould and shape us as individuals. These experiences have made me stronger and wiser in the game of living. It is difficult to actually stick to plans that have been made of things that I would like to do. The reason being that since events are uncontrollable and unpredictable. Well at least I am certain that my studies are near completion and this is what I am presently striving for” (Reeva, Entry 10, 5 August).

This entry was very personal and indicated an opening up of Reeva's thoughts and her ability to share these thoughts. They were also quite revealing: The fact that Reeva's boyfriend was prepared to wait for Reeva had moved her profoundly. I had the sense that although she was sure of her feelings for him, she didn't quite trust his verbalised feelings for her. This statement of intent went a great deal forwards in opening Reeva to a sense of 'trust'. It seemed that Reeva was becoming more open to her inner feelings and used these to guide her to where she wanted to go in life. Of course she had goals but perhaps, for me, importantly, her boundaries had shifted and

had become more open and flexible. Again, Reeva reflected on the concept of time and the immutability and inexorability of the concept.

Jane (critical reader) comments:

“Despite the pressure, what a mature perspective and how much critical reflection, together with inter-communication activities, have strengthened her, opened her to the fact of “Man Proposes, God Disposes”. Her boyfriend’s sacrifice and her illness has made her really realize her own mortality, and value life. Interesting to look back here at her changing perspective – how it is not the ‘moment’ that shapes our lives ultimately, but experience.”

11.6.9 Development of critical thinking skills

While Reeva did use her journal for introspection, she also used it to improve on her critical thinking skills and she sought to do this by analysing various journal articles that interested her or were useful to her practice. Mari (critical reader) notes “In the beginning there are noticeable holes in her arguments, (Confidentiality and teenagers) but then, during the reflection process she hones her critical thinking skills and begins to argue from various angles (Entry 6).” I remember some of the first assignments and Reeva’s entries, where she would argue issues. Initially, I was left with the impression of someone trying to be erudite and confounding many of the thoughts with cryptic and esoteric words and phrases in order, it seemed, to be seen to be clever. How to help Reeva develop a better style using a simpler form of phrasing without hurting her feelings was one of the issues I had to consider. In some of her earlier entries, she had some of the following difficulties and mitigating factors in her expression of critical thinking. As the arguments and attached articles are sometimes lengthy, it is advisable to read the related article, Reeva’s critical reflection, my

responses and my interpretations of the thought process in the complete analysed journal (see Raw data).

11.6.10 Themes

Reeva's reflections revolved around her nursing practice where she focused on her philosophy of nursing and the challenges facing the delivery of good nursing practice. She was very concerned about issues relating to power. Mari (critical reader) writes: "The following quote expresses beautifully Reeva's increasing awareness of her responsibility to help others become empowered:

"My role as a health educator/advisor increases daily in the view of empowering communities with the knowledge of current research and findings so that hope is enforced and despair is shunned."

These also connected with issues related to gender and to her self-identity. The moral and ethical components of health care delivery and her interrelationships with others led to her addressing resulting conflicts and the feelings emanating from these situations. As Reeva appeared to operate from the private self of Johari's window, most noteworthy were her efforts to open herself to uncomfortable self-scrutiny. In Entry 12, she explores the linkages between culture and spirituality. On the macro level, issues around politics, the South African context and HIV AIDS were issues discussed. From her student identity, issues around learning, the difficulties, challenges and achievements were addressed. Mari (critical reader) observes: "...Reeva is passionate (she uses lots of exclamation marks), but she uses intellectual and academic foundations to back up her arguments."

11.6.11 Lessons learned

I do think that there has been a development in Reeva's critical reflective writing ability over the period of the year to the point where the issues were not obfuscated by the words. I came to both

like and admire Reeva during the year, and my teaching has been the better for the lessons she handed me. One of my real difficulties has been in the journal section where students have developed arguments or indicated where and how issues emanating from the article impact on their work. Because it forms part of their journal, the 'rules' of critiquing apply. In the reflective section, it is relatively easy. However, there is a differentiation between critical thinking and reflection: Both are connected to each other, but I am concerned about the structuring of the journals where I have indicated that my job as empathetic-critiquer is not to judge. While I do judge, albeit below layers, carefully and indirectly, I don't know if I am doing the student any favours by not being more specific, particularly when it comes to reason and logic. Part of me believes that through this softer approach, students venture into realms that perhaps they would be far more cautious about had I formalised my critique - but I am not sure. Perhaps my answer lies in Reeva's journal? I had approached the analysis of Reeva's journal chronologically but recall becoming more aware as time progressed, that Reeva's ability to reason, or perhaps express her reasoning, had improved significantly by year's end.

11.6.12 Conclusion

Reeva was someone who tried to learn from life's lessons. I think that there had been a number of issues that forced her to revisit her priorities and values - her health and the closeness of her needed love relationship being some of these. She had been emotionally affected by her ill health, but she had been very sensible in her approach to minimising the damage and managing herself. She also valued the knowledge she had in facilitating this careful approach. "Now it's just a matter of time, waiting for biopsy results while holding onto the thought that I am in remission!" (Reeva, 8 July, 2003)

Maureen: And now obviously since I spoke with you this morning, all is well. Your entry 6 also resonates with me and connects with what you and are now saying. Will you continue with the stress reduction campaign – or hit the work overdrive button again?

I think that the question I asked was most apt - Reeva was a workaholic. This did seem to define who she was. She also liked to have control over her life, and so I was particularly impressed with her live-and-let-live acceptance of her required need to wait for the test results to determine her diagnosis. In terms of her lesson as a patient - Reeva had gained a clearer understanding and appreciation of her 'sick role', which she believed will allow her to empathise better with her own patients.

(Reeva, 12 June) "...I do believe that religion affords us comfort in the unknown as prayer helps fill the voids with hope. Those that have hope have the courage to survive whereas those that don't might not. This is something I often think about especially during trying times. Pleasure cannot fully be rewarded without the expense of pain".

I see Reeva using the reflective cycle and returning again and again to issues that concern her – her spiritual growth, her physical fallibility, her strengths and ability to cope and the challenges life presents her with. Initially I had a sense of Reeva wanting to move forwards and the achievement seemed to lie in the developing of skills and gaining the certificates of proof. I had awareness of a softening in Reeva, possibly because of the challenges which have really knocked her reality and directed goals. I still have an impression of Reeva's innate confidence in her ability to overcome her 'challenges' and this is an empowering sensation, enfolding her in the warmth of 'good' feelings – "enjoyable". I recognise the Calvinistic principles in the cliché "*Pleasure cannot fully be rewarded without the expense of pain*" – it seems like something a parent would say to their child, to rationalise the experience.

(Reeva, 28 August, 2003): "I can feel that the year-end is drawing to a close as the pressure to complete tasks and assignments has been growing. It has not been easy and to complicate matters we have been given a new lecturer. I really feel for those girls within the group that were finding things difficult as it were. In order for me to have coped I have had to work around the clock using up whatever time I had available. Sticking to a work/study/social roster has helped me tremendously to make sure that I had things well balanced and that all aspects of my life were taken care off. My inspiration has been my boyfriend who has urged me to stay focused in order to complete my studies"

Again, Reeva contemplates issues that matter to her - completing what she has started; reaping the results of hard work. Although Reeva had previously indirectly reflected on the need for balance (mostly in the form of practical approaches to coping), she now directly refers the need to have balance in her life - a very healthy approach. She again acknowledges the support - or rather, inspiration of her boyfriend. She also makes reference to the difficulty presented by having to contend with another lecturer (I had taken some time off for study leave). I don't know that I fully appreciated the amount of energy it requires to have another lecturer take over. I thought the transition would be smooth, but I see that renegotiating entry with another educator is more difficult than I anticipated, although this issue was raised in Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.6.3.

Reeva touched on a number of issues in the article (Entry 26 June) about the nursing profession and made the issue and views her own. She was concerned that there is a difference between reality and 'ideal' nursing practice. She maintained that if nurses were supported (through infrastructure, emotional and financial aids), there would not be such a gap between the real and the ideal world. She suggested that those who ought to know and were in a position of power did not appreciate the contradiction between real and ideal. They were the ones who needed to 'hear.' She was proud of her profession and I was aware of this throughout the year. At the same time,

she noted the need to be seen as someone not tied down by society's expectations or confined within a clichéd role, "emotionally submissive", but rather expressed the need to be seen as a human being who is a nurse. She valued her profession and saw herself as a nurse "who would have made a difference by touching the life of someone or may have made someone feel better by the mere presence of yourself." Respect was an important quality for Reeva, both in her respect for her clients, but also being respected herself. These are issues that the majority of students writing reflective journals, have noted. Reeva, as have other students, recognised the unreasonable demand being placed upon them, without the requisite remuneration or consideration. It is this lack of consideration, she noted, which drives nurses to emigrate. This ambivalent situation must have been a difficult one for Reeva - knowing she was needed, but disappointingly aware that she was not valued appropriately.

I included the following entry because Reeva refers to the workshop, an event that has been referred to by the various participants within this research study.

"Today was an exciting and interesting day for my group. The teamwork and effort that we all pooled together into running the workshop was outstanding and this was supported by the comments and the response that was received during the session.

The turnout from the guests invited was good and most of the lecturers showered us with support. Overall they were impressed and I feel proud of being part of this dynamic management group of 2003. This day saw the way in which we put our communication, organisational as well as interpersonal skills into effect as future managers..."

Mari (critical reader) observes: "Although Reeva expresses some frustrations with the process-oriented nature of the course, she finally rises to the challenge again at the end of her diary, where she becomes part of the group. Previously there was a sense of her being separate and trying to remain independent, now she extends what used to be an individual pride, to a collective one".

I found Reeva's use of the phrase 'future managers' very revealing. She started her programme to learn to be a Primary Health Care practitioner and was not that open to the management component - it was seen more as a course requirement than an 'empowering' programme. I was pleased that she was able to see herself in this light. This workshop was a wonderful collaborative effort and that it allowed students to identify their development in management in practical terms was exciting for us all. Reeva just reminded me again of the need for a positive and supportive learning environment. I do think that if someone believes in you, it makes believing in yourself so much easier. Espeland and Shanta (2001:342) cite Glass who observes that empowerment means "...the raising of consciousness, the development of a strong positive self-esteem, and the political skills need(ed) to negotiate and change the healthcare system." Reeva's comment on evaluation at the end of this section demonstrates that she has moved beyond the need (although maybe not the desire) for good grades, to an appreciation of the concept of evaluation.

I don't think that I was sufficiently aware of Reeva's openness to change or to accepting the need to "strive(s) for betterment" (Reeva, 18 September, 2003). I think that I made assumptions about Reeva that were not entirely supported by her entries – and again, it is only as I read her entries in their totality that I become more aware of what Reeva was striving for - and that there were hidden vulnerabilities and needs and self-realizations that were masked by her external persona, which reflected a quiet, untouchable confidence.

"Two weeks to final exams, the home stretch begins! My preparation for the exams has begun physically and psychologically. I have agreed to give it my best in order to complete this year since I have worked so hard. The most difficult of tasks for me was learning to be critical and looking within one. I do feel the clarity in my thoughts and this has enabled me to gain better control over my thoughts and feelings. For all the hard work that I have put

into the year and all the time I have sacrificed and dedicated towards my studies I do believe that the reward I am to reap at the end will give me a true sense of achievement!" (Reeva, 2 October, 2003)

Marie (critical reader) notes that Reeva "ends on a high note, in typical goal-oriented style: "The home stretch begins!" - still true to herself, yet having grown noticeably since the first diary entry."

I am left with a sense of awe. Reeva had worked hard and this was reflected in her work and her marks - and I salute her for this. She had been totally committed to her task and I admired her gumption and doggedness in following through this commitment. My greatest admiration is reserved for "The most difficult of tasks for me was learning to be critical and looking within one. I do feel the clarity in my thoughts and this has enabled me to gain better control over my thoughts and feelings" (Reeva, 2nd October, 2003). Initially, Reeva did not strike me as someone who would dig deep and look within herself, no easy task for anyone, particularly when this is being shared with someone she was not familiar with. I don't think that there is any doubt about Reeva's personal development this year. I have also noted a gradual and increasing shift in her critical thinking skills - less verbosity and more substance.

Reeva's Self-Evaluation Commentary:

Reeva, in her self-evaluation, has made the shift from registering for a course for degree requirements to an internalization of the notion of actually being a 'manager' and ironically, this shift has occurred through the reflective process:

"As future managers we need to possess the necessary skills used to analyse situations, information and experiences so as to act appropriately if the need arises within the practise. Critical thinking has given me the opportunity to analyse my thoughts, something I never did previously, as well as the opportunity to increase my knowledge and prepare

myself on current issues occurring within the health sector. This knowledge became a pool of wealth for me as these current issues were used for general conversation both at work as well as socially... Insight is a powerful tool that all managers should possess. This not only improves the way a manager functions but also enhances his/her relations with others within their environment. “

Reeva has clearly moved beyond the micro nursing context and again, ironically, has completely embraced the reflective journaling process:

“Looking at current health issues and the impact it has on my present practise allowed me the opportunity to look at the changes that are occurring within the health sector. The Government’s decision to provide Anti-retro viral treatment in the future using community based health centres in drastically going to change my organisation in the future and the way I will be functioning as a Primary Health Care nurse. What I have realised through the diary writing is that the only way to cope within the nursing profession is via ongoing education and update of knowledge. This is how nursing has managed to evolve into a strong dynamic recognisable profession that it is today.”

Reeva’s trusting of the process and valuing independence of choice and the Constructivist approach to learning is evident as she describes how journaling is fleshed out and embraced in the reflective tutorial: “This is where the diary comes at an advantage as it gave each person within the group an opportunity to focus freely on issues that concerned them without restraint compiling these thoughts into their own diaries.”

Reeva has learned new skills and has learned to challenge what previously been seen as authoritative voices in newsprint:

“Drawing on conclusions and clarifying issues was difficult at first as it was taken for granted that whatever I read in the media was true because the media’s purpose was to

keep the public informed. Well I was wrong and the evaluation of the articles assisted me in discovering how facts are contorted by words so that the media could market what they perceived as news. On closer inspection of the articles and by the use of other resources, it became increasingly clear to see and read in-between the lines, especially when it came to the issue of the Governments delay in the provision of Anti-retro viral treatment. “

Reeva has made a complete turn-around from an original skeptical stance to embracement of the process:

“One of the strengths of keeping this diary is that it encourages the learner to broaden their horizons in the use of resources and reading material. There are no limits to the sources of information that each diary entry can spark off. The lecturer has assisted us on numerous occasions by posting up News Links using web sites as well as making additional readings available on Web-CT. For me this opened up my thoughts to various views on common issues raised within my writings. Various resources also gave me the ability to use the information to sift out the relevant from the irrelevant regarding the newspaper and the journals. Diary writing has proved for me that it can be challenging informative and a powerful educational tool that gives the learner the opportunity to look for information related to his/her interest. It is amazing how the ability of critically thinking was moulded by the use of the diary writing process for me.”

Reeva focused on her personal choices and learning; her personal struggles. While she decried the political focus of interests of many South Africans in one of her first entries, it was most enlightening to see how frequently ‘politics’ consumed her thinking – the major source of her speculations concerned HIV AIDS debate (at least 7 articles). She also focused on nursing as a profession and other issues involved aspects touching on her practice. Interestingly, unlike many students, she never discussed her work context specifically or management issues in her work context, but rather focused on her discipline, Primary Health Care Nursing. As I reflect on the entries read, my analysis and then Reeva’s final analysis, I don’t believe that I would alter her

evaluation. Her analysis is sound, supported by evidence and congruent with mine. This is a young woman with a voice of her own. She claims both ownership and responsibility for her ideas, beliefs and actions and has demonstrated keen insight, particularly with regards to herself.

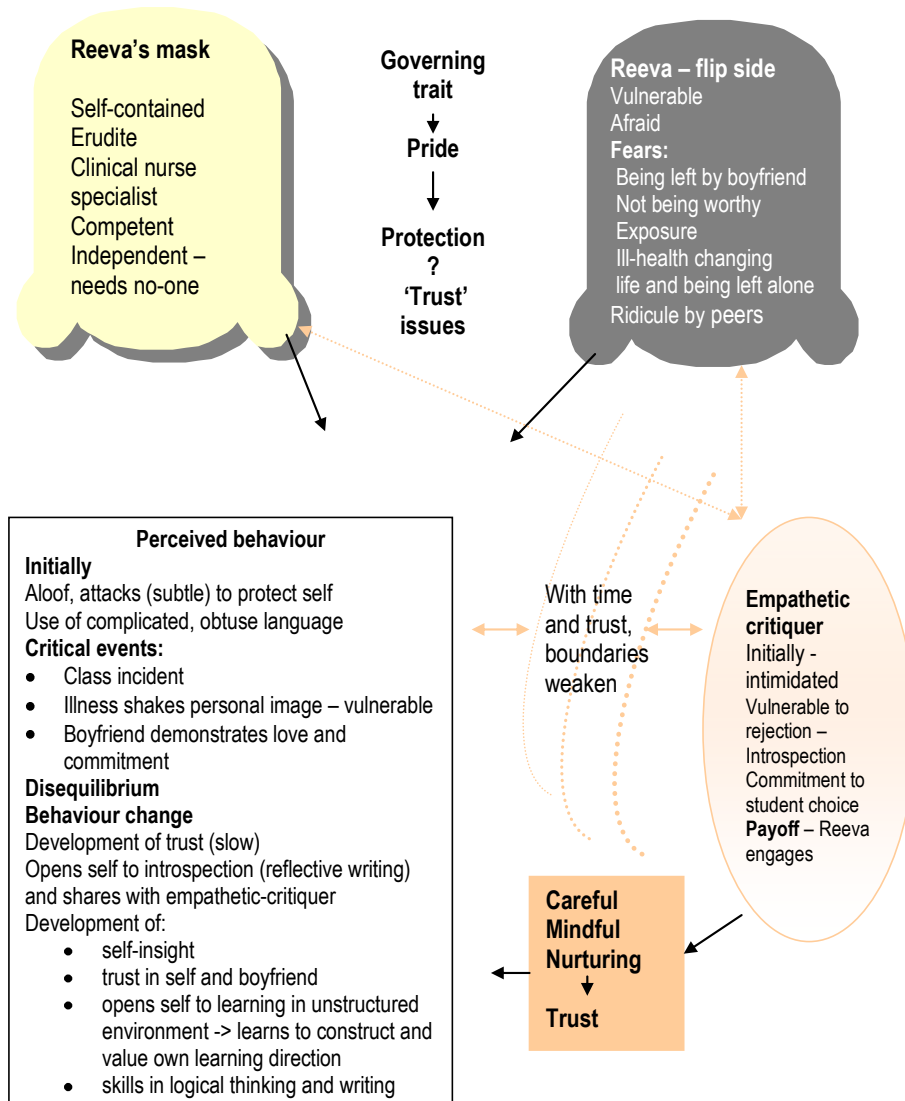


Figure 12.5 Reeva – an example of the importance of the 'trust' relationship

Xolisi's journal

11.8 XOLISI

Balance through choices based on a grounded value system

11.8.1 Introduction

Theoretically, the empathetic-critiquer's role is to ask question around process rather than content. Some research indicates therefore, that it is not necessary for the empathetic-critiquer to be an expert in the field (as explained in Chapter Three, Section 3.8.3 and Chapter Five, Section 5.4.1). I don't necessarily think that expertise is required, but certainly a working knowledge of the discipline and context is useful. This became clear as I engaged in feedback and then analysis of Xolisi's entries, that as the empathetic-critiquer, I had had to use my knowledge to appreciate and understand the cues (or short cuts) presented in the reflective writing. Xolisi has written about her experiences very briefly and succinctly. I became aware on reviewing her entries and my critique, that I had made assumptions and filled in the blanks - and fairly easily. The language, whilst not correct English, was sufficiently descriptive to allow me to fill in the blanks - partly because I am a nurse and can transpose myself in my imagination into scenarios with which I am familiar. I notice that I respond fairly similarly to other students reports or entries, where English is their second or third language and have become quite used to 'filling in the blanks.' On June 20, Xolisi titles her entry "... Love them enough to talk about sex... SABC advert for love life". It is a typical example of how we make connections without full explanations because of our exposure to the cultural context. I understand perfectly that 'Love them enough to talk about sex...' SABC advert for 'Love Life' is about the messages on sexual education we need to give our children to protect them from negative consequences - and that *Love Life* is a programme focused on sex education on our South African television channels.

Much of communication lies in the picking up of these cues and being aware of what is happening around one. In order to analyse Xolisi's reflections, I have had to find support for my analysis – hence the references to the literature in my initial analysis as seen in the complete journal analysis and with some examples as illustrated in Appendix 11.1. This process was necessary as the critical readers and perhaps other readers of this thesis, may not have the requisite working knowledge of both the time, place or professional practice of nursing as referred to by the participants, particularly remembering that the student participants were writing only for the empathetic-critiquer and themselves as part of their learning journey, and not as part of the research process. Although prior permission to use their work in the research had been given early in the academic year, realisation that their work had been included in the actual study only came later.

11.8.2 Xolisi's narrative

How to describe Xolisi's journey? I would summarise this as an expression of issues that have mattered to Xolisi and that have been able to convey the principles, philosophy and personal traits within Xolisi's self (these are further complemented in Chapter Eight, where Xolisi is one of the participants in the tutorials used in the study). These are conveyed through the many quotes she gives throughout, as she reveals her views and values:

"Those degrees...really do prove the intelligence and enthusiasm on ones part. But does one enjoy them without sharing and giving of that knowledge in order to help the needy and to promote other's quality of life?"

"In most instances a person's obstacles in reaching her goals is the person him/ herself by being scared of what will people say..."

"As a manager, empathise with other people...listen to what people are saying...gain a reputation for being supportive, ...be natural and humble."

"How comforting it is to know that there are still people out there who are prepared to speak the truth no matter at what cost to their dignity."

As Mari (critical reader) observes "Xolisi's diary is a tapestry of horror stories (rape, AIDS etc.) stitched together with thoughts and anecdotes of Ubuntu, humour and faith." Xolisi's work has provided reference points for what she did, and more importantly, how she did this. The people she worked with reflect the challenges she faced such as the possible perceived threat posed by the witch doctor:

"Hiv / AIDS is just an illness like all other illness that I can heal, but one must come to me when he has just been infected if he needs to be cured". This is what the local witch doctor inyanga told the people at an imbizo held in the local induna's house. The meeting was to address people on health issues and apart of awareness campaign on Hiv AIDS. So as an outreach team, we were there per invitation by the headman. I said to myself " We still have a long way to go" and the feeling I had towards this being was a mixed one of both fear and hatred. I focused on the first part of what is being called witch doctor, and wished that there can be a broom to whisk him away from that gathering. But then I remembered that this person is respected in his community so of we can win him to be on our side, he is the key figure who will help preaching the right information about HIV AIDS and stop misleading our people. So now the next step is to work on winning this man and all like him to be on the right side in fighting the AIDS problem. As Booyens (1995:144) puts it get our opponents on our side during time of any crisis."(23 February)

Challenges in this rural environment also came from the paternalistic and perceived stubborn attitudes of the older village men who refused her offered help:

"From the rural families point of view, AIDS is the most cause and still going for a long time, of deaths of parents in many families. Besides being ignorant, rural men are so stubborn. They do not attend meetings where health issues are discussed and when their poor wives come home with these suggestions they were told in the meetings like use of condoms, they, man, go berserk and not use them." (27 February)

I recognise Xolisi's frustration - not only is the type of help she could offer rejected, she also appears to disparage the type of help they traditionally do seek, as do they, hers. "When most men

are sick, they do not come to the clinic, where it would be possible to give them health education and counsel them, instead they go seek help from inyangas." Xolisi's reflections indicate her wide scope of practice and the community she held dear. She was part of that community and worked within a sometimes unbending system. Despite this, her approach to her work and to life was a positive one, filled with hope "Have faith in God and you will lift up your face without shame, you will stand firm and without fear and all who follow you will gain courage, have positive hope that the goals will be achieved" (8 September). She was not a complainer but nor did she play the passive victim role "Do not compromise your principles" (8 September). She approached life with vigour, and looked for lessons in life's journey "Remember the good also" (14 September). She seemed to find solace and sustenance in her spiritual beliefs, her family, her work and her community through apt quotations, which seemed to give her pause for reflection "The world steps aside for a man who knows where he is going" (2 August). What attracted me most to Xolisi is that she didn't express life as a struggle: it was a life full-led, which provided her with meaning and hope, and the key to her attitude lay in her balanced approach to all aspects of her life.

"It's time to practice Ubuntu. We nurses are a luck group of caregivers, because in addition to what we know naturally in caring for our people, more has been added through our studying and practising more expertise. So basically and academically, we can" (14 May).

I was aware of this 'balance' when Xolisi was a student in 2002. She travelled to class from afar (the Eastern Cape) and she attended about 50% to 60% of her classes. She worked at her own pace and while her handing in of her course requirement materials was not in the scheduled time, these were all completed and she passed all her courses of her nursing programme. She did not live up to my expectations of her ability as a student, but she chose her standard, and it was acceptable. More would probably have moved all the other components of her life out of kilter, out

of balance – and that was not what Xolisi espoused. To this end, I think that Xolisi's reflections are a true reflection of herself and are supported by the mature, balanced and pragmatic stance she took in both class discussions and tutorial sessions.

11.8.3 Student growth

Mari (critical reader) suggests, through examples, that Xolisi appears "steadfast, confident, balanced and mature" and that "Xolisi challenges and asks many questions from the start...The journal provides evidence of continuous critical and reflective thought".

However Sarah (critical reader) does not totally agree:

"Xolisi has, and has not, produced much evidence of growth. She is clear about her core professional values of care and good management, but to my mind she does not show much proof of critical thinking. Her diary entries tend to be brief and are too often unquestioning e.g. Entry no 8, 04 April 2002 where she argues the main reasons poverty and malnutrition have not been alleviated in South Africa is because of poor family planning and an increase in refugees from SADEC states. See Maureen's critique.

However, Xolisi is to be commended for her solid belief in the integrity of nurses and her commitment to helping "her people". I do not feel this developed because of the course she took at DIT though. Rather it feels to me that this is something that she has always held dear to her heart. I salute her courage in the face of intractable patriarchal beliefs around HIV/AIDS in the rural areas. This to me is proof of critical thinking. Empowered by her faith in western medicine Xolisi is able to challenge traditional assumptions while realising that any change which she and her colleagues can bring about will be incremental and slow. You could argue however, as Maureen did, that her

faith in Western medicine is too unquestioning, and that she needs to learn to see the benefits of traditional African medicine too.

On the 30.6 X wrote "Managed care - A challenge for nurse managers". She did not elaborate on what she meant. To me this is proof that her critical thinking process has room for improvement. This topic was not analysed at all. Maureen says later that she must "not move automatically into my critical teacher role that assumes the worst (e.g. how to complete an assignment with minimum effort in the shortest space of time) - although I do believe that there is an element of this here." I would concur. I think Maureen is generous to give Xolisi the benefit of the doubt here.

Furthermore, Sarah (critical reader) states that Xolisi has "grown marginally in her critical thinking: Xolisi does not do much theoretical analysis in her journal. When she does, it is often simplistic. e.g. her diary entry of 4 April where she discusses Nelson Mandela's historic speech at the Rivonia trial. 'National and provisional budgets have burst along seems trying to meet the needs of ever growing population in this country the fact that there is no law preventing people from having so much children as they feel (13) and the lately in borders and controlling authorities in allowing refugees to enter(14) the country in huge numbers, contribute to the problem.' She does not back up her theories with convincing evidence. However it must be noted that she does link her later argument to personal experience - which is good. "Xolisi proves graphic examples of personal experiences to lend credence to argument." (Maureen)

Similarly, on the 11th July Xolisi picks up on the issue of poverty and malnutrition – "but doesn't have anything to say about the statement - hence the question on the implications of this statement." (Maureen)

Her journal is mostly anecdotal, relating to her work. She does not refer to her studies often. The one direct reference to her studies is when on 14.5 she says, "We nurses are a luck group of caregivers, because in addition to what we know naturally in caring for our people, more has been added through our studying and practising more expertise. So basically and academically, we can." This is an assertion of her belief in the enabling power of studying, although I find it quite vague. She does not say how the academic knowledge helps nurses. And she does not mention critical thinking, which makes me wonder if she actually understands the concept at all.

Obliquely Xolisi does mention self-reflexivity when she says on 12.6, "We can laugh as much as our small mistakes but always try to avoid (35) them happening over and over again. A wrong impression can lead to a wrong diagnose a wrong treatment and then a lot of trouble. So one need to audit well what one writes because only one will answer for them at some point."

A second direct reference to education occurs on 6.7 when she says, "Those degrees, diplomas and all the short courses one may have successfully studied for are ones to keep and they really do prove the intelligence and enthusiasm on ones part. But does one enjoy them (42) without sharing and giving of that knowledge in order to help the needy and to promote other's quality of life?" I like her generous approach here. She is saying qualifications are only meaningful if one uses them to help others. She is promoting applied knowledge, and being clear about her value system at the same time – which is commendable - education for education's sake is not enough, it must be of benefit to others too.

Xolisi was studying nursing management at the time when she kept this diary, but her references to management are not theoretical and do not reflect wider reading. They are quite uncritical and

border on stereotype. i.e. 15.7 - "We must accept people as they are and love them by being exemplary to them, it is then they will conform to how we would like them to behave as a group towards achieving a certain goal." She does not back up her statements with examples from her work. To me this reveals an unquestioning attitude. I think this is why Maureen asks Xolisi, "This works for you? How do you deal with obstacles?" However perhaps Xolisi's thoughts on management are practical rather than theoretical and as Maureen says, "I do believe that N has taken on board the concept of management and leadership and practices the values she espouses as being important for this mindset. When I reflect back on some of her entries, a number of them are addressed to her colleagues or subordinates, and Xolisi is the manager. For her, management is a state of mind."

Xolisi is also vague when she does refer to theory, (10.8) "There are 3 basic types of leadership styles and believe not no one can choose only one and adopt it. Depending on different situations and circumstances, we are all 3 in 1 sometimes." She does not specify what these three are.

11.8.4 Empathetic-critiquer's support for student learning (Sarah, critical reader)

"Yes, I do think that Maureen demonstrated sufficient support for Xolisi's growth process. Her comments to, and about, Xolisi reveal that she carefully read and considered her journal and thought hard about how to help her best realise her potential.

Maureen can name the weaknesses in Xolisi's approach but also praise the strengths – truly constructive criticism. 10.8 - "I sometimes feel frustrated at the paucity of the entry in terms of length and description, but I should also note that I am impressed at the clarity of impression received by the very short entry." Maureen deserves praise for the kindness with which she

considers Xolisi's writing. She does not jump to conclusions about the brevity of Xolisi's entries but rather finds something good to commend in them.

Her questions are not judgemental but do prod Xolisi in the right direction – towards substantiating her points and thinking more critically. e.g. 2.8 – “Maureen's comments: This works for you? How do you deal with obstacles?”

Maureen insists on seeing the best in her students. While she says that Xolisi did not grow as much as she would have liked in the year (“She did not live up to my expectations of her ability as a student, but she chose her standard, and it was acceptable.”), she can still express approval of her approach. “What attracts me most to Xolisi is that she doesn't express life as a struggle: it is a life full-led, which provides her with meaning and hope, and the key to her attitude is in her balanced approach to all aspects of her life.” My appraisal of Xolisi's growth in critical thinking coincides with Maureen's. I feel Xolisi grew professionally and personally, but not academically. However her own personal code of ethics shines through – “Xolisi's reflections indicate her wide scope of practice and the community she holds dear.”

11.8.5 Conclusion

There were a number of issues discussed in Xolisi's journal, which reflect both her interest and her learning needs. Initially, I chose Xolisi's journal as part of the sample as I initially perceived it to be a particularly weak example of the reflective journaling process (deviant or extreme sample). I knew that Xolisi's heart did not lie with her studies and that the distance factor (her home was in the eastern Cape), her workload and her family and community commitments would affect her motivation. She did in fact miss a number of class contact sessions and her work submissions

were not a true reflection of her intellect and her abilities. I believe I only saw her potential, and concur with Sarah (critical reader) that much of her reflective writing is clichéd and vague and at times it appeared quite naïve (although how much this is a result of her being a second-language English writer is not clear. I am very aware that both at home and at work, Xhosa was the medium of expression). Her journal, a hard cover A5 book, was illustrated with pictures cut and pasted from magazines, reminiscent of presentations of the younger schoolchild. These overt signs may be indicative of the lack of effort and true engagement with the journal as a mode for 'deep' learning.

Did Xolisi grow from this endeavour? She did not submit a self-evaluation form, so I do not have this as evidence to support how she would see her learning. I don't believe that she was truly committed to the formal learning process, but I do think that she had her own 'voice' and was quite comfortable with herself and her choices. At this stage of her life, she chose balance, rather than commitment. This superficial engagement with learning in the management course is a reminder that although students register for courses, the engagement with medium and the mode for learning and the motivation to learn varies.

I leave Jane (critical reader) with the last words as she provides an overview of her understanding of Xolisi through her journal and the tutorial:

"Xolisi appears a pragmatist, but with sufficient insight to reach beyond this definition. That she is firmly rooted in her tradition and circumstances, is clear, and status, lifestyle, and wealth are not that important to her. Perhaps the thirteen years as a policewoman as something to do with her attitude. She describes herself as shy but friendly and she likes people, and is quick to praise or acknowledge. Her empathy with people is shown in her acknowledgement that lying often needs a 'hug' (entry 25); and in the plight of the teenager: (entry 1) – where she doesn't condemn but

seeks to ensure the correct handling of this issue. This leads her to a critical reflection on her two daughters and her horror of sexual abuse (entries 1 and 2). The entry of 11 May shows her way of coping with the stress of her profession, and her thoughts are insightful – rare personal glimpse... 'Remember the God also' (entry 32), exposes how popularity is regarded more highly than professional standards and practice. Her sympathy for this doctor is patent. There is humour. An example is (entry 16) which lists odd comments on OPD cards. Kindness is evident in the diary, and sharing ideas and practices is important to her, and there is anger and sarcasm in (entry 37) on the Angels of Hope comment.

The issue of talking to children about sex (tying up with the incidents of sexual abuse reported as well as reflected in the Tutorial) – and the video viewed in the tutorial – is a sensitive area and her comment that 'we are making progress', shows an enormous cultural jump from traditional attitudes. Interesting as well, here, is the influence of traditional culture in her professed 'fear and hatred' of the witchdoctor, an issue that would have required much thought to plumb the depths of this. Her ability to associate seeming anomalies to positive effect, is due to her observation of the environment – here, in a billboard with a telling message: 'The world steps aside for a Man who knows where he is going.'

Perhaps her own words sum up Xolisi's attitude "If I pause to carry another's burden, I will become stronger."

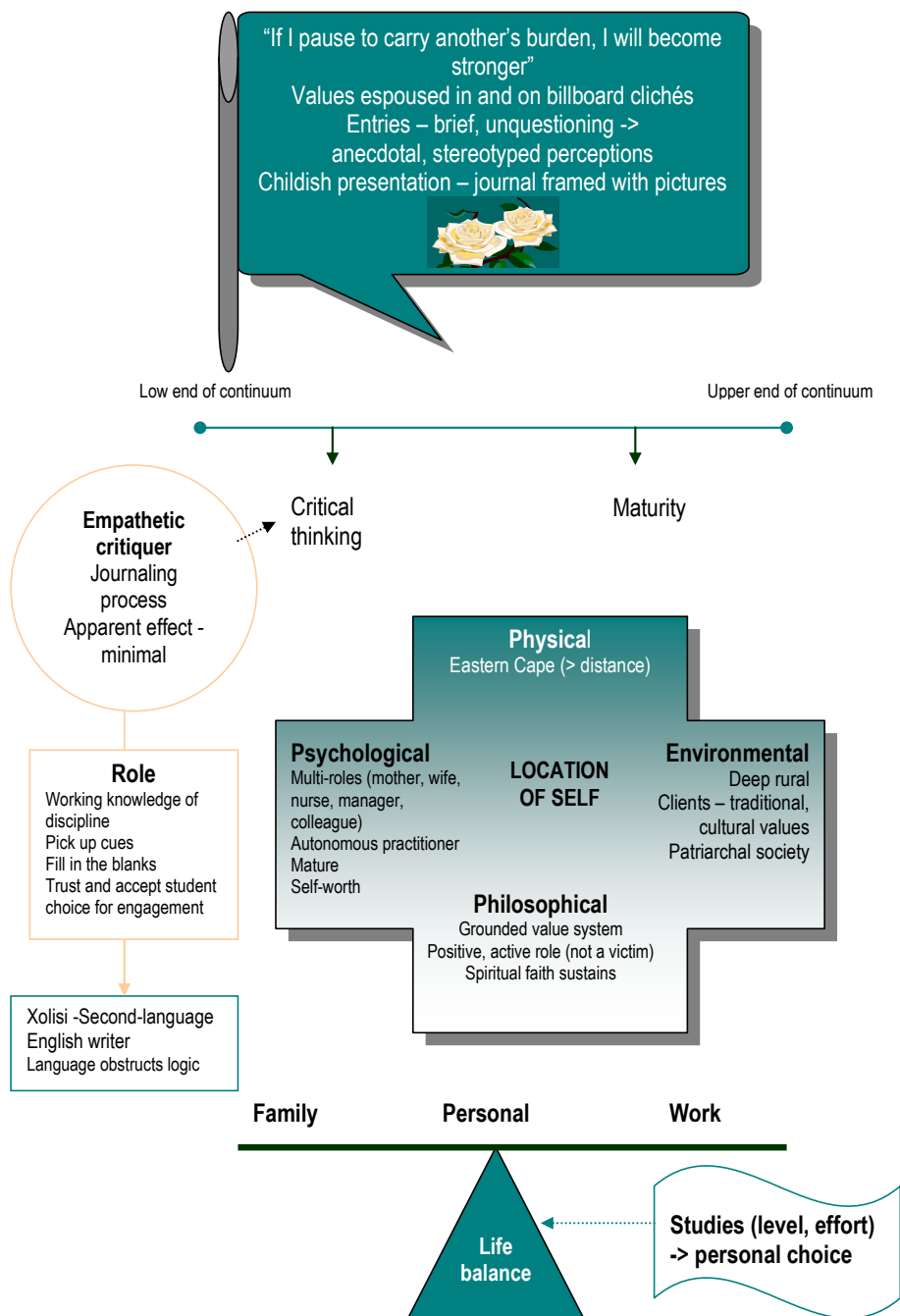


Figure 12.6 Xolisi, an example of an extreme or deviant 'case' sample – the 'weak' student

Lea's journal

11.9 LEA

An open heart, open mind and effervescent nature evincing a desire and commitment to learn, share and grow

11.9.1 Introduction

Lea was in her fifties, happily married and was an occupational health nurse. She had subcontracted to a big paper industry and divided her time between different branches of the company. I was struck in the early stages of the year by her earnestness. She had started studying in the latter part of her life and was eager and open to learning, "The children had grown and flown and a new position in occupational health demanded further education" (14/2). What a pleasure. I remember her very first assignment and was struck by her creativity - but also her propensity for engaging with material tangential to the assignment. This helped her to develop arguments in unconventional ways. It seemed as if Lea had been reading widely and as she read, she seemed to just want to share. She wrote pages and pages. I didn't quite know how to start to critique her work, but realised that I would have to help her focus on salient issues. Her response to my critique was somewhat overwhelming in that she didn't defend her position at all but rather accepted without question my comments and suggestions. In fact, she seemed eager to accept whatever I said. (Mari, critical reader) also questions Lea's abilities: "Although Lea takes on the challenge of engaging in dialogue with the lecturer, this is more of a social engagement, and she seldom rises to the challenge of disagreeing with the lecturer." Again I realised the power my position as 'the teacher' held. I inferred that because of her age that Lea had come from an 'old' traditional school where the 'teacher' was held in high esteem. I realised then how vulnerable she was and that I needed to focus on helping her correct these errors. She needed to develop a protective, stronger stance and value her own thinking - and also to develop a more skeptical stance and challenge mine. Also, it is easy to fall into a trap of self-indulgence when a student is so

agreeable and likeable. As an educator, this makes my job so much the more difficult, as I have to be more mindful of my role and alert to self-deception. Throughout the year, Lea journeyed from afar (a couple of hours traveling each way), had an incredibly busy work schedule, but was always on time, focused and eager to learn. She was also very responsive to her classmates and would make a point of complimenting others (appropriately) whenever the opportunity arose "Leigh's amazing introduction speech will be remembered always!" (18/9). She seemed almost naïve in her openness, but I think that this was because I was more familiar with the protective masks that people wear today. Many of us only trust when we have spent time getting to know and understand the other, but with Lea, seemingly the trust came first. I also cannot remember her ever making a single mean comment. I think Lea was just a genuinely nice person.

11.9.2 Personal events

Lea was faced with some difficult trials and tribulations during the year. I remember her phoning early one morning to tell me she could not make class. On enquiry, her fostered child had died and she had had to organise his funeral. She was devastated. This was entirely natural. It was only later that I discovered that her family had adopted a small black African girl who had later died from HIV AIDS. She shared her sorrow in class and on-line through the pictures and stories of the joy the child had brought to her and her family's life

"I try to write down thoughts in regard to the demise of a dear little girl who squealed when she saw you, who rushed to be picked up by big Bumper [Grandpa]. So high! Who loved butterflies and her dogs, the birds and her friend Keegan. Who ate her food very slowly and carefully because swallowing was difficult. Who asked for help when she knew she wouldn't make it up that flight of stairs, her little chest so damaged with TB and pneumonia. Another bout was just too much." (11 June)

As a nurse, she knew about the limited life span resulting from the disease, but this in no way mitigated the emotional involvement or eased the pain. Perhaps as a result of her involvement, a number of entries (17/2, 17/3, 28/4, 24/5, and 11/6) were focused around the issue of HIV AIDS.

11.9.3 HIV AIDS

In her entry (21 February) Lea links her personal story of HIV AIDS to growing morbidity and mortality statistics. She does not make a link - but allows her reader to make the connection - which perhaps, is even more profound because no comment is made. The three sets of statistics, each just over a week apart, and the closeness in the time continuum linked to the horrific, and inexorable growth in numbers, linked to Lea's story make the disease and its impact so much more real to me.

"In the year 2001 Aids equaled all other deaths added together.

THE FACTS:

- 5000 people die of Aids in the world per week
- 600-700 die per day
- 150-180 die from Aids every day in KZN
- there are 1500-2000 new infections every day
- women are most at risk aged 15-40 years
- mostly girls 15-19 years old" (24 May)

The constant bombardment of the senses by statistics and stories and issues on this disease in the news media almost numb the senses and it becomes increasingly difficult to 'feel' the impact of the disease. It is much easier to intellectualize and remain distanced from the disease. Lea's story allows me to re-connect in a meaningful way.

Through her entry dated 28 April, Lea continues with the HIV AIDS discussion, using a similar approach to one she used previously. By using the growing immensity of the problem as depicted

by the statistics (her graph interpreting the statistics, is a particularly powerful pictorial representation of the rapid and steep growth incline of the disease), she then links these statistics to a further reading, which she then transcribes in her own words, indicating the depth of the problem. She picks up on an issue that has been concerning South Africans for the past few years, the ostrich mentality of politicians, and the refusal to directly acknowledge the problem or address it with effect. Her response is effective, by her use of the repetitive technique “We are not doing enough. We can do more. We are not ostriches,” although she does not get down to practicalities. I became aware that I was not challenging Lea to see the issue within her own work context, or identify the implications for her own practice. I think I must have been carried away with her argument.

11.9.4 Variety and spice

I enjoyed Lea and the fact that her interests went beyond her immediate world or the world of nursing. Global issues and politics and ecological matters interested her.

“Are we going to drown in our own garbage?

Are we a throw-away nation?

As from the 9th of May, in stores nation-wide, consumers will no longer be supplied with plastic carrier bags free of charge.” (5 May)

This relates to the double-loop learning discussed in Chapter Three, Section 3.10.1. She also used her journal to pick up on issues reflected in class. I was struck by Lea’s creativity, both in her discussions and in the way she presented her journal. She inserted web-based graphics and diagrammes, as well as charts. She used colour to highlight issues or vary her style. She was probably one of the most widely read of the students in this class and referred to a variety of texts and readings. She included a poem and the style of her writing reflected a creative literary bent, not

apparent with most students of that year. I have generally found working with mature students to be a pleasure. There is a mellowing and a sense of appreciation which isn't always apparent in younger learners. At this stage of Lea's life, she had numerous experiences which helped mould her character. These connect with Erikson's stages of Development as described by Nash, Stoch and Harper (1992) in their explanation of the developmental tasks of middle age. Those that relate include - in terms of work and leisure - a gaining of new work satisfaction and increasing social activities. In terms of relating to the self, there is a focus on health maintenance, a redefinition of self-concept and identity and a promotion of the autonomy of own children and an expression of a sense of regeneration through guidance of the younger generation.

Reflection on my analysis: It is most disconcerting to find how much more there is to find and appreciate in students' entries while taking the time to analyse their reflections. I recognise how lightweight some of my own comments are, and cringe when I realise how much good work I might have overlooked, because I just haven't paid sufficient attention. I realise that this is difficult considering the constraints - such as time or the fact that I was not always able to view the students' entries in a 'holistic' context. But still...

11.9.5 More examples of Lea's choice of issues and her approach to journaling

- **Power disparities in the workplace**

Lea's first entry is titled "Maternity" and deals with issues around pregnant labourer's failure to take allotted maternity leave, mostly in response to pressure from the contractor, their 'boss'.

"It appears the worker is reluctant to take maternity leave because of financial constraints. She is given one month's unpaid or annual leave for the event and UIF (unemployment fund) pays her for the six weeks after the birth and this is usually a half of their usual wage.

They are normally single parents with other children to financially care for supplying food, clothing and education for their families and cannot afford to go without full pay for this period. Very often the administrative staff working for the contractor or the worker themselves has not applied timeously for UIF and the money is only received long after the worker is back at work (three months after the birth). ” (Lea, 14 February)

One of Industry's responses to the tightening up of labour legislation in South Africa, through the Labour relations Act and the Equity Act has been to reduce their own responsibility in the morass of legislation governing employees and their rights by contracting out specific services. This is where there is a dilemma and a gap that Lea speaks of. Industries are responsible for the health of those to whom they contract out work - but it is indirect. They make recommendations (these are not absolutes) and set criteria, which to my mind let them off the hook because of the weakening of the connection between total responsibility and indirect responsibility. However, some companies take this responsibility seriously - and this is really what I was trying to find out through my questions. In this entry Lea has researched the problem and identified the legislation and requirements for the interpretation of the legislation. She did not let the contractors off the hook and indicated their area of responsibility. She had a dilemma with time (these work sites are dispersed over wide areas of many miles) and so attempted to identify a solution. She noted that she was not given sufficient time. This is one of the early indicators of the dissonance between her Human Resource Department, to whom she was directly accountable, and her own view of what her work entailed or required. It is also the key to an issue Lea was going to have to learn to deal with: Assertiveness as opposed to pleasing all. This and the issues of Lea's extensive traveling and need for better organisation became important elements which we spoke of during the year, through her journal, personal contact and the tutorials, both of which indirectly resulted from her underlying lack of assertiveness.

- **Factors influencing personal stress levels**

In an entry (13 April), Lea focuses on various sources of her stress “There has been a series of interesting mood swings this week.” One of the difficulties Lea experienced is not uncommon amongst nurses – and this relates to the appropriate valuing of the self. Through Lea’s more focused understanding of her work context through the lens of her assignment of a situational analysis, she was able to see the enormous and inappropriate demands placed on her time and energy, without the appropriate recognition and reward. I think that she just took it for granted that such a big organisation such as “S” would be fair and that she was very lucky to have her job. I recollect spending time going through this assignment with her. A useful approach to a person with Lea’s unassuming nature is to ask her to remove herself from the situation and imagine someone else responsible in this position. Would she expect the same treatment to be afforded to that person? Additionally, I think that I asked her to also cost in all the planning, preparatory and administrative work as well as the travelling time and energy and financial costs (indirect and direct). I think that by making the implicit, explicit, these figures allowed her to see her function in a new light, hence her comments “I found myself viewing my own situation quite differently. I started to put myself in the forefront instead of the companies I do work for. I suddenly started to view them as clients and not employers” (Lea, 13 April).

Lea was an occupational health student, and her programme was loaded somewhat differently to the other students in other programmes. This, her second year, was very heavy comparatively speaking.

“I think last week was just too much, 2 full days, 1000 kms later and all the flu vaccines are given! 2 full days and completed many medicals, spirometry, biopters and all! And this past

week hasn't been much better what with pharmacology looming. One health & safety meeting lasted 3 hours this week, the guy likes the sound of his own voice!" (Lea, 13 April).

Lea's 'complaints', in this context, are reasonable. With someone less aware than Lea, I might discuss this with her other lecturers.

"Is this a norm amongst your students? Do they also have this turnaround mid-first term? The outcome has been one of a change of perspective, one of realisation to accept and act on the above. Half of me says that's quite okay, things will be fine and the other half says let me get back to my knitting and forget all about this career, it's so full of responsibilities and there's never a chance to have one's own social life, that maybe polishing the furniture would be more comfortable" (Lea, 13 April).

Lea was forced to confront who she was and where she wanted to go. She was feeling overwhelmed, I think, with the pace, and demands of both her job and her role as student. I also sensed that she didn't want to be seen as a complainer and she tempered her frustrations, which were couched in humour to deflect criticism of the self, by the self or me. She did this by her question "Is this a norm amongst your students?" and by concluding with the positive mood swing, almost as if to say, I'm OK. It is really nothing. The sun will shine tomorrow and all will be well. Lea didn't want to be seen in a negative light, hence her appeal to me through two notes of appreciation – 'thanks for listening. I'm just venting'. She did have a huge workload, and I have no doubt, that at an age when many people are comfortable with themselves and socialising with family and friends, this was not an option for Lea at that moment. She was also wondering about how she was being perceived and valued at work and what this was doing to her sense of self - not a good comfort zone to be in.

According to Stacciarini and Tróccoli (2004), occupational stress is affected by the work context,

both specific situations and characteristics of the work environment, but it is also affected by individual characteristics and coping responses to the stress. Their Brazilian study on 461 nurses indicated that occupational stress is closely related to job satisfaction as well as the individual's physical and psychological state of health. Nurses who have a constructive thinking coping style fare better in managing stress. In light of these findings, I haven't worried unduly about Lea in that although she was frustrated with the work load, she was constructively thinking her way through solutions. Her capacity to think creatively and flexibly, and express and reflect on her feelings denoted a positive outcome for her psychological well-being, which was also assisted by her numerous support systems.

11.9.6 Lea's thought processes and style of writing

- **Digression**

"I keep digressing", notes Lea. I can relate, and therefore realised the ability to focus in a singular way was very difficult for Lea. Her mind lighted on so many connecting issues and scenarios. It made for a complexity of thought, which lent to her creative spirit, and her ability to think laterally. It was just that much harder for her to focus. Fascinating though I find this process, this is one area that Lea needed to address – honing in on issues and being succinct. Lea herself in her evaluation writes "I can see a varied and although sometimes *jumbled* array of thoughts and ideas"

- **Coping strategies (time management and use of tables)**

Mari (critical reader) notes "Lea is aware of her limitations: "I watched one video on Time Management (my biggest stumbling block: can't say no to anyone!)" Time management is indeed

a recurring theme, and the diary comprises of two extremes, namely feelings of being overwhelmed by work and reflections digressing from the topic...”

Lea (6 April) observed that tables made for easier reading. I noticed in her assignments and tasks that she used this tool to great effect. It seems to counterbalance her need to explain matters effusively and make sense of her work and need to priorities. I note in a self-memo (Data bite, 25 April) that there are elements of analysis within her entry. Lea was particularly good at establishing a context for her ideas and the process she used is movement from national, to global, back to national, then to local contexts. She had a penchant for statistics, I notice, and used them in a most creative way, so that they became memorable. I think it is the extremes of the examples that created this effect. Nonetheless, as I read, I kept waiting for more and wondering - how will this argument develop? Hence my question "And this leads you to?" Lea's response was satisfactory, albeit brief. This wasn't the first time I had asked a similar question. In retrospect, I wish I had made a more overt observation about this tendency - but perhaps the question was sufficient. Sarah (critical reader) however, recognises that change does occur "Lea displays an awareness of the fact that her time management skills improve during the course of journaling: "I have found that I have started to take longer in making decisions and also I try not to get too involved if I know I do not have the time to complete what I start.”"

- **Development of an argument using the environment as a context**

Lea's interests reflect a basis for her discussion

"Also am passionate about animals, especially birds, and all environmental health issues, a great supporter of the Greenpeace-type enterprises and their heroes. We have spent many years on farms and now are settled in Richmond"(14/2)

In an entry dated 5 May, Lea presents a nicely seasoned argument, reflecting a position on the environment with the proposed introduction of legislation whereby “ from the 9th of May, in stores nation-wide, consumers will no longer be supplied with plastic carrier bags free of charge”. She introduced the concept without specifically identifying it (Lea is actually referring to litter control through pricing of previously free plastic bags) and suggests this is the next best move to “Nelson Mandela’s release from Robbin Island!” Lea’s juxtaposition of analogies is highly suggestive. There would probably be universal agreement that Mandela’s release was the most profound event that shaped South Africa’s post-’94 democracy – and so the extreme analogies create a sense of curiosity in the reader. She then asks a couple of provocative questions “Are we going to drown in our own garbage? Are we a throw-away nation?” (Lea, 5 May). These are questions which lend themselves to an emphatic denial from the reader. She then moves on to factually describe the current situation that includes the solution, then the problem historically identified. She provides a legal framework for viewing the issue and then concludes with a statement on what to do and why. She binds her argument elegantly together. However, as empathetic-critiquer, I don’t think I asked enough questions to promote broader critical thinking. Her perspectives were broad, but they only supported her argument, and not the opposite perspectives.

- **Connections in development of insight**

Lea (Entry 9 June) deals with two concepts that arose out of her readings for class (communication – specifically transactional analysis – and reflective thinking, and connects the two quite neatly.

“Mezirow’s “action learning” which combines individual responsibility and reflection on personal experience and is ideally suited so Dr van Aswegen of Medunsa says to critical reflection in the workplace. When you start to question the social norms that govern our actions and look at what influences our decision making, it makes for interesting thought. I have found that I have started to take longer in making decisions and also I try not to get

too involved if I know I do not have the time to complete what I start.”

Lea was quite perceptive in recognizing herself in this form of communication “Protective orientation which looks at saving other's faces. (I have always done this and so often landed in trouble!)” (Lea, 9 June). It reflects a recognizable trait. She really was a nice person. I liked her recognition of the lesson to be learned “In the new assertive “shell” one would obviously not join the one who was in the dog-box but just offer help and keep out of trouble” and the acceptance of this - also the following-on reflection that explained how this worked in reality. This is quite a critical moment and a breakthrough. Instead of the ‘If only’ game, Lea has seized the gauntlet and dealt with her decision making needs. Impressive! Even more so when Lea accepts this responsibility - and she doesn't do this in a heavy handed way, but rather through interpreting readings on reflection by Mezirow and van Aswegen. (I handed out reading on critical thinking and reflection and reflective practice at various stages during the year and sometimes discussed them, and sometimes not). Lea picks up on the alternative options for reflective journaling identified by van Aswegen - and these appeal to her creative spirit. On consideration of Lea's responses to learning, I really think that she had grasped the essence of the concept of Constructivism. She seized the moment, connected with her learning needs and used a variety of resources to further her insights and learning. It was at moments like these that I feel vindicated in my use of this approach to teaching and learning. - How satisfying this feeling is!

- **Constructing own learning using the journal as an opportunity**

“A busy time lately... so I have sent this proposal as diary entry. There's lots else I would like to write about including the Aids Convention in Durban this week. I would appreciate your comments, (which I view as valuable) on this proposal “(Lea, 5 August)

Lea has used this entry as a means of sorting her thoughts and as a reminder. This was the second occasion that Lea had used her journal (and me, as recipient) to deal with issues relating to her work, but that were not a requirement for her programme. Students in general did use their journals to discuss work issues, but these tended to revolve around the philosophical or ethical or work problems that required thought and were used as a means of clarifying thoughts. This was the first time that I had a student who used her diary (and me) to formally plan and organise her work for her work setting. I don't think that I was particularly conscious of this at the time – just happy that Lea was making connections between theory and her workplace practice – and using whatever opportunity to do so.

I remember responding to this entry, with comments but also with a private discussion where I asked Lea to focus on the purpose and objectives of the report. We also looked at the person who would be receiving the report and what she wanted to get out of the report. There was a lot of work that needed to be done and we went through some of the principles of report writing. She had the basic preparatory materials and could answer the questions. We also focused on some of her weaknesses (too much material and discussion) and the linkages and key to interpreting the tables quickly and easily. Lea was trying to control the loquaciousness through tabling and so was able to effectively condense her thoughts. However, she had gone from one extreme to another, (loquacious to terse) and just needed help on moderating her approach.

11.9.7 Critical readers' comments on Lea's development and learning

Mari (critical reader)

"From the start Lea chooses to engage with the lecturer/researcher, by answering her questions. In previous diaries students largely left the questions unanswered (which does not necessarily

imply that they didn't ponder on these questions). Lea even poses questions back: "I enjoy being creative. I don't know about you?"

Lea seems to share quite easily who she is and talks about her personal interests and family life. And her use of language is delightful: "He was telling all and sundry, visitors, other residents, professional staff, visiting doctors, padres, physiotherapists, anyone!!" and I feel this lady had guilt feelings plus, plus and those feelings had been stirred up by all the agitators (the six a.m. callers and Spar whisperers). The Christmas poem is also warm, funny and endearing. Throughout her values are embedded implicitly in her positive comments about people and her appreciation of them.

Growth

(Sarah, critical reader) questions this growth. "On the 21.7 Maureen asks Lea, "What are the benefits to you in extending your working commitments?" L's response: Not much but someones' got to do the job before audits come and I have always been the helper in all situations." To me this sounds like a conflict of interests. Lea does the job because no-one else will, but is she growing personally here? When does professional achievement outweigh personal input? When is enough, in other words? Maureen has observed that Lea thrives on extreme hard work and meeting tough deadlines, but perhaps the challenge for Lea is to find new ways of doing the work without placing so much stress on herself? I do think her actions of delegating go a way towards remedying an overly heavy work load (See 10 August). This is evidence that she took Maureen's comments on her journal seriously and reflected on how she could change her behaviour. "Now I have put the foot down. I need time for admin and other activities which have taken a back seat." As she herself notes in her evaluation, "My thought processes also have shown a change toward a

seriousness and correctness which wasn't always there, 'move over humour', and a noted slowing down (to contemplate consequences before acting), to keep with this change so I can apply this change to everyday work, all situations."

...The student has grown to some extent:

On the 17.3, Maureen writes, "While her approach and the scientific nature of her debate could possibly be questioned, this is her reflective journal, which is more forgiving because it is more flexible." I do not think this is evidence of academic growth.

Academically:-

On the 20/3 Maureen writes, "A strong opinion article, somewhat one sided - Lea's views and anti-American opinions are clear- on Lea's feelings about wars in general, and the US-Iraq war in particular." I agree with Maureen that Lea's passionate views sometimes blind her to seeing both sides of a situation, "I cannot argue with her position – merely focus on her passion that perhaps affects her ability to question the facts." Sometimes I get the sense that Lea is over pressured in terms of doing her job and being a student at once. I wonder if her cultivation of a very hectic job hasn't been at the expense of actually coming to grips with her studies?

One of the benefits of the triangulation process is being able to 'see' the student from different perspectives. While quite correctly critical reader (Sarah) did not see clear evidence of academic growth in the presented entries, this clearly was not the case in the overall student picture. Lea consistently demonstrated her academic soundness in other, more formal elements of the course and was in the top 10% of her class.

"Then the mood swings again and it's snot en tran as we prepare ourselves for the Pharmacology test ... I don't even know whether I've learnt for the right units, no time to phone, I'm still not orientated with the WEB ct although have sent a message and read all the content."

Therefore I would agree with Lea when she says of her own work, "The efforts focused on these diary entries waxed and waned but generally showed various interests, ecologically aware but not enough critical reflection shown re nursing or management." Considering that she was in this class to learn more about the academic side of nursing and management, I do not think Lea grew dramatically in her academic capacity, not as much as she did personally and professionally."

I detect Lea's openness to change when she announces a "turnaround" after having done "situational analysis and the organizational structure" in lectures: "I found myself viewing my own situation quite differently. I started to put myself in the forefront instead of the companies I do work for. I suddenly started to view them as clients and not employers"

She also expresses self-awareness: "Protective orientation which looks at saving other's face (I have always done this and so often landed in trouble!") While inundated with an over-full schedule, Lea constantly recognizes the researcher's busy life too or thanks her for her support. Lea relies on humour and creativity in deepening her problem solving abilities. The journal is filled with creative analogies and comparisons: "It's not that I don't like work, it's just there's so much to do in so little time it's almost like you're facing Shane Warne at the crease and he's about to bowl another wicket-taking googlie."

During times of high stress, instead of simply not posting, she gives visual input (which is quicker and easier, but paint a thousand words) by posting pictures to depict her profession and life – another example of her creative approach to problem-solving. Her evaluation of her diary entries is a testimony to her development during this period: “The dairy keeping has provoked thoughts, helped understand problems, made me change my thought processes from ones of “couldn’t possibly change” to ones of “that has to change and it might as well be today.” And “I can concentrate a lot better and complete monumental tasks without “caving in” and “Questioning inter-departmental processes also comes with ease now and I have been responsible for changes.”

Critical Reader (Jane) writes this of Lea:

“She displays a concern for fairness and exposing generalised attitudes is indicated from the outset, as is her positive attitude which is manifest in her refusing to vegetate into senility. She has a good sense of humour – a light touch... Her grasp of the value of new technology is proactive and she makes good use of the facilities. She is essentially non-judgemental, except in the case of the Iraq War, entry 5 where her cynicism is evident, as it is to a degree in entry 8 – but Future Shock and Darwin are excellent antidotes! It is ironical that this same technology is cause for action, entry 22. Her concern here again reflects her ‘missionary zeal’. The telling comments of ‘sick workers who no longer exist’ and ‘the increasing anonymity of people’ are chilling.

Balance is an accepted way of life here, reflected in her Holistic encompassing of the entire environment from the great outdoors, through good practice, to caring for Nqobele. Chilling out is part and parcel of survival and in entry 7, the value of changing perspective, part of Critical reflective process, is a way of coping and includes extending her knowledge through other channels, such as those in entry 14.

Time Management – an aspect experienced in other diaries – spurs Lea on to be proactive and to re-organise, for efficient practice, not only her own domain but that of a friend. The concept of the Workshop was great: another pro-active initiative!

Lea's natural affinity with people and her unaffected sincerity, her readiness to praise – as reflected in her appreciation of the course of study and the challenge and development it has afforded her - to find what is good in a situation makes her an invaluable asset. The inter-relationship and connectedness of the group – her comments – affectionate and insightful show qualities that a Team leader should possess."

11.9.8 Conclusion

Lea is incredibly open, and her final evaluation of her diary reveals a great deal about Lea. I think that she has analysed her learning far better than I could.

When I first considered researching the area of critical reflective practice, I read a number of studies around nursing, and nursing education in this area. Quite a bit of the research focused on evaluation and tools to measure learning and some of these issues are discussed in Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.4. I found this concept really problematic - not the notion that learning per se could not be compared from one chronological stage to another - but the notion that I could implement a programme and measure the effects of this. It just seems so presumptive. There are too many variables to consider, which is why the qualitative approach to understanding the learning process (the triangulation method, using a variety of inputs, including perceptions of students and staff at different stages of the course development) seemed so much more appropriate. As Lea so correctly notes

"The critical thinking processes, introduced to us this year, have helped instill deeper meaning to thought, although I have always been one for looking at the other side of the picture and discovering the solution to the problem or the understandable reason/s for perceived incorrect behaviour."

Lea has made a number of insightful observations, but the ones that are most meaningful to me, as I have not had these articulated in quite this way before, are her thoughts on the freedoms that we as South Africans now share. Her connection of Nelson Mandela's release to "we have all been released to discover a new group of friends and professional partners free of prejudice and fear" is liberating and profound. While Lea thanks me on a number of occasions, I can take very little credit for her journey. She was given the space, and the opportunities and she opened herself to the process. I think that her evaluation of herself and the process indicate clearly that Lea has a constructed voice. Her thinking was flexible and she spoke in an impassioned and assertive way. She was intuitive and linked notions to rational and sophisticated thought. She saw her learning as a process under construction, and, more importantly, translated this into her life style through action. I do think that one of the most difficult tasks one can undertake is to transform an attitude or an opinion into behaviour. It takes effort of will.

Lea had a clear sense of herself and was comfortable with her quirkiness. It disguised her sincerity, her sense of humility and her integrity. She didn't look for affirmation through grades and was probably one of the few students who understood the concept of learning for the process of gaining greater knowledge, rather than the recognition from others in the form of grades. Her value system was implicit through her diary entries - hard work, continuous striving to learn more, a valuing of relationships - her family, colleagues, clients and peers. Whilst there is a sense of idealism and optimism with which she views the world, she also has a healthy skepticism which allowed her to have a more pragmatic view of life. She knew where she came from and appreciated where she was - I think that this allowed her to have a positive view towards her future in this country. She was proud of being South African, and rejected the baggage that accompanied the pre-democracy years - prejudice and racism, and this clearly coloured her sense of being in this multi-cultural

environment. Her work was very instrumental in defining how Lea saw herself, and was an important vehicle in her move towards self-actualisation.

- **Lea's Self-evaluation: Diary Entries for 2003**

Lea is unapologetic about her stance and demonstrates her unequivocal position on important issues affecting her as a citizen. Her value system is clear. This is not the position of someone who is going to leave the 'fixing' of problems to the ubiquitous 'other'

"I can and will openly discuss and criticise incorrect, undemocratic, snobbish or racist issues and behaviour with indifference but with vigour. I can and will support all groups in South Africa and have an understanding for all the related problems and realise we are a developing nation, we can all help in change, we can all give support".

It is easy to criticize but Lea looks to the positive, and this makes her enormously valuable as a role player and manager where she does need to be realistic and recognise 'what is'. But more than that, she has to move beyond feelings of helplessness and hopelessness engendered by the presentation of multiple problems to an action phase, which Lea does appear to do

"There has been a huge improvement since 1994 and this improvement escalates daily. We need a strong health and welfare structure to cope and strong role-players. The dairy keeping has provoked thoughts, helped understand problems, made me change my thought processes from ones of "couldn't possibly change" to ones of "that has to change and it might as well be today". This change in thought process often comes in handy when the thought process can be transferred to different situations and problem solving aspects and voila! solutions are found! I can concentrate a lot better and complete monumental tasks without "caving in". The critical thinking processes, introduced to us this year, have helped instil deeper meaning to thought, although I have always been one for looking at the other side of the picture and discovering the solution to the problem or the understandable reason/s for perceived incorrect behaviour. With that deeper meaning the best solutions are possible in most situations."

Lea finds balance in journaling process and outlines the changes she sees in her learning process:

“Reading between the lines whether that is in a newspaper report, or a report on the news, one now is aware of the need for correct reporting, non-biased reporting, and although scepticism has always been very dominant in my life, it tends to be more balanced and healthy now. My thought processes also have shown a change toward a seriousness and correctness which wasn't always there, 'move over humour', and a noted slowing down [to contemplate consequences before acting], to keep with this change so I can apply this change to everyday work, all situations... I do now work in the interdisciplinary sectors of my business, and often raise those root questions without referring to others first and thereby find there is less backlog of work because of that. Questioning inter-departmental processes also comes with ease now and I have been responsible for changes.”

She now openly values inherent characteristics of herself:

“Comments on my entries have often included ones of being creative. I do like to be different, creativity and novel ideas, I think, is part and parcel of the character. My apologies if the entries have been long-winded, I try to condense a thousand thoughts”.

I reread Lea's analysis of her experience in her self-evaluation after I had completed my initial coding and interpretation and found there to be a great deal of congruency between my analysis and her thoughts, which I find very healthy.

About midway through this research process, I came to understand the concept of 'guided reflection' and found it extremely enticing and exciting as a teaching strategy. I was also worried about the freedom I had given students to reflect, especially when a colleague of mine asked - what if they are not writing and learning about their practice? I do feel vindicated in that each journey is different, and the students have chosen their journeys - and in this way, they have 'owned' them. Who am I to determine what it is that each should learn along the way? If I believe in the process of adult education, I need trust it as well. So far, so good.

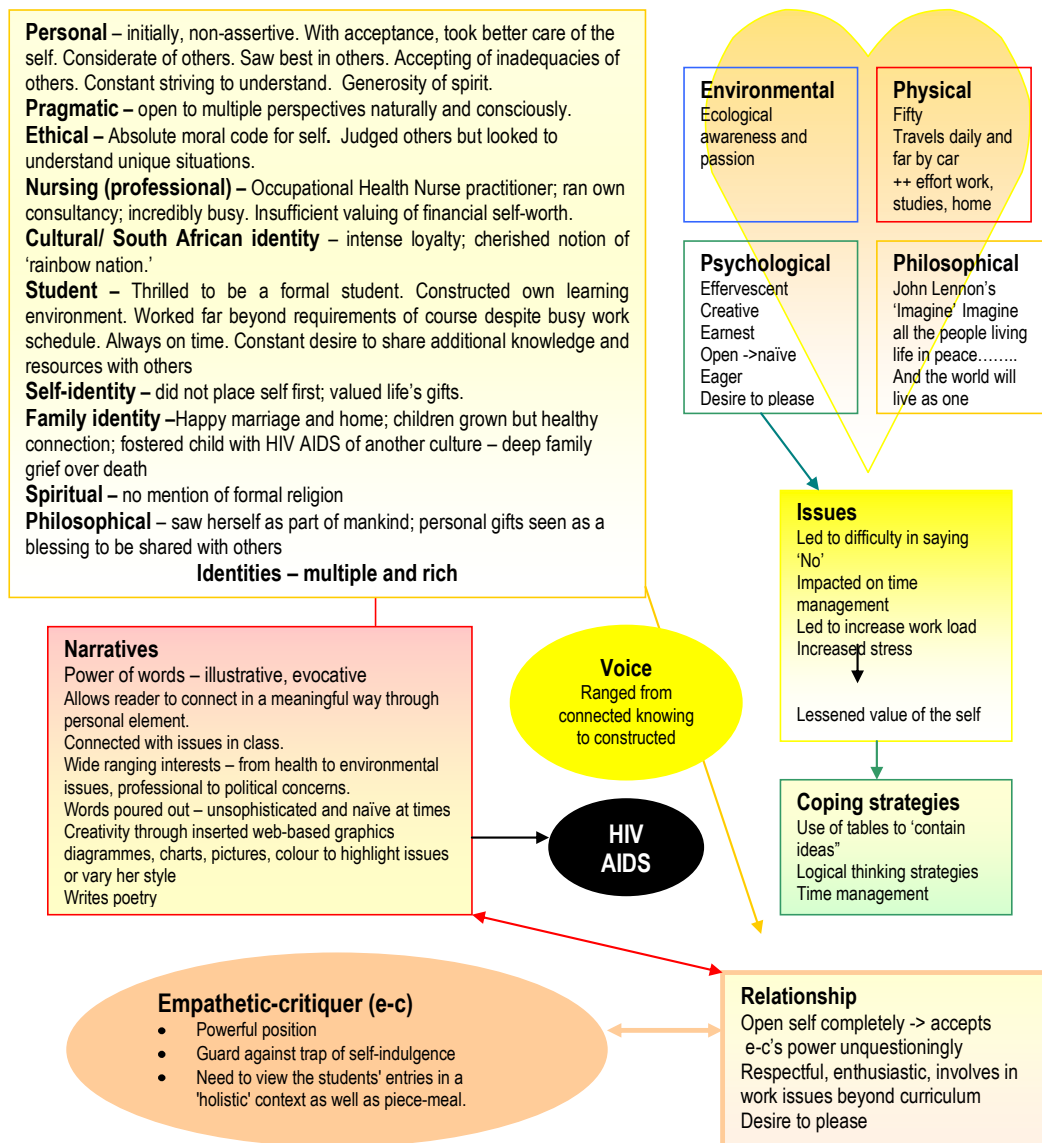


Figure 11.7 Lea's journaling experience in light of framework in Figure 10.1

Nandi's journal

11.10 Nandi

“Sound professional practice and parity in treatment of all stakeholders” (Jane, critical reader)

11.10.1 Introduction

On review of the analysis on Nandi, I realise that I have no specific demographic data on Nandi. Nandi was not part of my original 2002 research group and was just one of the 2003 students who had given written permission to include her in my research study. My decision to include her in the study was only determined after she had concluded her course. The sampling decision was based on the following criteria: Students from the 2003 group who were second-language English Primary Health Care students, who had provided written permission to be included in the study and who had completed reflective journals. These journals were placed in a small pile and the transcriber/typist was asked to choose one without reviewing the material. In this way, Nandi became part of the study.

In a text search of my reflexive journal, I found no mention of Nandi. My comments are based on memory, a picture of Nandi posted on Web CT and her journal. As I close my eyes, I can see the horse-shoe shape of the desk placements and Nandi sits at the far end of the crescent, between two of her friends, both almost as reticent as she. Nandi was probably one of the shyest students I have ever encountered. She was an attractive, softly spoken young Zulu woman in her early twenties, worked in a labour ward in a public hospital as a midwife, and was sedate in both manner and dress. She very seldom initiated discussion. In the first quarter of the year, she would literally hide behind her hands and her head would be down and eyes focused on the floor. She spoke with hesitation and was hugely uncomfortable with any form of attention. Confrontation as a form of conflict resolution was not part of her repertoire. The tutorial sessions were the most helpful

experiences, for they allowed me glimpses of students that went beyond the contact class sessions. After the first couple of tutorial sessions, I set Nandi a task. She was to initiate three conversations, however brief, every day. I also made it a point to recognise and praise Nandi whenever I could and would often tease her. By year's end, Nandi was still shy, but she self-participated in the discussions and maintained a fair amount of eye-contact. She was respected by her peers and she moved from being a junior staff member at work, to being a professional nurse (most of which was mind-set). I was delighted to see that on conclusion of her Primary Health Care programme, she had registered the following year for the remaining two subjects which would allow her to complete a programme in Nursing Management. The course co-ordinator had nothing but praise for her progress.

I have deliberately chosen *not* to follow up the pursuance of demographic data and instead allow Nandi's journal to speak for itself. I do this, for as I reflect upon the analysis of the remaining seven journals, I realise that it might seem as if I, as the facilitator, must have a more than usual knowledge of the student in order to understand that student and to support the critical reflective practice. In general, because classes were small (less than 20 students), this factor lent itself to my developing a more intimate knowledge of the students I worked with. The question is: does this educational process work when one also facilitates the learning of larger numbers of students and where, through lack of opportunity, one deals with only the academic input of the student? I contend that it does. Each student is an individual and expresses herself in a unique way and the reflective journal and the tutorials provide the opportunities to reflect this. However, although I try to connect in some way with all my students I am aware that my personality assists or gets in the way of this process. I can only try to be intuitive and mindful and consider the *Ethical posture: Perspective on ethical student/educator relationships* described in 10.2.3.

11.10.2 Subjectivity in analysis

In Chapter Ten, Section 10.1.2.2, I have expressed my concerns about the levels of expression and the rationale for using Duke et al.'s (2000) Reflective Evidence Rubric as a guide to *monitor* rather than as a specific tool to *measure* critical reflective writing. In considering my data bite memos with respect to Nandi's entries (e.g. February 12 and 13), my recognition that Nandi could have pursued her analysis in greater depth is to a large degree, subjective – especially taking into account the guiding norms for reflective writing (Table 6.5 in Chapter Six). I am also aware, as I reread Nandi's reflections that further or different questions beyond the original critique, come to mind. Again, this reflects the subjectivity in my thinking processes (and therefore, possibly, of the processes of other reader-respondents or empathetic-critiquers), which in turn, is affected by a number of different influencing factors, such as interest, knowledge, frame of mind/ mood etc. So, just as the situations that Nandi and other students deal with are “messy,” so, I would suggest, are the solutions and the processes for decision making. A case in point is Nandi's journal entry (8 August, 2003) titled DISCIPLINE AGAINST ABDUCTED BABY IN UNIT where she discusses the abduction of a baby from her ward and focuses on the disciplining of the responsible nurse.

“A baby was admitted in nursery where he was looked after following delivery by caesarian section his mother was bedridden and could not come to breastfeed. The relatives came requesting to see the baby, they were told in the ward. Where the baby's mother was admitted to go to nursery because that was where the baby was. When they got there, they could not find the baby. They went to report in the ward where the mother was admitted. The in-charge then phoned the in-charge from the nursery to enquire but she was told that the baby was there doing well. The relatives left without seeing the baby and the following day they came requesting to take the baby home, it was then that they discovered that the baby was missing. When they first came and told that it was well the baby was already missing for two days.

The policy for discharging a baby from nursery is that the baby's mother comes with her chart and then identification is done by comparing the baby's and mother's particulars and the mother is made to sign that she has taken her baby. According to the nurse who signed the baby out the woman came with the mother's chart in hospital attire, she checked the particulars in the mothers chart with that of the baby's and they matched and she made the woman signed for the baby and gave it to her. Unfortunately she could not recognize that she was handing the baby to the wrong woman because she hadn't seen her since the baby was admitted because the mother was bedridden when the baby came.

THE ISSUE

The unit in charge of the baby's ward is facing disciplinary committee. Why did she say that the baby was well whereas it was missing. It is said that she will be suspended. Though the nurse who handed the baby to an unknown woman is also said to be guilty not sure what charges are laid against her. It is still confusing how did the woman got hold of the baby's mother chart and even the hospital attire. But fortunately the baby was discovered after two weeks thanks it was not hurt. I feel sorry for the in charge because she is known as one of the responsible supervisor's."

In my initial analysis I wrote:

Many unanswered questions for me. A horrific situation made even more horrific for me because of the understated way in which it was written. Nandi writes about the situation in terms of the facts and the process but the emotion is missing. Nandi does not explore how this feels for the mother or family and just notes that she feels "sorry" for the nurse- in- charge because she is a 'good nurse'. For me, this is the stuff of nightmares - but even the positive result - the return of the baby, is written in an understated way. For Nandi, at least in this diary entry, it is the disciplining of the nurse that is the issue (hence the title) of the discussion and not the missing baby.

I am not sure if this is because of the South African context where, according to newspapers, horrific events happen daily. This occurrence is not so outside the norm that it is not perceived in gargantuan terms.

This is not the first time something like this has happened in South African hospitals. It does point to the awkward structure of the setting, a system where there are many patients – and high turnovers – and so difficulties in getting to ‘know’ clients – and very busy staff. It is interesting that Nandi does not point out any of these issues. She works within this context and doesn’t seem to know it could/ should be different.

When I read about this scenario - it also becomes clear that this is a predominantly black African ward and that the staff and patients are predominantly black African. Within the ‘white’ culture, it is highly unlikely that the family would return home without insisting that they ‘see’ the baby first - and although the concept of Batho Pele is infiltrating all hospitals, where the rights of the patients are made obvious - it is hard to change the passivity of a whole generation within only a period of a generation (Maureen, databite analysis).

In accordance with the ethical norms of the research process of this study, I gave the typed journals back to all students (except Xolisi, who had left the country and whom I was unable to locate) for comment so that they could validate or refute or elaborate on the final document to be shared with the critical readers. These documents included the articles and reflections I had chosen for analysis, as well as scanned articles that the students had used as a basis for discussion. They also included my data bite analyses which were memos I had made interpreting the findings within the individual journals. Nandi was the only student who wished to make

amendments or comments, and she did this in regard to the data bite analysis of article already noted:

“DIARIES

18 May 2004

Thank you for the summary of my analysed diaries. Having read them I do not have anything to criticise because they are analysed according to ones opinion and is not opposing.

I have realised that the analysis is about what you feel (own opinion). This was discovered when we discussed the diary of an abducted baby. From that diary I only focused on the people who were responsible for the abduction. But from our discussion It was clear to me that my focus did not go to the baby's family. It made me understand the comments that are made from other diaries because I did not broaden my mind.

I agree with most of the comments because when I wrote those diaries I used to concentrate on what had touch my mind at that time. Therefore from the analysis I was able to see that I only concentrate to the particular area of the scenario. The analysis help me to realize my shortfalls on critical thinking.

Thank you

Nandi”

On reading Nandi's comments, I reminded both Nandi and myself that the student had freedom of choice in terms of what she reflected upon, and that her reflection did not necessarily indicate a shortfall in critical thinking at all. She had just chosen to look at the issue from a specific perspective.

11.10.3 Nandi's Choice of reference material

Nandi chose to use newspaper articles and journal articles from the South African Nursing Journal 'Update' that is produced by and for members of DENOSA, the Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa for the journal section of her reflective journal. 'Update' is not a research journal, but covers issues of general interest to nurses. She had also taken a number of incidents that had

occurred at work in relation to either her colleagues or herself, and commented on these. The articles are not scanned. Originally, I would read the article first and then the journal entry and then comment or question. For the purposes of this research, I have focused on the students' reflections, with the understanding that they have their base in and from the articles.

11.10.4 Student growth

(Critical Reader, Mari Pete) “**General comments**

This was a particularly heartwarming case to engage with, since Nandi comes across as vulnerable and inexperienced at first, and later on her growth is so evident, and so inspiring, springing from Nandi's personal experiences.

Growth

Although Nandi offers simplistic solutions to problems, she constantly engages and questions controversial issues. After exposure in lectures to assertiveness and power issues, I sense an “awakening”. Initially Nandi does not reveal her personal feelings or stance on issues. She rarely gives her own opinion or digs down to the root of a problem...” (Mari, Critical Reader)

In an early entry, Nandi discusses the consequences of “... poor record keeping and lack of patient identification in an incident when a patient was given the wrong blood and subsequently died. Her concern for patients again is manifest as is her professional commitment and in her awareness of correct procedure. The de-personalisation of patients and her problem solving skills in suggesting that they be known by their full names and not by their condition, is – apart from being professional procedure – concerned and compassionate.” (Jane, Critical Reader)

“The habit of not referring to patients by their proper names can result in poor care and if the patient is asked by relatives it is not easy to know because he is called by the bed number or his condition. If the patients have the same condition but maintained on the different medication you only know them by their conditions” (Nandi, 27 March)

Nandi's comments take me back about 25 years when the importance of Nandi's comments formed a key element in nursing care as I experienced it. At that time, we were moving from a medical based model (where the disease defined the patient) to a holistic model of care (also discussed in Chapter 1.4.6). It seems incredible that this lesson has not yet been learned. But seemingly it is so - and therefore Nandi's comments are all the more important. On review, my comments seem somewhat patronizing: I underwent my nursing training in far more ideal settings than nurses do today and was supported by adequate staff, equipment and infrastructure. Client turnover was far slower, allowing staff to get to know clients. Nurses today, in our current system, are frequently faced by unrelenting pressures, which, I suppose, can only be really appreciated in the comparative contexts (discussed further in 1.2.2 and 1.3.1).

Over the past decade, health care authorities have become increasingly concerned with the poor care that has followed resulting from poor staff attitudes, and embarked on a campaign called 'Batho Pelo' - which, in essence, can be equated with quality care (see Chapter 1.1). The quality of patient care has been strongly connected to nurses' sense of professional identity. This has been severely compromised in the last decade. Nurses, as have all South Africans, have been undergoing a period of transformation and change, with the resultant disequilibrium that accompanies these processes. I have chosen to use Antjie Krog's (2003:127-129) interpretation of the phases of transformation elucidated in Chapter Seven, Section 7.4.5.8, as I could identify with

these. Her interpretation is in the context of the political transformation that has taken place in South Africa since 1994, but which impacts on all phases of South African life.

Against this background, nurses are affected more practically by the transforming processes - changes in health policy resulting in greater and wider access to health care, but often without the accompanying resources and infrastructure needed to fulfill their professional obligations. In addition, the resources have been strained past breaking point by the inevitable impact of HIV AIDS. In light of the country's needs, the satisfaction of nurses with their profession has not seemed to feature high on political agendas. Batho Pele has focused on patients' rights, but what of the nurses? Many nurses have felt, too little, too late.

11.10.5 Distancing from process of reflections

In the initial stages of her journaling, Nandi writes in the third person or about others and so distances herself from the processes of her practice. The article dated 24 April, titled 'ADVOCATE TOWARD A CRUEL ANAESTHETIST' is really the first time that Nandi has made a personal judgment, indicating her personal feelings. She has been very careful prior to this, to remove the problem so that she is not directly involved. The issue at hand was the unprofessional manner in which an anaesthetist managed an epidural, without first giving a local anaesthetic or without the appropriate supports. He was directly castigated by the nurse and reported to a higher authority.

"But the sister who confronted this doctor is a junior sister she did not wait to report him to his seniors but told him right away and she even explained to the doctor the things that doctor knew making him aware that even if she is not an anaesthetist, she knows what is giving epidural all about.

COMMENT:

I was pleased by the way this sister advocated for that patient because the next patients for procedure were done without any problem. I think the doctor realized that nurses love their patients and are their advocates.”

(Jane, Critical Reader): “In reporting an incident experienced by a colleague, Nandi evidences skills in creating a vivid picture. The attitude of the anaesthetist was unprofessional and certainly unacceptable, in her eyes, as was his lack of concern. The feisty attitude of the junior sister in confronting the doctor, without reporting him, is admired by Nandi, and re-affirms her concept of what nursing is all about.”

On a personal note, I haven't practiced as a midwife for over 23 years, and through Nandi (and the descriptions and analysis of other students) am taken back to these forms of nursing practices. I am reminded about what I know, and, in order to respond effectively to Nandi (and other students) I also have to search for and read about what I do not remember.

Nandi's judgment is still judicious and cautious. She does not condemn outright, nor does she provide recommendations or indicate in any obvious way, what right actions were taken. I think that Nandi is leaving this up to me, and that by describing the situation, and the process followed, she is making an assumption that I should be able to determine that her colleague acting correctly. This time, however, she has taken one step further and given a tentative judgment "I was pleased by the way..." (Nandi, 24 April).

I find Nandi's observations about the junior staff members, insightful - they are the "people who are always next to the patients it makes them become sensitive" (Nandi, 24 April). It is also quite an indictment on the senior staff members, who, theoretically, should have their fingers on the pulse of

the workings of the unit, but who do not appear to do so. Again, she does not note this in an obvious way and leaves this up to me (or at least, I think she does. She gives me credit for understanding how the system should work).

11.10.6 Use of titles to introduce topics

The titles of her topics provide an indication of the key issues she wishes to speak of - and for me, this condensation of the broader incident to a summarised phrase, is a good indication of Nandi's ability to think critically (even though some of the titles were taken directly from journal articles).

These include:

Table 11.8 Nandi's topic titles

AIDS patients get new R1,6 million care ward	Some were simply titled: Clinical experience	Lets talk nurses
Caeserian section: An unpregnant woman	Swapping a suit for a uniform	Poor record keeping can damage patient care and your career
Let them eat garlic	Who is responsible for last offices	Advocate toward a cruel anaesthetist
Value for money	Neviropine refusal resulted in cheating a patient	Power abuse by senior sisters
Unfair treatment of personnel	Discipline against abducted baby in unit	Lack of communication
Delegation of an impossible subordinate	What the future holds for nurses	Assertiveness skills to calm a senior member
Critical thinking and management	Four hospital staff from HIV after becoming infected through needles	

11.10.7 A question of power

In an entry dated 5 June, the issue at hand is a direct instruction by the attending doctor to a nurse colleague to give needed medication Nevirapene "as prophylactic treatment preventing mother to child transmission" to a patient, without the patient's knowledge as the patient had already withheld

consent. The nurse colleague refused, indicating that the process was unethical and the giving of the treatment, the anaesthetist's responsibility.

This particular situation is problematic and revolves around disparities in power - lack of power for the patient; lack of power (comparatively, in relation to the doctor) of the nurse. The doctor's intention was well meant. There are gaps in this story as the patient hasn't indicated why she doesn't want the Neviropene and part of the counselling includes 'Informed consent or refusal' - it is not at all clear from this scenario how aware of consequences the patient is. While Nandi praises the nurse's action - the point of the matter is that the patient received the treatment, regardless of the nurse's verbal intervention. The fact that *she* did not give the treatment in did not in any way mitigate her client-advocacy role - where she was clearly remiss. But here one needs to be aware of the disparity between the doctor and the junior sister in terms of power. This is a complicated situation where it is difficult for an outsider to be wholly aware of the potential consequences for those involved. It might be useful to consider the potential effects and Skillings (1992) cited in Freshwater (2000:482) "argues that nurses adopt the adaptive strategies of oppressed groups, directing their dissatisfaction inward towards each other, towards themselves and towards those less powerful than themselves (often the patients)." Freshwater (2000) notes that nurses function within an oppressive system, 'oppressive' because it is "patriarchal" and headed by doctors and others in authority. This often results in nurses lower down the power ranks engaging in aggressive behaviour towards each other.

One of the things that have been missing so far in Nandi's reflections is how nursing practice affects her and how she sees herself as responsible for addressing any of the anomalies. Her

comments do include action statements, but so far, they have mostly been generalised and refer to the ubiquitous 'other.'

11.10.8 Personalising the experience

Mari (Critical Reader) "...Halfway through, she writes for the first time about "my experiences". (See Entry 12 - "Power abuse by senior members – my clinical experience".) Here Nandi gives personal examples for the first time (previous examples were based on others' experiences) and Nandi also comes alive in her logical critique of the situation."

We are almost midway through the year before Nandi begins to write about "my experiences" (12 June). I would suggest that it took a while to develop a sense of trust with me as the critiquer and until her initial approaches have provided her with a sense of safety. I am enchanted by Nandi's approach to this incident. It is an issue on power. We actually discussed this incident in a tutorial session - and what Nandi does not mention here, is that the senior staff work in units (e.g. the nursery) where the off-duties and the work itself is more congenial and easier to cope with. During the tutorial session, Nandi noted that the more senior staff felt that it was their due to work in this more congenial environment in terms of their seniority and length of experience. However, their refusal to work in the more intensive labour wards was couched in different terms where they rationalised the process i.e. "it was said that because of the experience and exposure to the environment the junior professional nurses will not solve the problems that might arise." This is a slightly different scenario that Nandi presents - but with the same outcome.

"In my unit the allocation of duties is according to seniority that is the senior staff members are placed for supervision and writing of reports and attending to patients problem such as queries about their children's death notification and problems are sometimes forwarded to the attention of the unit manager if available at the time. The junior professional nurses

are responsible for patient care and attending to doctors order. They are never allocated to do the senior professional nurse duty. I heard that it was said that because of the experience and exposure to the environment the junior professional nurses will not solve the problems that might arise.”

The time comes when there is no senior staff member available, and the junior staff members (including Nandi herself) take over with minimal difficulty and fuss. Her solution is very tongue-in-cheek “Maybe next time things will not be easy as it was when the junior sisters are left on their own.” The tutorial sessions clearly indicated the hierarchical structure in the hospital ward, where Nandi was in a junior position. Nandi does not question the seniority issue – but she does challenge the logic and the manipulation of the situation by the senior staff.

“It was then requested from the senior staff that we think it can be wise if we all rotate in doing the senior duties that is the senior sister allocated with a junior sister so that the latter person can gain experience towards such duties. But up to this far the request has not yet been attended to.”

The fact that Nandi even thinks about the challenge is quite a step forwards for her – and I am charmed that her reference to the assertiveness class and reading is also used to validate and support her response!

“After reading about assertiveness it came into my mind how would it be if the junior nurses told the unit in charge that they are willing to do the work but after being exposed to the environment because the reason for not allocating junior sisters was the lack of experience. “

Nandi, however, isn't just being cute – they did work in the situation and did not hijack the senior staff – which is both right, and commendable, in my book. (Jane, critical reader) *“A far cry from Ms Young! The hierarchical structure is necessary? How then does a senior sister keep in touch with the realities of the workplace – it seems a lack of planning? The Junior staff were able to manage*

and rightfully credited - when the senior staff were away. Seemingly, they adapted well, which Nandi reflects, with some pride. The attitude of the senior staff to rotation suggests an 'holier than thou' approach – which is reflected in Nandi's last paragraph – on assertiveness – which seems to have empowered her: she's 'taking a risk'. Rotation seems a logical solution to this issue – and a way of creating greater harmony. Nandi's tone implies that there is discord."

11.10.9 Taking a stand

(Critical reader, Mari) "After this Nandi begins to take a stronger stand (Diary entry 13 – Unfair treatment of personnel), backing up her position with research support ('I support Booyens, 1996:48 where he states that "uniformity of policies prevents conflict and promotes fairness")".

11.10.10 Disempowerment to empower?

(Critical reader, Mari) Diary entry 15 – "lack of communication" Nandi undergoes an intensely disempowering experience, when her unit is moved overnight without her knowledge, and she returns in the morning, finding she has no place to belong to, having to fill in for nurses in other wards. "I felt angry, frustrated and annoyed..." After considering calling in sick, and resigning, she analyses and processes the incident: "After I came to terms with the situation on my own, because no one ever bothered to apologise...I realize how important it is to discuss and communicate with subordinates and that the manager as a change agent should prepare staff members so that they could go through all the stages of i.e. giving support and encouragement until refreezing has occurred."

Nandi has tended to write fairly unemotionally throughout her diary. This is the first time that she has used very emotive and highly descriptive words and phrases like "I blinked several times to

ensure that I was not dreaming", "We remained standing as if we were electrocuted", "angry, frustrated and annoyed" (28 August). Through Nandi's eyes, I recognise that Salvador Dali nightmare and I am fairly sure that I would not have responded in such a calm way. Her senses are pummeled, she and her colleague have been displaced without so much as a bye-your-leave, and it was not as though there had been no opportunity to warn Nandi as she had been present at the Ward hand -over the night before.

Nandi's greatest emotion is reserved for the feeling of not being needed or recognised, which is further exacerbated by now having to work as a night relief as "I suffered threatened self interest as I had no unit to work in" (28 August). Nandi recognises what has happened and also is looking introspectively within herself and analysing her responses and the effect (and potential effect) of the displacement. It is a measure of her character that she chooses to use this as a learning experience and responds to it as such rather than disintegrate or follow some of her initial inclinations - i.e. phone in sick (after first experience); resign (after second experience of rejection - no 'own' unit to work in). She also, as I note in my response to her, integrates the theory learned in Change Management, to her own situation.

"MY COMMENT

I think there was lost of communication somewhere seen that the staff at the lower level was not informed either verbally or through the memorandum. There was no follow up to ensure that the message or instructions received to all affected by it because neither staff members in both shift were aware about change that was going to take place. I think I was in a state of resistance to change because I suffered threatened self interest as I had no unit to work in. Also psychologically resistance as I understood the reason for change but emotionally I could not. May be it was the way the change was introduced. Then I concluded that my managers did not realize that even planned change can result to

different emotional react and not to mention if unfreezing phase was not introduced”
(Nandi, 28 August).

This was a shocking experience but one that resulted in a huge forward movement in terms of reflective writing and self-growth.

(Critical Reader, Mari) “Nandi’s assertiveness develops in leaps and bounds after this: First she deals effectively with an uncooperative, moody messenger whom nobody wants to instruct: “From that day I just go to her with a serious mood and look her straight and tell her, the task...but that incident opened my eyes and taught me to stand on my own...and that a person needs to be firm and consistent to subordinates. I realized that the messenger has no problem the problem is with us, her supervisor.”

“Maureen: Well done Nandi

You are not asking her to do anything else but her job. It is amazing the power some people have over others part of being a professional person means assuming proper use of power – and I like your choice of words – “firm and consistent”

This is a big step forward for Nandi and a big part of her maturing. I like her recognition of the understanding displayed by the doctor, and his refusal to allow Nandi to kow-tow to the situation. He expected the situation to be dealt with and the message be sent. Failure on Nandi’s part could have been embarrassing – particularly in terms of the hierarchical structure where the messenger is way down the totem pole. Nandi is also recognising that being nominated a manager does not necessarily make a good leader. Nandi demonstrates insight into the situation, but more importantly, into her own fears. Her introspection and resolution allows her to move on to actions that are appropriate. The power disparities inherent in this system indicate that position does not

necessarily coincide with power. There is a differentiation between conferred power and assumed power, something Nandi is aware of.

11.10.11 The great debate

(Nandi: Entry 17, no date). What the future holds for the nurses.

The issue of migration of nurses is a recurrent one (Smetherham and Laurence, 2004) and a major issue in South Africa for the past few years. It is an issue that has been discussed in nearly every student journal, as has the issue of HIV AIDS (Ehlers, 2004). Although in an oblique fashion, Nandi does indicate what it is that she wants - recognition, respect and support from the health authorities. She sees the overt message - Doctors count, but nurses don't. Nurses are expendable. It is a harsh reality to deal with and as Nandi says:" If you can not remove the source of stress the solution is to move away from the source."

There is no doubt that the conditions of service are difficult for nurses in South Africa, and this is further exacerbated by the helplessness nurses feel in attempting to manage the AIDS pandemic, which has changed the face of health care in South Africa. Nurses battle to work in difficult conditions, where their own health is placed at constant risk as well, and having little recognition for their endeavors, places further stress on their loyalties.

Nandi's concerns are real and her argument is that someone who has walked in a nurse's shoes, will appreciate a nurse's perspective. Nandi has spent much of this course trying to appreciate other perspectives, and this possibly might be why she considers this a reasonable suggestion. It is simplistic, but I can't quarrel with her logic.

11.10.12 Moving forwards

(Critical reader, Mari) “From this point onwards Nandi starts using phrases such as “I like the idea that...” A sterling example of Nandi’s development is when she challenges authority when she insists repeatedly and calmly that a senior follows the correct procedures, namely putting a new patient to bed before dealing with the red tape (Entry 18 – Assertiveness skills to calm a senior member). Nandi proceeds to reflect on the incident, realizing that she acted without thinking through the issues beforehand.

She is suggesting a standard policy (which is useful in promoting conformity of behaviour and supporting conformity of behaviour). The issue is of assertiveness and has been threaded through Nandi’s diary entries and she has described a number of situations where this has been warranted. She has explored the effect of her positions on herself and on others, and has come to the realization that these skills do work for her. Nandi is still in a fairly junior position where the concept of policies as a tool for controlling behaviour is seen as the answer. But it is not the only solution, and she will need to hone her interpersonal skills – which she is doing. I think the fact that the senior nurse did as she was asked, and calmly, is indicative that Nandi handled the situation fairly well. I have become aware of Nandi’s sensitivity to others and her non-aggressive approach. For her, harmonious relationships between her colleagues and others she works with are important.

11.10.13 Personal connections

(Critical reader, Mari) “The first explicit comment on Nandi’s personal life appears towards the end of the diary (Entry 19 – Critical thinking and management) when she says learning about critical thinking had made her social and work lives easily manageable.”

11.10.14 Nandi's growth

Sarah (Critical Reader) comments on Nandi's growth "...Academically:- Nandi has shown evidence of growth in her critical thinking to some extent. Her theoretical arguments are quite simplistic. E.g. 12/02 – "But my concern is that why is not this amount used in trying to find the cure rather than spending it to the terminally ill who are already towards the end of their life." Nandi does not realise that there is already a large amount of money being spent on research towards a cure for AIDS, and that money set aside for palliative care is also important. She focuses on the practical and the concrete rather than the abstract and the intellectual.

A number of her anecdotes relate to nursing in general rather than how the practice affects her and as Maureen so aptly puts it, "how she sees herself as responsible for addressing any of the anomalies."

She does however pick up evidence of problem-solving thinking: "She took this statement as a problem solving approach where she needed to find facts without blaming anyone," (18/02) and expresses curiosity, "I also wish to know if that step did bring changes and solution to the pre-existing problem."

10/04 – asks thought provoking questions – "I asked the doctor who was doing VCT "How reliable was the rapid test kit" he was using." 24/04 – summarises an incident neatly, evidence of her ability to think critically. "I was pleased by the way this sister advocated for that patient because the next patients for procedure were done without any problem."

Ditto for the 29 April when she writes: "A person must carefully think what is it that he want the union do for him."

More evidence of challenging behaviour is to be found in the 12/06 diary entry. Quotes reputable sources to substantiate her arguments – "(Booyes, 1996:48)." 28/08 – brings in an awareness of theories of change management to help her deal with a big change in her professional life. "Then I concluded that my managers did not realise that even planned change can result to different emotional react and not to mention if unfreezing phases was not introduced."

Nandi herself is very positive about the benefits of the academic course for her. 21/10 – "Learning about critical thinking in management course has been of great benefit to me. It made my social and work lives easily manageable. It is a tool that everybody needs to have especially the managers."

11.10.15 Critiquer support (Sarah, critical reader)

"Yes, the critiquer has demonstrated support of student growth in critical reflective thinking through her critique. She asks pertinent questions designed to promote critical thinking. For instance, she observes that Nandi's responses tend to be general rather than specific. Thus, in diary entry 12/02 – she tries to bring Nandi's awareness to the personal, "What if it was one of your family members? What about a balance?"

She is encouraging and positive, "Very good start Nandi!" However she also asks Nandi to apply lessons learned personally at a general level. See 13/02 – "What are the implications of this situation and your reflection for your own nursing practice?"

Maureen's questions demonstrate an understanding of midwifery that means she is on a level with Nandi – 6/03 "What do you know about false pregnancies? Why was the woman bleeding? Why hadn't the woman attended AN clinic? How did the woman cope afterwards – what kind of support would she have needed?"

However, as Maureen herself notes, sometimes the issues she notices in Nandi's writing she does not challenge her on – i.e. 27 March, "Perhaps if she had addressed this, it would have added to a more appropriate analysis of the problem, allowing for a more creative solution. I see that I have not challenged her on this either."

I think Maureen is more critical of Nandi's thinking in her notes to herself than she is to Nandi. This might be tactful and supportive, but sometimes constructive criticism and prompting can be a great help. On the 7/08 Maureen writes "A horrific situation made even more horrific for me because of the understated way in which it was written. Nandi writes about the situation in terms of the facts and the process but the emotion is missing." But to Nandi she only asks, "Is there a better or safer method of organisation that could be used? Had this happened before? What is the lesson learned for you?" She should perhaps have asked Nandi how she felt about the abduction?

She does give credit where credit is due though. "I am very proud of you – this was a very good reflexive process – and you integrated your theory on your own situation. Well done!" (28/08). Very encouraging and supportive, "I look forward to following your progress in future – and will always be interested in what you are doing." (9/10)"

11.10.16 **Themes** As identified by Sarah (critical reader):

“Empathy

Nandi shows empathy towards another nurse – 13/02 – “I think everything happen so fast that she though how she can save the baby’s life but unfortunately for her she cut the baby’s scalp.”

Maureen shows empathy for Nandi – 28/08 – “What a shock for you, Nandi!”

Constructive criticism

12/02 – Maureen tries to get Nandi thinking in a multilogical way, “Nandi – your questions are valid – but perhaps you might take into account the fact that this is a club donating funding.”

Authenticity

Both Nandi and Maureen bring in their own emotions to their work situations. Nandi, in particular learns to be emotionally more expressive, “I felt angry, frustrated and annoyed, because nothing was said to us when we left in the morning.” (28/8)

Positive Reinforcement

Maureen encourages Nandi in her journey towards critical thinking. Very encouraging and supportive, “I look forward to following your progress in future – and will always be interested in what you are doing.” (9/10)

Critical Thinking

Nandi’s: 21/10 – “The ability to analyse issues and form judgement, find solution and evaluate conclusions are learnt by using critical and reflexive thinking. This skill covers almost all what a manager should possess. These include conflict management, problem solving, assertiveness and

motivation to name but a few... Since I started learning about it and writing my diaries I easily came to understanding of some behaviours and situation. I have reflected this in some of my diaries.”

Maureen's: I found Maureen's writing on the process of transformation fascinating (27/03) and wondered how it would be if she shared that (perhaps more simply phrased) with Nandi – to help Nandi come to terms with the rapid transformation of the SA health system to a Batho Pelo model?

11.10.17 Nandi's Self-Evaluation

“21 OCTOBER 2003

DIARY ENTRY 19

CRITICAL THINKING AND MANAGEMENT

Learning about critical thinking in management course has been of great benefit to me. It made my social and work lives easily manageable. It is a tool that everybody needs to have especially the managers.

After learning about this skill I tried to use and it helped in improving my personal relationship with others because I have the understanding of their performances and behaviour. The skill helped me in providing more productive ways of organizing my work and personal life effectively.

I have no doubt that a manager with this skill can unconsciously be an effective motivator to staff or subordinates. The ability to analyse issues and form judgement, find solution and evaluate conclusions are learnt by using critical and reflective thinking. This skill covers almost all what a manager should possess. These include conflict management, problem solving, assertiveness and motivation to name but a few.

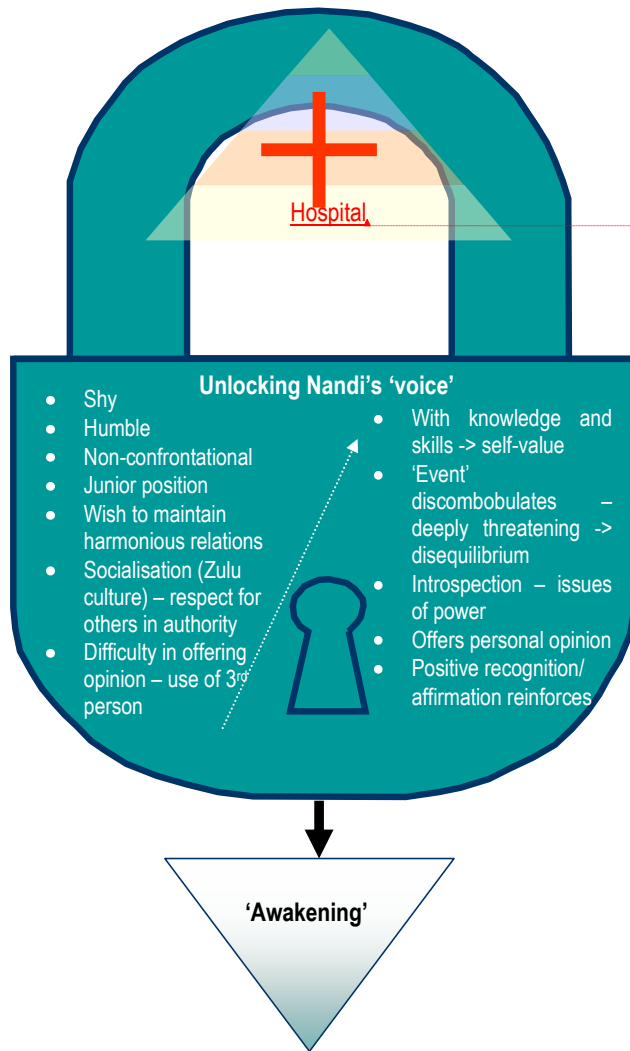
Since I started learning about it and writing my diaries I easily came to understanding of some behaviours and situation. I have reflected this in some of my diaries."

11.10.18 Conclusion

Nandi has encapsulated the purpose of her diary and how she has structured her diary entries. It has been heartening as Nandi's facilitator, to see how she has taken knowledge gained and skills developed in class, and both consciously (and as she notes) unconsciously used in her practice setting. She has gained in confidence and developed an awareness of her own strength and power and used the reflective process increasingly as an introspective tool for self-understanding. As a facilitator, I recognise the changes that have occurred during this learning process and as a researcher, (albeit a very subjective one, strongly bound to the subject as her teacher), I have tried to interpret Nandi's learning process. My subjectivity is both hindering (in that I have biases and can be blinded by these biases) but it also allows me to engage deeply with the process and express my understanding in ways that might not be possible had I not been part of this process. I have tried to use a variety of data to support or refute my interpretation, and I think it is only appropriate to include the student's 'voice' as an authentic interpreter of the data as well. I see this entry as a valuable contribution to my interpretations.

To answer the question: Has Nandi grown in her personal, academic and professional capacity?

I don't think that there are dramatic changes, but Nandi has grown. Her 'voice' becomes stronger and she has become more self-assured. The issues that concern her are relevant and she has moved out of the passive role to taking a more directive stand, in both her learning and her work - and has integrated both.



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Figure 11.8 Unlocking Nandi's 'voice'

11.11 CONCLUDING REMARKS

11.11.1 Lessons learned

Surbeck et al. (1991) described the processes involved in journaling in Chapter Ten, Section 10.1.2.3 (reaction, elaboration and contemplation), and in general, these reflect similar processes experienced by these eight students. Perhaps because of their profession (nursing, reflecting the kind of scenarios where life-death issues are a daily aspect of a nurse's practice), perhaps because of the ethical and moral foundation of their profession, perhaps because of their stage of development (these students were not neophytes) or perhaps because of the guidance (critiquing, question prompt, criteria for journaling, group support, class discussions) or perhaps because of an amalgam of these factors, most of these students either moved into the contemplative stage or continued within this phase, unlike the teaching students in Surbeck et al.'s (1991) study.

I would suggest that the focal question posed to the students: "How does this reflection relate to your nursing practice?" was instrumental in moving the student beyond the descriptive phase. I would also suggest that including a section on news articles and journal articles not only gave students permission to move beyond the particular but in fact encouraged more global considerations of issues beyond the immediacy of their personal practice, supporting the double-loop learning explained in Chapter Four, Section 4.6.4.2.1. All students addressed the HIV AIDS issue from multiple perspectives and most of the students addressed issues affecting their profession e.g. migration of nurses or the various acts impacting on practice e.g. the Pharmacy Act. A number of students moved beyond their professional interests to discuss other issues, for example, poverty alleviation or environmental or political concerns, reflecting issues current of the time. It was also clear that, in general, students developed their reflective skills to consideration of alternative perspectives, to try and arrive at more balanced perspectives.

Additionally, although I did not choose to include very much on students' use of journal article analysis in the final presentation (although this is available in the raw data analysis on CD-rom), this component was extremely useful as it ensured that students were in fact connecting theory to practice. They had to do this in a personal way relating to their own specific practice as again, they had to answer the question 'How do your reflections or your analysis of this article apply to your nursing practice?' Through this component, as well as in their personal reflections, both the interests, needs and specific discipline within nursing are explored. It is very easy to tell which student is specializing in which discipline, even if they are discussing management related issues, as they are integrating all components within their journal. It is also the area where it is easier to identify and support critical thinking, as it is familiar to both student and myself as it fits more easily with academic 'norms'.

The issues discussed by the eight journaling students reflected congruence in that they can be demarcated into personal, professional and discipline related areas. In general, students chose to reflect on issues that (a) interested them and (b) concerned them. For example, issues around power - be it related to gender, hierarchical structures, client advocacy or personal rights - were common. It was notable, that those students with more world experience (and had probably more authority and power over their own actions e.g. Carol, Lea, Xolisi, Jena and Janet) tended to grapple with issues related to power over others, whereas the younger students (Nandi, Liseko and Reeve) had less control over external power systems, and tried to develop understanding and a way of coping in situations where their control was limited.

The eight student journals were written by students from three different race groups and six different ethnic groups. In most of the journals, the cultural backgrounds, gender, age and

professional experience of these students was reflected to a lesser or greater degree. For someone like myself, from a different cultural background to the majority of my students, these journals allow me an insight and understanding of these areas that would be difficult to access in normal classroom contact or academic assignments. This in turn allows me opportunities to understand and respect student practice which is not necessarily in line with theoretical standards and so learn to appreciate where practice can drive theory, rather than arbitrarily dismiss this as not 'fitting' in with normal practice.

Generally speaking, it is fairly easy to identify that most of the students underwent their reflective journey as categorized and explained by Glaze, (2002) in Figure 10.1. Although these categories are listed in Chapter Seven, in section 7.3 the essence of similar journeys is expressed by the students. It is clear to see in nearly all the journals that students are shocked at the initial stages and experience difficulties in their struggle to come to grips with both the writing and the demands of the process. One might also note that as empathetic-critiquer, I was gentlest and most supportive in these early stages. I felt very much like a mother teaching her child to ride his first bicycle "You can do it, you can do it. You are wonderful. You have the ability..." As the students moved into an acceptance mode and started making connections, the questioning became more probing although the motivation and support were there. In those early stages, I made sure that we used classroom and tutorial time to share entries and further discussion. I did ask permission from individual students to comment on a specific entry. If it was refused, I moved on gracefully, however, I was careful in those early stages not to bring to class entries that were highly personal or had the potential for embarrassment. In this way, I would recognise work that students were doing in their journals through formal acknowledgement in class. I reminded students about the questioning prompt and at intermittent stages within the course, I included further readings on critical reflective thinking and

journaling. After the first term, I would then start encouraging students to start sharing entries on the web. By this time, they had settled down and generally, were comfortable with each other. Both writing and typing skills started to improve, and in general, there was a shift in the fluidity and ease of expression that did increase as the journaling process proceeded. Obviously, this was more notable with some students than with others – and a good example is Reeva's writing. The type of writing modes seen in most of the journals included the descriptive, cathartic and reflective modes as described in Chapter Three, Section 3.14.4.3. Students such as Carol openly recognised when they were in the cathartic mode. In general, the descriptive modes were seen more frequently in the early stages of journaling and then usually, as an introduction of context for further entries. From these eight journals, it is clear that there were multiple reasons for writing entries, and each of Auerbach's (1999) categories see reflection to some degree or other in each of the journals

- writing to express the self and make meaning out of the experience;
- writing for affirmation – here the student writes to develop approaches such as the narrative, expression of factual matters and to persuade – and try to conform to the genre of reflective writing or the more formal style required in the journal article analysis;
- writing for social change, where important social issues are explored to try and bring about a change and improvement in lifestyle.

In Chapter Seven, section 7.3.6 reflects the value students placed on reflective journaling, and as the facilitator of this process, I would support their perceptions. Additionally, however, I have seen the reflective journal as a place where it was possible to 'see' the character of the student and to identify her moral and ethical stance. Reflective tutorials, to a degree, also allowed this perspective, but had this been a 'normal' classroom with usual activities for assessment (e.g. tests

and assignments), this would not have been so easy to determine. Because the journal was process driven, the reader can observe the thoughts and feelings (and to a degree, the behaviour) of students over a long term, and so it becomes difficult to 'hide' behind an assignment, where academic criteria frequently drive the process.

It should be remembered that these students worked in diverse health care settings in locations both near and far. An added advantage to the reflective journal from an educator's perspective was that, through the lens of the journal, I was able to 'visit' the student's place of practice and 'see' how they worked. The reflective journal allowed an in-depth understanding of both the student and her practice.

The self-evaluation process was particularly effective, as it was within this process that the student identified the kind of thinking and learning that had taken place over the academic year, and had to both place a value on this process, as well as a justification for the value. This issue is addressed in Chapter Seven, Section 7.3.6.

From a constructivist perspective, the student has determined the what, where, when and how in the thinking and writing process, as can be seen from the very individual journals which have been presented.

As Jane (critical reader) so succinctly observes **"This is a shallow appreciation of women of considerable worth and capability."**

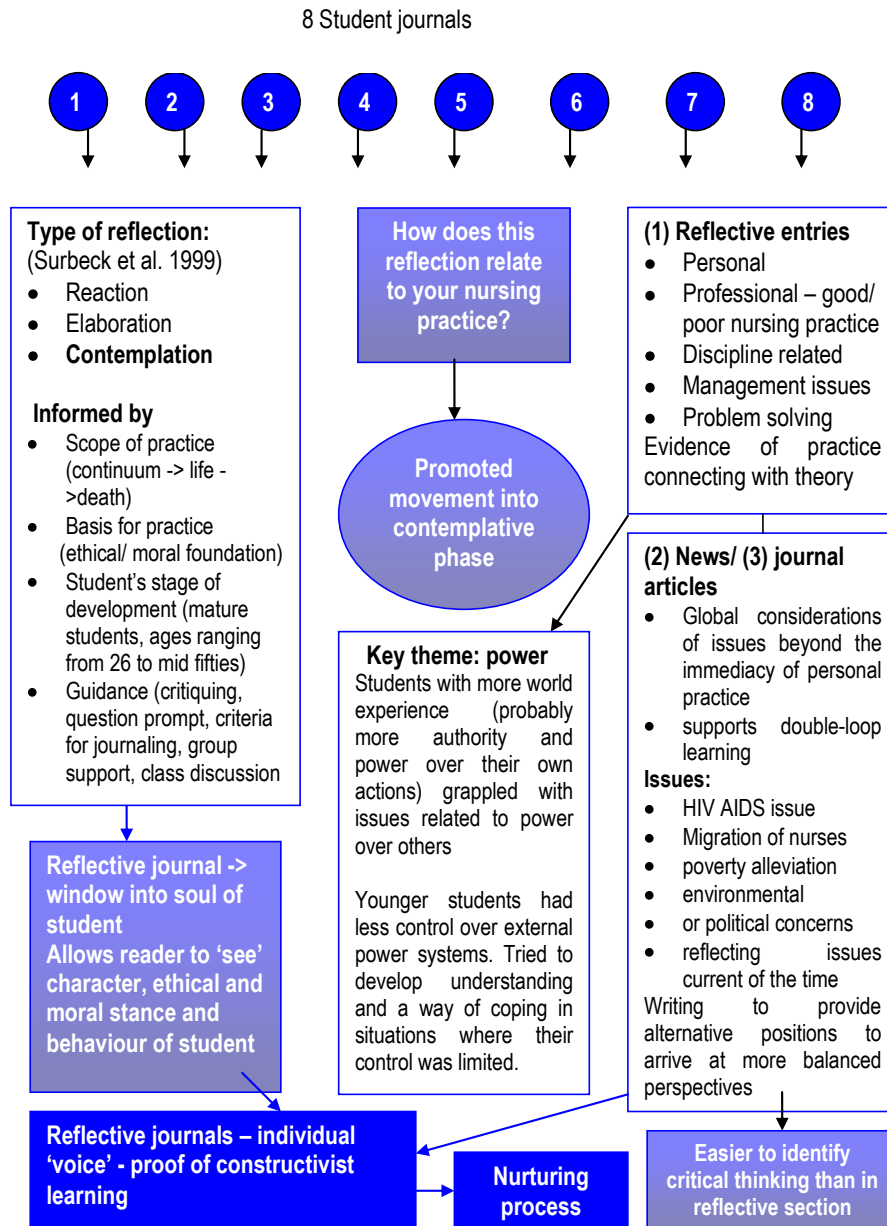


Figure 11.10 Some lessons learned from text of 8 students' reflective journals

11.11.2 Overview of the process (critical readers)

This chapter has comprised a composite of different 'voices' and so it seems only appropriate to conclude this section with a general overview of the process by Mari (critical reader).

11.11.2.1

Mari Pete "General Comments

It is an honour to have been part of the journeys of these students and their lecturer. It has left me feeling humble to have learnt how caregivers who do nursing management work under the most challenging circumstances, develop coping strategies – often through hope, spirituality, humour and creativity. These are some of the themes that run through these diaries. Hope, because in the midst of despair and even horror in some cases (I was shocked to tears by many of the anecdotes) these nurses display compassion, courage and generosity of spirit on a daily basis. To be a witness to the courage and growth of these students, and to read the intimate thoughts and feelings expressed in their diaries, is a privilege.

Lecturer/ Researcher support of student growth process

On the point of interaction, the researcher's *questions* posed to students often remained unanswered in most journals, but student Lea in diary 7 chooses to engage and student Reeva in diary 8 also reflects explicitly on input given by the researcher. Even though there is largely not a sense of dialogue present in the journals, given the fact that all students grew in some respect, the constant questions are likely to have directed this growth process.

The researcher analysed all learners' *reflections* in great depth, and from various angles.

Throughout the researcher gave credit to students' point of view and demonstrated an understanding of their individual backgrounds (cultural, personal and professional) and she showed an awareness of their strengths and limitations. The researcher is also aware of her own cultural bias: "I recognise that most of my viewing and reading is based on western material that doesn't hold the appeal or relevance for many of my students, and so am more selective and cautious about this inclusion."

There are also many instances where the researcher indicated her own growth, by being open to learn from her students: "On reflection it (journaling) is a nurturing process. I don't know that I appreciated this notion before."

Van Aswegen says: "Without commitment and encouragement the reflective practitioner may become increasingly stressed." I was deeply moved by the lecturer/researcher's compassion for each student, her gentle prodding and immovable support. It is clear throughout that it is this safe space which enabled students to open up, share and grow. It is through the balance between critique and support that she builds a foundation for her own and her students' reflective practice (see diaries for specific examples.) It was particularly moving to see Student Nandi in Diary 6 gradually opened up and sharing some of her learning curve in assertiveness with the researcher.

I found the researcher's reflection (from Diary 5, Liseko, quoted below) particularly insightful and I think it speaks for itself about her focus on empowering her students, yet doing this in a sensitive way:

"I sense Liseko's feelings of powerlessness. I am always concerned about directing a course of action for students, unless they specifically ask my advice. I prefer to look at potential implications and try to elicit possible options, but I am also aware that many of the situations within which these nurses work, is fraught with potential difficulties, or masked by hidden agendas not easily apparent to myself. Most of the decisions I make for myself are based on a context, affected by my awareness of the nuances and complexities of the situation and those involved. Much as I try to deliberately empathise with the student and the scenario, I am also aware that it is the student who will have to live with the consequences of her actions. There are situations where I am willing to risk much, but that does not mean that the student will have similar feelings or values, or that I should think less of the student as a result of this. I can only try to understand and facilitate a realization of potential behaviour consequences. I can see by my questions that I was concerned about Liseko's dilemma hence my proposal to discuss this with her Nursing Association (DENOSA) and with her peers. I find it very hard not to jump up and down and 'do' something when I read this story. It only makes me all the more determined to focus on empowering students and constantly honing in on and challenging their (and my) moral values."

In conclusion to this section, my answer would be yes, for each of the students the researcher demonstrated *“support of student growth in critical reflective thinking through her critique and provided evidence as a transformative education in terms of Van Aswegen’s (1998) concept of the educator as an agent of transformative learning through the promotion of critical reflective thinking.”*

I have given specific examples in each of the diaries.

In some diaries the researcher engaged to a lesser degree with the students than in others, but through the in-depth reflections the researcher displayed sensitivity and self-critique, making it clear that she is holding back for specific reasons (e.g. diary 3 Student Jena – the student would not have coped with a further debate on abortions, and diary 4 student Janet – the researcher is aware of professional boundaries when the student goes through the trauma of her son’s illness.)

Limitations

I wish to express an awareness of the following factors which limit my ability to comment:

The diaries are not assignments, and can therefore not be assessed in the same way.

Students’ reflections were influenced by their choice of topic, their mood and the time they had available to fit in the diary entries amongst their commitments to work, families and studies.

Students also had the freedom to choose to which degree they wanted to pursue an issue, and not unpacking a problem in detail does not necessarily mean that a student is not capable of doing so.

The researcher chose a selection of entries for my perusal from each student’s diary, and not having been part of the full scope, and the bigger picture of other interactions (class discussions and assignments) my comments of their development are obviously limited to that selection.

As mentioned before, the researcher analysed learner *reflections* in great depth, and from various angles, in a way that is only possible for someone with specialist knowledge, who is intimately

connected to her students. The researcher was able to fill in gaps in my knowledge through her face-to-face interactions with students.

While recognizing that my perspective adds to the richness of this qualitative study, to comment on whether a particular student was unpacking a problem in the “right” way without knowledge of the issues and politics of the nursing environment was not always possible. I fully echo the researcher’s reflection on her own role in Diary 6 (Nandi): “My subjectivity is both hindering (in that I have biases and can be blinded by these biases) but it also allows me to engage deeply with the process and express my understanding in ways that might not be possible had I not been part of this process.” After having been through this process I can see clearly that this is indeed the case.

It was initially more difficult for me to find evidence of growth in critical, creative thinking for those students whose first language is not English, since written language ability is so closely tied up with the ability to reason in writing. Diaries 5 (Liseko) and 6 (Nandi) were particularly difficult in this respect. Perhaps my surface knowledge of issues made it more difficult to understand what students meant, since I was lacking the context which the researcher has. Much of the context was explained, though, by the researcher, which helped a lot, and as I continued to immerse myself in these diaries, it became easier.

In doing this analysis I was extremely aware of steering clear from making surface “judgements” of students’ abilities or characters, yet, not having the skills of a psychologist, I am unsure of whether I have managed in this respect. I am also concerned that, as an outsider, I am likely to make superficial comments on the lives and development of compassionate caregivers who work under the most difficult circumstances.

Method followed to look at growth

Initial approach

As requested, I first read the student entries without reading the researcher’s reflections, after which I tabled examples of characteristics of a critical, reflective thinker, pertaining to student growth. This initial process was to “get a handle” on critical reflective thinking processes

specifically in terms of Van Aswegen's definition. Then I read the researcher's reflections, and tabled examples for the second question pertaining to the lecturer/researcher's facilitation of the growth process. I then re-read the diaries holistically, to write down further observations and overall comments.

Later approach

In some cases reading the journal entries without the researcher's reflections did not work at all, as it resulted in a fragmented picture. I therefore began to draw on the researcher's comments from the start, to develop an understanding of the scenarios and arguments.

There were a few reasons for this. In some cases the researcher provided the context and background information which allowed me to understand cryptic reflections that did not make sense on their own. This was particularly useful where students' language abilities made it difficult to follow their arguments. Articles that students commented on were not always included, which made it more difficult to understand arguments and assess students' critical thinking skills without referring to the researcher's contextual information.

Growth

As I understood it, my role was to find evidence of student growth in a specific context, namely as defined by Van Aswegen. To "get a handle" on this, to be able to "correlate" the diaries' content with Van Aswegen, I have chosen largely to respond with quotes from the diaries. It is very difficult to write generally in response to very specific guidelines, i.e. growth in general is not what the researcher is looking for, but rather growth in terms of Van Aswegen's model. I felt overall that the quotes, as I plotted them next to the Van Aswegen model, speak for themselves.

Therefore the tables offer specific examples that correlate with Van Aswegen's definition. I found it difficult not to raise growth in a broader sense – the introductory paragraphs before the table comment on growth in more general terms.

As I went along it became increasingly difficult to separate out, and comment separately on, growth in personal, academic and professional areas. Since the students are mostly in management

positions, and they study Nursing Management, it is often difficult to make this distinction. Not many of them revealed their personal lives or commented separately on their personal, academic and professional identities. In the journal reflections, these aspects were often woven together closely and difficult to separate out. Many spoke implicitly of their values, by the kinds of issues they chose to raise in their diaries. I feel one can assume that growth in one area will impact on the other.

The pattern that seems to have emerged

1) Processing

For all students the diaries seem to have provided a space for **processing** their hectic (I can find no other word for it) lives, and the constant crises within which they have to take on a leadership role. A place for prioritising and making sense of juggling their various roles as parents, professionals, students, and human beings.

2) Display of critical thinking skills

It seems that, in some cases, the diaries were an opportunity to make evident the student's **ability to reflect critically**. In these cases it was easy to find examples of qualities of a critical, reflective thinker, but more difficult to prove that these skills were developed during the time of journaling.

3) Cementing existing values and principles

In other cases it seems that the diaries facilitated a process of **cementing of ideas and principles** (Swiss student).

4) Change

And in some cases **significant change and growth** was evident *during* the period of journaling (Diary 6, Nandi).

5) A continuum

Having said the above, as I go through the diaries again, I am realising it is as if the students enter this process on different positions of a continuum or sliding scale, in terms of their critical thinking skills. Some enter bewildered, wide-eyed and inexperienced (diary 5, Liseko& 6, Nandi) and grow more obviously, while others enter with more life experience, and grow in other areas perhaps not so obvious at first sight (diary 4, Janet).

Section C: Would I consider this framework appropriate for analysing the student's reflective journal?

Considering the student growth overall in this process, my answer is yes, the framework seems appropriate, provided that the person who journeys with the students is closely connected to them, and that there is a strong sense of trust, as modeled by the researcher in this journaling process.

The researcher's method is underpinned by a multi-faceted theoretical base (see Van Aswegen's definitions; critiquer questioning techniques on various levels; analysis of identities). She has clearly steered clear from a technocratic approach and the methods followed are focused on holistic development and student emancipation.

Timing of interactions:

How difficult was it to reply to students timeously, before they wrote their next entry, and was it important to send back questions and responses before they proceeded to their next entry? What influence did this have on the process?

Format:

It was sometimes difficult to follow the conversations due to the format of the journals. (I assume these were email based). There seemed to be missing pieces – the flow and logic was sometimes interrupted so that one had difficulty in following the dialogue. A one-on-one threaded discussion tool (not a group tool such as the Web CT discussion tool) might have been an aid in this respect.

This is only a minor and practical comment. The researcher's work being such a dense and thorough analysis, on a deep, theoretical level it is difficult to point out any gaps" (Marie, critical reader.)

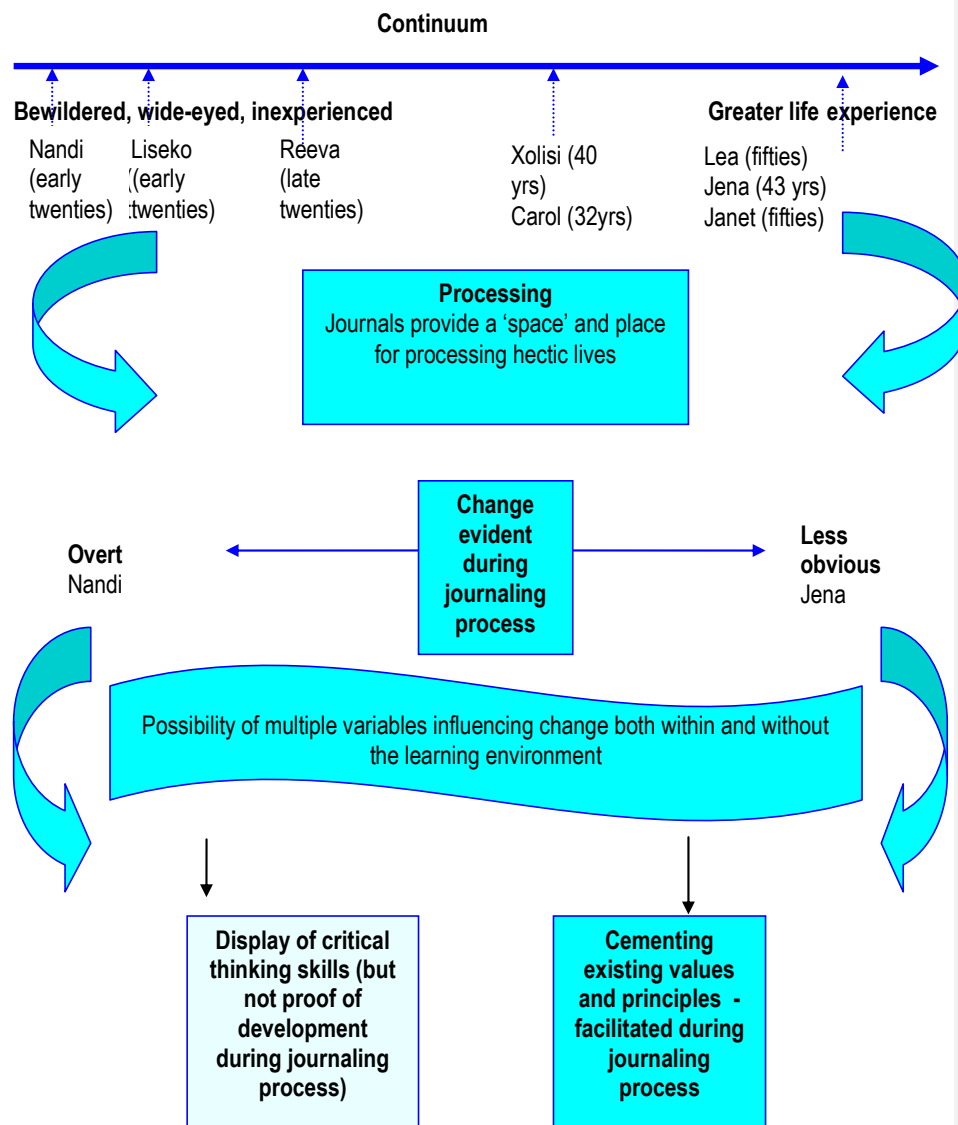
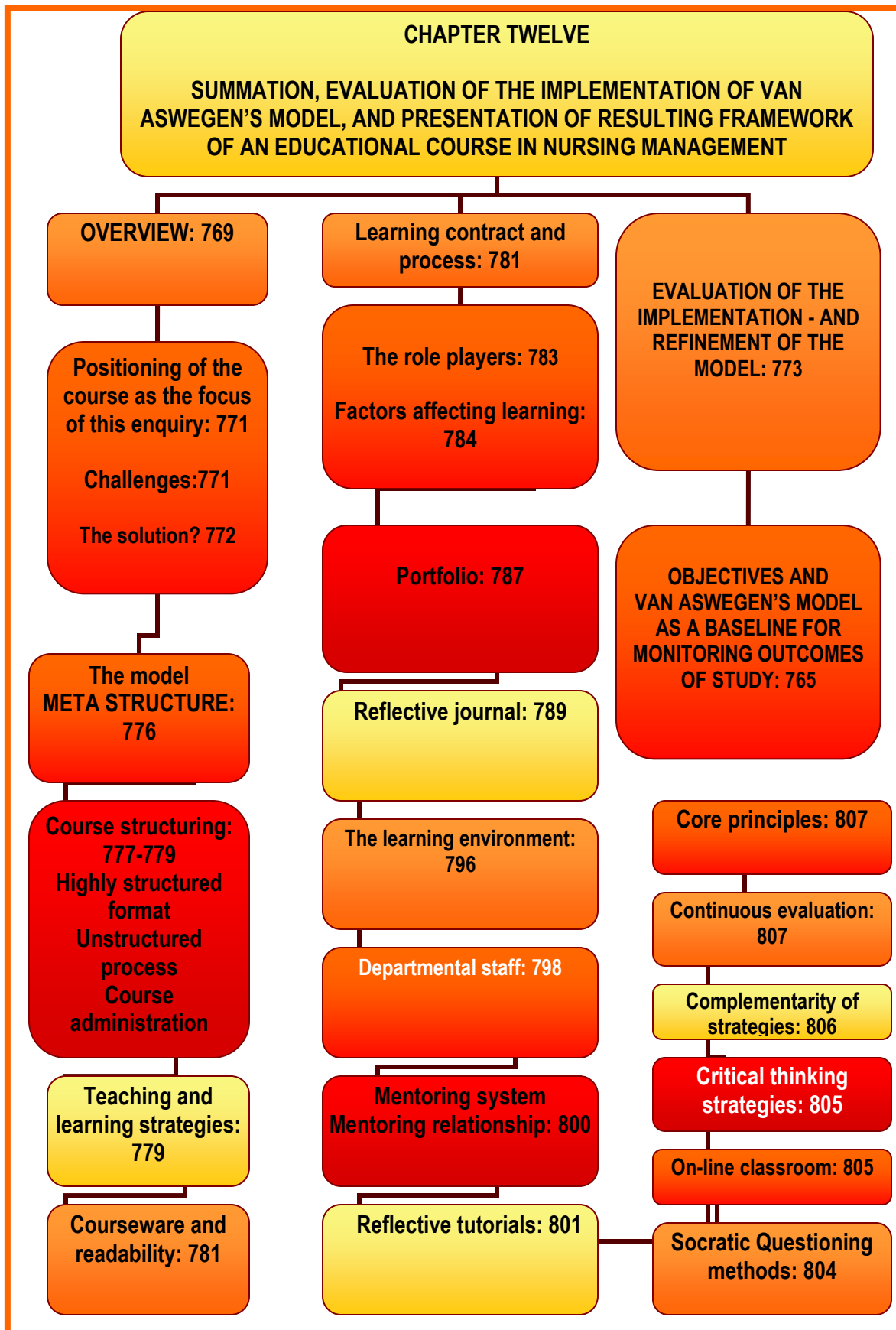


Figure 11.9 Patterns emerging through analysis of 8 students' reflective journals
(based on Mari Pete's (critical reader) observations)

11.11.3 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to monitor the personal, professional and academic growth and development of eight students through their reflective journals. This growth and development through critical reflective practice is underscored by the study objectives 1, 2 and 4 in Chapter Four, Section 4.11 and I would suggest that these have been satisfactorily addressed. More than this though: The value of these narratives is that they represent the everyday lives as witnessed by these nurses and allow their nursing practice to be made visible. It enables the reader to view the issues current at a point in time and also uncovers the vulnerability of nurses as practitioners and health care managers practicing with care or making mistakes, thereby allowing opportunities to value or improve on practice. If used appropriately, these narratives can inform social policy or organisational change. They allow all students to have a 'voice' and as educator, they allow me to focus on managing diversity through understanding. But more than this, these narratives can renew pride and hope in nursing as a profession.



CHAPTER TWELVE

SUMMATION, EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF VAN ASWEGEN'S MODEL, AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTING FRAMEWORK OF AN EDUCATIONAL COURSE IN NURSING MANAGEMENT

12.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to draw together the components of the study in order to formulate a comprehensive overview of a model of critical reflective practice that has been interpreted through a course and to evaluate whether or not this interpretation is successful, and whether this model has in fact supported critical reflective practice. The main findings from the chapters dealing with data analysis will be summarised in the light of this intention. Van Aswegen's model will then be considered for adaptation, adoption or refinement in terms of these findings.

12.1.1 The final argument

Perhaps some of the central arguments of this thesis can be found in response to the following questions:

- **What are the key principles that support self-directed and adult learning and what are the key arguments against them as supported in the research literature?**

It would seem from Chapter 3, Section 3.2 that adult learners should be self-directed as adults learn when they are motivated and when learning meets their needs and interests. Learning is more effective when it is life-centred rather than content oriented. Readiness to learn is influenced by the need to know or accomplish something. Adults prefer to learn by doing and to have an experience-base that serves as a resource for their learning. Additionally, they are motivated by

self-esteem needs, the need for recognition and self-actualization, and by the desire for a better quality of life. It would be foolish, however, to assume that because adults display these characteristics, that it automatically follows that they would prefer their learning to be self-directed. In a study undertaken by Sadler-Smith, Allinson and Hayes (2006) on 127 personnel practitioners at the UK's Institute of Personnel and Development (IPD), respondents preferred traditional and work based methods of learning over self-directed methods.

Candy (1987: 172) in Sadler-Smith et al. (2006:241) however, made the following observations:

- “1. the preference for dependent methods may not be innate but is learned in an educational system which fosters ‘teaching’ and ‘learned helplessness’;
2. any disinclination towards self-direction may be a temporary state of affairs in which intolerance may be ameliorated by education and the acquisition of particular types of ‘study skills’;
3. ‘some people are simply more independent than others, and this is a function of intelligence, personality *or some other innate quality or characteristic*’ (emphasis added)”.

Therefore, suggest Sadler-Smith et al. (2006:241), the preferences for the different ways of learning may vary “as a function of the innate characteristic of cognitive style”. In other words, different people prefer different styles, despite the commonality of characteristics linked to being an adult learner. This is not surprising considering that adult learners are a heterogeneous group. Wang and Sarbo (2004) suggest that these considerations can be overcome by educators taking into account the complexities, variability and differences presented by the learners and by focusing

on an understanding of their own personal philosophy of education, which, they suggest, should be situational and adapted according to the learners' needs, style, motivation and experience.

Mezirow (1997a) in Moore (2005:82) believes that ideally, for adult learners to thrive, they need to be given full access to information. Learning should be freely chosen and they should be provided with fair opportunities to engage in the different roles required in discourse. Critical reflective thinking should be encouraged and that learners themselves need to be empathic and open to the opinions of others. Additionally, they should be open to listening and "to search for common ground of a synthesis of different points of view, and willing to make a tentative best judgement to guide action".

- **How do these critical arguments impact upon an understanding of the van Aswegen model?**

To subscribe to the van Aswegen model, one would need to be a self-directed, adult learner. This requires commitment and high levels of motivation on the part of both the learner and the facilitator. This could be potentially difficult, given similar student demographics and characteristics as described in Section 1.7, Chapter One. With the result, a major portion of the facilitator's role would then need to focus on providing motivation, role modeling and support to enable students to engage in a potentially difficult, but ultimately deeply satisfying educational experience.

Van Aswegen's model is essentially idealistic and 'pure', contrasting starkly with the harsh and often ugly realities that pervade the average South African nurse's working world. Some nurses do not have the infrastructural, social or emotional supports needed to easily cross the ideal/pragmatic

divide partitioning the perfect from the real world of practice. As van Aswegen (1998) notes, the steps towards transformatory learning may prove dangerous and require personal courage. Dialectical thinking may offer too many ambiguities and contradictions, alternative truths and different world views (Merriam, 2004). So unless these students are supported, the path taken could easily deviate and prove to be destructive as the effort required might be perceived as being too much, and the venture into the unfamiliar, too daunting. Too many good nurses are lost to the 'burn-out' factor and to the slide into careless and seemingly unconcerned behaviour that epitomises the 'lost' or poor practitioner and unless carefully guided, may well avoid taking on the challenge towards deep learning. The choice of using this model is not an easy one as it is complex and demanding and does not provide simple formulae for application. It requires an environment conducive to learning, committed learners and educators, as well as time and space in which to develop the types of activities which promote reflective practice. It requires unfailing enthusiasm, continuous self-reflection and courage. This ultimately does place a strain on the resources of the institution, the department, the facilitator and even the learner. As can be seen, it is not for the faint of heart, nor is it the educational panacea for all learners or educators particularly when there are a number of 'easier' models available. But in terms of an integrated 'holistic' approach to a learning course where 'deep' learning is valued, it is the obvious choice.

- **What are the key critical arguments that arise from the data to support the use of van Aswegen's model?**

Clearly, introspection through the various mediums opens students to possibilities. The most exciting of these is the idea of valuing the self through self-acknowledgement and the realisation of the ability to participate in the determination of one's own life direction. The constructivist approach

to learning opens up the possibilities of the value of self-directed learning, where learning can take place at the students' own pace and time. The exciting concepts of creativity and flexibility encourages students to seize opportunities to learn in their own work environment, and often inspires students to move beyond the requirements of the curriculum, and so take ownership of their own learning. Moore (2006:89) describes an interview with the president of Brown University, Ruth Simmons in 2001. Fittingly, she recognized that the goal of the university was not just to get a job but rather "that education is about transforming your soul".

- **Are there a set of principles that can be synthesized and summarised from the key findings from the study?**

A study such as this must provide a structure and sets of principles to serve as a way forward for others who wish to tread the same path. In order not to be repetitive, principles identified in the study have been cross-referenced where necessary in the theoretical constructs depicted throughout section 12.5.

12.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study focused specifically on thinking and learning, factors which ultimately were central to the study. At this final stage of the study, it is worth revisiting the objectives of the research and summarizing where these have been addressed.

The objectives of the study were to:

1. **Trace the development of critical reflective thought within a context of a learning course of an educational programme.**

- This development did take place. It is clearly evident in my reflexive journal, where I have pondered and debated the learning processes of the students over a two-and a half year period. One of my final entries reflects on this change:

Reflexive journal: 12 September 2003

I have definitely noted a change in the journal responses and students' ability to complete other tasks (particularly amongst the black African students) this year -2003. It could be that as a group, they function better and at a higher level.

It could be the improvement in the orientation; the change in times (08h15-12h00 on Thursdays with tuts organised in the afternoon of the same day opposed to Friday afternoon classes - 14h00-17h00 with tuts on separate days); it could be the better organisation and return of course material and journals (there is a one week turnover, as opposed to a two or three week delay in response); it could be the regular Web CT class from 12h00 - 13h00 on class contact days, with students actively engaging in writing on-line journals and responding to each other.

In many ways, these 'open' entries seem to shape, to a degree, the responses from others in the class, by sparking ideas or by offering an opportunity to acknowledge each other in a safe way. Students, who might not normally speak to others in the class, now had a forum to do so. The power of change is visibly removed from me as 'facilitator' or 'teacher'. Initially, I would ask a few questions or make some comments - but I have stayed out of these discussions almost completely after the first month or so - although I read them all. Initially, students would write about incidents they themselves had been involved in, where they or their families were personally affected. A number tended to be quite negative and the responses were mainly sympathetic and indicated that other students identified with the author's problem or pain.

The responses started to change with students offering advice or moving into the Socratic questioning mode. Two or three times, students have written about incidents, where they themselves have not featured in a positive light, and one or two students have taken it upon themselves to question their motives or actions or censure the behaviour. Some students have handed in some very good work in their tasks or have come across readings or issues that have interested me, and I have suggested that they might wish to share these with the group - and they have. We had an external lecturer who was exceptionally motivational and a number of the students wrote enthusiastically about his ability and value. I was able to share this with him and pass on some of these comments - as well as to the HOD. We had an on-line test and some students used the open classroom to express their apprehension or displeasure at this unfamiliar testing method.

These journal entries have now taken on a life of their own, which preclude my involvement - For me, this has been a means of empowering students but at the same time, I see that this has not taken away my power, but rather shifted me into another place, where I find myself at a parallel level rather than a vertical level to the students.

It could be the active support received from the departmental staff in promoting the journals as a means of critical reflective writing.

It could be that I am more comfortable with the process and this confidence might be rubbing off on the students. I am not sure. It could be one or all of these things.

What I am sure of, is that students' effort and involvement is much better.

- This development is observed and noted through student responses to a questionnaire in Chapter Six, Sections 6.5.2, 6.5.6, 6.5.7, 6.5.11, 6.5.14, 6.5.15.
- It is particularly evident in Chapter Seven, Section 7.3.6 which focuses on reflective journaling, and is valuable because the students themselves have identified *how* they have used this mode as a means of critical, reflective thinking.
- It is evidenced in linkages to other courses indicating that this process is fluid and not compartmentalised as noted in Chapter Eight, Section 8.3.1.1. In this same chapter, Section 8.3.1.5 resultant student growth is identified.
- It is recognised and considered by the staff in the department in Chapter Nine, Section 9.4.8.
- Also supporting this objective are the responses from the moderator's reports in Chapter Six, Section 6.3.

2. Analyze the development of the student's critical reflective thought in the light of van Aswegen's (1998) model in order to refine and adapt the model.

This includes the evidence acknowledged under Objective One above and summarised in Figures 12.1 to 12.22 and Table 7.8. The initial questionnaire was to establish a baseline and included demographic information as well as an identification of the students' perception of their learning styles and needs. It dealt with Objectives 1 and 2.

3. Identify enabling and inhibiting factors within a department of a higher education institution that would support or limit the use of such a model for the development of critical reflective practice.

- This was discussed as a prelude to the study in Chapter One, Section 1.4. In Chapter Five, Sections 5.4.2.1 to 5.4.2.16 describe these factors, and in Chapter Six, 6.2.1 to 6.2.12 reflects the students' perceptions of these factors.
 - In Chapter Seven, the whole of Sections 7.1. and 7.2 focus on the structuring of the journal and the critiquing process and includes the strategies that scaffold this learning process. Sections 7.3.6.17, 7.2.6.2 and 7.2.6.7 relate the students' perceptions of this scaffolding and some of the difficulties attached to lack of perceived support in 7.2.6.3. In Section 7.4.5, a focus group of second- language English speakers deliberate on their learning and the issues impacting on their learning. They discuss these factors mainly in terms of their reflective tutorial sessions, but also to some extent, in the light of their journals and class contact sessions.
 - In Chapter Eight, Section 8.1.3 describes the supportive structuring of reflective tutorials and Section 7.2.6.7 indicates the students' perception of the factors perceived to support or hinder critical reflective thinking
 - These factors supporting or limiting critical reflective thinking are evidenced in Chapter Nine, Sections 9.4.5, 9.4.6, 9.4.7, 9.4.7.2, and 9.4.9 through the interviews with staff members on their perceptions.
- 4. Monitor the process involved in reflective thinking evidenced from learning journals; reflective tutorial groups and staff reflections and whether reflective thought has an effect on the resulting perceived attitudes and behaviours of post-basic nursing students related to health care practice.**

- In Chapter Six, the moderator's reports (Section 6.3) link in with student questionnaires on course process, as well as with staff and reflexive journal input on course structure and process. Section 6.5.14 focuses on the effect of the reflections and tasks in terms of health care practices.
- Evidence of students' attitudes and values – the 'meat' of the thinking and perceptions of student learning - in the issues chosen for reflection. Chapter Seven in Section 7.3.6 clearly spells this out as does Chapter Eleven in each of the eight students' journals.
- In Chapter Eight, Figure 8.5: focuses on perceived factors within the student promoting reflection; perceived resultant positive attitudes and behaviours and perceived affects of the behaviour - (in the light of van Aswegen's model).
- In Chapter Nine, Table 9.5 identifies staff perceptions of the attitudes of students resulting from the critical reflective approach to teaching and learning.
- In Chapter Eleven, the self-evaluations of seven of the students reflect their perceptions of their attitudes towards their practice, and the analysis of each of the eight journals identifies the respective attitudes of each of the students.

The study objectives will be illustrated in the models following this section resulting in further models that augment van Aswegen's model. Each of the course components will be considered individually, highlighting key issues identified in the findings or my personal observations. To try and maintain flow and cohesiveness, each figure will be introduced with an explanation of how and where it connects within the course in the form of a brief narrative highlighting key issues and/or findings, some of which have been repeated from previous chapters and so noted in the numbering of the figures. Where appropriate, aspects of van Aswegen's model will be represented within the

graphical illustrations of the models. The same process will apply to the outlined research objectives represented as follows:



12.3 OVERVIEW

South African nurses are faced by a number of challenges seldom confronted by nurses in health systems in the better resourced western world (Industrial Health Research and the S.A. Municipal Union, 2005). As already noted in Chapter One, Section 1.7, the challenges faced in the Nursing Management IV course were:

- Limited contact sessions with students - 32 contact days over the academic year,
- Limited studying time for students due to work, family and community commitments,
- Distance and learning experience factors as students were dispersed across a wide variety of health services, practicing in different nursing disciplines and had different learning experiences. Although these averaged 6 years at tertiary level, this learning had taken place within a college-of-nursing context, where teaching historically focused on training and more traditional dependent learning strategies (Radebe, 2001).

These factors needed to be considered when supporting the student learning shift from dependence to independence; and the shift to a constructivist learning paradigm as opposed to the more traditional forms of teaching so as to encourage transformatory learning. The challenge was to offer a course that was meaningful to students, incorporating their current practice by promoting a continuous means of engaging in learning where the workplace is seen as their primary learning

setting and where classroom contact is used to facilitate this process. This was a study of such a course.

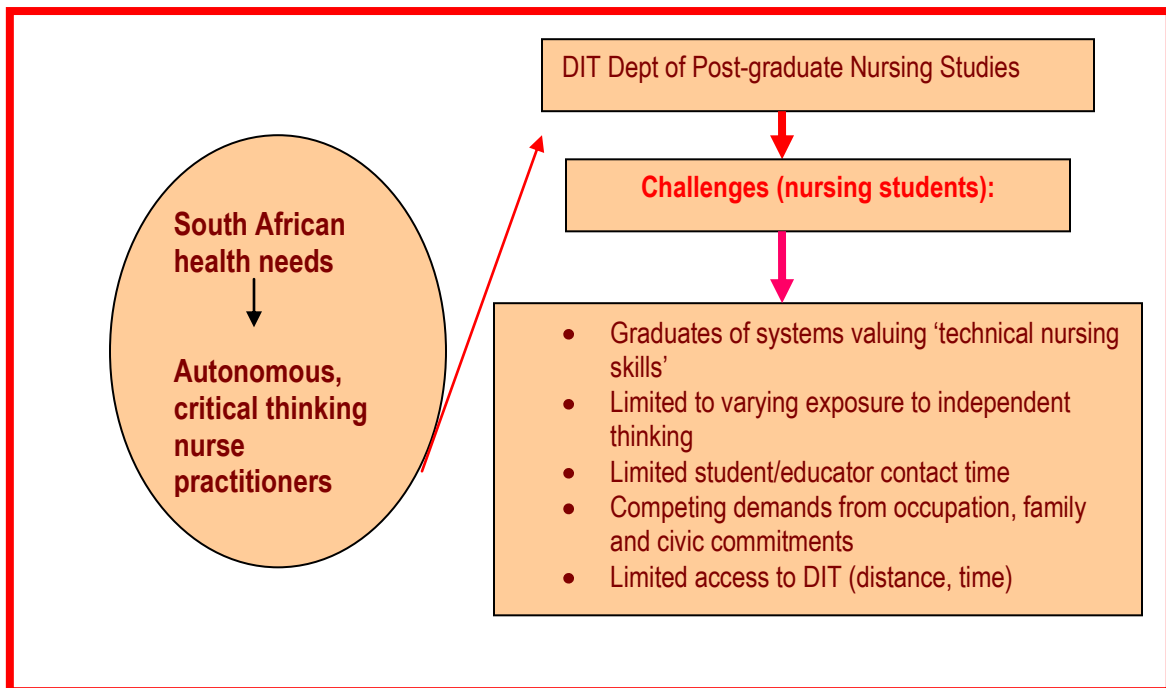


Figure 12.1 Challenges aligned with health service needs

To offer perspective, the following organogram illustrates the positioning of the course in question:

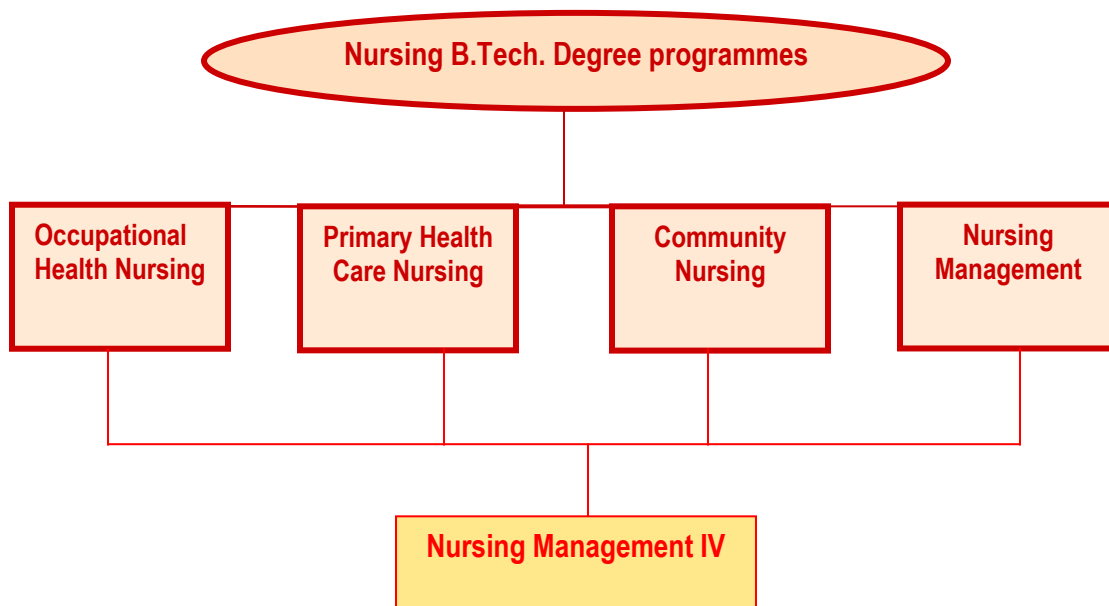


Figure 12.2 Positioning of the course as the focus of this enquiry



The solution?

The model

Van Aswegen's (1998) broad, conceptual model of critical reflective practice framed the research project (Figure 2.1 repeated below). The research project however, comprised the detailed design and implementation of a nursing management course that would facilitate transformatory learning. Utilisation of the model required openness to this approach to learning and students already to be working in the 'real' world so that the learning programme would meet their workplace learning practice needs. The intention of the model was to promote students' ability to think and learn critically and reflectively, drawing on different environments. The teaching and learning approach was multilayered and integrated. It focused on process, student-centred learning with a conceptualised, thematic approach to management activities and functioned within the students' workplace. This reality-based learning was enhanced by a variety of critical reflective learning strategies. The facilitator-learner relationship was built on negotiation and mutual respect and key teaching techniques were informed by adult learning principles and by a constructivist approach to teaching.

This model is again presented to remind the reader that this was the model used as a basis to flesh out not just a component of critical reflective practice, but an entire course, which is why this is such a lengthy thesis. The model is an idealistic one, and what this study presents is a realistic interpretation of this model, as illustrated in the following figures.

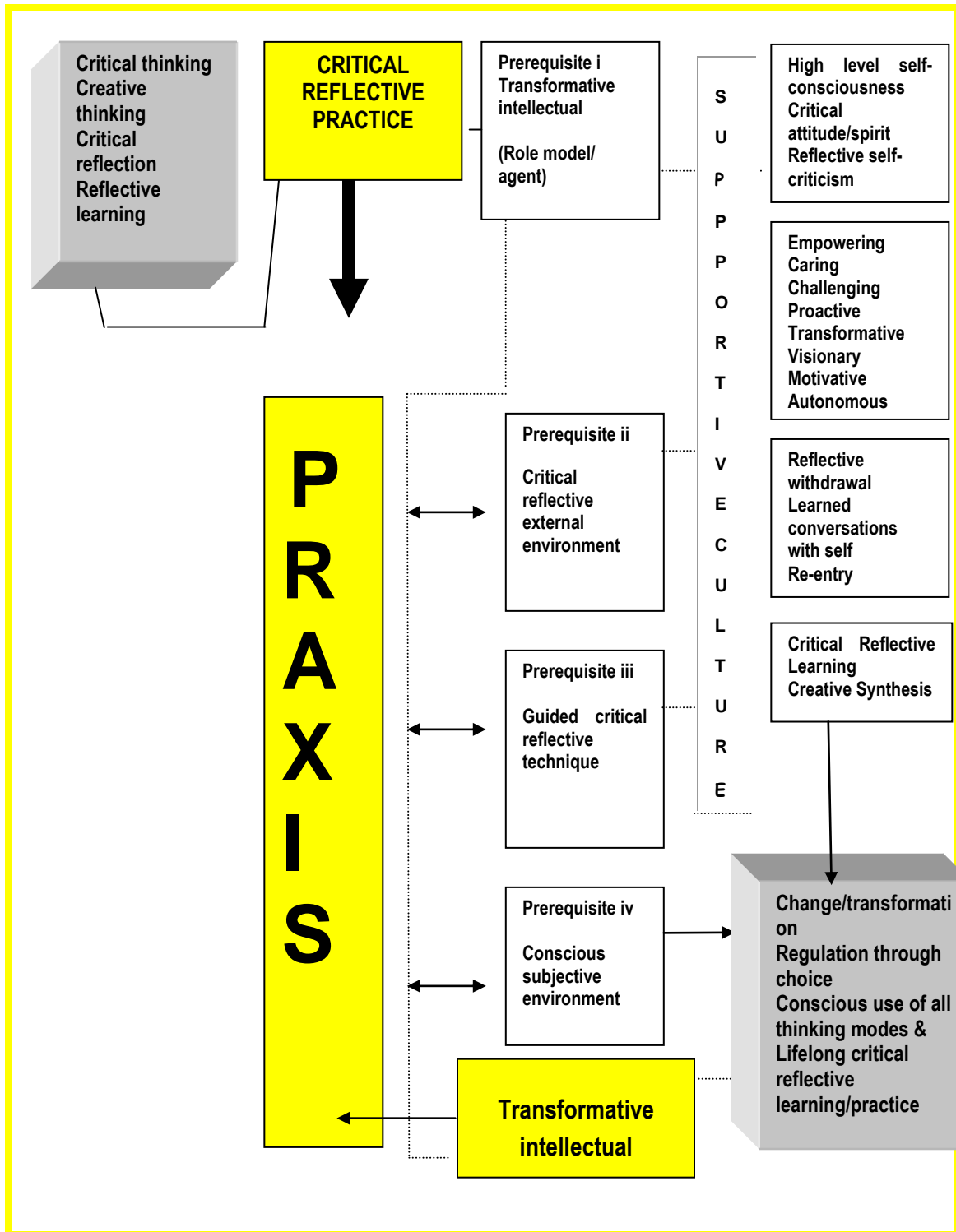


Figure 2.1: Van Aswegen's Model for facilitation of critical reflective practice and peer review of the constructed model (van Aswegen, 1998).

12.4 EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION - AND REFINEMENT OF THE MODEL

As an acid test for the implementation evaluation of the model, van Aswegen's concluding statements (below) can be used as a means of evaluating the use of the model. These have been used as a yardstick of measurement for monitoring the use of the model.

"The central focus of the model is a **transformative intellectual** (prerequisite 1), who within a **critical reflective external environment** (prerequisite 11) enables conscious use of **guided critical reflective techniques** (prerequisite 111), thus stimulating a conscious subjective internal environment (prerequisite 1V) in learners/ practitioners. The effect of the interaction between the four prerequisites in **critical reflective learning and creative synthesis**, resulting in **change/transformation** which enables fulfilment of the main purpose of the model, namely **lifelong critical reflective learning and practice (praxis)** – and a **transformative intellectual (critical reflective practitioner)** who takes responsibility for empowerment of others to become critical reflective and creative practitioners" (van Aswegen, 1998:392-393).

So in my research, I looked for the:

(1) Traits within students (in their reflective journals) that would denote the **transformative intellectual**. In critical reflective practice, the concepts are comprised within the following categories: critical thinking; creative thinking; critical reflection and reflective learning. The traits of such a critical reflective practitioner are mainly identified within the reflective tutorials and reflective journals and are dealt with in Objective One.

(2) **Critical reflective external environment:** This includes a description of factors affecting the student's learning environments – from macro to micro level from both the educational and the learner's perspective e.g. educational (Dept of Education; SANC; DIT; Dept of Post-graduate Nursing; B.Tech: Nursing programme; Nursing Management IV course) and learner's perspective (personal context; occupational context; home context; nursing context). The data sources for this component have included: reflexive/ reflective journals; focus group discussion; reflective tutorial discussions; reports, questionnaires; mid-year and course evaluations. This component also required a description of the learning course, its structure and approach in terms of both the students' and my perceptions. Objective Three relates to this component.

(3) **Guided critical reflective techniques:** This includes descriptions and comments through the techniques used for portfolios, reflective journals; mentors; Web CT; reflective tutorials; learning and teaching approaches. Data sources included my reflexive journal; students' reflective journal evaluations; questionnaires; mid-year and course evaluations; moderator comments and critiquing comments. These focused on guided reflection (critical thinking; creative thinking; critical reflection and reflective learning) and the factors facilitating/ limiting this process e.g. the learning methodology; mentorship; portfolios – journal, tasks, assignments; reflective tutorials; class discussions; workbooks; Web CT and work-based learning.

(4) **Lifelong critical reflective learning and practice (praxis):** The evidence of change is demonstrated in the students' reflective journals, reflective tutorial discussions, tasks, assignments and questionnaire responses and is supported by the analysis and the critical readers' independent comments.

(5) Transformative intellectual (critical reflective practitioner role model/agent): In my role as the educator, I would be viewed as the main change agent through my reflexive journal, the analysis of the critical readers (peer review) and students' perceptions of change through their responses to questionnaires, reflective tutorial discussions and reflective journal entries. However, other staff members in the department have an impact on the teaching and learning process and this is evidenced through staff interviews.

Would I adapt or refine van Aswegen's model as a result of my findings?

This is a broad conceptual model or framework underpinning a philosophy for critical reflective practice. Because of its philosophical nature, it is idealist. It supports 'ideal' practice. In reality, life is far more pragmatic and grounded in practical concerns. So, just as this model offers an 'ideal', in the same way educators teach for the same standard, but keep in mind the harsh reality of practice. So, in answer to the question, I believe that the model is appropriate and don't propose that it be adapted or refined in the sense of 'correctness'. What I am doing is offering additional descriptions and explanations in the form of the following models. These are presented in light of what worked for me as an educator.

12.5 META STRUCTURE

Figure 12.3 provides a synopsis of the Nursing Management IV course approach. I have presented it the way I approached the course, so that it unfolds in a logical, sequential progression. This does not mean that all courses should be developed in the same way – it was personal logic and choice.

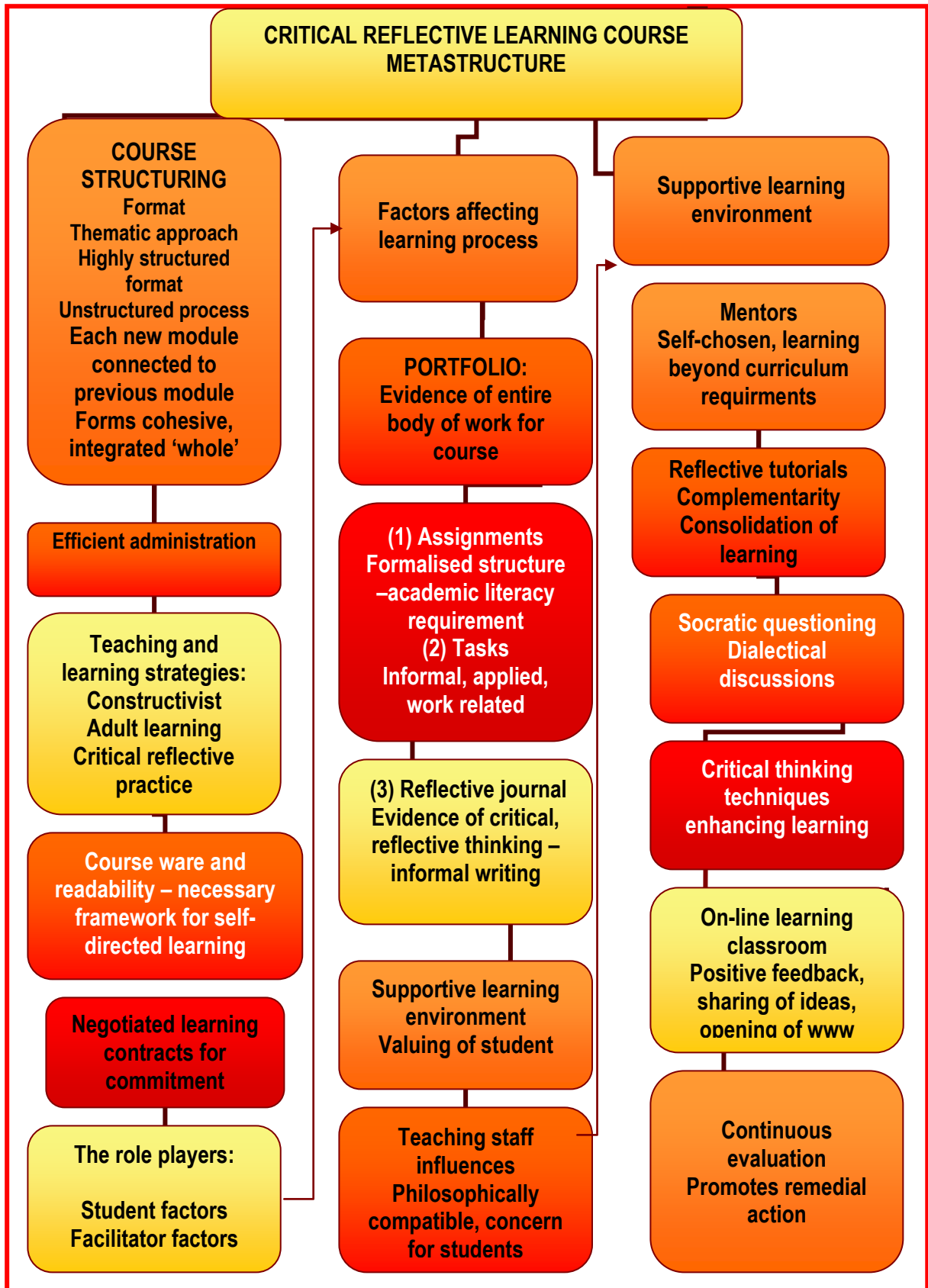
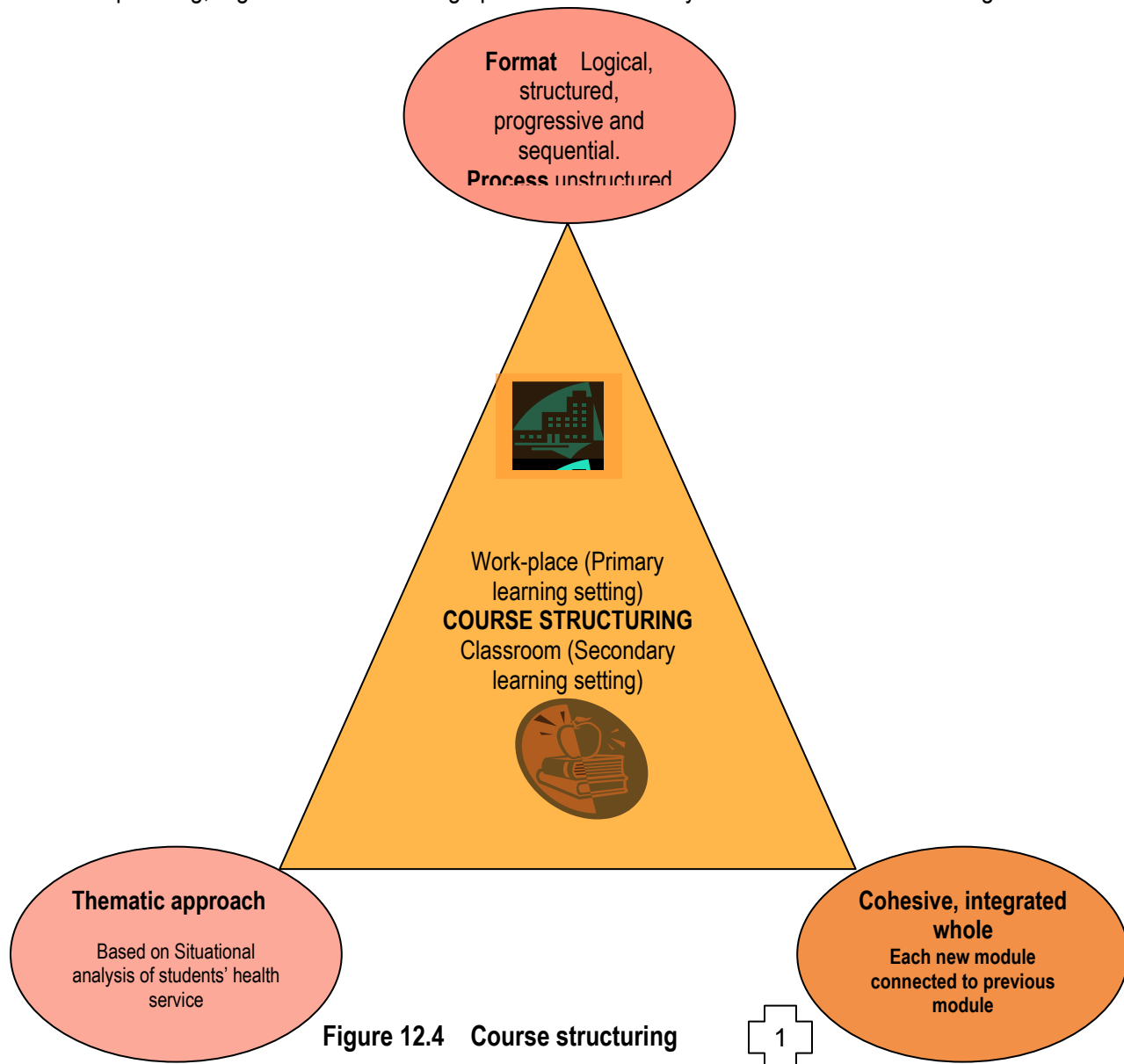


Figure 12.3. Synopsis of Management IV course approach (based on Figure 5.4 Meta structure of Management IV course)

12.5.1 Course structuring

A thematic approach to the course was used, based on a situational analysis of the students' work environment. The primary (work based) and secondary (classroom) learning settings form the context for the format of the course that progresses sequentially using an integrated approach. The development of this structuring took place well in advance of the academic year and required planning, organisation and setting up of administrative systems and is illustrated in Figure 12.4.



12.5.2 Course administration

Planning for any learning course requires consideration of the course structuring, administration and the intended teaching and learning strategies.

Well organised administration of the course as described in Table 12.1 is vital to the smooth running of the process and is essential in that there are many components to the course. For example, critical to the process is regular and relatively immediate feedback to students. If students did not perceive this to take place smoothly and efficiently, it affected their own motivation in engaging in the learning process. The purpose was to ensure that the students view their progress on a continuous basis.

Table 12.1 Course administration

- Negotiation with students on structuring, organisation, content, timing, evaluation
- Checks and balances – (Facilitator: CHED; peer review, personal judgement, moderators) (Student: democratic group decisions)
- Transparent – Course information and marks available to students, colleagues, moderators
- Efficient communication – students' personal files containing marked and critiqued work brought to each contact session; personal time for review; contact availability through e-mail; phone, fax, Web CT and personal contact
- Efficient administration – Contained student information and marks – spreadsheets; departmental and institutional
- Student information – collated and available (spreadsheets). Student photos and contact details available to peers – Web CT
- Continuous evaluation strategies and controls – assignment criteria, assessment strategies – available and explained in Study Guide

12.5.3 Teaching and learning strategies providing opportunities to construct own learning

The main focus of the teaching and learning process was to motivate students to construct and determine their own learning experiences in ways that were meaningful to them. As seen in Figure 12.5, these were based on theoretical frameworks, which had specific intended outcomes and

were also planned well in advance of the academic year by building them into the learning materials.

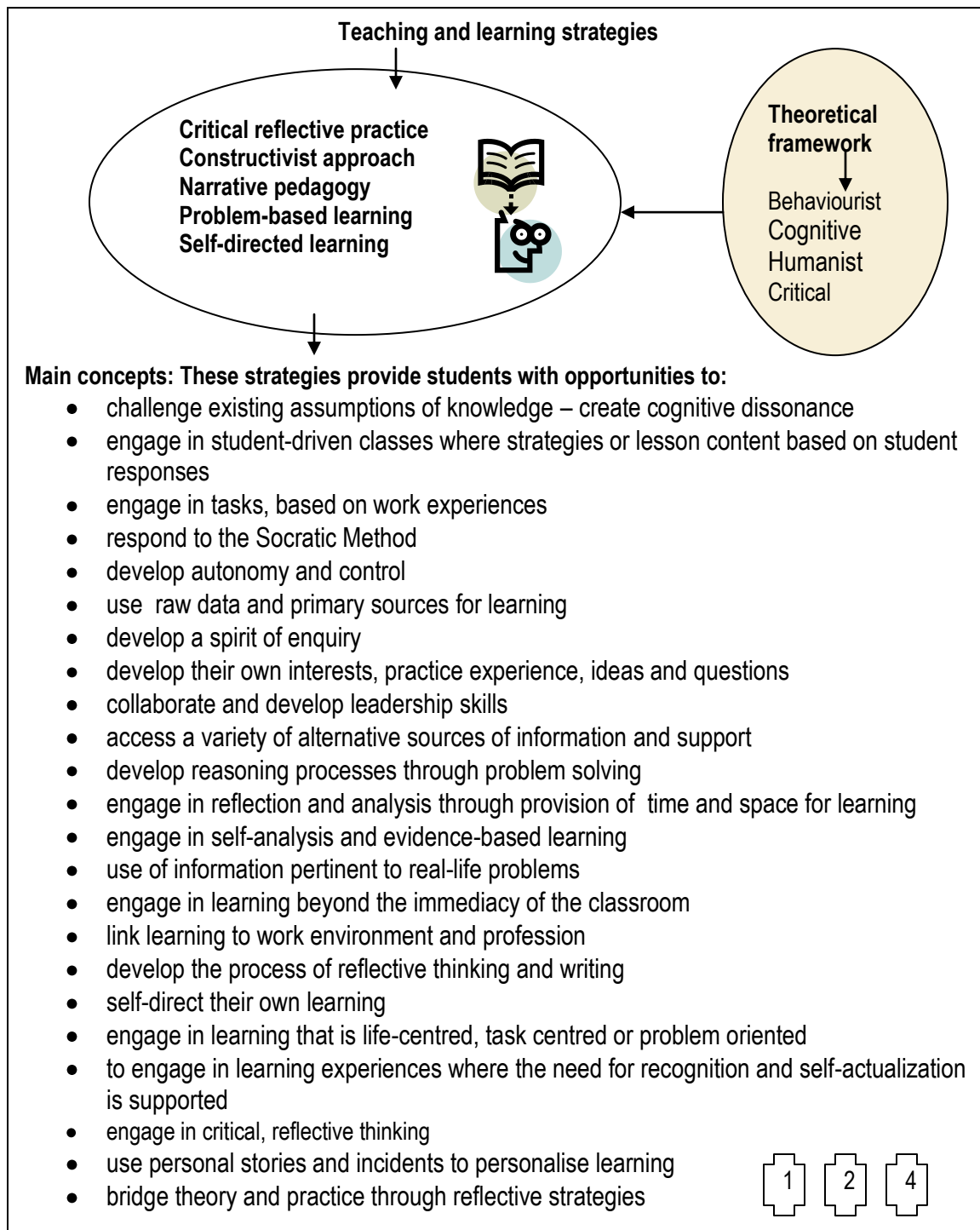
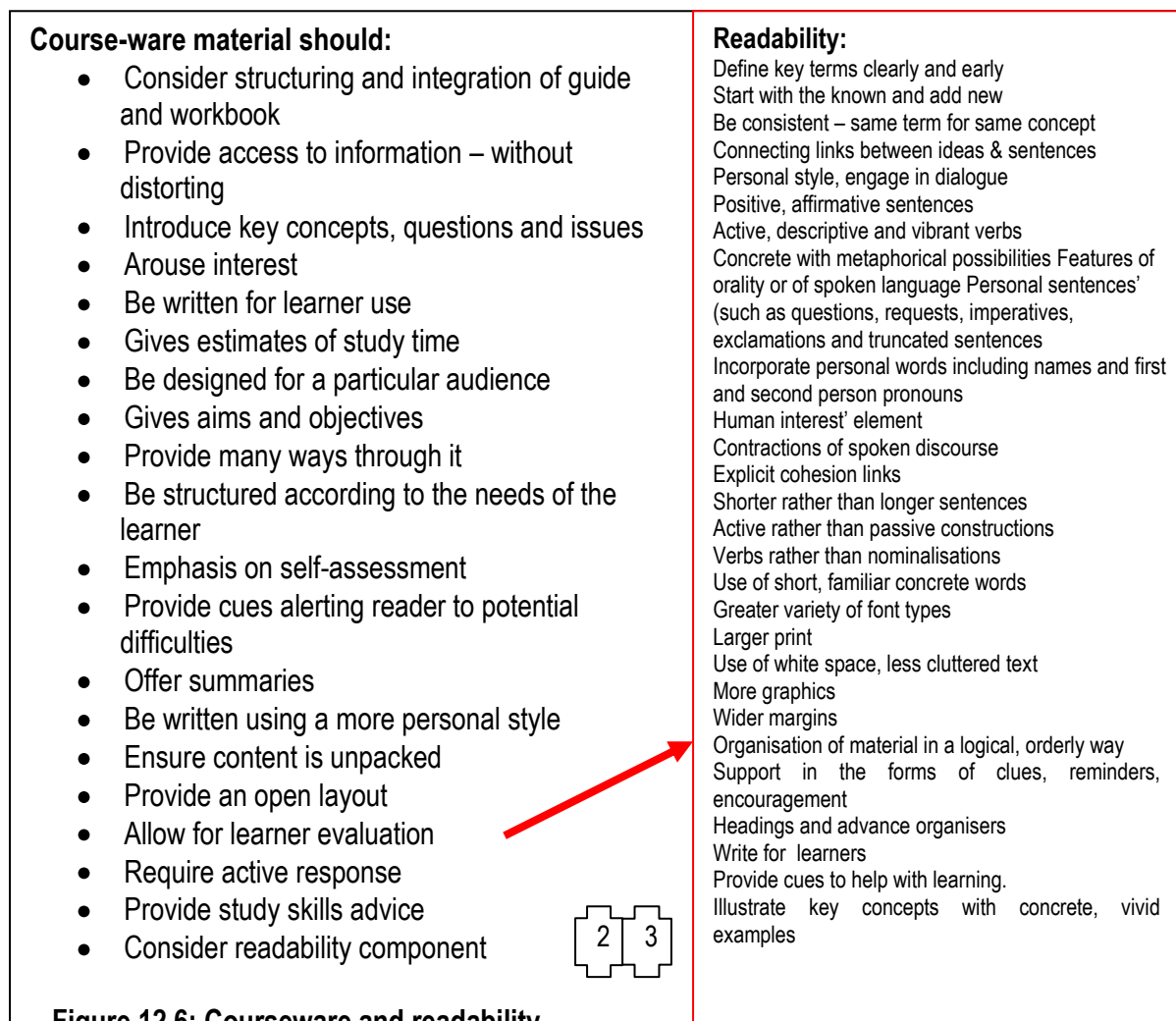


Figure 12.5: Teaching and learning strategies providing opportunities to ‘construct’ own learning

12.5.4 Courseware and readability

Course-ware materials were planned for well in advance of the academic year and provided text sequentially in stages from the start to finish of the course in the form of workbooks and study guide in text format, as well as on a CD-Rom and within the web based classroom. Planning and developing the materials took into consideration specific principles outlined in Figure 12.6.



12.5.5 Learning contract defined

Learning theories are interwoven throughout all aspects of the course, with the intention of engaging and motivating student learning. An early form of committed engagement is the

negotiated learning contract (Figure 12.7) which forms both the anchor and springboard for the student/facilitator relationship.

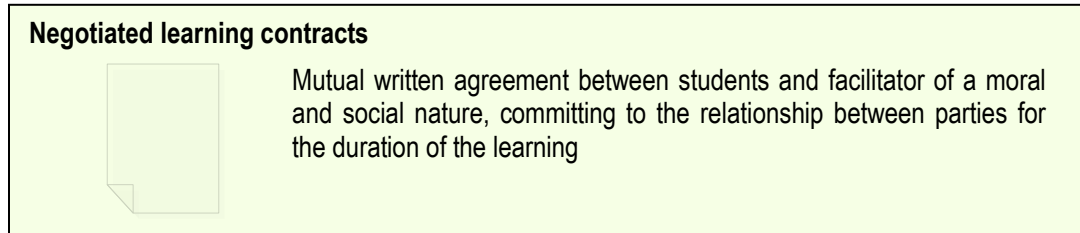
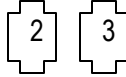


Figure 12.7. Learning contract defined

12.5.5.1 Learning contract process

As with any contract, this process needs to be negotiated. Figure 12.8 indicates the process involved.

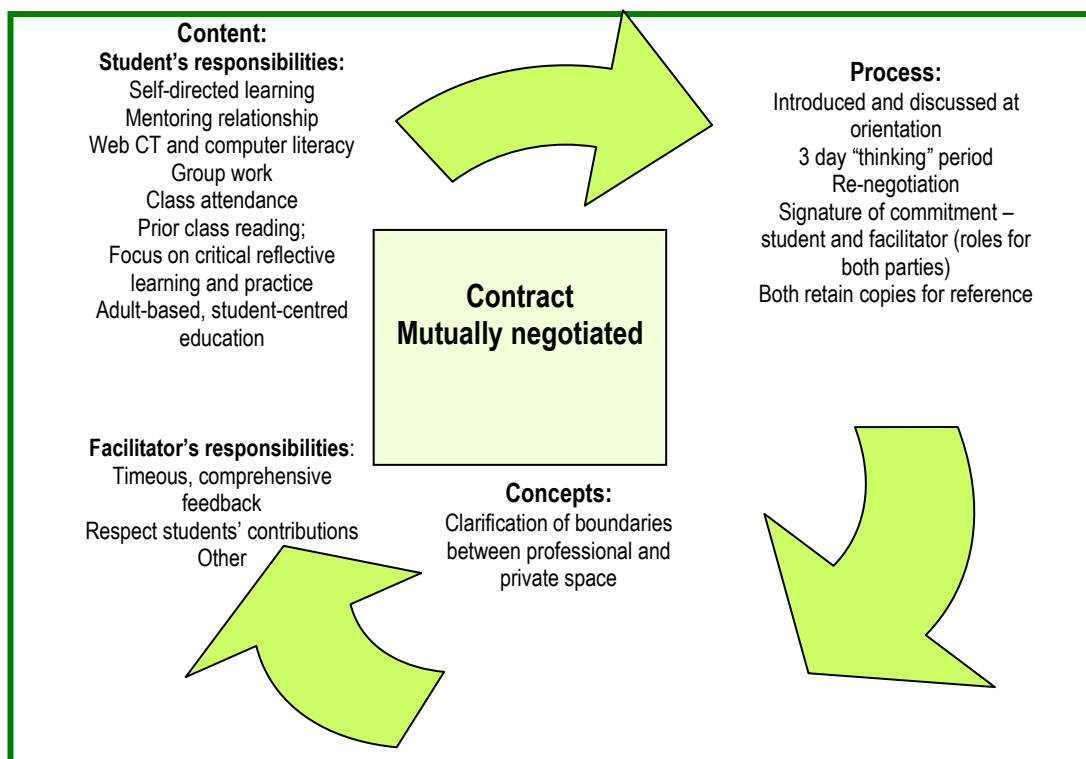
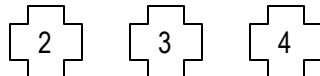


Figure 12.8 Negotiated learning contract process

12.5.5.2 The role players

Both the students and the facilitator, as demonstrated in Figure 12.9, form integral parts of the van Aswegen model (as follows) are:

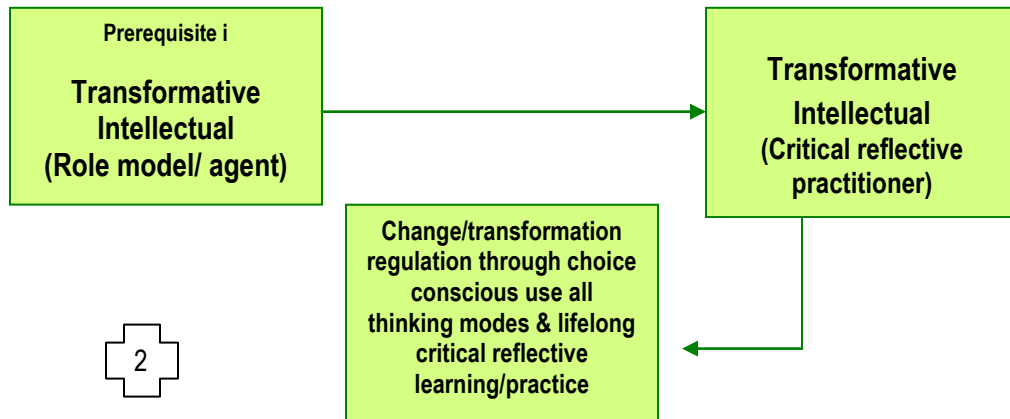


Figure 12.9 The role players

12.4.6 Van Aswegen's Supportive Culture

The following figure 12.10 represents van Aswegen's supportive culture and relates to and cuts across Figures 12.11 (a to d).

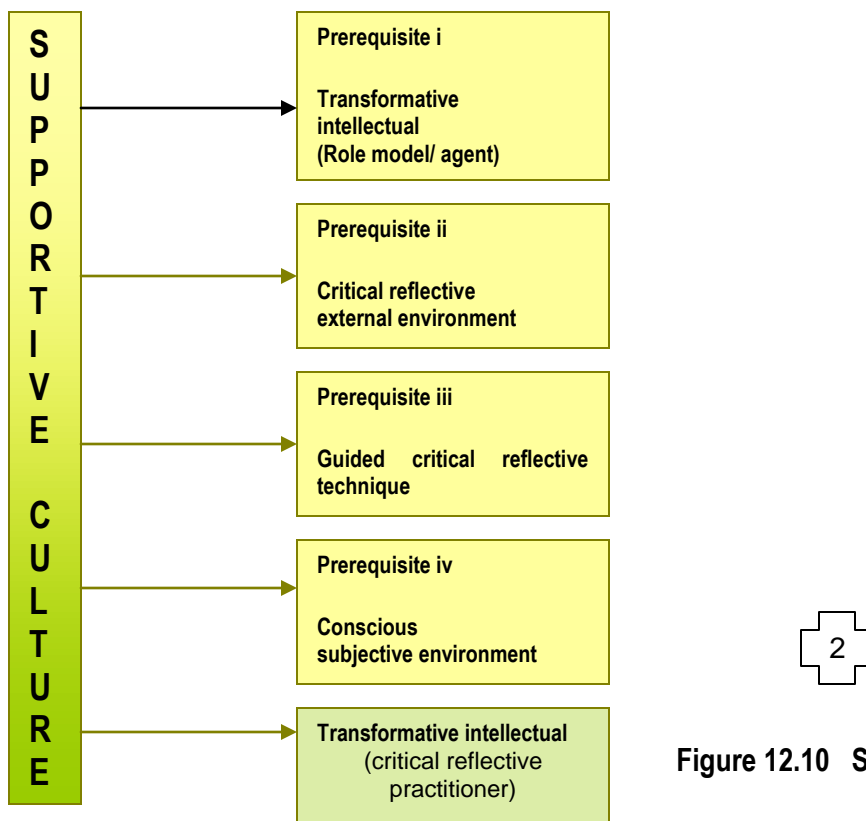


Figure 12.10 Supportive culture

12.5.6 Factors considered by students, staff and facilitator to affect the learning process within a course focusing on critical reflective practice, using the Constructivist approach

The aim of this study was to use van Aswegen's model to support critical reflective practice.

Figures 12.11 (a-d) are a synopsis of those factors seen by involved parties to affect this learning process. While Figure 12.11 (a) shows the interlinking of components, they are in no particular order.

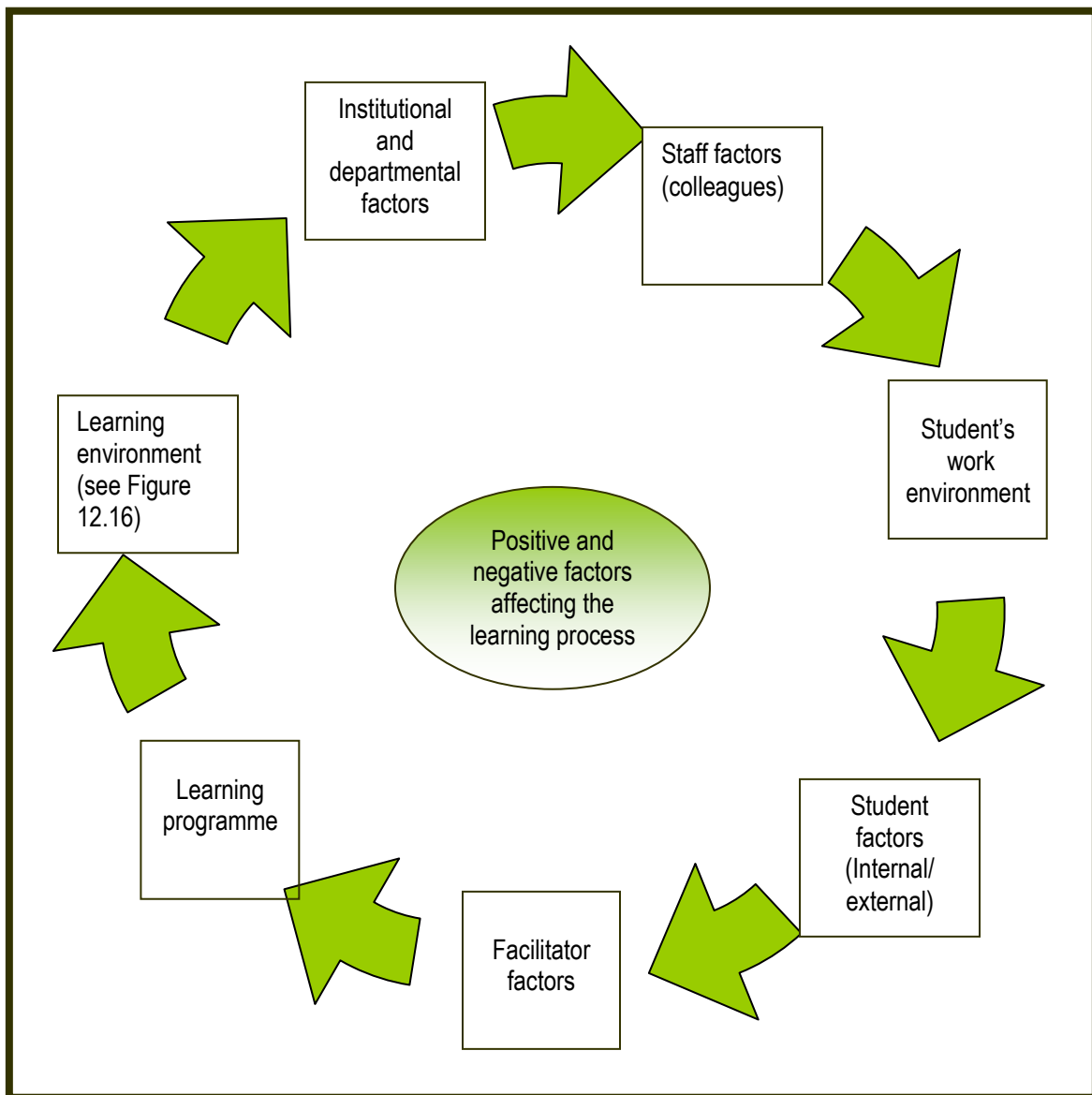


Figure 12.11 (a) Factors affecting learning process



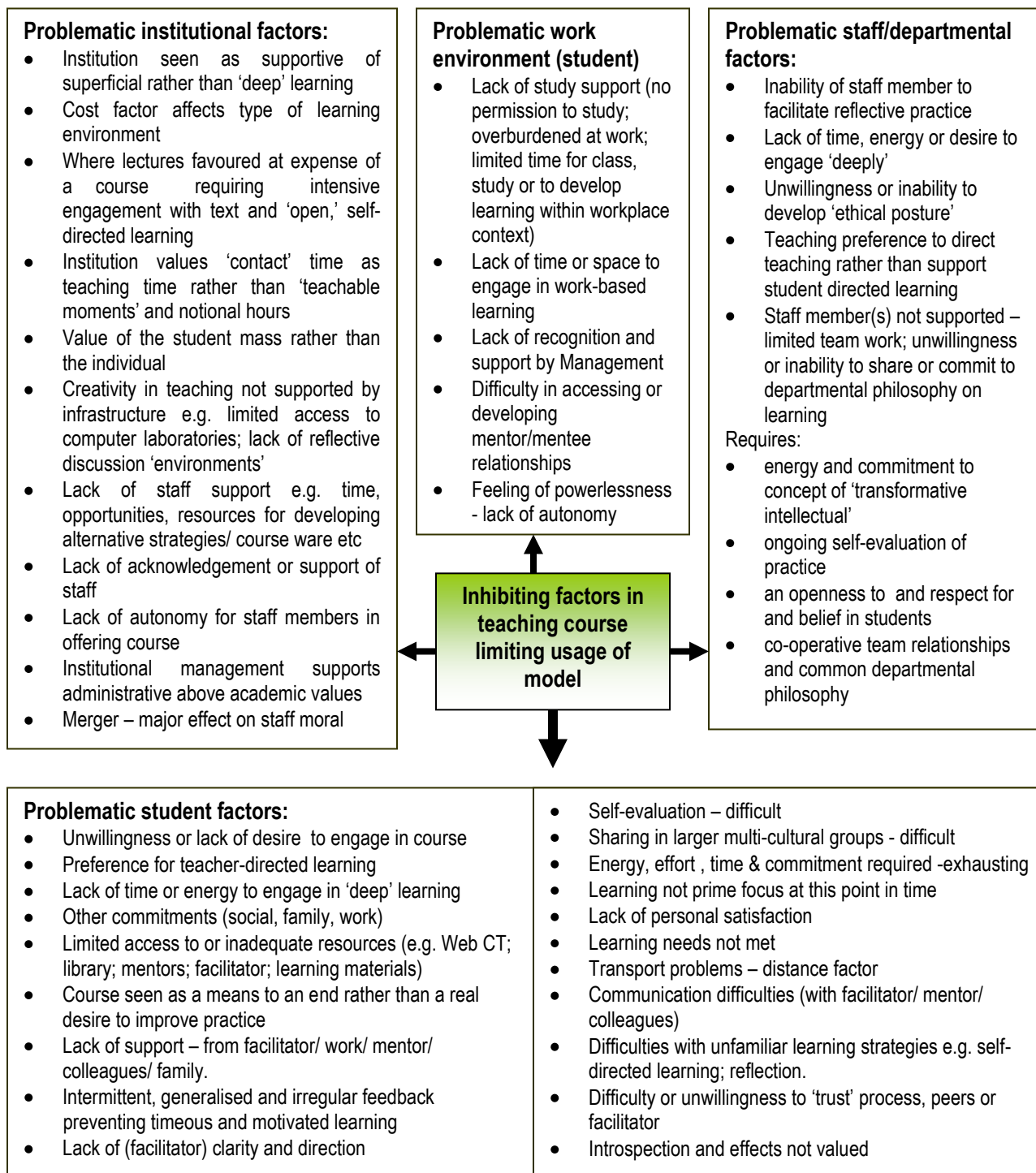


Figure 12.11(b) Inhibiting factors limiting use of model of critical reflective practice as seen in the form of the Nursing Management IV course

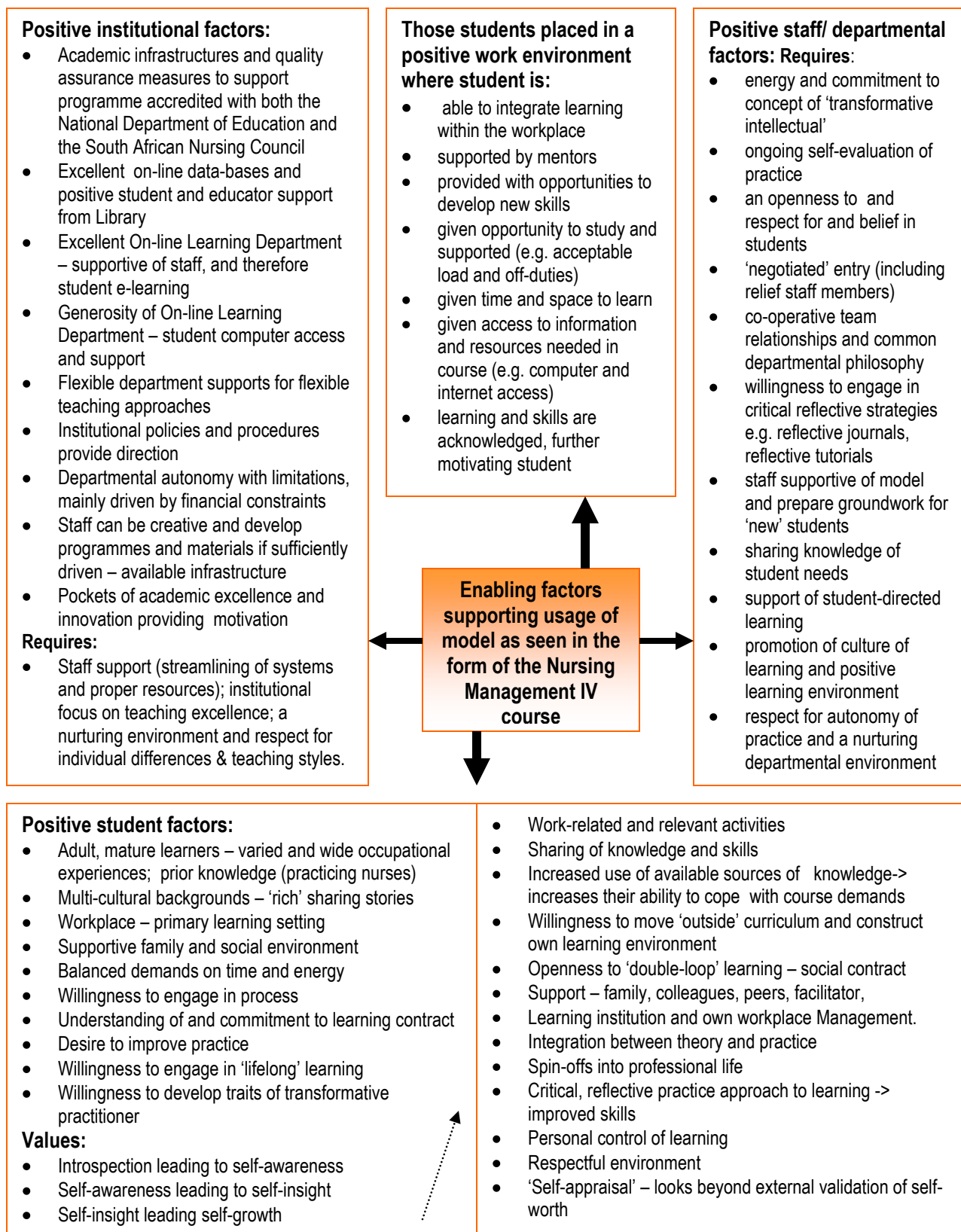


Figure 12.11(c) Enabling factors promoting usage of model for critical reflective practice as seen in the form of the Nursing Management IV course

Facilitated approach to course

- Marketing of course and learning/ teaching approach to staff and students
- Consider meta- framework as well as operational issues
- Philosophy of van Aswegen's model used to drive approach to promoting critical reflective practice
- Educational approach –Adult based learning/ Constructivist approach

Valued:

- Critical theory – transformational emancipatory learning
- Students' right to self-directed learning
- Shift in balance of power and control in learning
- Resulting relationships and shared knowledge
- Positive student attitudes and staff support
- Integrative learning

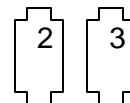
Resulted in support of principles:

- Integration of theory and practice (praxis)
- Shared responsibility in success of learning
- Facilitation of independent thinking and practice
- Students' right to self-regulate

Concerns:

- Energy and effort and time required – exhausting
- Does not suit all students/ all educators
- Requires commitment and support from students, staff members and institution

Figure 12.11 (d) Factors considered by facilitator to affect the learning process within a course focusing on critical reflective practice, using the constructivist approach.



12.5.7 Students' portfolio comprising key evidence of their learning

Portfolios, as depicted in Figure 12.12, are collections of student's work demonstrating the effort and achievement of that work. Brought together as an integrated 'whole', they provide a holistic overview of the student's performance (Panitz, 2000). The institution required evidence that was

outcomes based and the portfolio comprised a variety of such evidence indicating both the integrative and holistic approach to learning.

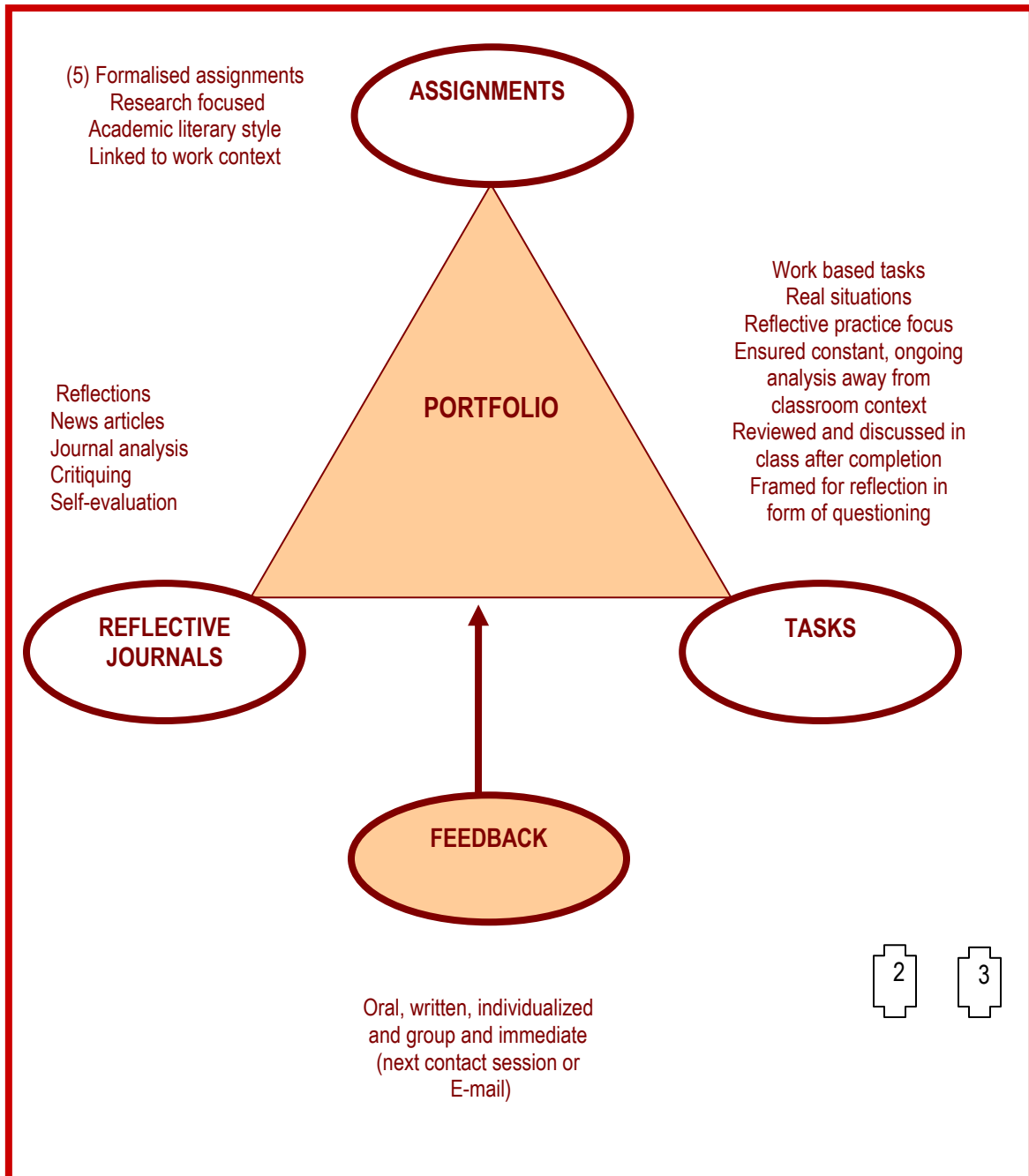


Figure 12.12 Students' portfolio comprising key evidence of their learning

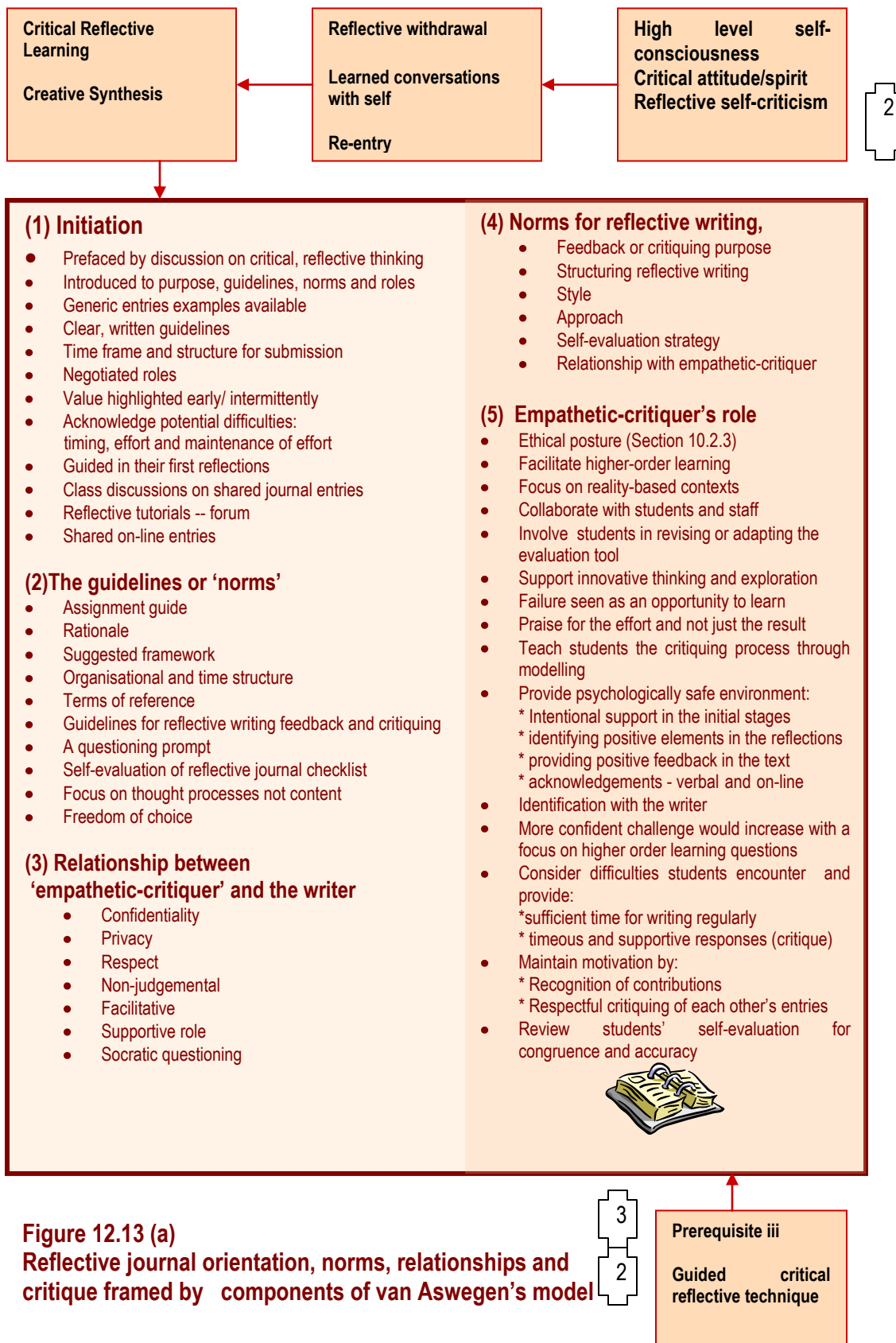


Figure 12.13 (a)
Reflective journal orientation, norms, relationships and critique framed by components of van Aswegen's model

12.5.8 Reflective journal orientation, norms, relationships and critique framed by components of van Aswegen's model

A key component of the portfolio was the reflective journal, initiated as proposed within van Aswegen's model. Figure 12.13(a) and the following figure and table (Figure 12.13(b) and Table 7.8 from Chapter Seven focusing on the structuring, organisation, critiquing and evaluation are based on the findings of this study, my reflexive journal and the literature. This figure focuses on the relationship between the empathetic-critiquer and writer, the guidelines for journaling and how this process can be initiated.

12.5.8.1 Framing the journaling experience

Figure 12.13(b) explains the actual journal experience and includes its structuring, organisation, characterization, purpose, orientation and administration. Given this framework, an educator could expect to see the purpose of critical reflective journaling fulfilled.

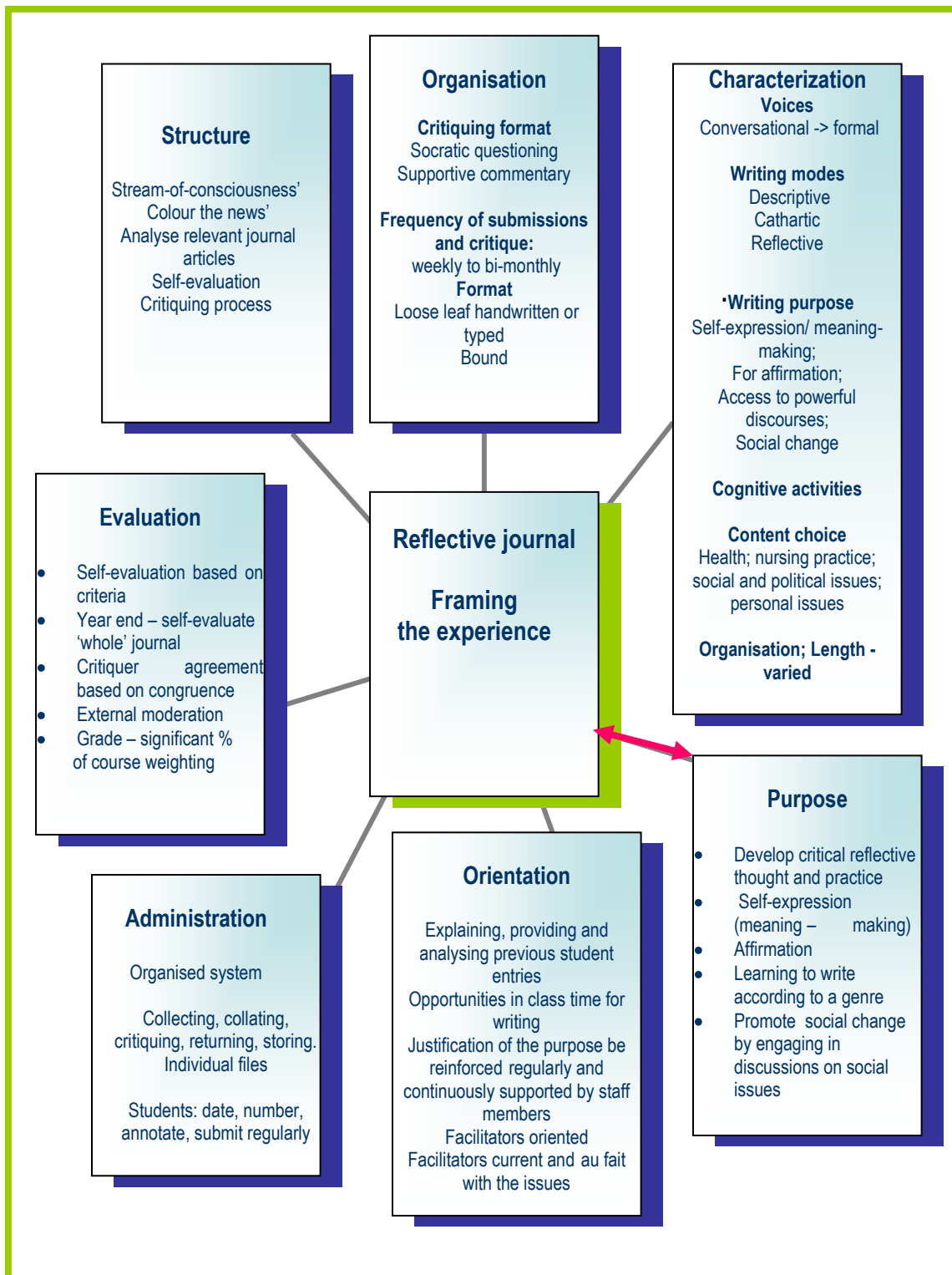
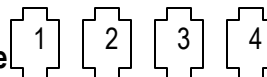


Figure 12.13 (b) Framing the journaling experience



12.5.8.2 Themes relating to students' perceptions of the value or limitations of journaling

In Chapter Seven, Section 7.3.6, students discussed the value and limitations of the journaling experience. Table 7.8 outlines the themes that emerged.

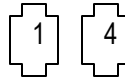


Table 7.8: Themes relating to students' perceptions of the value or limitations of journaling

<p>Journaling as a tool for learning</p> <p>Type of learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affective• Developmental (includes cognitive) <p>Effects of learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional development• Cognitive development <p>Development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical thinking skills• Reflective skills <p>Questioning of own practice</p> <p>Problem identification and problem solving</p> <p>Reading</p> <p>Reflective writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affective development <p>Catharsis</p> <p>Value Clarification</p> <p>Self-valuing</p> <p>Personal growth and development</p> <p>Confidence building</p> <p>Difficulties associated with the processes of journaling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confidence• Language• Initial engagement• Time consuming• Level and extent of effort and involvement required• Work overload• Lack of insight	<p>Use of journaling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making connections through news text and journals:• Increased awareness of contextual 'space'• Connecting with self and 'other'• Active engagement with issues• Reference sources• Personal travelogues, personal reminders <p>Sustaining the process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharing of stories• Supportive feedback
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12.5.8.3 Framework for viewing and valuing reflective journals as a means of supporting critical reflective writing

The narratives of eight student journals were analysed in terms of my theoretical framework (Figure 10.1) in Chapter Ten. As a result of the analysis, Figure 12.13(c) was developed. Given the parameters established in Figures 12.13 (a and b) this new framework should provide a means of viewing and interpreting students' reflective journals.

12.5.8.4 Revelation through reflective journals

The text of the eight student journals was analysed in terms of my theoretical framework (Figure 10.1) in Chapter Ten, and Figure 12.13(d) represents some of the findings in light of this framework.

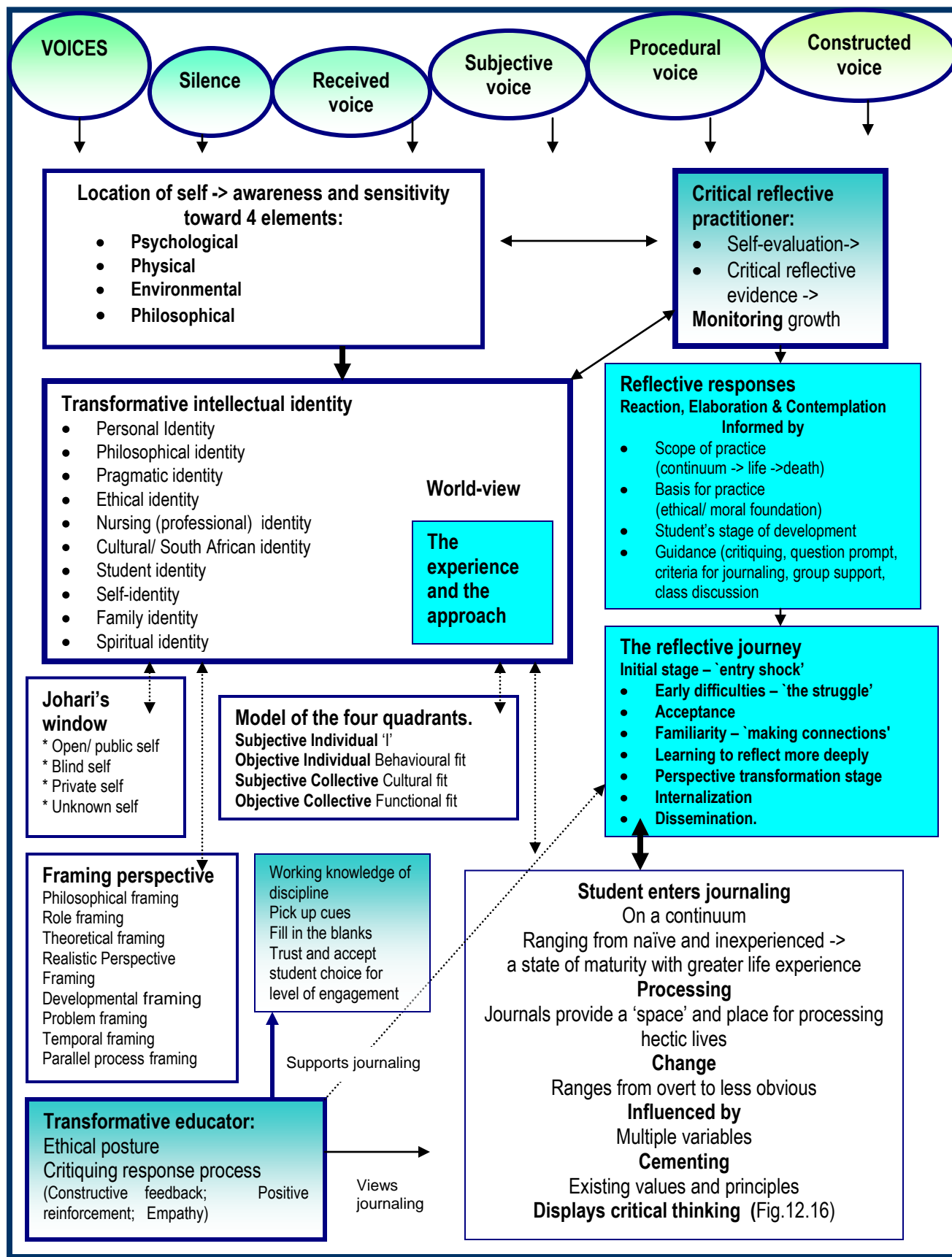


Figure 12.13 (c) Framework for viewing and valuing reflective journals as a means of supporting critical reflective writing

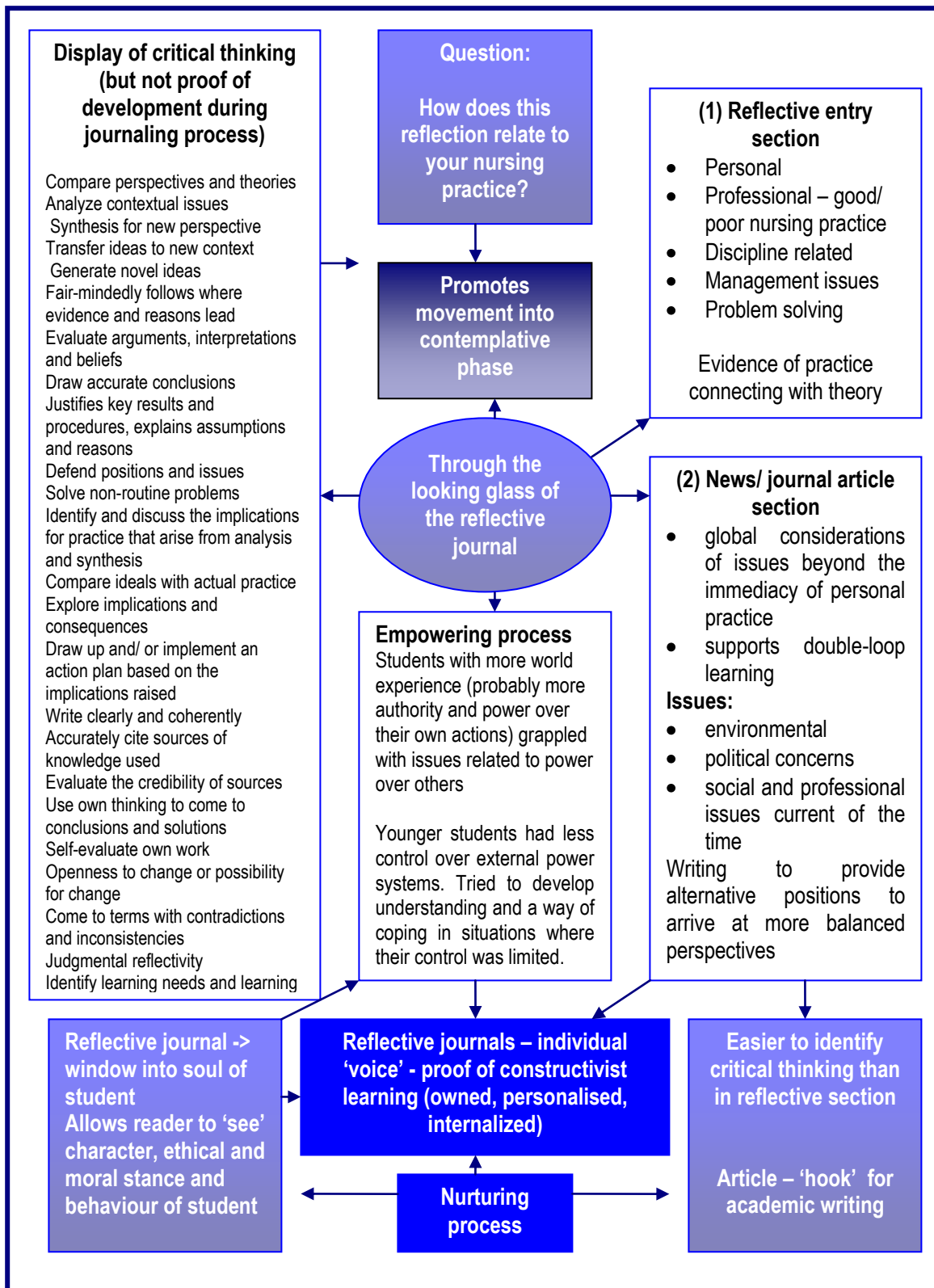
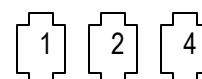


Figure 12. 13 (d) Revelation through reflective journals



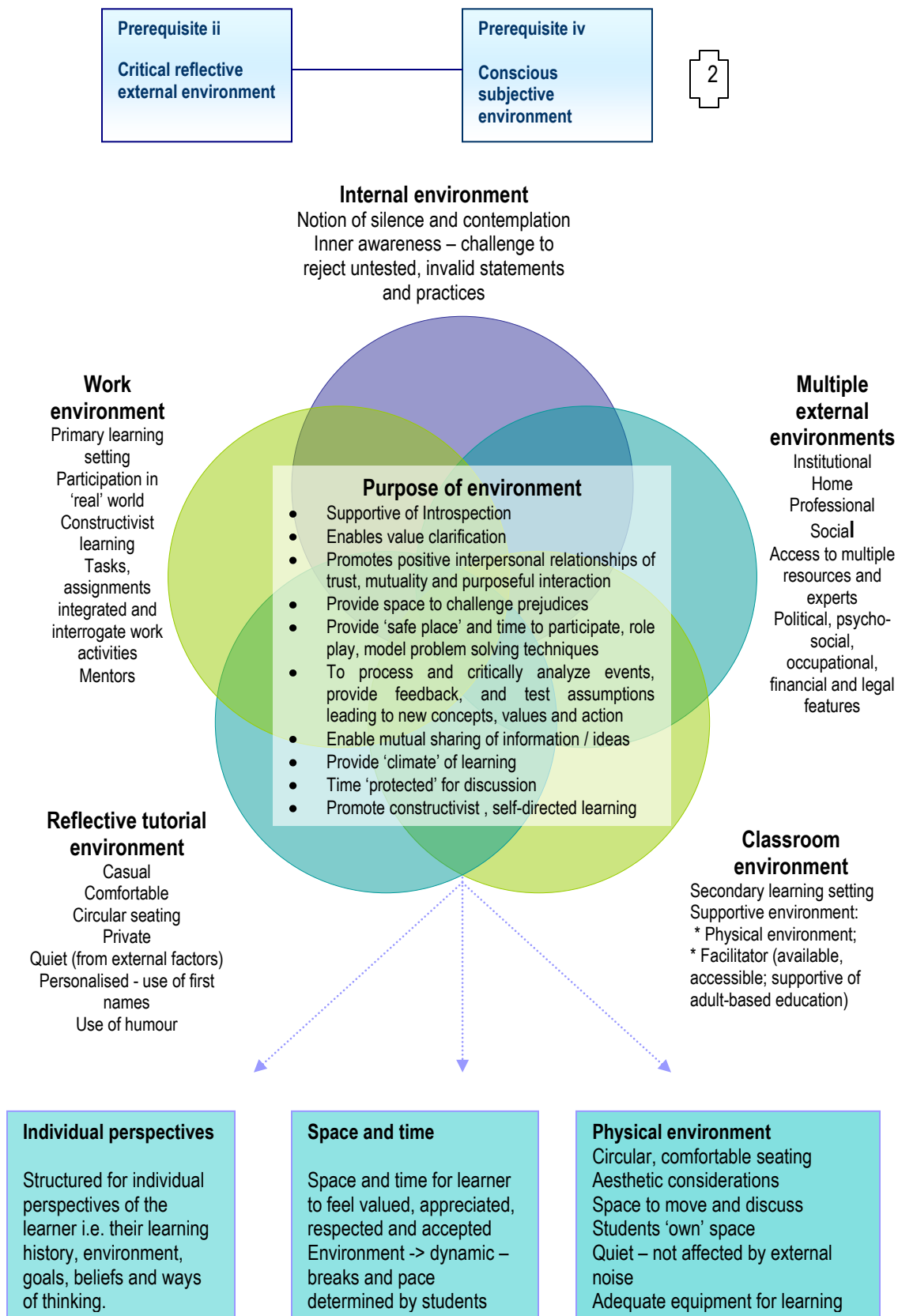


Figure 12.14 (a) The learning environment

12.5.9 Learning environment

In Chapter Six, Section 6.5.13 and Chapter Seven, Section 7.4.5 students clearly indicated that factors in multiple environments affected their learning. Figures 12.14(a to c) focus on what is required in order to establish the type of environment conducive for the learning required within this course. A supportive learning environment is a prerequisite of the model of critical reflective practice.

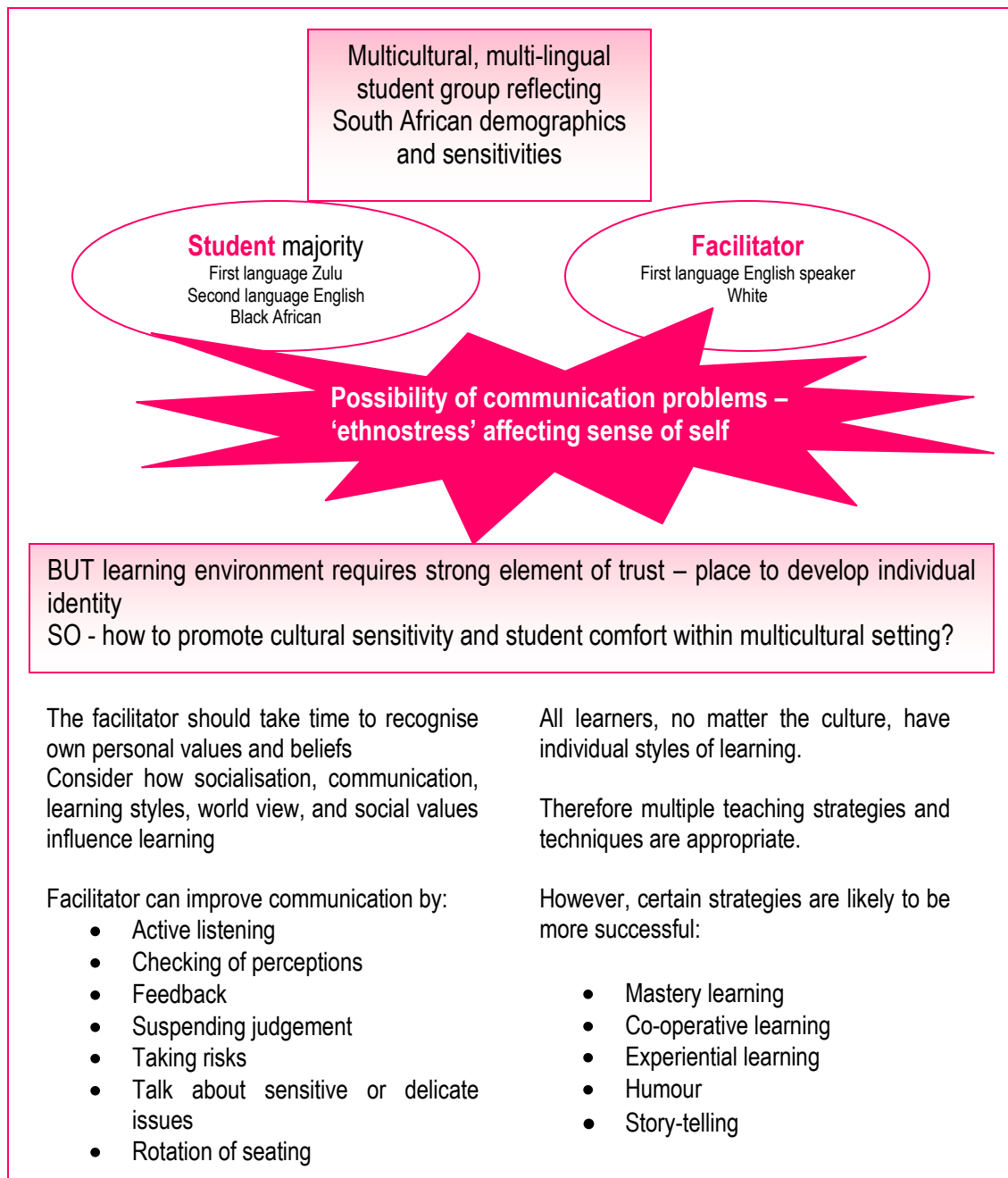


Figure 12.15 (b) Multicultural considerations



Facilitator support for second language English learners by:

- promoting easy access to learning
- constantly reflecting and questioning own understanding of learning process
- entering world of students and their reflections through journals and tutorials
- consider difficulties in conceptualization because of word paucity rather than lack of understanding
- simplifying theory by application to their world
- being open to possibilities
- appreciating that perceptions of understanding and valuing of learning differs
- appreciating different frames of reference (e.g. cultural, educational or experiential)
- believing the best in and of students
- focusing feedback on the positive and constructive
- being emotionally available and accessible to students
- creating a consistent and logical context and approach to their learning
- using appropriate readings and rewriting the complex in simple terminology
- providing scaffolding but motivate to deeper thinking

**Education is more than knowledge acquisition.
It is the formation of identity and
consciousness**

Most of the second-language
learners -> black African.

Therefore, how to support
expression of the 'African voice'?

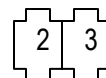
**Difficulties experienced by second
language English students:**

- difficulty in true expression
- results in the inability to express the self freely
- cannot express deep feelings well
- results in lack of confidence
- writing is not an African tradition
- feelings of disempowerment
- result of prior socialization
- exacerbated by being part of a mixed cultural group with first language English speakers fluent and therefore more articulate

**Practical tips for making English more
accessible**

- Provide space and time for speech
- Slow down pace
- Small, familiar groups - forum for safety in expression
- Use students' own experience and background in the discussions so that theory and practice are directly relevant.
- Frequent, regular critiquing of journals
- Concrete supports of the newspaper and the journal article more tangible and easier to respond to
- Affirm students' self-worth wherever possible
- Provide constructive expectations and framework within which to function

Figure 12.15 (c) Provision of an environment to support second language English speakers and to support the African 'voice'



12.5.10 Teaching staff influences and perspectives

12.5.10.1 Philosophies of education and main teaching approaches of staff members

Although the course in Nursing Management IV is a specific subject, it cannot be considered totally in isolation. As seen in Figure 9.1 from Chapter Nine, both students and the facilitator are influenced by departmental and institutional factors and the teaching staff members, because of the close relationships, also influence teaching and learning practice.

12.5.10.2 Staff members' view of the learning process

In general, students registered for Nursing Management IV in their second year of their learning programme. This meant that they would have been exposed to the teaching practices in other courses within the department both prior to and concurrent with this subject. In Chapter Six, Sections 6.1.2, 6.1.10, 6.1.11, 6.1.12 and Figure 6.3., it is clear from the findings that students were strongly influenced by previous experiences with educators. As the educator within this course, I too was influenced by my peers and the tone set within the department. In line with this understanding, it is appropriate to identify how my colleagues viewed the learning process as in Chapter Nine.

12.5.10.3 The environmental factors perceived by staff members to support or limit teaching and learning

In Chapter One, Sections 1.4 to 1.6, I have contextualised my appreciation of institutional and departmental factors influencing teaching and learning. Figure 9.4 in Chapter Nine outlines those factors perceived by my colleagues to support or limit teaching and learning and shares elements of congruence with my own perceptions.

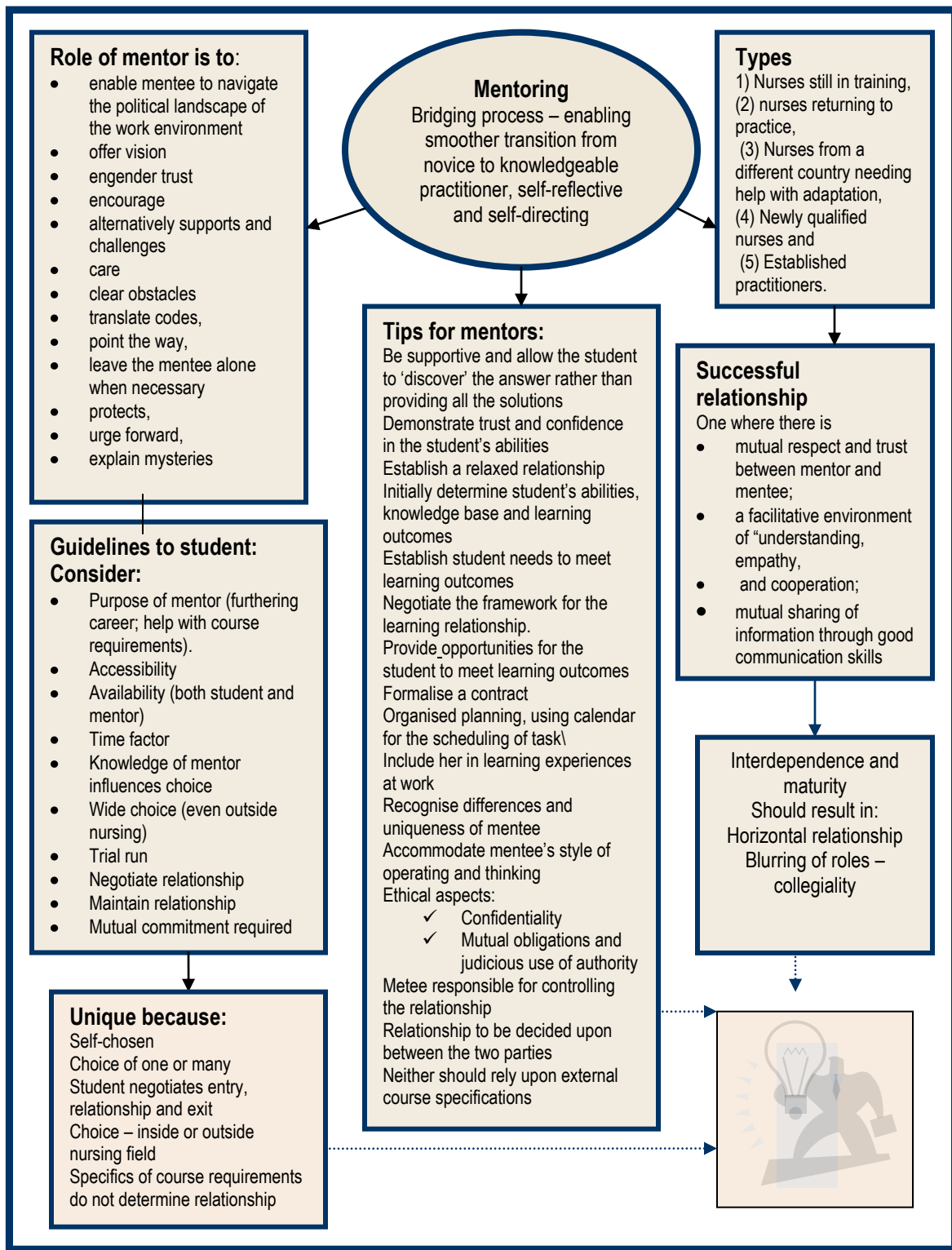


Figure 12.16 (a) Mentoring system



12.5.11 Mentoring system

One of the scaffolding support systems put in place for and by the students was a mentoring system seen in Figure 12.16(a). Findings in Chapter Six, Section 6.2.10 and the literature informed the development of this system in terms of perceived role of the mentor, guidelines for the student and mentor, the types of mentors for specific groups of students and the uniqueness of the process in this course.

12.5.11.1 Mentoring relationship process

Mentoring was one of the supportive strategies in the course to support critical reflective learning. The strategy of negotiation alone is one that demands maturity, foresight and communication skills. The process for the development of a successful mentor/mentee relationship is informed by the findings in Section 6.2.10.2 and the literature and depicted in Figure 12.16(b).

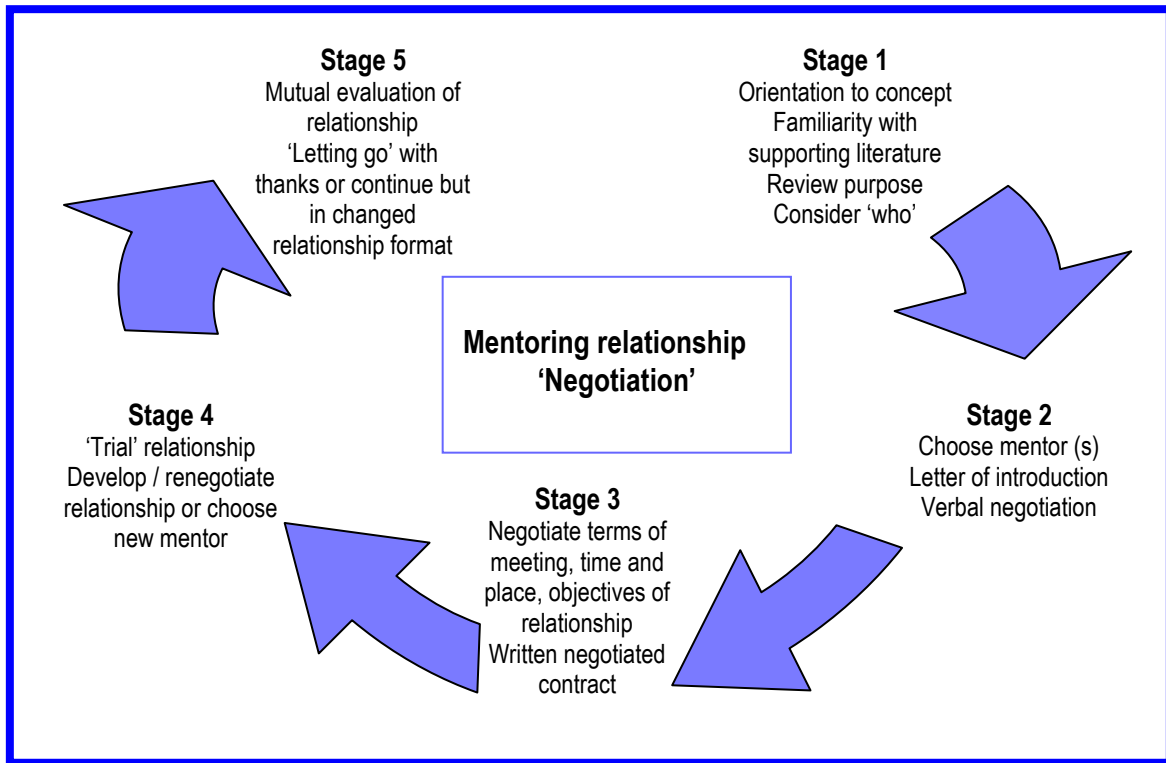
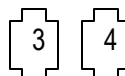


Figure 12.16(b) Mentoring relationship process



12.5.12 Reflective tutorials

Another collaborative strategy is the reflective tutorials system and Figures 8.1 to 8.6 in Chapter Eight illustrate the theory emanating from this strategy.

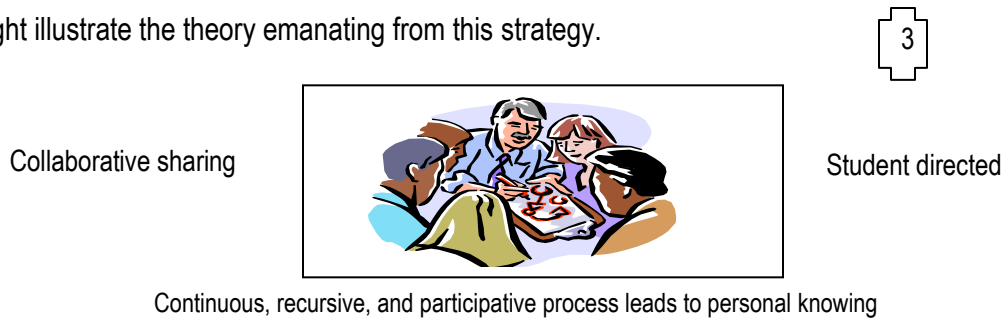
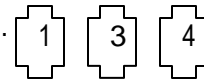


Figure 12.17 Reflective tutorials

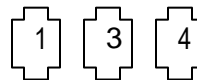
12.5.12.1 Barriers perceived to limit reflection

The reflective tutorial is a scaffolding system that supports integrated learning. Chapter Eight, Section 8.3 provides the analysis of the reflective tutorials which, together with the literature and my own observations, informs the text for Figures 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5 and 12.18. and 12.19. Figure 8.2 considers the barriers perceived to limit reflection in the reflective tutorials.



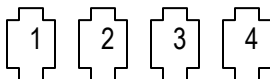
12.5.12.2 Perceived internal barriers to reflection

These barriers (Figure 8.3) may affect the student both in the written reflective journal and/or the reflective tutorial.



12.5.12.3 Factors perceived to support reflective tutorials

These factors are identified in terms of the student herself, the facilitator, factors external to the student in her environment both within and without the institution, environmental factors, group factors and those within the actual reflective process. These are illustrated in Figure 8.4 in Chapter Eight.



12.5.12.4 Student factors promoting reflection affecting attitudes and behaviour

Figure 8.5 is a reflection of my perceptions as the course facilitator of the factors that appear to promote reflection, resulting in certain perceived behaviours which appear to culminate in certain effects. It is also based on the literature and the findings in Chapter Eight, Section 8.3.1.7 4

12.5.12.5 The reflective tutorial: Setting the scene

Figure 12.18 outlines the planning for and orientation of students to the reflective tutorial process

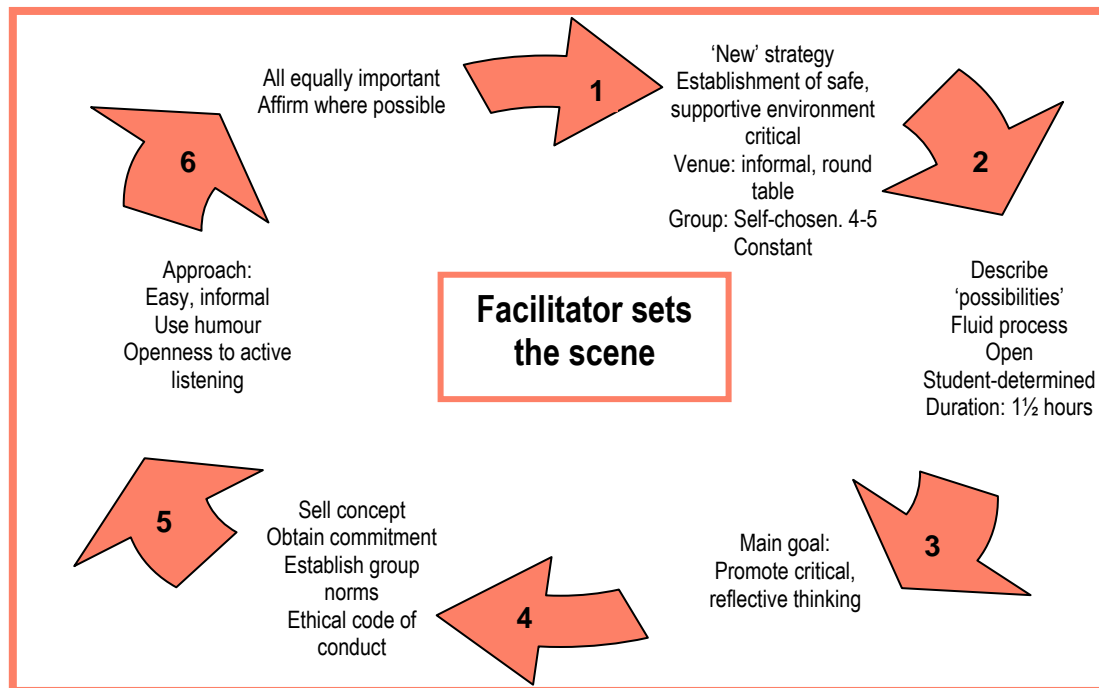


Figure 12.18 Planning for reflective tutorials

3

12.5.12.6 The reflective tutorial process

There are definite stages I have observed taking place within the tutorial process and is evidenced in

Chapter Eight, Figure 8.6, as repeated as follows:

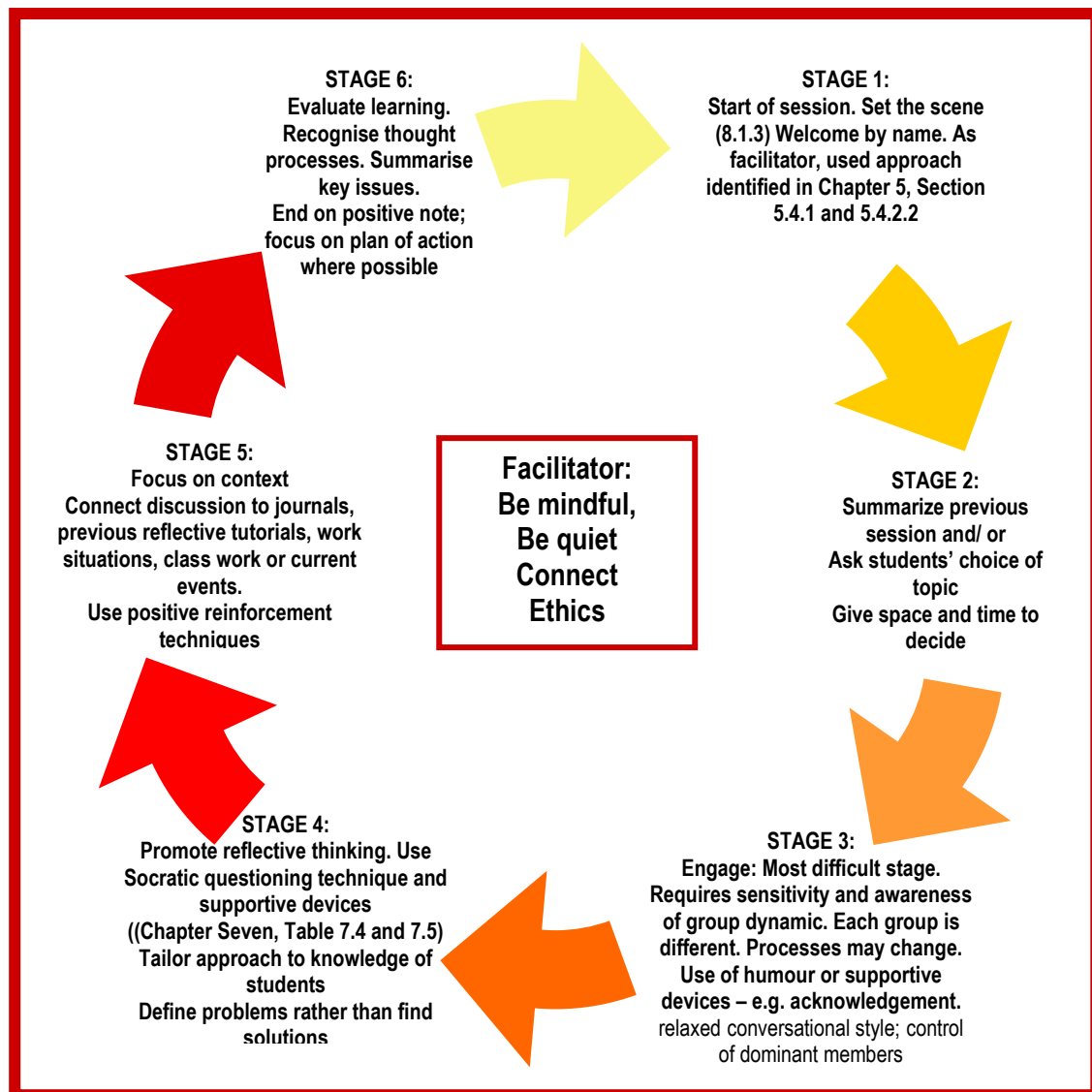
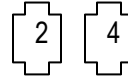



Figure 8.6(b): The reflective tutorial process

12.5.13 Socratic Questioning method

This technique is used in both the reflective tutorial and the reflective journal and Figure 12.18 defines the process and gives examples of how and when to use it.



Socratic questioning
The focus of Socratic questioning is to provide students with more questions to allow themselves to find a path to understanding

Call on students who do not answer regularly
Call on others to summarise the thinking
Use 'buzz groups' of 2 to 3 students
Feedback to larger group
Summarise the thinking
Challenge ideas
Label type of thinking
Consider Paul's (1990) model for Socratic Questioning:

- Origins
- Support
- Conflict with other thoughts
- Implications and consequences

Tips for Socratic questioning

1. Consider purpose
2. Plan logical series of questions
3. Focus discussion.
4. Promote full participation
5. Personalise question.
6. Respond non-judgementally
7. Use questions that probe; promote controversy; create cognitive dissonance
8. Use questions that promote higher order learning
9. Use open rather than closed questions
10. Use questions to focus on key issues
11. Check for student understanding.
12. Value use of pauses and 'space' for thinking.

Figure 12.19: Socratic questioning method



12.5.14 Critical thinking strategies and methods supported within van Aswegen's model

Figure 12.20 lists the strategies used within the Nursing Management IV course based on van

Aswegen's model to support critical thinking

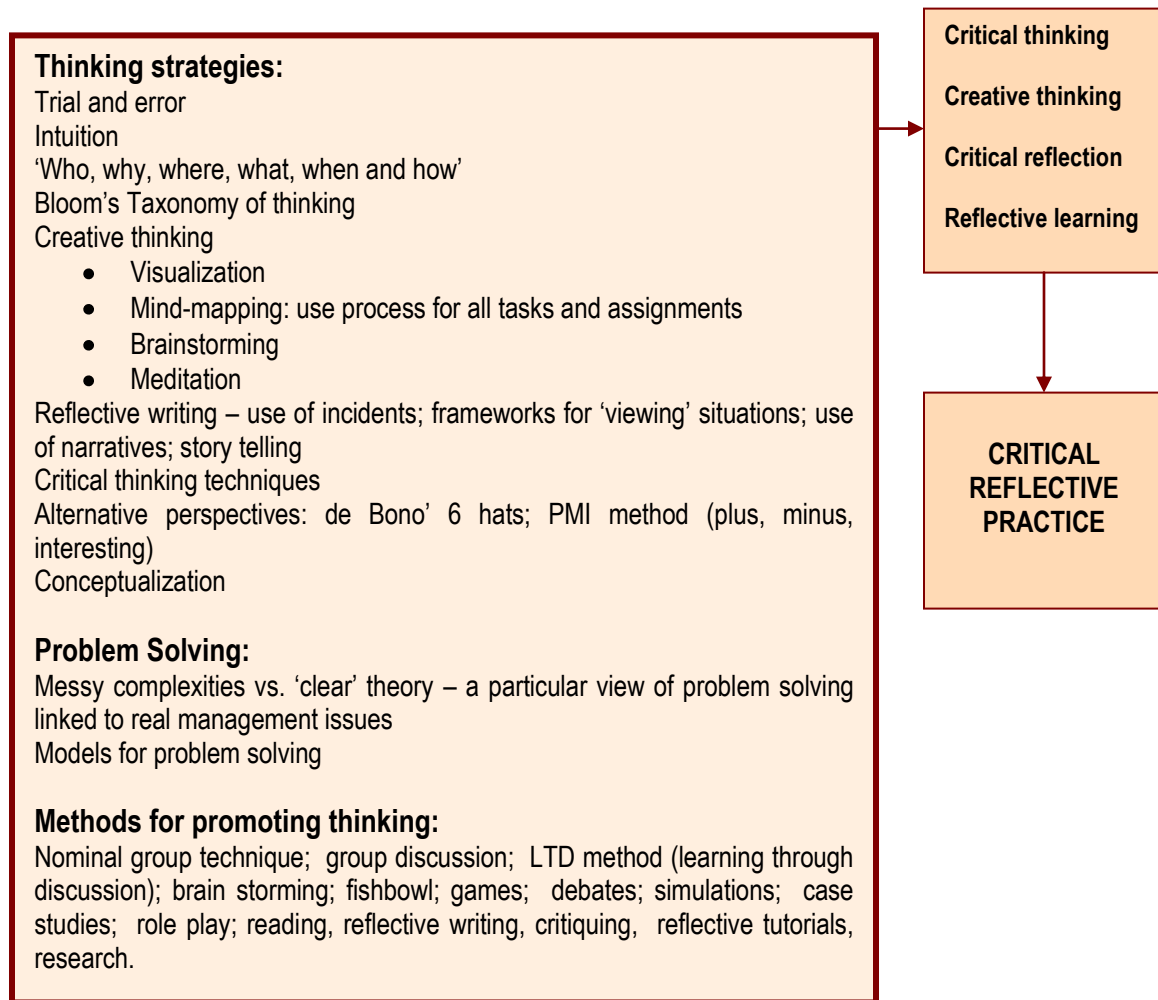


Figure 12.20 Critical thinking strategies and methods supported within van Aswegen's model

12.5.15 On-line learning classroom (Web CT) as a vehicle for learning

Section 6.7.11.6 and Figure 6.1.1 in Chapter Six outlines the use, value and difficulties in using an on-line classroom as a vehicle for learning.

12.5.16 Provision of an example to demonstrate complementarity of strategies

Figure 12.22 provides an example of how one idea can be addressed through the complementarity of strategies to promote integrated, deeper learning

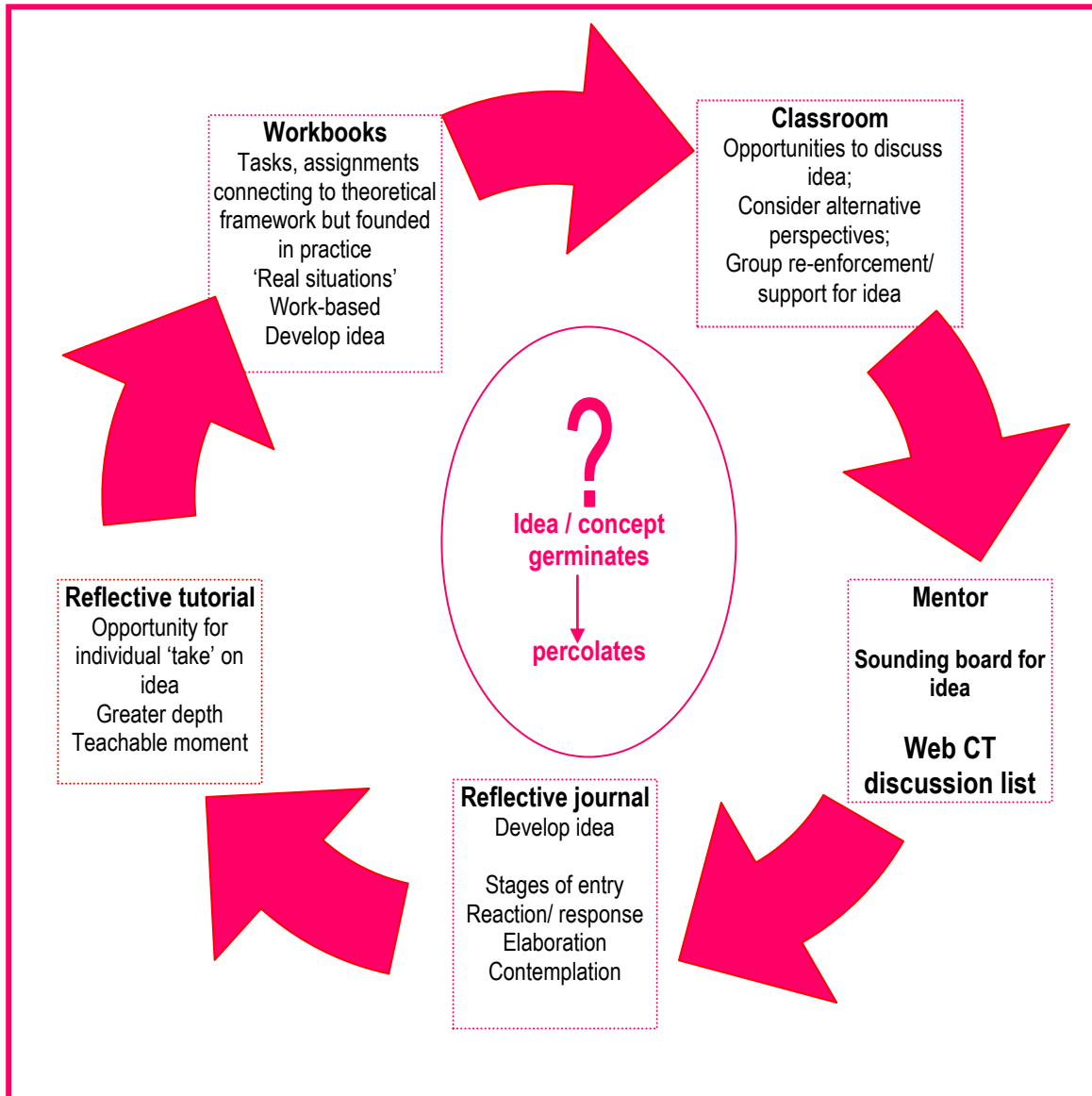
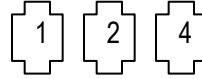


Figure 12.21: Provision of an example to demonstrate complementarity of strategies

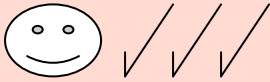
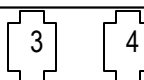
<p>Continuous evaluation is</p> <div>  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuous; • formative (but includes diagnostic and summative assessment); • student-centred; • negotiated; • based on identified criteria; • focus is on higher-order thinking skills; • informs the learning process; and • provides student progress information. <p>Purpose: to validate outcomes and promote continuous, 'deep' learning through constant feedback and improvement</p> <p>Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to provide multiple opportunities for gathering evidence • to accommodate different learner needs and abilities e.g. self-paced learning • to provide opportunities to 'stage' learning improvement e.g. assignments e.g. can be <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) discussed or • (b) reviewed beforehand; • (c) returned with or • (d) without required changes for improvement 	<p>Strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Varied to provide a wider range of evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tests, • assignments, • projects, • workshops, • tasks, • reflective journal 2. Linked to work-based situations -> portfolio 3. Written and oral <p>Environment: Non-threatening</p> <p>Assessors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-evaluation; • peer evaluation; • educator/facilitator evaluation; • student invited external evaluators; • panel evaluation; • mixed approach. <p>Negotiation: Facilitator with students re timing, approach and criteria</p> <p>Checks and balances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External and internal examiners and moderators; • Transparent process; • Process and weighting of marks; • Documented in study guide; • Complete documented evidence available in department for four years.
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Figure 12.22. Continuous evaluation



12.5.17 Continuous evaluation

The value of learning needs to be demonstrated. The process of continuous evaluation is employed in this learning course and included in Figure 12.23 is the purpose, rationale and strategies used for continuous evaluation. Also included is consideration of the evaluation environment, the assessors, the concept of negotiation as well as that of checks and balances.

12.5.18 Core principles

Recommendations for future offering of Nursing Management IV (identified in 6.2.13)

Maintain the following practices:

1. Involve students in determining their learning needs and in the shaping of the programme. Try to accommodate for individual preferences and needs. Provide students with the results of previous student evaluations of the programme in enabling them to determine their own learning needs.
2. Appreciate that students come from a broader social context and strongly consider an individualised approach.
3. Ensure an appropriate and extensive orientation to the learning and teaching approach and intended outcomes (Oehlkers and Gibson, 2001).
4. Develop, with the students, the criteria for the ongoing tasks. Ensure relevance to working situations by consultation with students, and adapt accordingly. Let practice drive theoretical needs and ensure regular opportunities for sharing, discussing and debating relevant reality-based issues.
5. Should other lecturers be involved in the teaching of the programme, ensure an appropriate orientation to the principles of the Constructivist approach to the teaching of the programme. Orient staff to the process of critical reflective practice and the required ethical stance to promote 'mindfulness' of students. Reinforce consistency of approach and evaluation in the presence of the lecturer(s) and students to promote the continuity of the approach and avoid any ambiguities.
6. Reinforce the principles inherent in the critical reflective approach; the Constructivist approach to learning; adult education and the mentoring system on a regular basis. Support student ownership of own learning needs and maintain an open, supportive and motivational learning and teaching environment.

7. Maintain the tutorial system in its current form, explaining and emphasising the value within the learning system. Support the group process as a means of facilitating learning. Oehlkers et al. (2001) find that peer support increases in value when the facilitator is not available. Therefore, promote supportive group processes such as collaborative projects and e-mail or discussion list exchanges.
8. Highlight and reinforce the mentoring approach and reflective journals as a routine item in class contact activities.
9. Recognise and support, where possible, individual learning needs. Recognise, support and reward student effort. Provide feedback regularly and as quickly as possible (Oehlkers et al., 2001).
10. Endeavour to be culturally sensitive and involve students in this effort. Recognise language differences and the need to accommodate the difficulties resulting from these differences e.g. within small groups or on an individual basis.
11. Ensure that prior reading and preparation drives the contact sessions. Ensure that students can differentiate between required readings and 'enrichment' readings.
12. Provide and support 'enrichment' activities e.g. on-line learning, group work, the mentoring relationship, outside speakers, flexible and creative experiential learning activities. Challenge students on both a group and individual basis, to maximise their use of the learning opportunities.
13. With students, set high, but realistic standards, and support and recognise the meeting of these standards. Provide incentives, such as recognition in class or on-line.
14. Be open to students and to change and maintain own up-to-date knowledge base. Variety in teaching methods and evaluation is key.
15. Enrich the course by inviting experts from the field or education to 'share' with students.
16. Continue to liaise with course co-ordinators for marketing, consistency and support purposes.

12.6 CONCLUSION

I cannot conclude this thesis without mention of my own transformation and learning. For a number of years prior to this study, I had managed the department of nursing at DIT. As the department grew in size, my contact with students and programmes developed into a greater administrative role, and I was more often than not, a guest lecturer in the different programmes. As staff members became increasingly concerned with the challenges faced by the department as set out in Figure 12.1, I responded by asking if I could introduce the reflective journal, and this was accepted in one or two of the programmes. The intense satisfaction derived from the interaction with students and their thoughts and the almost forgotten challenge of academia, resulted in my resignation from the management post to embrace a project that would be meaningful to the students, the department and myself.

I started a journey that in a sense paralleled that of the students within my study. As they reflected on their personal and professional lives and developed an increasing awareness of their 'voices', I too, discovered through my reflexive journal, and my relationships with students and my supervisors, my own academic 'voice' and the chance to value its power. I started out full of doubts about my ability to present an authoritative and traditional thesis, without losing the essence or authentic voice of the students. Qualitative research was an unknown quantity but as both the project and my understanding of the research process grew, so did my appreciation. Ostensibly, this thesis has been written for the purpose of obtaining a doctorate. But also I hoped to find a way to perhaps share and connect with other like-minded educators as Elsie van Aswegen and other similarly generous educators did with me. Essentially, however it has been to explore, with licence, my practice as an educator in an effort to become a 'critical reflective practitioner'.

I have not been disappointed.

“I am a teacher at heart, and there are moments in the classroom when I can hardly hold the joy. When my students and I discover uncharted territory to explore, when the pathway out of a thicket opens up before us, when our experience is illumined by the lightning-life of the mind -- then teaching is the finest work I know...

...Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one's inwardness, for better or worse. As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together. The entanglements I experience in the classroom are often no more or less than the convolutions of my inner life. Viewed from this angle, teaching holds a mirror to the soul. If I am willing to look in that mirror, and not run from what I see, I have a chance to gain self-knowledge -- and knowing myself is as crucial to good teaching as knowing my students and my subject.

In fact, knowing my students and my subject depends heavily on self-knowledge. When I do not know myself, I cannot know who my students are. I will see them through a glass darkly, in the shadows of my unexamined life -- and when I cannot see them clearly I cannot teach them well. When I do not know myself, I cannot know my subject -- not at the deepest levels of embodied, personal meaning. I will know it only abstractly, from a distance, a congeries of concepts as far removed from the world as I am from personal truth “(Palmer, 1998:1-2).

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Note: The references cited here deal with the following:

The text of final thesis

The appendices

The crude analysis of the raw data (e.g. the data bytes) of the eight completed student reflective journals. (Only selected portions of the journals were included in the final thesis)

Appendices

Nursing Management 1V: Questionnaire

I would like to know a little about you as this will help me obtain a better understanding of who you are, where you come from and what your needs and your experiences are in terms of learning. To help you get started, you might want to use these headings as a basis for your discussion. Please feel free to add anything you feel might be helpful for me to know in order to understand and help you. Feel free to use this as an introduction to your diary and as one of your reflections.

1. Demographic details:

- 1.1 Name
- 1.2 Age
- 1.3 Educational background [e.g. where did you go to school; type of school[s]; where did you study for your profession (nursing college/ Technikon etc); did you study either formally or informally for anything else?]
- 1.4 Qualifications and year and place [e.g. diploma in general nursing. 1999. Addington; certificate in brick building, 2000. Pinetown, Dept. of Manpower]
- 1.5 Work experience [the experiences that have helped you become the nurse practitioner you are. These might include informal work experiences]
- 1.6 Current work situation [where are you working and what are you doing?]
- 1.7 Work role [the position and responsibilities you hold; the authority or power you wield, either formal or informal]
- 1.8 Family membership [roles, numbers and power structures. For example, who is your family? How many are in the family? What position do they take in the family e.g. who is the dad/mom/sibling/son? Who is the boss?]
- 1.9 Role in the family [What is your role in your family? Are you the nurturer or care-giver; are you the parent? Are you the chief cook and bottle washer? You might wish to write about the nuclear family structure and/or the extended family structure]
- 1.10 Community/civic commitments [what do you do when you are not working or being with your family? Do you belong to any groups?]

2. Personal characteristics

The kind of person you perceive yourself to be, the life experiences you have been exposed to, your personal philosophy of life all impacts on how you see yourself as a person and as a nurse.

- 2.1 How would you describe yourself?
- 2.2 What would you like me to know about you?

3. Learning history or experiences

The kind of learning experiences you have been exposed to, both positive and negative, affect the way in which you approach learning in your education programme.

- 3.1 What prior positive teaching have you experienced [i.e. can you think of a teacher or teachers/facilitators who have inspired you to learn, and how did they teach you or help you learn? You might want to consider how your learning environment was organized or structured that made learning easier or more interesting.]
- 3.2 If you have had a poor learning experience, why do you think it was negative?
- 3.3 Teaching methods
 - 3.3.1 What methods are you familiar with? [tick appropriate box below either 'yes' or 'no']

3.3.2 What is your preferred method of being taught? Rate each of the listed methods from 1-5 [1=most preferred; 5 = least preferred. 0=don't know method]

Teaching method you are familiar with	Yes	No	Rating of preference from 1-5
1. Lecture			
2. Prac or laboratory work			
3. Tutorials			
4. Projects			
5. Case study			
6. Problem solving group work			
7. Simulations and games			
8. Buzz groups			
9. Brainstorming			
10. Controlled discussions			
11. Fishbowl			
12. Free group discussions			
13. Questions			
14. Role play			
15. Seminar			
16. Debate			
17. Workshop			

4. Perception of the purpose of and for learning

If you perceive learning as a means to an end i.e. a bar on you epaulettes or as a means to promotion [both of which are perfectly reasonable outcomes] or whether you see learning as a way of life and a means of personal satisfaction [also reasonable] or whether you see it as a means of satisfying your needs for further development in the nursing profession, this could effect the way in which you approach the learning process. You could, of course, see the purpose of learning as a means of improving your status or allowing you greater and better access to preferred jobs. You may have other reasons not mentioned. You may have one reason or many reasons. The importance you give to each reason may also vary.

5.1 Why have you registered for **this** learning programme?

5.2 What do you think your purpose for learning is this year?

5.2 Do you think that you want to learn exactly what is required in order to achieve this qualification

yes

or

no

5.3 Do you think you have other learning needs? Explain.

6. Expectations of the course

The way you are likely to approach a learning programme is fairly dependent on what you expect to get out of the programme and how you expect that programme to be offered. Your motivation for learning is often influenced by your expectations.

6.1 What are your expectations of the course in Nursing Management 1V?

7. Learning style

Scenario A. Miss A. has given a class on Tuberculosis and its management. Students are seated in rows facing the screen and Ms A. stands next to the overhead projector. She has clearly structured her lecture, giving the purpose of the topic and provides appropriate explanations, definitions, examples, descriptions and comments. She is a good speaker, enthusiastic and dynamic in her presentation. She uses humour and drama to attract and keep her students' attention. She uses the overhead projector and transparencies to explain the content of her talk and at the end of the lecture, she provides her students with notes that will enhance and add to her lecture. It is also at this time that she asks if any of the students have questions. It would seem that they have all understood. She tells them that it would be a VERY good idea to learn the material she has supplied as the exams are coming up. At this stage, she summaries the key issues and ends her class. Ms A's class like her very much and enjoy her classes. She makes them feel safe.

Scenario B. Ms B. sits in a circle with her students and asks for their reflections on their clinical visit to the local primary health care centre. Students are quite enthusiastic about their visit and appear to have a need to express their concern at the number of TB patients who also have HIV/ AIDS. Ms B. briefly places these problems within the South African context and wonders aloud what nurse practitioners [the students] could do to alleviate the situation? She, however, indicates that she is not certain of the statistics and while she knows TB is problematic, she wonders, in fact, if it is under control? Perhaps, she asks, the students might like to enlighten her on the current health status of our citizens, as regards TB? Also, why did they think there was a link between HIV AIDS and TB? Was there any evidence to support this? Ms B.'s students are used to working in groups and she suggests that they break up into these groups to decide how to go about the problem solving process, but more importantly, what it is that they really wish to know. Once each group has decided on the problem question and explained how they intend solving the problem, Ms B. either challenges the validity of the problem question and the approach, for review, or indicates her approval. She provides direction on time and feedback. The students have access to internet and a fairly good health resources in the institution's library. They are provided with a time allocation to find and process the information and to report back to the class.

7. The above present two different scenarios for learning.

- 7.1 Which scenario provides for easy learning [A] or [B]
- 7.2 When do you think [A] learning style would be appropriate
- 7.3 When do you think [B] learning style would be appropriate?
- 7.4 Which provides for more difficult learning [A] or [B]
- 7.5 What are the benefits of this style of learning, do you think?

8. What factors do you perceive to affect your learning:

- 8.1 Positively
- 8.2 Negatively

9. Prioritization of nursing interests as they affect your understanding of the nursing profession in South Africa.

The scope of nursing management is extremely broad. While you will be given the theoretical underpinnings of nursing management in your programme, there may be a number of issues/problems/challenges that you would like to discuss or focus on in order to allow you to practice more effectively in the health care environment.

- 9.1 What issues concern/interest you in health care/nursing?

10. Perception of concepts:

10.1 What do you understand to be the meaning of the following educational concepts? [Don't worry if you don't have all the answers. I just want to get a 'feel' for what your understanding is]

critical thinking	Mentorship	experiential learning
reflective practice	adult education	learning contract
problem based learning	community based education	outcomes based education?

Note: I have omitted the original spacing and lines for student responses



Report
Midyear evaluation: Management IV



Classroom Task:

Working in groups of two or three:

Write a one-page report in response to my request for feedback on the Management IV course, with particular focus on critical thinking, reflective learning strategies and the mentoring process.

The purpose of the report is to:

- ➔ evaluate your ability to think clearly and concisely and be able to translate this into an appropriate form of written communication.
- ➔ enable me to undertake a mid-programme review in order to establish the status of the programme from your, the student's, perspective,
- ➔ allow you the opportunity to reflect upon your learning within a group context.
- ➔ provide you with an opportunity of constructively analysing the course and the reflective diary to enable adjustments to be made, if necessary.

Remember to support your arguments and provide alternative solutions.

Make feasible recommendations.

Remember to note those aspects of the course that work effectively for you as well as those that need adjusting.

Read the report out aloud to ensure for accuracy and clarity.

Final Questionnaire**Management 1V students 2002**

This questionnaire should take you about a half of an hour to complete. It should complete my inquiries into student learning using a critical reflective learning methodology. Thank you for your participation.

Q1. Describe the **thinking** processes you used in this management course

Q2a. What knowledge did this critical reflective thinking approach to the course demand?

Q2b. What skills did this course demand?

Q4. What influenced your learning and performance in this management component?

Q5 Consider the learning that has taken place as a result of your engagement in the management component of your programme. Did you use some of the following thinking processes in this management programme? Tick relevant box

5.1 Application of theory to practice [To put to use known information/principles from one thing to another (parallel)]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.2 Identifying cause-effect relationships [Cause= a reason or motive
Effect = the result or outcome. To recognize and explain the relationship between the motive and result]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.3 Classifying or categorising [To arrange by a system or principle from the broadest to the narrowest; to put things together that have the same feature(s) (grouping, sorting, categorizing)]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.4 Comparing and contrasting [To show similarities and differences; to determine how two things are alike and/or different]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.5 Evaluating [To make a judgment based on a set of criteria and/or standards]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.6 Inferring [To arrive at a logical decision by making assumptions; to read between the lines; to conclude by reasoning from a premise based on data (deduction); to extend information or understanding beyond what is explicitly stated]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.7 Observing [To regard with attention; to methodically view or note facts or occurrences]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.8 Predicting [To state what one believes will happen (based on data)]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.9 Prioritising [To give precedence in time and/or importance to a belief, event, idea (preceding from something else)]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.10 Sequencing [To follow one thing after another; to order in succession (grouping, ordering)]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.11 Summarising [To briefly report the main points]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.12 Synthesising [To create something *new* from the parts]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.13 Interpret [explain, deduce]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.14 Analyse alternative viewpoints [see perspectives other than your own]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.15 Draw conclusions [to make an assumption or deduction from all the information available]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.16 Make realistic recommendations [to make a suggestion or proposal based on evidence and available resources]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

Q6. Do you use these thinking processes more than, less than or the same as before you entered this course? Tick relevant box.

Thinking process	More than before	Less than before	Same as before	Not Applicable
Application				
Identifying cause-effect				
Classifying or categorising				
Comparing and contrasting				
Evaluating				
Inferring				
Observing				
Predicting				

Sequencing				
Prioritising				
Summarising				
Synthesising				
Interpret				
Analyse alternative viewpoints				
Draw conclusions				
Make realistic recommendations				

Q7 Did you use the following sources of knowledge more than, less than or the same as before you entered the course? Tick relevant box.

Knowledge sources	More than before	Less than before	Same as before	Not applicable
Internet				
Mentors				
Text books				
Journals				
Newspapers				
Fellow students				
Colleagues				
Friends				
Experts				
Community resources				
Facilitator				
Library				
Other				

Other: Explain

Q8 Did you have to have knowledge of the following in order to successfully cope with this course: [tick the correct box]

Knowledge of:	Yes	No
Group dynamics		
Basic computer usage		
Problem-solving steps		
Information retrieval		
Community resources		
Functioning of your health service		
The SA health system		
The rules of discussion and debate		
Assignment writing		
Developing a written argument or discussion		
Other		

Other: Explain.

Q8 Did you have to have skills in the following in order to successfully cope with this course: [tick the correct box]

Skills	Yes	No
Research skills		
Communication skills		
Time management skills		
Organisational skills		
Self-motivational skills		
Team work		
Critical thinking and reasoning skills		
Ability to reflect		

Active listening skills		
Interpersonal skills		
Computer literacy skills		
Motivational skills		
Other		

Other: Explain.

Q9. Have these skills improved or not as a result of your involvement in this course, do you think? Tick relevant box.

Skills	Improved this year	Not improved this year
Research skills		
Communication skills		
Time management skills		
Organisational skills		
Self-motivational skills		
Team work		
Critical thinking and reasoning skills		
Ability to reflect		
Active listening skills		
Interpersonal skills		
Computer literacy skills		
Motivational skills		
Other		

Other: Explain.

Q10. What did you value or appreciate the most in terms of the management component?

Q11. Which of the following factors affected your learning in either a positive or negative way? [Tick box]

Factors	Positive factor	Negative factor	Not applicable
Time [to learn]			
Personal factors e.g. problems or positive happenings at home or work			
Tutorial sessions			
Discussions in class			
Learning environment in class			
Learning environment in tutorials			
Learning environment at DIT			
Learning environment at home			
Support from peers			
Support from facilitator			
Support from colleagues			
Support from family			
Readiness to learn			
Amount of work			
Applicability / relevance of tasks and assignments			
Diary			
Past experience			
Questioning approach by facilitator in tutorials, diary, tasks, classes			
Use of multi-modal system e.g. workbooks/cdrom/internet/facilitator/videos/outside speakers/web ct			
Use of Web CT [e-mail; discussion			

list; posting of messages/readings; calendar]			
Self-directed learning			
Self-paced learning			
Consultation on tasks, assignments with others outside class e.g. mentor/ colleagues/ peers			
Integration of tasks, assignments, tutorials, diary to own work environment			

If you wish to comment further:

Q12. What effect have the reflections in your diary and tasks had on your attitudes and behaviour in your health care practice, do you think?

Q 13. Were you able to explore and analyse your feelings during this course [e.g. through your diary or through tutorials etc]?

Yes ____ No ____

Q 14. Were you able to do any self-evaluation as a result of your reflections?

Yes ____ No ____

Q 15. Do you feel more empowered as a result of your learning experiences this year?

Yes ____ No ____

Q 16 Do you feel you have grown personally as a result of your learning experiences this year?

Yes ____ No ____

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Feel free to contact me about the findings of this research.

Maureen

Note: I have omitted the original spacing and lines for student responses

DEPARTMENT OF POST-GRADUATE NURSING STUDIES
COURSE EVALUATION NURSING MANAGEMENT IV (2002)

KINDLY COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE AS OBJECTIVELY AS POSSIBLE BY MARKING THE SELECTED ANSWERS WITH A TICK () OR BY GIVING A WRITTEN ANSWER WHERE REQUIRED [if you copy and paste this, you may e-mail it to your course facilitator. Alternatively, a hard copy is available from the department]

DURATION OF THE COURSE

The course is found to be: (too short) (adequate) (too long)

THEORY

The theory was considered to be: (too detailed) (adequate) (too simple)

THE APPROACH

The approach to learning was considered to be: (relevant) (acceptable) (irrelevant)

WEB CT

The integration of computer based learning was: (useful) (not applicable) (not helpful)

Sections considered:

most interesting

least interesting

superfluous

Aspects which should be: expanded

included

Specify why:

READINGS

Were the readings provided

(useful) (appropriate) (adequate) (inadequate) ?

Specify why:

OUTSIDE SPEAKERS

Would you recommend including outside speakers again next year? YES NO

Were there any outside speakers you would NOT recommend for next year? YES NO

If yes, please specify:

Please indicate what other outside speakers you feel would have been beneficial and why :

ASSIGNMENTS

Were there any assignments that you did NOT consider useful? YES NO

If yes, please justify:

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Completing your tasks within your/ or a specified work environment enabled you to integrate theory and practice True/ False

Aspects that could be: expanded

Aspects that should be: included

COURSE FACILITATION

Facilitation was generally of what standard?

(High) (Medium) (Low)

If 'medium' or 'low' please qualify:

Did the facilitation style influence your appreciation of a subject? YES NO

If YES, how and why:

Area(s) of especially high quality of presentations:

Would you have preferred more self study? YES NO

FACILITIES

Please comment on the following facilities:

Classroom Audio-visual aids Parking

Seating Library Toilets

BENEFIT FROM THE COURSE

Please indicate whether you have benefited from the course by circling the appropriate comment:

(Personally) (Professionally) (As a practical nurse)

(Theoretically) (Not at all)

Would you recommend this course to a colleague? YES NO

If NO, please specify why:

Are there any changes you have not already mentioned, that you personally would recommend be made to the programme?

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM

Note: I have omitted the original spacing and lines for student responses

Evaluation of selected aspects of Management IV course:

Web CT:

Here you might want to consider the various aspects and indicate how useful/ not useful they were and why:

1. E-mail
2. Diary entries to be shared with colleagues
3. Feedback and dialogue with colleagues about the entries
4. Additional readings
5. Discussion list
6. News articles
7. Fun section
8. Use as an administrative tool
9. Focused entry into the internet by the provision of URL sites
10. Data sources e.g. Journal for Advanced Nursing etc
11. Calendar
12. Access to the nursing management programme through the web
13. Other uses for the Web CT site
14. How functional did you find this resource in terms of accessibility, availability, user friendliness, facilitator support?
15. Taking into account your own limitations e.g. your own work, study and social schedule as well as the limited infrastructure of the technikon, how could the use of this resource be optimised?
16. What advice would you give to me in setting up this resource for next year?
17. What advice should I pass on to next year's students?
18. What have you gained from using Web CT or the –e-mail system?
19. What skills do you now have that you didn't have prior to use of Web CT?
20. What skills have you improved upon since engaging in the Web CT classroom?

Mentoring Process

Discuss the value and limitations of your experience of the mentoring process this year. Explain what I did to make this an effective experience and what I should have done to make it a better experience.

Teaching and Learning Strategy:

I chose to use the Constructivist educational approach, learner contract, reflective journals, mentoring, tutorials, prior reading, completion of workplace related tasks prior to discussion, assignments, enrichment activities [e.g. Web CT], invited expert guest speakers and continuous evaluation as a means of supporting your learning. I need to know what you felt about this approach and whether or not these were appropriate for your personal learning and why.

Workbooks

I chose to use workbooks and study guide instead of set text books for this course. I need to know how useful/ un-useful they were. The following are some of the principles of course-ware development and writing. Tick the box that you feel most represents the use or non-use of the principle of presentation in your workbooks:

Principle of structuring and layout of workbooks and guide	yes	no	sometime	N/A
Accessibility of information – without distorting				
Introduction to key concepts, questions and issues				
Engage with material in meaningful way. Learning includes “content knowledge acquisition, cognitive development and the ability to engage critically with the subject matter”				
Write to promote effective learning by engagement with the text.				
Arouses interest				
Written for learner use				
Usually gives estimates of study time				
Designed for a particular audience				
Usually gives aims and objectives				
May be many ways through it				
Structured according to the needs of the learner				
Major emphasis on self-assessment				
Alert to potential difficulties				
Often offers summaries				
More personal style				
Content unpacked				
More open layout				
Learner evaluation should be conducted				
Requires active response				
Often provides study skills advice				
Readability considered important				

The following are the general rules for reader friendly writing. Consider your workbooks and guide in terms words or phrases that are:

Reader friendly word or phrases	Yes	No	Sometimes	N/A
Simple				
Short				
Familiar rather than esoteric [high sounding]				
Concrete with metaphorical possibilities rather than abstract				
Verbs that are active, descriptive and vibrant				
Short sentences				
Positive, affirmative sentences				
Personal style, engaging in dialogue with reader				
Provide connecting links between ideas and sentences				
Consistent – same term for same concept				
Start with the known and add new information				
Define key terms clearly and early in material				
Illustrate key concepts with concrete, vivid examples				
Use headings and advance organisers. ..These are initial statements which express new concepts to be learned in familiar terms.				
Write for your learners. Know who they are.				
“Provide support in the forms of clues, reminders, encouragement or even the breaking down of a problem into				

steps, thereby allowing for practice in a structured process of learning.”				
Provide cues to help with learning.				
Organisation of material in a logical, orderly way and omission of needless, ambiguous words				
Other:				

Orientation to critical reflective thinking:

1. Were you given sufficient support for this process?

Yes	No
-----	----

2. Was the orientation to your reflective diary adequate?

Yes	No
-----	----

Note: I have omitted the original spacing and lines for student responses

Research Title: The integration and development of van Aswegen's (1998) model of critical thinking, within a nursing programme, to promote critical reflective practice

Questionnaire: Critiquing of your diary

Instructions for completion

1. Please use the spaces after each question to fill out your answer.
2. Where there are boxes, please tick the one you feel is most appropriate.

1. What are your expectations from the person critiquing your diary?
2. What is your understanding of the rules for critiquing established and explained by your facilitator when orienting you to diary writing?
3. Is the critiquer meeting these rules?
4. If not, in what way and why not? Yes No
5. Are you meeting these rules?
6. If no, specifically why not?
7. When you write in your diary, to whom are you writing?
8. 8.1 Do you write using different 'voices' at different times – for example, you use different styles when you write a report or an assignment or a letter or a reminder to yourself just as you would use a different style to speak to your friends or family or boss or do a presentation. So, do you write using different styles for the different sections in your diary? Yes No
9. 8.2 If yes, tick the correct box in the following table

Diary section	Informal Style [write as you think and feel] OR	Formal style[structured, check for grammar, spelling, comprehension and correct information]	Frequency Always/often/ sometimes/ never [tick correct box]
Reflection			Always/often/ sometimes/ never
News			Always/often/ sometimes/ never
Journal			Always/often/ sometimes/ never

Other

9. Has the critiquer helped you with your diary?

 Yes No

10. If yes, how?

11. Has the critiquing process hindered you in any way?

 Yes No

12. Explain?

13 Do you respond to the critiquing comments:

- 13.1 In your thoughts ?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

13.2 In a written response in another diary entry ?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

13.3 In discussion with others e.g. colleagues, family or friends?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

13.4 By action e.g. changing your behaviour or your practice?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

13.5 Other

14 Do you respond in different ways to comments, i.e. a specific type of response to a certain type of comment?

15 Is your critiquer judgemental in comments?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

16 Is the way in which your critiquer responds to your diary entries helpful?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

17 Explain

18 Do the comments help you to think more critically?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

In what way?

19a Do the comments help you to reflect?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

19b In what way?

20 Do you feel that you can write freely, without worry about being criticised?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

Explain why

21 Does it make a difference that the comments are written in blue or black pen or pencil rather than in red ink?

Yes

No

Explain

22 What advice would you give to the critiquer to enable the critiquing process to be more effective?

23 Would you write your diary the same way if you did not have someone critiquing your diary?

Yes

No

Explain:

- 22 Would you complete the diary entries at the same time if you did not have someone critiquing your diary?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Explain:

- 23 Do you consider the list of questions for critical reflective thinking when you do your diary entries?

Suggested questions to encourage critical, reflective thinking about thinking

- What did you think about this?
- What assumptions were you making at this point?
- Did you challenge the assumption of ____ ?
- Were you sceptical about the validity of this diagnosis/decision/conclusion?
- Which explanation is best supported by the data?
- What other interventions could have been used?
- Was intuition involved in making this decision/ or coming to this conclusion?
- Did you reflect on the feasibility of ____ ?
- How did you arrive at this conclusion?
- How did you evaluate your thinking processes re: ____ ?
- How did you evaluate your analysis of the data?
- How many other interventions/diagnoses/ outcomes might have been considered in making your decision?
- What decisions would you make to manage this situation differently?
- What would the results look like?
- Did you trust your judgement?
- Did you consider other alternatives?
- What conclusions did you reach after examining your own critical, reflective thinking?

Source: Van Aswegen, 2002:54

☐ always

☐ often

☐ sometimes

☐ never

- 24 If not, why not?
- 25 How do the question influence the way you do your diary entries?
- 26 Do you consider your diary evaluation rubric when you do your diary entries?

Diary evaluation rubric.

Do you:

- Use your own thinking to come to conclusions and solutions?
- Defend positions and issues?
- Consider a wide variety of points of view?
- Analyse concepts, theories and explanations?
- Clarify issues and conclusions?
- Evaluate the credibility of sources?
- Raise and pursue root questions?
- Solve non-routine problems?
- Transfer ideas to new contexts?
- Make interdisciplinary connections?
- Evaluate arguments, interpretations and beliefs?
- Generate novel ideas?
- Question and discuss each others views?
- Compare perspectives and theories
- Compare ideals with actual practice
- Examine assumptions
- Distinguish relevant from irrelevant facts
- Come to terms with contradictions and inconsistencies
- Explore implications and consequences

Source: van Aswegen [1998:138] citing Paul [1990] in Critical Reflective Practice: Conceptual Exploration and Model Construction. Thesis. UNISA

Diary requirements: Have you done the following?
Written 3 entries per month [28 in total] ?
Reflected upon relevant professional issues?
Indicated the relevance of each article [newspaper/ journal] for your practice?
Changed some aspect of your practice as a result of your reflections?
Used journal / newspaper articles that lent themselves to the topic 'Health Issues and Nursing in South Africa'?
Determined what is fact, fiction or opinion in the newspaper articles?
Referenced correctly?
Analysed your journal articles in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recency of events i.e. current issues • discussions, comments and recommendations that are feasible, reasonable, well thought out, relevant, creative and that fall within the constraints of the present health system?
Used your list of analytical questions to help you with the above?
Presented your diary in a neat and legible format?
<i>Write a one to two page commentary on your evaluation and also include the strengths and limitations of keeping this diary</i>

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

- 27 If not, why not?
- 28 How does the rubric influence your diary entries?
- 29 Is your diary evaluation rubric appropriate as an evaluation tool?

Yes	No
-----	----

- 30 If yes, in what way?
- 31 If no, what would you change?
- 32 If yes, in what way?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Maureen

Note: I have omitted the original spacing and lines for student responses

**STUDENTS: DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY NURSING
DURBAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

**REQUEST FOR YOUR PERMISSION FOR YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN RESEARCH MONITORING THE
DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING AND REFLECTIVE LEARNING**

As you are by now aware, I, Maureen Harris, have been focusing on critical thinking and reflective learning as a specific educational approach to your studies. Your learning diary, the critical thinking exercises and the discussions emanating from the reflections in your diary using your personal experiences and thoughts, are the tools being used for this approach. The purpose of this approach is to develop 'emancipatory' thinking and to empower you, the learner.

As with any process, it is important to evaluate this technique. You need to know that what you are doing is worthwhile and will result in the above. I am undertaking a qualitative research study in order to do precisely this. This will form the basis for a doctoral study, the results of which should help in future educational planning for the department. The diary, as a tool, has been an assignment in the department in the past two years and as a result of my impressions of its value as a learning strategy, I have decided to investigate it further, and hence, the research.

I would like your permission to include you in the study. What this will mean is that I will include your diaries, tasks, tutorials and class discussion in the study. I would also like to question you at some stage with regards to this process. This should probably take about 30 minutes of your time.

I will ensure that confidentiality is maintained in that I will not use your name in identification of the material. As the diaries are part of your learning programme, the people who might be reviewing the materials are those both within and outside of the department who would normally review/ critique your work. These might include moderators, SERTEC, the SANC. They and other people in the department will possibly see the names on your diaries. Others who would now also view this work and the recordings of the teaching sessions will be those involved in my research e.g. supervisors and transcriber. Where possible, your name will be removed from the documents to which the transcriber has access. The final document however, will not show names and analysis/ findings will be presented in a way that is not possible to identify the participants.

You are at liberty to participate/ or not participate in this project. Please remember that your diaries are self-evaluated so your mark is **NOT** dependent on whether you participate or not.

This is a qualitative research project which means that I only need a relatively small sample of respondents i.e. I won't be able to include everyone, anyway. Therefore I would much prefer that group to include people who wished to participate in the project. Should you agree to participate, you are also at liberty to withdraw at any stage.

I intend giving / and obtaining feedback throughout the year, either individually or in class and the results of the study will be available to the department and to you, in the department, on completion of the study. The principles of confidentiality will be respected in this regard as well.

Please feel free to consult with me regarding any reservations you might have or if you require further clarification. Should you agree to participate, please sign the attached Informed Consent Form.

Thank you for your participation

Maureen Harris
Department of Community Nursing
Tel: 031 2042032
DURBAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

DURBAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT:

The integration and development of van Aswegen's model of critical thinking, within a nursing programme, to promote critical reflective practice

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: Dr L Grainger 031 2042036

NAME OF CO-SUPERVISOR: Dr S. Wickham 0834178675

PARTICIPANTS FULL NAME:

PARTICIPANT'S ALLOCATED NUMBER:

PLEASE CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE ANSWER

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. Have you read the research information sheet? | Yes/No |
| 2. Have you had an opportunity to ask questions regarding the study? | Yes/No |
| 3. Have you received satisfactory answers to your questions? | Yes/No |
| 4. Have you had an opportunity to discuss this study? | Yes/No |
| 5. Have you received enough information about this study? | Yes/No |
| 6. Who have you spoken to? | |
| 7. Do you understand the implications of the study? | Yes/No |
| 8. Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study? | Yes/No |
| a) at any time, and | |
| b) without having to give reason for withdrawing | |
| 9. Do you agree to voluntarily participate in the study? | Yes/No |

If you have answered "No" to any of the above, please obtain the information before signing.

I, hereby give consent to participate in the abovementioned research project.

PARTICIPANT'S NAME SIGNATURE

WITNESS'S NAME SIGNATURE

RESEARCHER'S NAME Maureen Harris SIGNATURE

DATE

**STAFF MEMBERS
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY NURSING
REQUEST FOR YOUR PERMISSION FOR YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN RESEARCH
EVALUATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING AND REFLECTIVE LEARNING**

I have been focusing on critical thinking and reflective learning as a specific educational approach to students' studies.

I would like your permission to include you in the study. What this will mean is that I will include your perceptions on educational issues. I would like to interview you at some stage with regards to this process. This should probably take about 30 - 45 minutes of your time.

I will ensure that confidentiality is maintained in that I will not use your name in identification of the material. The final document will not reveal names.

You are at liberty to participate/ or not participate in this project. Should you agree to participate, you are also at liberty to withdraw at any stage.

I intend giving / and obtaining feedback and the results of the study will be available to you in the department, on completion of the study. The principles of confidentiality will be respected in this regard as well.

Please feel free to consult with me regarding any reservations you might have or if you require further clarification.

Thank you for your participation.
Maureen

Reflexive Journal Entry: 7 August, 2001

THOUGHTS FOR THE FUTURE

I am seriously thinking that I use this year as a pilot year, reflect on mistakes made or insights gained, and use these to firm up on a more structured approach next year.

Reflexive Journal Entry: 6 December 2002

Work from students is coming in dribs and drabs. I am putting Time Management into the orientation for next year and giving out calendars to students so that they can plot their year. I will make them complete this along with their contract. I have structured their study guide in such a way that they won't be able to help but be organised. I am determined!...

What have I learned and what will I change for next year?

I made a quick review of the students' evaluation comments and clearly arising from these comments was one major issues and two less frequently mentioned issues:

The diary was time consuming and purely because of the limited time available to students, the need to complete the number of entries required became an overwhelming factor and burden in a number of students' lives.

A number of students found it very difficult to understand or appreciate the requirements for diary entries and the reflective process took quite a while to appreciate.

The approach to the Management programme, philosophically and practically, was not easily appreciated or understood, especially in the initial stages and a number of students took a long time to come to terms with the approach.

Time constraints:

The tasks have been reduced to 12 tasks for credit and I have also included 4 additional tasks for extra credit, should students wish to pursue this option (I will be interested to see if there are any takers).

The assignments remain the same except that one on auditing has been removed as quality assurance will form the research theme for 2003. Two assignments have been updated with additional material and a marking rubric.

The rubric for workshop evaluation has now been developed and will be reviewed for appropriateness, once the students have decided on the workshop topic.

The diary assignment has been shortened: I have simplified the requirements. There are now three sections, a reflective section, which remains the same; the newspaper section has been slightly changed. Instead of underlining fact, fiction or opinion, students are required to highlight key issues in the reading and then comment in terms of application to nursing practice. The journal article section remains unchanged.

The difference really lies in the number of entries: The students will be required to make one entry per week from any of the three options above - 30 entries required in total. This halves the present requirement.

(An aside: Judith (staff member) decided that her students would start a diary in their first year and continue into their second year. This is quite a breakthrough for me. It was unsought and the request came from her).

Understanding of the process.

Orientation:

The second year students have been told to come in for a three day orientation programme, and this should then allow me sufficient time to:

- get to know the students
- students from the different programmes will get to know each others
- Judith and U (the two co-ordinators of the second year programme) will also get to meet and know the students
- Orientate the students to the programme
- Orientate the students to the process
- Have an intensive work period at the beginning of the year which should afford me the opportunity to set the tone. Off-hand, the material to be included in the orientation period (check at work)

- * Web ct (three afternoons)
- * Ice breakers
- * Group work
- * Approach to programme
- * Explanation of study guide
- * Study contract
- * Critical thinking and reflective practice
- * Mentoring
- * Time management
- * Orientation to library
- * Assignment writing

I will also invite some external speakers (nurse managers from the different disciplines to discuss their role and function; and one or two students from 2002 to discuss their experiences and reinforce certain concepts)

Theoretically, I should also have Web CT set up for next year as well as the CD ROMs. I absolutely didn't have any time at the end of this year. I only managed to restructure the study guide, the readings and the tasks. At least these have been sent off for duplicating and will be ready. I will just have to work like crazy at the beginning of the year and try and get the CD's and the web site ready on time. There is at least two weeks work needed to complete this.

Understanding of the process: Restructuring

For me, a huge lesson lies in organisation. The better organised the work, the lesson planning and the implementation of the process, the better the programme functions. A far cry from 'the seat of my pants' style although, I still respond intuitively but a structured framework prevents many problems. So, what to improve?

Course materials:

The workbooks and readings were all reviewed, as were the tasks and assignments. Nothing has been photocopied, and readings have all been scanned and adapted, with the necessary acknowledgements and copy write permission is in process.

Many of the adaptations have included additional insertion of appropriate pictures/ cartoons to identify or separate sections; the removal of unnecessary information and the inclusion of additional information or instructions. I have included a number of group exercises for class work in the readings which should make lesson planning much easier. (I spoke to U. and suggested that we meet on a weekly basis a few days before the actual class contact session to review the lesson plan. I have also made quite a few notes on the lesson plans that were incorporated this year and can use them again next year but these are negotiable and will depend on the discussion with the two co-ordinators. My intention is to again ask about the prayer/song before class and then use 15 minutes for administration purposes e.g. returning of work; difficulties with work; acknowledgement of students' inputs etc.

This is quite an important element in the programme). The font is the same throughout the workbooks in order to provide consistency. Pictorial references highlight tasks (e.g. a task man for individual tasks and group tasks by a circle of hands) Tasks are all framed by borders so that they are easy to recognise. All assignments have clearly structured and reviewed criteria (I have given these out to course co-ordinators during the year for comment/review should they wish. No response, so I assumed that all was well. I know they are busy and this was really more of a courtesy action than as a result of a real need). This has resulted in 5 ring bound A5 workbooks and an A4 size study guide. Each workbook has an index where the tasks and assignments are clearly noted and page numbers have all been inserted for easy reference. Each book has a different colour cover and picture (this helps with identification) and they will be handed out one at a time, so as not to overwhelm students. I have decided not to have set textbooks but rather, recommended texts. The information in the workbooks is comprehensive and I will again post readings on Web CT.

Study guide:

This remains essentially the same except I have tried to remove anything that was non-essential e.g. additional readings; bump on experiential learning (they get this from their course co-ordinators) etc. I restructured the programme so that essentially, it is divided into three sections:

- The introductory section and framework
- The generic processes
- Management functions

Timetable:

I structured it to include the topic; page numbering; class contact dates; task no., page reference no. and due dates, as well as the readings and page references to be read before class contact.

Assignments / tasks and weighting of marks:

These were shaded in to emphasise the importance. I created a table including the title of the assignment, the page number and the due date. This same approach was used for tasks and only the required tasks were shaded in. Those for extra credit or the evaluations (mid-year and final) were not shaded in.

A table was then made for the weighting of:

- Tasks
- Assignments
- Diary
- Tests
- Summative evaluation

I then gave copies to the course co-ordinators for comment and to check and confirm dates and programme content, as well as assignments and tasks. Lucky for me, there are some sharp eyes out there and so obvious clashes are avoided. This also means, in effect, that they have sanctioned the course content and approach, which is also helpful.

Times:

The timing of the course is much better, I think. Thursdays from 08h00-12h00 and Web CT has been built into the programme and allowances made from 12h00-13h00. Tutorials have already been structured for Thursday afternoons (two sessions). Each student will attend 6 one and a half hour tutorials during the year, starting early on in the year. These will alternate with research on other Thursday afternoons. Ideally, the tutorial group membership should also be the same for the research groups. Identification and bonding will be helpful for peer support. I do not have influence in this regard and can only make the suggestion.

This organisation should address both student and lecturer concerns. There were of course, a number of positive comments which I will look at later. The one issue that I need to think about now is the self-paced learning approach. I mentioned this as an administrative difficulty to students and a number of students have indicated that they found this support incredibly helpful. It allowed them to deal with other work/domestic issues without the guilt of having to hand work in at specified times.

On the other hand, there were students who indicated that deadlines and a tougher approach would have kept them motivated. Oh, that everyone was the same!

What I will do is firstly, spend time on Time Management in orientation and get students to draft a time schedule. I will then provide students with a year planner and get them to write in due dates for readings, tasks and assignments for the Management course and then to put in due dates for any other subject they are registered for. In addition, I will ask them to pencil in priority requirements from work or home. Once this has been done, they will then need to review the year planner for the feasibility. Only after this has been done, will I ask them to sign the contract. (This past year students signed contracts but did not appear to understand the binding nature of the contract, even though this had been explained. I will make available a reading on contracts and spend time discussing the ethics of the signing process.)

There are penalties for late submissions (2% per day). I think that I must stick to this but allow students the option of revising their submission times once a term. I think that this is fair but will negotiate this with the students. The important issue here is not to take on a strict parental role and lecture the students about wrongdoing. The mark allocation/ removal should be a sufficient deterrent. (How this pains me. I am the world's worst nag and lecturer, as my children can attest. To keep my mouth closed and not belabour a point tests me to extreme limits!)

The next thing I will do is organise a communication link. I spent far too much time phoning student or having them phoned (re reminders or change of plan). Sarah mentioned that Judith used SMS's on cell phones. I will see if my children can help me understand this process and it should work out cheaper in the long run. I tried to rely on Web CT, but with the limited access for our students, this was not a reliable option. So the system will be SMS's; e-mail; fax or phone. I must make sure that there is a response or will assume that the message did not get through.

The other system is to make the students responsible for contacting each other and use a chain link. Much will depend on access to communication. I think I will pick up on the 'buddy system' again. The non-punitive positive reinforcement system definitely paid off. Student completed the work or redid tasks/assignments without complaint - a highly unusual state of affairs. The tutorial system provided further discussion and reflections on many of the reflections dealt with in diaries and had many positive effects - catharsis, reflection, problem solving, support, affirmation, acknowledgement etc.

Off-hand, another factor noted was when I introduce a new concept, it needs to be reinforced. For example, I taught students about mind mapping in one class, and didn't return to this concept until the class test. Big mistake. I think that I will require students to hand in mind maps with all their assignments and ask other lecturers to use this process in some of their classes. This same principle must apply with other new concepts. I did do this with problem solving and with de Bono's 6 hats approach although I didn't consciously call the process by name, but rather questioned students in terms of alternative perspectives. We spent quite a bit of time on that this year.

Another perceived problem is the returning of students' work. As a result of the continuous evaluation approach, we are required to keep the students' work in the department. What to do? They can take it home with them during the year, and do, but what a mission to get it returned. I shouldn't complain because it all does come back in the end but my blood pressure levels are very unstable at the uncertainty of the process. Losing tasks/ assignments is always a worry, especially if others are marking the work. Perhaps stapling the work together when it is handed in and using the new improved cover sheet with listed signature? Yes, that might work. As per usual, I will remind the students that the onus is on them to make a copy of their work and assume that I might lose the original, although I will make every effort not to do so. Web CT should help in this regard if students upload their work, a copy can be kept on the web.

Web CT

If all goes well (and I have fairly solid reasons for believing it will not!), students will use Web CT more effectively and more regularly. The initial few weeks will be used to explore and practice using Web CT and the range it offers but thereafter, I will take up Jena's (a student) suggestion, and get students to share reflections with each other on the web.

I will get them to use the hour to write and post a reflection and respond to a class member's reflection on a rotational basis i.e. use an alphabetical listing. This will be a bi-monthly requirement. Those students who e-mail their diary entries/tasks/assignments to me will have a typed response to their work. I will make individual files for students on my computer and charge them the standard rate for paper if they can't get it printed elsewhere.

I have sold the concept of the extra hour for Web CT in that the students can also use this facility for their research. I will have to be very structured in the beginning (I do have a number of worksheets and useful sites) to get the process in motion. The limited usage this past year has indicated that this process should be moved forewords and be enhanced.

My concern about Web CT is the computer access. I have arranged with On-line learning Dept and with the Marketing dept to use their computers (I thought if I had an alternative plan that I should be fairly OK). Hah! News from both is precarious. The merger has caused huge ructions and people and departments are shifting all over the place. I shall just have to wait until the beginning of term to see what is in place.

NB Staff relationships!!!!

Reflexive Journal entry: 2 September, 2003 - letter to Sharman

I really wanted to speak to you about the parameters in the research. I have definitely noted a change in the diary responses and students' ability to complete other tasks (particularly amongst the black students) this year -2003. It could be that as a group, they function better and at a higher level. It could be the improvement in the orientation; the change in times (08h15-12h00 on Thursdays with tutorials organised in the afternoon of the same day opposed to Friday afternoon classes - 14h00-17h00 with tutorials on separate days); it could be the better organisation and return of course material and diaries (there is a one week turnover, as opposed to a two or three week delay in response); it could be the regular Web CT class from 12h00 - 13h00 on class contact days, with students actively engaging in writing on-line diaries and responding to each other. In many ways, these 'open' entries seem to shape, to a degree, the responses from others in the class, by sparking ideas or by offering an opportunity to acknowledge each other in a safe way. Students, who might not normally speak to others in the class, now had a forum to do so. The power of change is visibly removed from me as 'facilitator' or 'teacher'. Initially, I would ask a few questions or make some comments - but I have stayed out of these discussions almost completely after the first month or so - although I read them all. Initially, students would write about incidents they themselves had been involved in, where they or their families were personally affected. A number tended to be quite negative and the responses were mainly sympathetic and indicated that other students identified with the author's problem or pain. The responses started to change with students offering advice or moving into the Socratic questioning mode. Two or three times, students have written about incidents, where they themselves have not featured in a positive light, and one or two students have taken it upon themselves to question their motives or actions or censure the behaviour.

Some students have handed in some very good work in their tasks or have come across readings or issues that have interested me, and I have suggested that they might wish to share these with the group - and they have. We had an external lecturer who was exceptionally motivational and a number of the students wrote enthusiastically about his ability and value. I was able to share this with him and pass on some of these comments - as well as to the HOD. We had an on-line test and some students used the open classroom to express their apprehension or displeasure at this unfamiliar testing method. These diary entries have now taken on a life of their own, which preclude my involvement - For me, this has been a means of empowering students but at the same time, I see that this has not taken away my power, but rather shifted me into another place, where I find myself at a parallel level rather than a vertical level to the students. It could be the active support received from the departmental staff in promoting the diaries as a means of critical reflective writing. It could be that I am more comfortable with the process and this confidence might be rubbing off on the students. I am not sure. It could be one or all of these things.

What I am sure of. is that students' effort and involvement is much better...

Appendix 7: Categorization of data generated from questionnaire on the scaffolding provided for journaling

1. Students' perceptions regarding role, function and responsibility of the critiquer. Critiquer : (N=31) responses				
Provides guidance (f=6)	Promotes growth through learning (f=2)	Directs thinking (f=9)	Correctly interprets student's intent – and provides opportunity for student to clarify (f=1)	Provides explanation (f=1)
Provides verbal feedback (f=3)	Criticises constructively (f=4)	Provides written feedback(f=2)	Attitude – open-minded; fair, non-judgmental (f=10)	Responds timeously (f=1)
2. Students' understanding of the rules for critiquing established and explained by facilitator on orientation to journal writing				
Critiquer will appreciate the entry in its entirety before responding (f=1)	Critiquer will maintain confidentiality and allow for 'free' uncensored reflective writing (f=7)		Journal writing is a process of building trust with the critiquer (f=6)	
Entries will reflect the 'real world' of the student (f=10)	Student takes on the responsibility of thinking critically and reflectively (f=4) at all levels, regularly (f=2)		Focus will be on the process of critical reflective thinking and not content (f=2)	
Process is to promote learning f=7)	Issues of interest to the student (f=1)		Non-critical techniques used (f=5)	
3. Students' belief as to whether the critiquer was fulfilling the requirements of the critiquing role (N=20) responses				
Yes (n=16). No (n=8). Reason: Lack of feedback from critiquer (n=3); one (n=1) student hadn't handed in on time so couldn't comment; (n=5) felt that the feedback was critical in nature, and therefore went against the rules agreed upon.				
4. Responsibility of student in critiquing process (N=20) responses				
(n=21) felt they had met the requirements, (n=5) did not (those who did not felt that they had not met all the requirements all of the time – rather that it was a new experience and therefore learning was a process of experimentation)				
5. Recipient of the student's journal entries (N=20) responses				
Critiquer (n=12); Critiquer and student (n=6); Student (n=4) and General audience (n=6)				
6.The different 'voices' of the student				
(n=22) wrote using different styles; (n=3) used the same style throughout. All wrote the reflective section using an informal voice and (n=9) used a formal voice consistently for the news and journal section. Remainder (n=14) varied between the use of formal and informal voice.				
7. Critiquer perceived as a hindrance in the journaling process (N=20) responses				
(n=11) yes; (n=16) no. Rationale for negative perception:				
Not met with critiquer –lacked guidance (n=6)	Failure to appreciate relevance of written reflective process (n=1)		Misunderstanding or lack of appreciation of critiquer's comments/ communication (n=1)	
Feeling of self-consciousness (n=1)	Perceived failure of critiquer to appreciate the value or 'truth' of student's reflections (n=1)			
8. Perceived critiquer support in journaling (N=27) responses				
(n=17) yes but (n=23) demonstrated how critiquer supported them (combining of responses of 2 questions dealing with issue). (n=10) no				
9. Manner of student response (N=26) responses				
In your thoughts? Always (n=11) Often (n=5) Sometimes (n=8) Never (n=2)	In a written response in another journal entry? Always (n=1) Sometimes (n=10) Never (n=14)	In discussion with others e.g. colleagues, family or friends? Always (n=6) Often (n=8) Sometimes (n=8) Never (n=3)	By action e.g. changing your behaviour or practice? Often (n=4) Sometimes (n=6)	
10. Influence of critiquer in terms of manner of entry (N=27) responses				
Would you write your journal the same way if you did not have someone critiquing your journal? Yes (n= 11); No (n= 16) (N=21) respondents provided a rationale:				
▪ YES				
Critiquer provides focus/ added perspective (n=1); Enables identification of relevant arguments and interpretation of evidence (n=2) Critiquer provides the motivation to write/ learn (n=5); Critiquer needed for guidance (n=5) Presence of critiquer promotes objectivity (n=1); The reflection is valid without the critiquer's comments (n=4) Yes – because the student has no experience of the critiquing process and therefore wouldn't know how it might be changed.				
▪ NO				
Critique is not valued (n=2) because of perception of criticism				
11. Type of responses: (N=20) responses	12.Perceived attitude of critiquer is judgemental (N=21) responses	13. Freedom from restrictions in writing (N=20) responses		
Dependent on comment (n=10) Dependent on mood or time of day (n=2) or interest in subject (n=1) Not dependent on comment – write what thinks (n=5) No response – write as she pleases (n=2)	yes (n=2) sometimes (n=5) never (n=14)	Always (n=12) Often (n=3) Sometimes (n=3) Never (n=3) Because: Recognition that reflection is a developmental process and that the critique is the facilitative part of the process (n=9) Guidelines indicated students right to reflect without judgement (n=5) Critiquer seen in a facilitative/'friendship' mode – not critical or judgemental (n=3) No need for journal (n=1) No need for comment (n=1) Perception of critiquer in critical role (n=3) Questioning the authority /value of the 'faceless' critiquer (n=2)		

<p>14. Approach of critiquer perceived to: Enable critical thinking (N=26) responses</p> <p>Always (n=9); Often (n=7); Sometimes (n=7); Never (n=3)</p> <p>15. By promoting:</p> <p>Broader/alternative perspectives (different thinking) (n=6)</p> <p>Deeper thinking (n=3)</p> <p>Self-questioning (n=2)</p> <p>Focused and in-depth reading (n=2)</p> <p>Re-analysing/ revisiting problem/ rethinking situation (n=6)</p> <p>Focus on feelings (n=2)</p> <p>Different approaches to reasoning in follow-up entries (n=2)</p> <p>Because the critiquer was not physically available to respond to student, did not learn (n=2). One (n=1) student felt that because the critiquer had not taught the students, she did not have the authority or expertise to comment. There was a strong feeling that 'knowing' the students and proving her knowledge of the subject matter was relevant. Having to take the word of other staff members was insufficient.</p>	<p>18. Influence of the colour of the critiquer's responses (N=27) responses</p> <p>Does it make a difference that the comments are written in blue or black pen or pencil rather than in red ink? No (n=21) Yes (n=6)</p> <p>Comments rather than colouring is seen as important (n=23).</p> <p>Only (n=3) respondents perceived the negative connotation of the red pen.</p> <p>Three (n=3) respondents saw the red pen as positive</p> <p>Red indicates formal (n=1) or for marking (n=1); reminds student of schooldays (n=1); means shouting and rudeness' (n=1); enables student to differentiate clearly between own writing and critiquers (n=2)</p> <p>19. Influence of critiquer in terms of timing of entry (N=27) responses</p> <p>Would you complete the journal entries at the same time if you did not have someone critiquing your journal? Yes (n= 5); No (n= 22)</p> <p>No – the critique delays response as student requires time to reflect on the response (n=4)</p> <p>Early response connected to entry motivates as incident remains fresh (n=1)</p> <p>No – the exercise is pleasurable and the response from the critiquer provides further impetus to respond soon (n= 3)</p> <p>The critiquer provides the impetus/pressure to perform (n=9)</p> <p>The student sees her responsibility as an adult learner in this situation and does not require impetus to respond (n=3)</p> <p>(n=4) students felt that the number of entries was too much and so would not respond timeously or at all.</p>
<p>16. Enable reflective thinking</p> <p>Always (n=9) Often (N=6) Sometimes (n=6) Never (n=5) (N=26) responses</p> <p>17. By:</p> <p>Promote understanding and acceptance (f=2)</p> <p>Self-analyse and change of behaviour (f=4)</p> <p>Depends on the importance of the issue under reflection (f=2)</p> <p>Appreciate value and legitimacy of alternative perspectives (f=4)</p> <p>Enable full description of situation to promote analysis (f=2)</p> <p>Promote learning, further reading/ research (f=4)</p> <p>The questioning format evokes response (f=3)</p> <p>Critiquing sometimes promotes a discussion with friends/ family (f=1)</p> <p>No feedback (f=1)</p> <p>Some understanding of critique (f=1)</p> <p>Need to discuss critique with critiquer – needs to be available in class (f=2)</p> <p>Anger (f=1)</p> <p>Perceives critique as a disparagement of own opinion – disempowering (f=1)</p>	<p>20. Influence of prompt questions</p> <p>Do you consider the list of questions for critical reflective thinking when you do your journal entries? Always (n=4) Often (n=5) Sometimes (n=4) Never (n=13) (N=20) responses</p> <p>Since understanding the value of the journal (f=1)</p> <p>Selected aspects relevant to situation (f=1)</p> <p>No - Insufficient skills in critical thinking and ignore some (f=1)</p> <p>No – insufficient time (f=1)</p> <p>Easier to write reflectively without considering the guide (f=4)</p> <p>Yes - It provides a standard (n=3) a guide (n=3) a motivator (n=1) promotes broader critical thinking (n=8) promotes problem solving (f= 2) Enables further analysis (f=2)</p> <p>21. Use of journal evaluation rubric influences reflective writing (N=21) responses</p> <p>Always (n=2) Often (n=3) Sometimes (n=15) Never (n=1)</p> <p>22. Do you consider your journal evaluation rubric when you do your journal entries? (N=10) responses</p> <p>Reflective writing is a process requiring practice – becomes manageable over time (n=2) Does not value reflective writing assignment therefore does not use rubric (n=2)</p> <p>Time consuming process (n=5) – requires too much effort (n=5)</p>
<p>25. Suggested changes to critiquing process</p> <p>What advice would you give to the critiquer to enable the critiquing process to be more effective? (N=19) responses: (n=7) indicated positively that the process was working well for them</p> <p>Give guidance (n=1)</p> <p>Provide positive feedback before suggestions (n=1)</p> <p>Verbal feedback (n=3)</p> <p>Early feedback (n=1)</p> <p>Constructive feedback (n=3)</p> <p>Research prior to feedback – consider culture and race as student issues (n=1)</p> <p>'Avoid bias, be self and genuine' (n=2)</p>	<p>23. How does the rubric influence your journal entries? (N=20) responses</p> <p>Act as a guide/directive to good critical thinking (n=16)</p> <p>Influences choice of material (n=1)</p> <p>Limited influence (n=1)</p> <p>24. Appropriateness of evaluation rubric as an evaluation tool (N=20) responses</p> <p>Is your journal evaluation rubric appropriate as an evaluation tool?</p> <p>Yes (n=20)</p>

f= frequency of responses and not respondents; n = number of participants' responses (N=31). Not all students answered all questions.

For your Diary

TECHNIKON NATAL
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY NURSING

'I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read on the train. Oscar Wild, *The Importance of Being Ernest*.

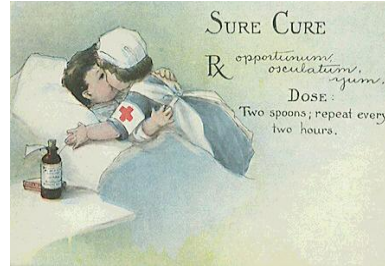
An important part of your learning process will lie in your ability to reflect on and analyze the situations, information and the nursing experiences in your specified field to which you will be exposed. You are expected to systematically keep a diary for the major portion of this year. The diary will allow for the recording of events or issues fairly soon after they have occurred. You will be expected to record, describe, theorize, explain, and puzzle over relatively immediate experiences. This diary form, if kept systematically, will allow both you and your lecturer to gain insight into and understanding of processes, sequences and time order of events that occur in your field of nursing. The purpose is to reflect on both personal and professional issues you have found stimulating, challenging, troublesome or puzzling as well as a record of learning and professional development. It is important that you are aware of issues of confidentiality so be selective about what you write and how you present it. Avoid using names and addresses.



SECTION ONE

In this section, you are asked to consider some of the following aspects of your current clinical experience in your specified field of nursing, either in your working context or experiential learning. You are free to choose what you would like to write about and how you would like to write about it.

If you have difficulty starting, you **might** want to consider using **aspects** of the following framework to guide your thinking and the relating of your clinical experiences:



Overview of environment e.g.

You could consider some of the following aspects of your experiential learning:

philosophy of care;	achievement of specific learning outcomes	organization of care patterns of care
environmental influences on care	multi disciplinary aspects of care	a typical days experience



Care in action e.g.

You might wish to comment on specific instances of care you have observed regarding one or more of the following:

client needs [psychological, social, spiritual and cultural]	health promotion	communication skill
nursing activities and their rationale	involvement of client, family and significant others	



Analysis of care

Consider the care that you gave or helped give to a client or group of clients. Can include:

description of care	rationale for care	personal reflection on quality and delivery of care
	research underpinning care	strategies for improving care

At the end of your entry include a short paragraph that indicates the relevance of your reflection for your practice. Highlight this in green.

Should you at a later stage change some aspect of your practice as a result of this reflection, add another paragraph and highlight this in pink

Additional notes on miscellaneous thoughts and ideas not already captured.

The diary is more than a straightforward account of what has occurred. You are encouraged to relate the experience and then attempt to interpret the experience by drawing upon appropriate knowledge (e.g. research, psychology, sociology, concepts of health etc).

Your studies: You should use this section to reflect upon your programme and your studies, for example, the assignments you are engaged with. Your actual assignments usually have a framework or a structure and criteria to which you will need to adhere. The diary will allow you discuss your thoughts and feelings whilst you are engaged in this process. If you use this opportunity to write down the difficulties [or joys] you are encountering, this making of the problem explicit will allow you to reflect upon the alternative methods of managing your problems. It will also allow me the opportunity of understanding your thought processes.

At the end of your entry include a short paragraph that indicates the relevance of your reflection for your practice. Highlight this in green.

Should you at a later stage change some aspect of your practice as a result of this reflection, add another paragraph and highlight this in pink

SECTION TWO:

Journal articles:

Include in your diary journal articles that lend themselves to the topic "Health Issues and Nursing in South Africa in the year 2001".

You are expected to analyze the article and comment in the light of the topic. You are expected to make suggestions where relevant, taking into account the constraints of the present system.

Criteria you are expected to consider are:

- the recency of events i.e. current issues
- legibility and neatness of the structure of your presentation
- the analysis, comments and recommendations that are feasible, reasonable, well thought out, relevant, creative and that fall within the constraints of the present health system. Please use your list of attached questions to help you with the above.

SECTION 3:

Read the newspaper in colour:

Determine what is fact, fiction or opinion. Read an article and paste it in your diary. Ensure that it is correctly

referenced [Title of newspaper, author – if available; page number and date].

Highlight or underline: Facts in blue; Fiction in green and Opinion in red

At the end of your entry include a short paragraph that indicates the relevance of the article for your practice.

Highlight this in green.

Should you at a later stage change some aspect of your practice as a result of this reflection, add another paragraph and highlight this in pink

Assignment Requirements

You are expected to make a minimum of three entries per week.

One entry per week from Section One [Reflective thought: 36]

One entry per month from Section Two [Journals: 8]

Two entries per month from Sections Three [Newspaper articles: 16]

Time frame:

Your entries start in February and the hand-in date is 11 October.

Monthly submissions:

You are expected to hand in your diary submissions in a labelled plastic folder on the last lecture day of each month [although you might want to hand in your entries weekly]. You should add these to your other submitted entries stored in your personal hard-cover file once these have been critiqued.

Format for diary entries:

1. Hardcover file – narrow
2. Title page: include your name; programme, date; lecturer's name: M. Harris; title of assignment: Diary
3. Index: include week no. [should be 28]; dates e.g. Feb 6, 14, 21, 28; topic title and note if newspaper article, reflective thought or journal article. As each month's entries are added to the file, you will make the necessary adjustments to the index.
4. Self-evaluation – this will only be included by September 1, after you have completed your diary.
5. 8 plastic folders [one for each month] containing monthly entries.

Total number of entries: 60

Evaluation: This assignment will be self-evaluated in terms of the criteria i.e. give yourself a mark. You will be expected to write a commentary on your evaluation and also include the strengths and limitations of keeping this diary. The assignment will be moderated to ensure that your evaluation demonstrates insight and an understanding of critical thinking and reflective learning.

Help:

This journal is intended as a means of enabling you to think more critically. It should enhance your ability to:

- analyse issues and form judgements
- find solutions and evaluate conclusions
- research and negotiate
- anticipate actions of others



You are invited to discuss your journal and problems and issues related to your journey with me. We will also use opportunities in class for discussion. This should be an exciting venture where you should be able to reflect upon your own personal growth. Do not struggle on your own – ask for help if you need it.

Critiquer-Questions and responses and accompanying examples

The following table provides an outline of the type of written dialogue (in the form of questions and comments) I had engaged in with the students and corresponding examples exemplifying the process. A simplified version of this table was introduced in Chapter Six in Table 6.5 Critiquing Options.

A. Critiquer-Questioning to promote different levels of thinking (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation)	Examples from Students' Reflective Journals
Rhetorical questions - Rhetorical questions are not real questions because the questioner usually knows the answer. Teachers often use these questions to discover what students know about particular topics, but these questions do not foster inquiry nor do they involve students in their own educational endeavours. Rhetorical questions are best used to simply stimulate thought with no answer expected.	I said I had noticed in our discussions that both A and C appeared to be more concerned about learning and sharing than in withholding and abusing power. (10a 7 Aug, 2001; Reflexive Journal) "You seem more concerned about learning and sharing than in withholding and abusing power?"
Deductive Questions – questioning from the general to the specific. David Ausubel's (1968) research on deductive reasoning (inferring details from generalizations or the "big picture") led him to suggest teachers introduce a topic on a general basis then slowly focus on details, linking new information with known information. Ausubel(1968) recommended: 1) Present an advanced organizer (something already known) under which the new information may be "filed", 2) Present the new material in context, and 3) Strengthen the cognitive organization of the new material relating to the old. Ask questions like: "If this is true about A, B, and C, what might we conclude about D?" or "Knowing the cause(s) in these cases, what would you guess about the cause(s) in this case?" Wakefield (1998)	15 April 2002 Xolisi's Journal Maureen's comments: Do you really think so? How important is trust in a relationship? What happens when this element is eroded? The fact that both are your friends, how has your professional position in terms of having to pass on the results, affected this relationship? Is it possible to be HIV positive, without the blood transfusion, sexual contact, (was there any other way that unknowing contact could have been made?) What does this mean?
Socratic questioning: Probe assumptions questions- Many questions can center around the concept of assumptions. The student may be asked for clarification, verification, explanation, or reliability of the assumption. Students may also be asked to identify another assumption which might apply to the particular case. What are you assuming? What is Karen assuming? What could we assume instead? You seem to be assuming _____. Do I understand you correctly? You seem to be assuming _____. How do you justify this as your position? All of your reasoning is dependent on the fact that _____. Why have you based your reasoning on _____ rather than _____? You seem to be assuming _____. How do you justify taking that for granted? Is that always the case? Why do you think the assumption holds here? Why would someone make that assumption? (Paul, 1993 in TRA)	Carol 6 March 2002 What does invasion of privacy mean to you? Who, specifically, in the company, did you and your General Manager apologies to? Were the specific employees aware of the breach in confidentiality or, only top management? What are the implications for this, do you think? In terms of the first question, do your new procedures fully address this issue, do you think? Carol 5 September What are the results of your interactions with Dr P? Do you get the results you want? Do you think that because 'you have always worked towards the best interest of the company' that this allows you to override his values or beliefs? How can you anticipate and manage his way of 'always being in a hurry', do you think?
Questions probing belief/value system for justification	Carol 13 March Do you believe that as a woman, you can have everything - the job, the relationship, and the children? Why and how? How do/can you separate out the different elements of your life - working, relationships, learning, and children? Is it possible? What is the effect? What is it that you want for yourself?
Questions for divergent thinking- necessitate more wide-ranging, longer responses with higher level thought processing for example 'Why is rap music so popular with teenagers?'	Carol 19 September I have a challenge for you: try wearing ear plugs for an 8 hour work day and describe how you feel. Consider what it must be like to wear these appliances every working day for that period of time and then ask

	<p>yourself the question 'How can non-compliance with health and safety issues be overcome?'</p> <p>Have you considered the BASNEF model of behaviour? What motivates people to change? What aspects of change behaviour would you incorporate into your health education model, if you were promoting the use of hearing aids?</p> <p>Do you think that understanding the stage of development of the individual might affect his utilization of protective equipment?</p>
<p>Questions for convergent thinking - often have short answers which "encourage similar student responses" and require low level thought processing, for example "Can you ski ? ---- "Yes, I can", "No, I can't".</p>	<p>Xolisi 14 September</p> <p>Xolisi: In our managing people do we only look and magnify their bad sides only or do we give lives to remember the good also about them?</p> <p>Maureen's comments: So should we make judgements? How hard it must be to be perfect.</p>
<p>Anticipatory problem solving questions – these are questions that assume that the problem can be solved, and often the questioner has a particular plan of action in mind.</p>	<p>Toko's journal 15/05/2003 (Toko was discussion an issue around unethical and corrupt behaviour of her manager)</p> <p>Have you considered discussing this with DENOSA? (This is the Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa)</p> <p>Is there any way that you can take this forward on your informal level? Perhaps we should discuss this in class?</p>
<p>Inference questions - These questions ask students to go beyond the immediately available information. To push beyond the factual in this way is to ask students to find clues, examine them, and discuss what inferences are justified. Inference questions demand that students fill in missing information. Wolfe</p>	<p>Carol's journal 11 April</p> <p>Why do you think that women seem to value special days such as birthday, anniversaries more than men? Is this an assumption on my part or is there some truth in the question? Does this mean they don't care ... or?</p> <p>How did you respond to his forgetfulness?</p> <p>Is behaviour indicative of the value placed on the emotion e.g. if someone regularly doesn't remember, does this mean they don't care?</p>
<p>Inductive Questions - specific to general</p> <p>Taba (1966) suggested inductive reasoning (arranging information according to inherent classes or principles) comprises the fundamental building blocks of higher thinking involve. Students should be led to infer the organization and significance of the information they are handling. To see this process in action, give students numerous pieces of information and suggest they meaningfully organize it. Strong students know how to organize and value information. Ask your students: "What is most important?", "What is least important?", and "Should you bother learning this? Why?"</p> <p>Wakefield (1998)</p>	<p>Janet's Journal 20 March 2003</p> <p>Question: if in fact, CEO had been doing so well, why would the mother company make such a radical change? Do you think that the philosophies might not be synchronous - e.g. this CEO worked hard on morale, keeping staff happy, was involved in community outreach programmes - but perhaps did not reach the output target required? All companies are profit driven and perhaps his bottom line in not their bottom line?</p>
<p>Socratic questioning: Purpose/explanation</p> <p>The building up of questions in order to arrive at an explanation or understanding of an issue</p>	<p>Reflexive Journal '11a 2001Entry 11 August 13'</p> <p>At this stage, I asked two questions: One - what was the race group of the patient and Two- why was this question relevant?</p> <p>A number of students chimed in and said that if she were black or coloured, she would be unlikely to ask questions as this passivity on receiving care, generally speaking, was a cultural norm. On the other hand, Indians and whites were far more assertive and non-accepting of treatment without explanations.</p>
<p>Evaluative questions - Evaluative thinking questions are those which deal with matters of judgement, value, and choice. They are characterized by their judgemental quality. Thought processes involved while asking and answering these questions are <i>valuing, judging, defending, or justifying choices</i></p>	<p>Carol 28 March</p> <p>Maureen's response:</p> <p>In retrospect, what could you have done to prevent this from happening? Or was it important that this happen as part of the learning process?</p>
<p>Structure/ how to question - question that will enable to student to structure how to go about the process to find an answer</p>	<p>Carol 2 July</p> <p>What can you do to bring them closer?</p> <p>Ø What are you doing in Richards Bay to help fill in the gap?</p> <p>Ø Have you made friends to bring on home?</p> <p>Ø What if you tackled this side of life (social side) as rigorously as you do work or studies?</p>
<p>Questions about the question - he student might be asked to identify the question, the main point, or the issue at hand. In addition, the student might be asked to break the question into single concepts rather than multiple concepts or determine whether some type of evaluation needs to take place. The student or discussion group may also be asked to identify why this question is important.</p> <p>Is this the same issue as?</p> <p>Does this question ask us to evaluate something?</p> <p>Is this question easy or hard to answer? Why?</p> <p>-What was the point of this question? -</p>	<p>Carol 11 July</p> <p>Does it help to reflect on what you did/ do in terms of learning these behaviours? Why/why not? Does it help to reflect on what you did/ do in terms of learning these behaviours? Why/why not?</p>

<p>Why do you think I asked this question/ - What does...mean? How does...apply to everyday life?</p>	
<p>Interpretation questions - Interpretive questions propose that they understand the consequences of information or ideas. Asks for deeper probing. Wolfe</p>	<p>Carol: 25 September Interesting that you have recognized the 'self-esteem' aspect of the problem. I sometimes wonder who people make the choice for - for themselves or their children. Did you know that this concept features quite significantly throughout your journal? Why, do you think? How do you think it affects your practice? (although you have commented indirectly and directly on this in your journal). How much recognition do you get in and for your work? Is it a built in feature? What do you do to elicit recognition? You mention that human beings need recognition. Is this a norm in our profession or in life in general? Why?</p>
<p>Questions for reflective thinking - When teachers ask reflective questions, they are insisting that students ask themselves: "How do I know I know?"; "What does this leave me not knowing?"; "What things do I assume rather than examine?" Such questions may leave a class silent, because they take mulling over. Nonetheless, they eventually lead to important talk about basic assumptions.</p>	<p>Xolisi's journal: 15 July What about the leader? So does the behaviour of the group depend upon the exemplary behaviour of the leader? Xolisi's journal: 3 July It takes courage for you to express these views. I have a question. If you yourself were HIV positive, is there any way you could confidently inject a client in your health care setting? What would be the purpose of revealing your status?</p>
<p>Probe reasoning/evidence questions- This category of probing questions asks for additional examples, evidence which has been discovered, reasons for making statements, adequacy for the reasons, process which lead student to this belief, or anything which would change the student's mind on this issue. What would be an example? Why do you say that? Why do you think that is right? What led you in that belief? How does that apply to this case? What would convince you otherwise? How could we go about finding out if that is true? By what reasoning did you come to that conclusion? Who is in a position to know if that is the case? But is that good evidence to believe that? Why do you say that? What led you to that belief? How does that apply to this case? What would change your mind? But, is that good evidence for that belief? Is there a reason to doubt that evidence? Who is in a position to know that is true? What would you say to someone who said that ____? Can someone else give evidence to support that view? By what reasoning did you come to that conclusion? How could we find out if that is true?</p>	<p>Reeva 20 February, 2003 Maureen: does the research indicate this? (Do you remember our discussion at the beginning of the year re which professional group had the most impact on the health status of communities in SA?) Carol's journal: 13 April I was going to ask you how you cope with such a workload but you have answered in terms of the positive attitude. What, in addition to cultivating a positive frame of mind, have you done this year to manage? Janet's journal: 18 February 2002 Maureen's response: Does pre-counselling include the eventuality that you write of? Should it? Is there any other possible explanation of the infection (other than the obvious - another partner)? J. No blood transfusions or any possibilities existed. Maureen - that she could recall?</p>
<p>Open questions - Questions which involve complex thinking require much explanation and detail in their answers and probably time to think and reflect. These questions are often called open or fat questions . They are often used to build up information, to allow for more personal responses and to generate further discussions and questioning. Questions which do not require any definite answer are often used as introductory questions at the beginning of a session. Their purpose may be to set the scene for the content that is to follow by steering the thinking of the students in certain specific directions. Open-ended or divergent questions promote open-mindedness and invite many answers or possibilities. They can stimulate the exploration of concepts and ideas and facilitate creative and critical thinking processes. Emphasis is on the individual. These are the kinds of questions that challenge students and their thinking. Open questions are generally contestable in that they leave us with more to think about and may not bring complete satisfaction. A good question is one that enhances and extends learning so it is important to know about the different kinds and where they fit in the learning environment. A good question should breed more questions</p>	<p>Janet's journal: 21 April, 2002 Question: You have been part of a merger. Has this had any impact on you? Are there any lessons you can take from this process that could help you with Change Management?</p>

and the desire to find answers. Good questions need to take the learner beyond the recall of basic information and challenge. Painter (1996)	
Questions to enthuse Questions that could make the reader feel good about themselves, and perhaps engage them in further sharing	Carol's journal: 18 February, 2002 MAUREEN'S COMMENTS: Ø Good for you! Ø Is this something you should share with us? Janet's journal: 26 July Janet, I know you are a member of your Occupational health society. Is this a possible issue the group needs to review? Have you considered writing a paper for the Occupational health journal re this issue? What are other members in the society experiencing? (Are you on the list server - so that you can get a quick idea of general perceptions?) What is your Company doing re this issue? What do you think they ought to be doing? What can you do?
Transfer questions - transfer questions provoke a kind of breadth of thinking, asking students to take their knowledge to new places	Carol: 18 February If race were not an issue in this country, do you think people would still behave in prejudiced ways? Is it possible to use race as a general explanation for poor behaviour and overlook other prejudices?
Questions for recalling procedure	Carol: 5 April What did you say to her in response? Why?
Questions about knowledge -- exhibits previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts and answers Questions: What is ... ? How is ... ? Where is ... ? When did ... happen? How did ... happen? How would you explain ... ? Why did ... ? How would you describe ... ? When did ... ? Can you recall ... ? How would you show ... ? Can you select ... ? Who were the main ... ? Can you list three ... ? Which one ... ? Who was ... ?	Janet: 28 April I am just wondering about our role as nurses. Our practice has extended to such a degree that many of our nurses are 'doctoring' and not nursing. Is there a difference? Do we have the skills and knowledge to make the decisions you are discussing? Is this a concern - or should it be?
Questions about comprehension - demonstrating understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions and stating main ideas. Key words: compare, contrast, demonstrate, interpret, explain, extend, illustrate, infer, outline, relate, rephrase, translate, summarize, show, classify Questions: How would you classify the type of ... ? How would you compare ... ? contrast ... ? Will you state or interpret in your own words ... ? How would you rephrase the meaning ... ? What facts or ideas show ... ? What is the main idea of ... ? Which statements support ... ? Can you explain what is happening ... what is meant ... ? What can you say about ... ? Which is the best answer ... ? How would you summarize ... ?	Jenny: 29 August What are the alternatives in the light of what is acceptable to people? Perhaps you would be right if this were the rational. I would question this as the major reason, however Jenny: 23 March Maureen's Comments/questions Good point. What would happen if repeated injections of benzyl penicillin ? There is a system (cheap) of conserving water and using soap in areas with limited access to water. Do you know it (Marijke has a reading if you want one).
Questions to promote action / Questions about application - solving problems by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in a different way. Key words: apply, build, choose, construct, develop, interview, make use of, organize, experiment with, plan, select, solve, utilize, model, identify Questions: How would you use ... ? What examples can you find to ... ? How would you solve ... using what you have learned ... ? How would you organize ... to show ... ? How would you show your understanding of ... ? What approach would you use to ... ? How would you apply what you learned to develop ... ? What other way would you plan to ... ? What would result if ... ? Can you make use of the facts to ... ? What elements would you choose to change ... ? What facts would you select to show ... ? What questions would you ask in an interview with ... ?	Carol's journal: 8 February Dear Carol In some ways, it is really hard for me to respond appropriately now to entries read so many months later and also because many of your issues have been discussed in tutorials. But I will do my best. It is quite obvious that you have taken on a huge challenge and for me, the challenge is: how to keep both you and your family safe while meeting your other demands. Can you accept a different standard of performance from yourself in either area? What do you anticipate will happen if you continue at the rate that you do? What have you noticed about your lifestyle when trying to analyze your time?

<p>Questions about analysis - - examining and breaking information into parts by identifying motives or causes; making inferences and finding evidence to support generalizations.</p> <p>Key words: analyze, categorize, classify, compare, contrast, discover, dissect, divide, examine, inspect, simplify, survey, take part in, test for, distinguish, list, distinction, theme, relationships, function, motive, inference, assumption, conclusion</p> <p>Questions: What are the parts or features of ... ? How is _____ related to ... ? Why do you think ... ? What is the theme ... ? What motive is there ... ? Can you list the parts ... ? What inference can you make ... ? What conclusions can you draw ... ? How would you classify ... ? How would you categorize ... ? Can you identify the difference parts ... ? What evidence can you find ... ? What is the relationship between ... ? Can you make a distinction between ... ? What is the function of ... ? What ideas justify ...</p>	<p>11 April: Carol</p> <p>Why do you think that women seem to value special days such as birthday, anniversaries more than men? Is this an assumption on my part or is there some truth in the question? Does this mean they don't care ... or?</p> <p>How did you respond to his forgetfulness?</p> <p>Is behaviour indicative of the value placed on the emotion e.g. if someone regularly doesn't remember, does this mean they don't care?</p>
<p>Questions about evaluation - presenting and defending opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas or quality of work based on a set of criteria.</p> <p>Key Words: award, choose, conclude, criticize, decide, defend, determine, dispute, evaluate, judge, justify, measure, compare, mark, rate, recommend, rule on, select, agree, interpret, explain, appraise, prioritize, opinion, ,support, importance, criteria, prove, disprove, assess, influence, perceive, value, estimate, influence, deduct</p> <p>Questions: Do you agree with the actions ... ? with the outcomes ... ? What is your opinion of ... ? How would you prove ... ? disprove ... ? Can you assess the value or importance of ... ? Would it be better if ... ? Why did they (the character) choose ... ? What would you recommend ... ? How would you rate the ... ? What would you cite to defend the actions ... ? How would you evaluate ... ? How could you determine ... ? What choice would you have made ... ? What would you select ... ? How would you prioritize ... ? What judgment would you make about ... ? Based on what you know, how would you explain ... ? What information would you use to support the view ... ? How would you justify ... ? What data was used to make the conclusion ... ? Why was it better that ... ? How would you prioritize the facts ... ? How would you compare the ideas ... ? people ... ?</p>	<p>Carol's journal: 28 March, 2002</p> <p>Maureen's response:</p> <p>In retrospect, what could you have done to prevent this from happening? Or was it important that this happen as part of the learning process?</p>
<p>Probe implications/ consequences questions - The student might be asked to describe and discuss the implication of what is being done or said, the effect which would result, the alternatives which might be feasible, or the cause-and-effect of an action.</p> <p>What are you implying by that? When you say ____ are you implying ____? But if that happened, what else would also happen as a result? Why? How can we find out? What does this question assume? Would ____ ask this question differently? How could someone settle this question? Can we break this question down at all? Is this question clear? Do we understand it?</p>	<p>Janet's journal: 13 February, 2003</p> <p>What would happen if the government did not impose this legislation? What would happen if the government did not impose this legislation?</p> <p>Janet's journal: 13 February, 2003</p> <p>An interesting article - following close on the heels of the basic minimum wage packages of domestic workers.</p> <p>Can you see any connection to what is happening in industry today? I took a walk around SA Breweries - and the staff complement was noticeable by their absence. What has been the impact of mechanization or the increase thereof - on the economy/ on the worker, do you think?</p>

<p>Is this question easy or hard to answer? Why?</p> <p>Does this question ask us to evaluate something? What?</p> <p>Do we all agree that this is the question?</p> <p>To answer this question, what other questions must we answer first?</p> <p>I'm not sure I understand how you are interpreting this question. Is this the same as _____?</p> <p>How would _____ state the issue?</p> <p>Why is this issue important?</p>	<p>What would happen if the government did not impose this legislation?</p> <p>What is the status of agricultural workers and their families, currently?</p> <p>What are the implications of this article - and your thoughts - for your own nursing practice, do you think?</p> <p>Carol: 14 February, 2002</p> <p>How does this perception help you as a nurse practitioner? Do you manage the contact differently with this thought in mind? What do you do to protect yourself as a nurse? Is it sufficient? You have children of your own and many children follow in their parents' footsteps and want to do what mom or dad does at work. Does the risk attached to your job affect what you would want for your children?</p>
<p>Closed questions - Many questions we ask in the classroom require only a simple yes /no answer or a brief response. These are usually classified as closed or skinny questions. These questions do not require complex thought to reach the answer. They are usually used to recall information, assess prior knowledge or knowledge gained after teaching. What really produces closure is neither the question nor the answer but the environment in which questions are considered. If the environment encourages the formation of questions as an important activity in its own right, and if it encourages students to use a variety of strategies regarding questions and activities as a step to further inquiry, then even closed questions may be open. Painter 1996</p>	<p>Reeva: 20 February, 2003</p> <p>Maureen: do you think that this is only peculiar to SA?</p>
<p>Questions to empower through insight development</p>	<p>Carol: 23 February</p> <p>This issue of group preparedness and team work plagues you for most of the year. How about picking up on some readings about how to improve or work effectively in a team or talking to an expert in this area?</p> <p>What else could you do to learn how to get a group motivated and working together? Could this help you in your work situation in any way?</p>
<p>Questioning about hypothesis -Typically, questions about what can be predicted and tested are thought of as belonging to sciences and other "hard" pursuits. But, in fact, predictive thinking matters in all domains.</p> <p>Skilled teachers probe for predictions as a way of making students actively aware of their expectations</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 27 February, 2003</p> <p>What would you say to Debbi Raphiti's advice "Ensure that your managers support you at all times. Open your mouth and talk?"</p> <p>How much responsibility do we as nurses bear in maintaining the status quo? (In other words, continuing to operate as we do?)</p> <p>If no-one objects to a situation, what reason is there for managers to change the situation?</p> <p>What type of pressure could we bring to get managers to change the work environment so that it is conducive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * to nurses' health and * to patients health?
<p>Probe for Clarification questions - Questions of clarification are basically asking for verification, additional information, or clarification of one point or main idea. The student would be expected to provide the information, expound on an opinion, rephrase the content, or explain why he/she made that particular statement.</p> <p>What do you mean by...</p> <p>What is your main point?</p> <p>How does _____ relate to _____?</p> <p>Could you put that another way?</p> <p>What do you think is the main issue here?</p> <p>Is your basic point _____ or _____?</p> <p>How does this relate to our discussion/problem/issue?</p> <p>What do you think John meant by his remark? What did you take John to mean?</p> <p>Thembi, summarize in your own words what Siphiso has said. Siphiso, is that what you meant?</p>	<p>12a June Reflexive journal entry</p> <p>(Questions to students introducing themselves in their journal)</p> <p>Tell me about yourself. Who are you? Where do you come from? Tell me about a day/ week in your life/ work life. Tell me about your family. Tell me about your programme, how it meets/ doesn't meet your needs. Tell me about how you learned in the past and if there is difference in how you are being taught now? What are the difficulties/ values you are experiencing?</p> <p>Janet's journal : 27 March, 2003</p> <p>And so what are you trying to say here - you are doing her a favour and therefore she needs to be loyal?</p>
<p>Probe perspectives/viewpoints questions - The student might be asked whether there are alternatives to this viewpoint or perspective, how might other groups or people respond, what argument a person might use who disagrees with this viewpoint, or a comparison of similarities and differences between viewpoints.</p> <p>What would someone who disagrees say?</p> <p>What is an alternative?</p> <p>How are Tobile's and Eric's ideas alike? Different?</p> <p>What are you implying by that?</p> <p>When you say _____, are you implying _____?</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 12 February, 2003</p> <p>What if it was one of your family?</p> <p>Xolisi's journal: 28 June</p> <p>If you were the minister of Health of SA, what would be your reasons for delaying treatment?</p> <p>Janet's journal: 27 March, 2003</p> <p>Here you have someone who has an 'in-charge' position? How do you</p>

<p>But, if that happened, what else would happen as a result? Why? What effect would that have?</p> <p>Would that necessarily happen or only possibly/probably happen? If _____ and _____ are the case, then what might also be true? If we say that _____ is ethical, how about _____?</p>	<p>get someone like this to 'buy into' your concept for the need to change? For 5 years, her notion of hygiene has been OK - but no longer - how can you get her to accept this 'new notion'? What could you have appealed to?</p> <p>Do you in fact, think you were wrong? What will be the outcome and what will be the cost?</p>
<p>Procedural questions - relate to classroom, lesson and student control processes such as "Who is absent today?"</p>	<p>Usually asked in tutorials or contact classroom sessions</p>
<p>Questions to promote synthesis - compiling information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions.</p> <p>What changes would you make to solve . . . ?</p> <p>How would you improve . . . ?</p> <p>What would happen if . . . ?</p> <p>Can you elaborate on the reason . . . ?</p> <p>Can you propose an alternative . . . ?</p> <p>Can you invent . . . ?</p> <p>How would you adapt _____ to create a different . . . ?</p> <p>How could you change (modify) the plot (plan) . . . ?</p> <p>What could be done to minimize (maximize) . . . ?</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 6 March</p> <p>What was her menstrual history? What was her state of mind? Is there not a policy on ultrasound's pr</p> <p>Wow So many questions about this. What do you know about false pregnancies?</p> <p>Why was the woman bleeding?</p> <p>Why hadn't the woman attended AN clinic?</p> <p>How did the woman cope afterwards? What kind of support would she have needed?</p> <p>Was there negligence on anyone's part here?</p>
<p>Socratic arc of questioning - But simply posing a variety of questions hardly creates a climate for inquiry. At least as important is the way in which teachers respond to the answers their questions provoke. Thus, recent research (Sacker and Sadker, 1985) suggests that too often students' replies meet with little more than a passing "uh-huh" Such responses can stop inquiry dead in its tracks. In place of such dead-end situations, skilled teachers give an exchange of questions a life-course. Across a long arc of questions and answers, they pursue an investigation in which simple factual inquiries give way to increasingly interpretive questions until new insights emerge. For an observer, there is an impression of a kind of mutually constructed improvisation unfolding (Mehan 1978, 1979). In this improvisation, teachers keep questions alive through long stretches of time, coming back to them days, even weeks, after they have first been asked. Creating a climate of enquiry: across an arc of "questions and answers, they pursue and investigation in which simple factual inquiry gives way to increasingly interpretive questions until new insights emerge". It is almost as if the questions posed form a kind of catwalk of realizable possibilities along which a student can move toward new insights (Luria 1976, Vygotsky 1978, Wertsch, 1978). Wolf (1987:4)</p>	<p>In general, students did not directly answer my questions in their journal. However, many either returned to the issues and discussed these further in tutorials or in later entries.</p> <p>Lea: 17 March</p> <p>? Maureen: very cute - but in fact, what kind of influence do hormones' play in our behaviour?</p> <p>Lea's response: Huge, but some don't have "human" control. I really need to become cerebral.</p> <p>Lea: 6 April</p> <p>Maureen: What are the implications for your practice?</p> <p>Maureen: Is cholera an issue on the work front?</p> <p>Lea's response: No but in KZN employees travel to other areas so must know signs and symptoms.</p> <p>Maureen: Where would you make this table available and why?</p> <p>Lea's response: traveling teams.</p> <p>Maureen: Why is a table so useful?</p> <p>Lea's response: So easy to read and evaluate quickly.</p> <p>Lea: 25 April</p> <p>Maureen: and this leads you to ...?</p> <p>Lea's response: If these are amazing and time is critical, then what can we expect to see in the next decade especially in genetics and DNA research!</p>
<p>CRITIQUER-RESPONSES TO STUDENT ENTRY</p>	<p>EXAMPLE FROM JOURNALS</p>
<p>Acknowledging individual worth.</p> <p>Individualising responses in a way that recognises the uniqueness of the student, allows the student to understand that they are valued,</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 28 August</p> <p>What a shock for you, Nandi</p> <p>Have you thought of making an appointment with management to express your concerns? I am very proud of you this was a very good reflective process and you integrated your theory on your own situation. Well done!</p>
<p>Recognising the student's personal circumstances/dilemma</p> <p>This follows on from the previous concept, and reminds both the critiquer and the student, that the critiquer is aware of the personal events or influences shaping the student's learning</p>	<p>Reeva's journal: 8 May, 2003</p> <p>I am fairly sure I have responded to this as I remember reading and thinking about it.</p> <p>A question, Reeva. Your first paragraph indicates a sense of despair and a feeling that life just takes over, with or without your control. Does this mean one should not have goals?</p> <p>Your second paragraph is much more hopeful, and personally, I can see the change in you. Would you have accepted 'your humanness' at the beginning of the year and seen it as the strength through which you now view your life? Have your values changed in any way?</p>
<p>Drawing analogies/ creating metaphors</p> <p>Gordon and Pose (1971) suggested metaphorical thinking stretches the mind and forces the learner to think critically. Analogies and metaphors require the learner to enter the land of synthesis and evaluation. Critical thinking in these creative terms may be the ultimate information-processing skill. Forced metaphors or analogies are particularly effective in instigating higher level thinking. A "forced" metaphor requires a learner to associate two ideas that are not</p>	<p>Janet's journal: 14 September 2003</p> <p>I suppose most things can be rationalized - but the question is - do we always want to?</p> <p>I am a great Walt Whitman fan and when he suggests we consider a blade of grass or the essence of a mouse - and then query whether or not there is a god.</p>

commonly linked. For example: "How are schools like gardens?", "Personally devise and explain democracy in the context of a metaphor.", or "What do math equations and language sentences have in common?" (Wakefield, 1998).	
Identification of relevant elements I have observed that for my students, one of the most difficult aspects of critical thinking, was the ability to focus on key, relevant issues. In many previous instances, students had been told by others in authority was relevant. I wanted them to learn to identify this for themselves and recognise the choices they were making and why.	Carol's journal: 10 April An interesting perspective. It made me think about getting older and wondering if fear of consequences was the reason for staying the same. Do you think that our value system changes as we age? Interesting choice of word "fall" why do you think you used that specific word?
Honesty/ authenticity Much of how the student/ critiquer relationship will develop, will depend upon the honesty of the relationship and the ability of the critiquer to provide 'reality checks' in an acceptable manner	Carol's journal: 4th September In a number of schools the teachers anticipate these sorts of reactions and put in a number of measures to try and lighten the playing fields, as it were e.g. cake and suckers for everyone at school etc, etc. There comes a time though, that children learn that life just 'aint fair' and that's the truth. How we choose to respond to those types of situations determines our own sensibilities. Your criteria for life's choices seem to me to be a reasonable one.
Providing information I saw my role as extending the student, and part of this requires a sharing of information. I chose to do this by engaging deeply in the reflections, and if I could offer anything further by means of additional sources or literature, I did.	Reeva's journal: 13 February You might be interested to know that the framework of this programme is based on the model of critical reflective practice developed by Elsie van Aswegen. She will be pleased to know that it had an effect on you. I note with interest your motivational message to the class - marks for nothing. Well, the intent is good, but believe me, you will have earned your mark - even if it isn't in the accepted traditional format. Tell me your thoughts when you have completed your programme.
Structuring the thinking process My function in these journals is to support critical reflective thinking. Ways I tried to achieve this was through trying to challenge and help students structure their thinking processes. Sometimes, this took the form of Socratic questioning and other times, through making connections.	Reeva's journal: June 2003 I am trying to disassociate myself from an event for which I was originally responsible - and so ask you to move into a hypothetical mode. Imagine a similar situation in your clinic where you are on the receiving end - what would make it easier for you to respond so that the issue is dealt with and your persona remains intact? Theoretically, the situation in class should not have evoked an emotive response, for, as you correctly note, your opinion was asked for. Why do you think it did? Could or would you change your management of this situation. If yes, how and why? If no, why not?
Providing direction Whilst much of my input was through questioning, it was sometimes also helpful to point the student in a specific direction, particularly if I was concerned about some of the decision making or interpretation of events.	Reeva's journal: June 2003 Maureen: There is a difference between being dependent on someone (this implies that they make the decisions without necessarily consulting or working with you) and independence - which means that you are in control of the situation and yourself. It doesn't mean that you assume all the responsibility and do all the work. Responsible delegation is just one of the techniques to do this.
Promoting reflective thinking	Reeva's journal: 10 April, 2003 While you mention that you have no control over your own path, perhaps the 6 months might give you space to view who you are without the support of a contact relationship. You might surprise yourself - and who knows what else might be in store for you if you open yourself up to experiences? While you mention that you have no control over your own path, perhaps the 6 months might give you space to view who you are without the support of a contact relationship. You might surprise yourself - and who knows what else might be in store for you if you open yourself up to experiences?
Reinforcing specific concepts	Well done Nandi (4 September) You are not asking her to do anything else but her job. It is amazing the power some people have over others part of being a professional person means assuming proper use of power and I like your choice of words firm and consistent.
Positive reinforcement by praising the student	Nandi's journal: 28 August I am very proud of you. This was a very good reflective process and you integrated your theory on your own situation. Well done! Nandi, you have provided a good description and supporting argument. Well done. Don't you think you should share this?
Accurate observations	Carol's journal:

	<p>What other kind of stress breakers have you built into your life style? Ø Stress is a theme in your entries. What should this mean to you, do you think?</p>
<p>Drawing analogies~creating metaposition - Gordon and Pose (1971) in Wakefield (1998) suggested metaphorical thinking stretches the mind and forces the learner to think critically. Analogies and metaphors require the learner to enter the land of synthesis and evaluation. Critical thinking in these creative terms may be the ultimate information-processing skill. Forced metaphors or analogies are particularly effective in instigating higher level thinking. A "forced" metaphor requires a learner to associate two ideas that are not commonly linked. For example: "How are schools like gardens?", "Personally devise and explain democracy in the context of a metaphor.", or "What do math equations and language sentences have in common?" Wakefield, (1998).</p>	<p>Janets' journal: 14 September, 2003 I suppose most things can be rationalized - but the question is - do we always want to? I am a great Walt Whitman fan and when he suggests we consider a blade of grass or the essence of a mouse - and then query whether or not there is a god.</p>
<p>Acknowledging student's contribution</p>	<p>Jena's journal: 28 May, 2002 Dear Jena Well your reflection provoked a lot of thought on my part. I thought about myself as a teacher/facilitator and my efforts to be non-judgmental - but is this possible? I make judgements all the time and in fact, judgements are essential element in critical thinking. Perhaps if I use the word objectively - this holds more truly to what I am trying to achieve.</p> <p>Your stories are wonderful illustrations about choices in judgement - and, importantly, you provide reasons for your decisions. It is only when you have access to reasons that you can then weigh these - and come to a decision - a judgement. When new information arises, your decisions are then re-evaluated on this light - and another judgement is made.</p> <p>I know I am not asking a question and that I am making a statement that you can disregard, as you choose.</p>
<p>Recognition of/planning for next stage</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 12 February It is nice that you have summarized but it is not necessary. If you just highlight the key points this will save you some time, This is good article to start your entries off.</p>
<p>Promoting critical thinking</p>	<p>Reflexive journal: 'Taentry2 June 2001 I went through one of her reflective thought entries. It dealt with professional practice and ethics and her analysis was both apt and thought provoking. I asked a number of questions relating to the relevancy of ethics in today's context and specifically regarding the situations nurses found themselves in today. I asked if we could afford to be ethical considering the reality of the complexity of some situations. Her response dealt with 'how can we not?' I am very interested in situational morality and would love to have debated this longer. It was good to give positive feedback. I also recommended some readings and a theorist on moral development, Kohlberg.</p>
<p>Identifying with the student</p>	<p>Xolisi journal: 31 May I echo your sentiments. When I read about the work that you do, and your sense of nursing, I feel the same pride.</p>
<p>Supporting the student by: *encouragement</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 21 October I look forward to following your progress in future- and will always be interested in what you are doing.</p>
<p>Linking to previous discussion/entry</p>	<p>Carol's journal: 25 June Sounds like a good plan. We have talked about this in tuts.</p>
<p>Demonstrating awareness of own weakness/lack of knowledge</p>	<p>Toko Topic 6 A dilemma indeed. I didn't know how to solve your problem, perhaps we should take this to class? I do know that in life, situations are never simple- and you are going to need to resolve your dilemma between -What is right and wrong (your own morality) -Loyalty -and intimidation. It is of course easier when there are proper systems in place.</p>
<p>Focusing/highlighting key issues Whilst as critiquer, I took my cue from the students' entries and followed up with related questions, I too, had an agenda and issues</p>	<p>Carol's journal: 30 April How do we as nurses, form alliances of mutual respect with other health professionals? What should/ could we do? How do we as</p>

that I was concerned with, one being the nursing profession. Where appropriate, I would highlight these issues through questioning or comments.	nurses, form alliances of mutual respect with other health professionals? What should/ could we do?
Criticizing It was difficult to draw the line between supporting, directing and disagreeing and criticizing, especially as my role as empathetic-critiquer had clearly delineated the non-judgmental aspect of my function. Nonetheless, there were occasions when I could not let the student believe that her perspective was not flawed. Generally, the questioning method was an indirect way of dealing with this, but sometimes, I found that I had to be more direct. I believe it is in the way one phrases the criticism that makes it acceptable or not – considering the limits of my own delineated role.	Nandi's journal: February 12 MAUREENS COMMENTS: Nandi, your questions are valid but perhaps you might take into account the fact that this is a club donating funding . The other issues you mention, quite correctly, should be dealt with and so perhaps you might be interested to see an additional form of funding been made available to St Mary's (see Web CT latest health link bulletin).
Recognising processes - restating or reframing to enable student/self to recognise what is happening	Jena's journal: 14 March, 2002 Regarding the checking at the Supermarket. The logic here however is: if you want to compare the costs of 'chicken casserole' tinned vs. cooked, the process may well be comparative. If however, you took the price of a banana - home grown to the grocery store - it may well be cheaper. Theoretically it should also be cheaper to take a small portion of the family's dinner and puree it - than cook separately. In certain situations, growing own vegetables might also prove more expensive (depending on what you are costing). Reeva's Journal: June 2003 Maureen: here you are assuming that everyone is (1) close minded and (2) considered all the alternatives and consequences and/ or (3) has exactly the same motivation or (4) that everyone gives the same amount of thought and care to their actions.
Requesting information Students needed to be aware that although ostensibly the journal was written for themselves, they did have a reader (s). If I requested specific information, it meant that there were gaps in the entry and that the information proffered was not self-evident.	Carol: 26 August What kind of a referral letter did she write, do you know? Is there anything else she should have done to ensure that she received feedback? Sometimes, liaison by the OHN with the concerned hospital does pay off in the long term. Do you think that personalizing a situation (i.e. making personal contact) will have a positive effect? You seem to do this all the time in your work why should the results be any different for the OHN? Even if, as you note, nursing is just a job why should there not be an appropriate procedure for feedback? If someone works at a supermarket, they do not have a calling; nonetheless, they are still required to do a good job. Why should this be different in nursing?
Reminding These types of comments served more than one purpose: They enabled the students to see that my engagement with their journals was deep – I remembered – but also, it was a way of connecting themes, which is part of the recurrent, reflective process.	Jena's journal: 23 February How empowered are nurses to change processes? (I am really thinking about your second entry here). Carol's journal: 23 August Carol These tutorials have had different meanings for different people. I spelled out my intentions in my own journal entries and the difficult part is that the formula is not and has not been the same for everyone. Much of the process has depended on the individual needs of the students. In a sense, you have missed out on some of the process in that I am only getting to critique your journal entries now. However, as I recognize many of the issues, these have been discussed and debated in the tutorials. I should mention that I am grateful that you have come along with me on this journey and committed to a process that was not always overt or spelled out. You have done this with courage and shared your innermost thoughts and concerns generously and with style. You might like to go back to your reading in Book 1, pages 13-15 on critical reflective thinking and review what you are doing in light of this reading.
Connecting to prior learning	Carol's journal: 20 August As a manager, where do you draw the line? Is there a line? What would have happened if you had asked the company to buy you a computer or at least, found a way to make it tax deductible, as the work you would be doing on the computer will indirectly benefit the company? (If I remember correctly, we did discuss this, didn't we?)
Demonstrating awareness of own feelings/emotions	Xolisi's journal: 31 May I echo your sentiments. When I read about the work that you do, and your sense of nursing, I feel the same pride.
Summarizing	Jena's journal: 17 February

	This was a very interesting response to a potential power-play situation (i.e. routed through the Matron) I get a strong sense of your being someone very comfortable with yourself - and not needing to be "boss".
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Table 8.1: Evidence of linkages to other courses

Boniswe, Bisa, Jabu 25/7/2002	Xolisi, Jena, Row Rea 2/8/2002	Carol, Lisi, Rea 14/6/2002	Carol, Lisi 23/8/2002
	<p>Linkage to class on HIV AIDS counselling; sexuality education; research. Maureen: "I think you all went to the (class) on Aids counseling." Rowan: "Yes"</p> <p>Linkage to previous year's class on circumcision and the difficulties of sexuality education (Jeff – a previous graduate assistant involved in circumcision management in a rural area was referenced.</p>	<p>Linkage with other courses (research and occupational health)</p> <p><u>Personal Observation:</u> Students had learning difficulties related to literature review in another programme, Research 1. As facilitator, I indicated that had found articles that would be helpful, but would be sharing this with the class as a whole. Maureen: "Last time we met, we talked about how to analyse a journal, and I have written stuff up and I will give it to you when we get into class."</p>	<p>Linkage with other courses (research and occupational health)</p> <p>Carol discussed an issue she had been dealing with in her journal relating to her course in research and her difficulties in working with her research group: "I just felt that a lot of the girls missed the point of what a literature review really was, and I felt like I did most of the work... and didn't get enough input from anybody else ..although two people's work, I did use...I didn't think it was fair that I would have to sit till 2 or 3 in the morning this whole week redoing that... it offends me when I have to be honest or (confrontational) .. "</p> <p>Maureen: It takes quite a lot of courage (to confront) doesn't it?"</p> <p>This discussion was followed up by my pointing out that although Carol appeared to have done most of the work, she had in fact benefited the most. So, learning can even be stimulated, as Eisen (2001:40) notes "by unwanted outcomes such as dissatisfaction with peer interactions". Also, Ironside (2004) notes that this 'pointing out' or giving name to embedded knowledge within the narrative account is an alternative to providing content without "hiding from view" practices of thinking.</p>
<p>Research topics for 2002 had focused on management issues, particularly with respect to quality assurance. Referred to in the discussion, and one of the aspects initiated the discussion</p>			<p>Xolisi, Musa, Zinzi 8/10/2002</p>

Table 8.2: Evidence of linkages between theory and practice

<i>Carol, Lisi, Ria 14/6/2002</i>	<i>Boniswe, Bisa, Jabu 25/7/2002</i>	<i>Xolisi, Jena, Rowan, Rea 2/8/2002</i>	<i>Carol, Lisi 23/8/2002</i>
<p>Team work: Lisi looked at the difficulty of this in her occupational health setting and Carol offered some examples of how to revisit this. Rea identified systems rather than individuals supporting the team approach (she worked in a metropolitan health service).</p> <p>All asked me to post readings on Web CT. The Management IV course focused on themes generated from the students' situational analysis, so Lisi, supported by Carol suggested "strategic planning." (She was trying to make sense of her own work environment). Carol: "There is quite a bit of notes that Maureen has posted on strategic planning." Maureen: "I can post sites that you can explore on the internet. Are you able to do that at work?"</p> <p>A previous session discussed the issue of contract workers. Both as OHN's needed to have a clear understanding of the implications in terms of their own practice. They had been asked to find evidence to support their contentions. One had asked their programme co-ordinator and another, the company doctor. Both cited the legislation.</p>	<p><u>Personal Observation:</u> We had used the situational analysis as a basis for analyzing the students' work practice. They had identified these problems and concerns in their assignments and tasks, and had used the theory to become more structured in the way that they 'saw' their workplace.</p> <p>Communication and teamwork or lack thereof had also been connected to the theory through the same process, and what the students were doing was trying to find a way to either accept or cope with the barriers presented in their place of work.</p>	<p>The practice in sexuality education related to themselves as individuals and as mothers. The community perspective. The students related the concept of HIV AIDS and what they were seeing in their world of practice.</p> <p>The linkage with what nursing is as a profession, and the reality with which it is practiced. The concept of empowerment was debated.</p>	<p>Linking theory and practice</p> <p>Lisi: "However, when one is in a working situation then one starts to learn"</p>
Discussion of use of protocols; statistics and community involvement.			<i>Xolisi, Musa, Zinzi 8/10/02</i>

Table 8.3: Evidence of connections

Boniswe, Bisa, Jabu 25/7/2002	<u>Xolisi, Jena</u> , Rowan, Rea 2/8/2002	<u>Carol</u> , Lisi 14/6/2002	<u>Carol</u> , Lisi, Ria 23/8/2002
<p>Tutorial, journal, previous discussion</p> <p>All these incidents had been written about in their journal entries, although from different perspectives. (Difficult work environment; changes in environment engendering fears; inter-collegial power struggles; frustration at lack of teamwork, support, recognition of safety factors; meaning of nursing, ubuntu). The discussion allowed us to break down some of the elements and also get to grips with some of the feelings that had ensued. I was particularly worried about the 'them' and 'us' relationships that had developed and which were extremely unhealthy in the nursing context (them being senior colleagues, management, but even more worrying, clients). We explored these relationships and the concept of the profession in the light of these relationships fairly frequently in the tutorials. This group of students met regularly for their reflective tutorials and never missed a session. The above themes were ongoing and addressed in both journals and reflective tutorials.</p>	<p>Tutorial, journal, previous discussion</p> <p>(Focus on the two students whose diaries have been analysed – Jena and Xolisi)</p> <p><u>Jena</u> - abortions; the nursing profession; sexuality education; empowerment of nurses; HIV AIDS; her desire to see health issues from the South African context; the lifestyle context of the community within which she works and her appreciation thereof; her view of herself and her identity as this impacts on her practice</p> <p><u>Xolisi</u> – her concern for her children; her contextualizing of her community and the community experience; the intransigence of the more traditional members of her community; the male domination. Circumcision; nurses leaving the country. The meaning of nursing as a profession.</p> <p><u>Evidence of connections between previous tutorial or class discussions (the circular process of reflection) and the current discussion.</u></p> <p>Nurses emigrating for improved salaries; professionalism; abortion issues; HIV AIDS; empowerment of nurses; organisation of workload – linked to problem solving and situational analysis.</p>	<p>Facilitator connection: I reviewed previous reflective tutorial discussion.</p> <p><u>Journal: Carol</u> has addressed most of the issues and discussed them in her journal: time; work overload, learning difficulties; communication; domestic stress. In Table 8.7, the students discuss 'dreams'.</p> <p>Maureen: "In Management (IV) we have talked about a vision...and a philosophy and I just want to bring you back to 'Why have a vision...I would also like to link it to reality, because what you are saying makes a lot of sense"</p>	<p>Connection to journal: (Carol: has addressed most of the issues discussed in her journal)</p> <p>Connection to class work. Connection to previous discussions: follow-up issue on discipline related material indirectly addressed</p> <p>Students recognised occurrence of learning: Evidence of self-directed learning: investing in learning tool (Carol: own computer)</p> <p>Evidence of influencing factors in learning: We discussed 'Ubuntu' and Carol noted that this had been asked in a question in an exam in a previous course. "That was the first time I had heard the word".</p> <p><u>Themes:</u></p> <p>Time; Work overload; Factors negatively impacting on learning</p> <p>Factors impacting on decision to continue with learning ; available options; value of process; prior learning; learning motivation; learning difficulties; supports; OH society; reflective tutorials; nursing profession.</p>
<p>Tutorial, journal, previous discussion: All these issues had been written about in some form or another by each of the group members: Conditions of service for SA nurses; Inadequate remuneration; nurses immigrating; work overload; power imbalances; actions taken to address power issues</p>			<p><u>Xolisi, Musa, Zinzi</u> 8/10/2002</p>

Table 8.4: Evidence of the circular process of reflection within the current discussion

Carol, Lisi, Ria 14/6/2002	Boniswe, Bisa, Jabu 25/7/2002	Xolisi, Jena, Rowan, Rea 2/8/2002	Carol, Lisi 23/8/2002
<p>Theme of support addressed from different angles – help with organisation; support from team, occupational health society, within the tutorial group. Maureen: "Maybe you would like to talk about setting up structures that make you feel safe?... In a sense, you have asked a question, a profound question that speaks to what your life is about." Lisi reflects on questions she has asked herself "What am I living for and what can I do? What can I achieve? And also to recognise that there are good things which I am doing." She continues talking, reflecting on the difficulties she has encountered and then revisits the earlier questions and reflects on "what good things I have done. That made me feel good about myself and stop complaining and say, I should have done that. I should have done that...at least there are things that I have done that maybe other people could not achieve in life. It gives me the courage to keep on going." Lisi's ability to recognise her strength within and express this within the group is a positive factor, and indicative of her maturity. Carol focuses on the time theme, related to stress and personality</p>	<p>Personal Observation: All three members of the group were working in the same place and so there was congruence in their perceptions, although their feelings differed depending on their status (differentiation between the junior and more senior nurses).</p> <p>The circular questioning approach supported returning to the issues. The fact that these issues had been spoken about in different forums (journal, tutorial, tasks and assignments) and that they were still being spoken about, clearly indicated that there was still much working through of the processes that had occurred, and probably still needed to take place</p>	<p>Earlier, Jena had left a class on sexual education, which had offended her. She preferred to check in with the course coordinator, rather than return to the person who had offered the class. Jena: "No, I will check and sit together with her and look it through with her, I don't want to attend another one". (Comment: clear indication of Jena taking control over how she wishes to learn)</p> <p>Students used much of this session to ventilate feelings and defuse anger resulting from inability to express feelings during a previous class (lecturer was a visitor from the US and students too well mannered – although Jenna had walked out of class).</p> <p>Discussed sexuality from different angles – self, family and own children, society in general. While I did not feel that learning had taken place on an 'instrumental' level, it did open 'space' for reconsideration at later stage. Critical reflective thinking is not problem solving. Brookefield (1987) in Simpson and Courtney (2002) explains that critical thinkers appreciate that critical thinking is a process, and because it is not static, it generally does not bring finality or a conclusion to the interrogation.</p>	<p>Lisi and Carol both struggled with workload, affecting their ability to complete their study requirements (See Table 8.5)</p> <p>Circular discussion on the many issues that have and could improve or allow them to progress. Self-identification of management strategies and discussion of other alternatives.</p> <p>Reflection of the relevance of 'practical application' of concepts imbedded in course and readiness to learn, as needed in current work situation. Recognition of value of how reflective tutorials working.</p>
<p>The problem issue of current nursing practice was discussed from a number of different perspectives in terms of what was, what could be done and what had been done. Even when theoretically, the discussion was over, Zinzi returned again to the issue to pick up on another perspective. Multiple perspective views are a clear indication of critical reflective thinking (Simpson and Courtney, 2001).</p>			<p>Xolisi, Musa, Zinzi 8/10/2002</p>

Table 8. 6: Identifying the issues chosen for reflection:

<p>Carol, Lisi, Ria 14/6/2002</p> <p>Recap of previous tutorial (This is included as it may have initiated some of the ensuing discussion):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Difficulties with learning in another programme (repeat and journal) ✓ Being overwhelmed by amount of work required in course. (repeat and journal) ✓ Journal issues (C) home and moving "I have a beautiful house..." Lisi looks beyond the "material" things. Talking to her family, she notes "Right now, we are going to look to education... It won't help me to dream, I need to go to school..." (repeat and journal) ✓ Difficulties with work and challenges faced. (repeat and journal) ✓ Challenges with completing course because of numerous demands (repeat and journal) <p>Current tutorial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lisi rethinking her position on leaving, particularly when she deconstructs the workload. Offered tangible help on revisioning work situation so that she is better able to conceptualise organization and structure. Theme: work overload (repeat and journal) • Organisation and structuring of work and thinking: Addressing theme of overload (repeat and journal). Maureen: "They are actually quite small things. They just require – what?". Lisi: "You just (need to) look at them one by one (instead of) looking at it the whole thing as a big big one complicated thing...once it is complicated in your mind, it will definitely look like it" • Setting of personal goals, connecting with management concepts of organizational vision and mission (connect to class work and practice) Ria: "You have got to dream big." Maureen: Reminding Ria about a previous statement "But you don't believe in dreams?".... Lisi: "... You need to aim high, so if you fall, you fall at a medium level. (laughter). "... But it is very important to dream realistically – achievable dreams and plans. You should know yourself and the resources that are available to you and so your dream should be within that." • Lisi – self-identity - appreciation of herself and allowing and accepting of her goals to be reality based (repeat – self-identity). "I am trying to accept whatever comes into my life. Once you don't accept, you become frustrated.... Not that I am sitting back. I need to go at a normal pace, otherwise I will die." • Time theme – C more time for self: reality check on what she would do with this (repeat and journal) • time, linking into her personality type (her drive, her need to achieve) – issues she deals with in her journal (repeat and journal) • Lisi – Self-identity and theme of racial prejudice and the effect on her functioning. How writing her thoughts down in her journal allows her to distance herself and obtain perspective, rather than pursue her initial reaction of aggressive behaviour. Linked to concept of communication and class readings (connect to class work) • Question of identity and nursing and whether the work environment supports self-esteem and confidence building – both Lisi and C suggested that the occupational health group and nurses were different because of the isolation within which they worked – good reasoning process. (repeat) • Team work and the effects of working within the different groups in the different health care settings (again, one of the themes that occurs both in the questionnaires and in the journals is that of working with colleagues and other members of the health team) • Theme – communication (recurrent in diaries and questionnaires) 	<p>Boniswe, Bisa, Jabu 25/7/2002</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of previous tutorial: Feelings resulting from frustrations with working within their work environment (This is included as it may have initiated some of the ensuing discussion) • Changes occurring in their work environment: Resulting from an externally directed situational analysis. Fears, concerns and frustrations resulting from the process. • Recognition of possibilities of the end result. • Recognition of purpose of diaries • Use of tutorials: explore intra-personal dynamics; opportunity to ventilate; opportunity to think "you keep throwing things back to me and making me think. Afterwards you find that some of these things that you are
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not aware but during the discussion you are motivating my thinking so that I think"; motivation to continue by sharing concerns with others "also to see when someone else has the same problem which gives me the strength and the courage"

- Negotiation with students regarding the taping of the reflective tutorials
- Fear of working with abusive patients; frustration with lack of management support for nurses' safety
- Failure to feel part of the institution; difficulty in identifying
- Frustration with lack of boundaries and colleagues/management overstepping boundaries with little respect for the students – called "kids"
- Frustration at the lack of teamwork
- Frustration at the lack of recognition given by the authorities to the work that the poly-clinic offers
- Feelings of stress because of the work situation, a feeling that has been verbalized by other health care professionals, and frustrations at not being heeded.
- Perception of unfair criticism, which was seen to be racially biased.

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- Sexual education, the need, value and appropriateness (or inappropriateness of the approach)
- Self-determination of learning needs (Jena)
- Abortion issues; HIV AIDS; circumcision
- Cultural or community factors impacting of the way nurses educate
- The nursing profession
- Factors affecting nurse immigration
- Evaluation of current trends in nursing practice
- The nursing profession and what it means to be a nurse

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- Lack of time (repeat and journal)
- Work overload – issue raised and discussed twice in discussion on different occasions – effects – creates more pressure and load build up; possibility of non-completion (repeat and journal)
- Factors negatively impacting on learning – adaptations to new job, new home, new geographical area; family issues – feeling of life being a "mess" (repeat and journal)
- Factors impacting on decision to continue with learning programmes – effort/ cost (travel/ course payment) and a sense that "these things will pass" – balanced against need and learning gained (repeat and journal)
- Consideration of available options to flexibly address learning concerns
- Valuing the learning process (repeat and journal)
- Recognition of prior learning
- Motivation to learn based on work needs rather than formal recognition as both in management situations (Lisi did not complete the course and in fact, neither she nor Carol had a need for formal recognition – Lisi indicated that she had completed Nursing Dynamics- the Dept recognizes this for both research and management for registration with SANC; and Carol had completed studies through UNISA, which also is recognized and accepted by the department); recognition of the connection to the work environment; understanding the material.
- Effects of learning – change in behaviour; linkage of theory and practice; readiness and motivation to learn dependent on work based needs. Despite the pressures, course seen as valuable because of it's approach and it's practical application to students' own practice
- Difficulty with the learning process – test – consideration of purpose and approach
- Supports: peer/ facilitators/ colleagues (through society). Organisation of course – workbooks and guides
- Communication issues: peers
- Use of reflective tutorials: explore intra-personal dynamics; opportunity to ventilate; opportunity to think "you keep throwing things back to me and making me think. Afterwards you find that some of these things that you are not aware but during the discussion you are motivating my thinking so that I think"; motivation to continue by sharing concerns with others "also to see when someone else has the same problem which gives me the strength and the courage"

- Value of tutorial: relieving burden on shoulder; relating to facilitator in a way that allows for addressing of many issues, including the personal;
- Professional society- recognition that this provided: support; a means of continuing further education; a means of networking; a means of quality assurance; a forum for marketing work product (C and laboratory services). Did this through contact meetings and on-line communication.
- Meaning of nursing to students: concept of Ubuntu (humanness and caring). Lisi: "I follow the way of the culture, nursing a South African person... of caring, the thing is Ubuntu". I understand them". Also included: nurturing and empowerment of clients. Importance of concepts such as ethics. Concern about the apparent changes in practice where some of these concepts not so valued. Discussion about factors influencing professional development: socialization, learning; family; religion; belief systems. Carol: "Upbringing plays quite an important role. Sometimes you become like your parents or sometimes you become quite the opposite, because you don't want to be like that... My father... he is very knowledgeable..., is very passive... and people take advantage of him, and I will never let that happen to me... I fight for service, I fight for quality." Lisi continues with the issue of assertiveness: I say "No, with a smile, which is fair".
- Connection between personal and professional identity

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Conditions of service for SA nurses

Inadequate remuneration

Consideration of immigrating overseas – discussion of differences between England and Saudi Arabia

Factors influencing or preventing immigration

Case Study (Z and her clinic situation): Problems in being able to practice appropriately – affected by:

- Work overload
- Difficulties with working with the community and counselors as part of the district health system – power imbalances
- Inflexible and unhelpful management – feeling of powerlessness

Table 8. 8: Process involved in the tutorial

<p>Carol, Lisi, Rea 14/6/2002</p> <p>Initiated discussion with a recap of key issues from previous tutorial. Discussion open for input Picked up on previous themes that seemed problematic. Jane (critical reader) comments: General themes, evident in other diaries and in other Tutorials, again focus on the conditions under which nursing practitioners work, through the pressure of time and overload. Carol wishes that she had more time for herself and family, though her striving for excellence makes this sometimes difficult. The Facilitator points this out in her questioning: "How old are you?" and the challenge implicit in "If you are 33 now and haven't yet made time for yourself, when do you think this will happen?" Discussion flowed from students' responses – no clear direction – but engaged in themes in journal/ work and related to self-identity and profession. Questioning approach "Is the end result as important as the process, or does the process not count?" Providing space and time to talk Active listening and respond to comments Using personal stories to illustrate a point "I have this friend of mine.." Use of humour to prod Restating "It is quite obvious when listening to the both of you that education is a priority..." Recapping /Summarising/ paraphrasing/ supporting/ challenging/ reminding/linking to comments made earlier/ connecting to work done in class/</p>
<p>Boniswe, Bisa, Jabu 25/7/2002</p> <p><u>Process:</u> My approach is very tentative. It took me quite a long time to establish a relationship with this group, particularly the younger two students. They were very used to a hierarchical system of power and it took a while for them to accept (or appear to accept) a shift in parity in our power relations. Most of our tutorial sessions were very similar to this one, and I was aware of constantly trying to get them to shift positions in order to make their lives (and I think the lives of their patients) more tenable. Language was definitely a problem. The first part of the transcript clearly indicates my difficulty in understanding what Bisa is saying (even though the transcript does not pick up on the peppering of the discussion with Zulu interjections, which were fairly constant.) I spent much of my time in questioning and rephrasing, purely to try and understand the problem. It is also clear from the first part of the transcript, how much effort I put into trying to establish a basis for trust. The students, particularly the younger two, were clearly suspicious of the tape recorder. It was only near the end of the year that they signed permission to be included in the research.</p>
<p>Xolisi, Jena, Rowan, Rea 2/8/2002</p> <p>Reflexive Diary: 6 August, 2002 The more I think about it, the more convinced I am, that students (and I include myself in that category) learn by real life experiences. These stories integrate their learning in a way that moves beyond theory. Theory often focuses on the single issues and doesn't or can't take account of the multiplicity of events or the synergies of action that impact on the different situations. This isn't new. The other aspect that is worthy of note, in fact relates to second language students. These stories allow for an integration of the facts and the concepts, which are often fairly abstract, in a way that makes sense of their world. I am aware that a number of second language students are able to pass or even do well at exams if they can transmit information from their texts onto the page (this naturally also applies to first language students). This doesn't, however, test application or comprehension. Sarah: Does this happen after discussions? i.e. working from concrete, contextual to abstract generic to show them the content that has been learned</p>
<p>Carol, Lisi 23/8/2002</p> <p>Welcome and start with question on journal. Listen and make connections between previous discussions; class work and discussions within the tutorial. Facilitate a student-driven approach but offer options to keep discussion flowing. Facilitate iterative reflective process. Strive to ensure equality of participation and recognition of students' needs. I used the Socratic questioning approach where possible. Provide supportive environment with limited judgment. Try to even out power elements. Recognised adult-based learning and needs. Very little silence – students comfortable with</p>

discussion. Acceptance of students stance and reasoning; summarizing of processes and recognition of feelings

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Very little input from X, but I didn't follow this up because she was physically involved (active listening, verbal noises of agreement, disagreement and most of the discussion focused on an issue raised by Z. Most of the discussion was between Z and me, with active listening and verbal noises from the other two, but more specifically, Musa. For the first half of the discussion, although I haven't written this down as such, the three would speak, often at the same time. It would seem that they were very comfortable. I noticed that I phrased and rephrased questions or summaries and that my language was far simpler than had I been speaking to first language students. (Used same wording or paraphrased or summarized aspects of discussion).

I noticed that I was very active in this discussion and more controlling than perhaps I should have been. Questioning was used, but also summarizing, rephrasing, recognizing key issues – but also making a lot of the suggestions. However, it was interesting to note that many of these suggestions had in fact, been thought of or tried already, so much of this discussion reflected on what had already been done. Z is a quiet student, as are the other two students. None of the students look to create conflict, but this does not mean that they are passive either. The discussion clearly reflected strategies taken and efforts made to change untenable situations. Thematically, the discussion flowed and each section linked to previous sections. The issues were not peculiar to this group and had been discussed in other formats with other groups and contexts, as well as within their reflective journals.

Table 9.1: Teaching staff members' beliefs and understanding of education within their teaching context in terms of their philosophy and methodologies of teaching

<p>Teaching means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring students understand the fundamentals of the discipline using a practical, applied approach to teaching: (f=3) It is "to try and get the basics across. The things that are really important. I don't like to make it too 'high' for the students. But I am very practical so I teach very practically, and that's what would mean a lot for me." • Promoting critical thinking (f=2) "the ability to take what is given and to look at something and apply what is given to what you are seeing and then reason your way into helping or achieving a goal, a nursing goal." • Supporting a strong theory and practice connection (f=4). • Promoting student enjoyment of the learning process (f=1) and working from the known and the familiar (f=4): "It makes it far more understandable to the students and they are able to then enjoy their learning a lot better than if somebody comes in and talks at a different level and they think "well, how am I going to use this?" And, "I don't understand." So, rather make it practical and also relate it to the practical situation so that when they do go and do their practical...It's fairly familiar to them... That it is not all strange and all just theory and that they haven't had any kind of practice." • Mutual growth (F=2): "Sometimes in teaching, there might be things you need to learn yourself, so you learn and grow together with your student... my experiences wouldn't be half of what their contribution would be." • Using personal experience as a teacher: "That is how I learn the best and so that is how I try to teach as well." • Using different teaching methods • Looking at the macro picture: The one thing that I am 100% sure of– and I have no doubts - that there is no place for the certificate... But what we have shown with the change is that there are a whole lot of competencies that a lot of those students possibly did not have that we now are ensuring that are actually in place to make safer practitioners." • Moving beyond the curriculum, where teaching is based on need (f=4). • Recognizing the value of students' experience, maturity and intuition as the basis for learning, – adult based education (f=4): I don't think that you can actually teach experience. I don't think that you can teach intuition."... I think it is something that develops over time. I don't think that it is something that we can teach. I think that it does develop over time. As the person develops not only in their own knowledge and their own ability but in their maturity and how they approach people. • Seeing the person behind the student (f=4): Awareness of and sensitivity towards students' personal issues, although not taking it on board "How do you separate a student from her problems? Even though you cannot solve their problems. But you have to listen should they actually – you don't have to ask about this. But should they happen to tell us about whatever we can just refer them and let them think about what they want to do about their problem." • Recognising the importance of listening skills. A student needs someone "who can listen to me, somebody who cares, somebody who can support me. And unfortunately, we are dealing with students who are housewives, who single parents. There are so many things you need to consider as a teacher." • Being a role model, a mentor. " As we are here, we are also their role models, we are the people they are going to look up to and say "Oh, how I wish I could do the same for somebody"...I am looking at a person that I could see as a mentor."

- **Acceptance of own/ students limitations:** (f=3): "I think with the Research - I don't feel comfortable leading a research group, and possibly because of that, I am much more textbook oriented, because I am not as comfortable as in (my discipline) settings".

"But at the same time, I think that we have come to the acceptance that we can't make all of them change and we can't make them change their whole approach to the programme."

- **Formalizing concerns about some students' failure to engage in learning:** "What do you do with students like that? We have now actually got them to sign **twice** that they have been informed that for them the best option would be to actually drop maybe (a) one or two subjects and then carry on with the other two successfully complete them and then spend time the next year working on the others."
- **Being aware of and support individual learning status (f=4):** "If students do tend to lag behind a little bit, I also do one-on-one which I also do find useful for students who do lag. But I can only see if they lag behind after a little while and then I will take them in to do a bit of extra work."
- **Being comfortable with one's knowledge and ability as an educator** – and this comes with experience. Knowledge and experience permits risk: "I think as I have taught more and more, I have become more and more comfortable within the teaching environment and have become probably less and less structured."
- **Being a role model, a mentor, a facilitator.**
- **Constantly evaluating** to ensure knowledge gain by using different forms of assessment from different sources for comparative purposes
- Using personal experience as a teacher **(f=2):** "That is how I learn the best and so that's how I try to teach as well."

Table 9.2: The concept of learning interrogated by teaching staff members

Learning is:

- **Growth: (f=4):** "Learning is more than a piece of paper. Learning means growth, it means broadening my scope of thinking. It means being a safe practitioner. It means being more knowledgeable in a specific aspect, and I always realize that no matter how much I can know but there will always be (room) for improve(ment), whatever I have learned... (Learning) is continuous; it is something that goes on and on. It is indefinite."
- **Self-growth which is developmental,** is based on intuition, maturity and experience
- **Growth supported by recognition and valuing of the students:** "As their opinion matters more in the class and they have more input. I really do feel that they change as people. They grow a lot in that year. I think people come in; they have nothing to say in the beginning and then at the end they have a very valued opinion on a lot of things – And I think that the perception changes for them. I have also had students who have come and have said " I really want to carry on and I want to carry on for myself" – which indicates that they have an idea of what adult learning is about, I think which is to improve themselves"
- **Openness to learning which promotes self-growth:** "It depends on the student themselves. I think that if they come in quite open, a lot of self-growth does occur, but if they come in with preconceived ideas of getting a piece of paper, that growth is very inhibited."
- **Freedom to learn:** Students should feel free to learn. The environment should be such that she is in a position to learn and I am only there to guide and support.
- **Promoting self-awareness:** Students should be" people that know why they are here."
- **Promoted through involvement:** "...as they are going through the course, as they are getting more involved. As their opinion matters more in the class and they have more input. I really do feel that they change as people."
- **Collaborative learning:** "They all have something to offer and that the students learn probably more from the other students than they would from me"
- **Integration of theory and practice in real terms:**" students actually go away with something that they've learned that they can apply. I mean, to me, it doesn't help if they just go away with theory and theory sits in their heads and they actually don't know how to apply it...but there are those who have grown this year... they have learned so much more and how it is making a difference to their practice , how they can take this and make changes in the workplace, which is obviously what we are actually trying to make them do"
- **Demonstrating competencies:** "there are a whole lot of competencies that a lot of those students possibly did not have that we now are ensuring that are actually in place to make safer practitioners."
- **Skills-based:** "Skills are very important. Do they really have skills to actually apply what they have learned? Because knowledge – it doesn't mean that if you know something you are definitely going to apply it. You need to link those two."
- **Acceptance of own/ students' limitations:** "But at the same time, I think that we have come to the acceptance that we can't make all of them change and we can't make them change their whole approach to the programme."
- **Having a specific outcome in mind:** ""I would like to see a caring, safe nurse practitioner at the end of the programme. By safe, they have to have the ability to not cause any harm, not miss any conditions that would adversely affect the patients and to be confident that the management, the treatment, the management, the education they give is worthwhile and will improve somebody's quality of life."
- **A dynamic process:** "Knowledge is **so dynamic** and even the environment you are staying in, the world you are staying in - things change before you can even think, so for us to cope we need to be very open in terms of how we teach and what exactly we teach."

Table 9.3: Teaching strategies or processes used by the teaching staff members

<p>Staff members teach by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising previous experiences or attitudes negatively impacting on student learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ “Students’ prior content-based learning experience.” Which is one of the problems that we’ve identified this year. They can regurgitate theory, but they actually can’t take that information and use it to the benefit of their working environments. “ ✓ Wrong motivation: “This year this group, the majority of them have come in, I would say (to the programme) for the wrong reasons – that they’ve come in for a easy way out of night shift, and the 7/7 (shifts), and weekend work and things like that and they actually don’t understand what is involved – in a nutshell, what occupational health nursing is about”. ✓ Desire for status as opposed to true learning: I think that a lot of them are certificate chasing at the moment. ✓ Students’ acceptance of lower standards for themselves: “maybe we have our education system to blame. That they have come from a system where a 40% is a pass so it is actually good enough not to actually achieve a minimum of 50% and I think that they have been able to pass based on their ability to recall as apposed to apply knowledge and they believe that the same will happen now.” • Organising one-on-one interviews where possible prior to student entry to enable students to make informed choices about enrolling (f=4). • Pre-testing to establish knowledge base and determine teaching approach (f=3): I like to see what the level of knowledge is beforehand especially before we start something difficult or technical such as immunology or immunizations. I just look at their level of knowledge and then adjust my teaching accordingly – so I look at how difficult or easy or practical I should approach it. I try and use everything that is available that would be useful.” • Teaching from the known to unknown (f=4) : “take the theory and say that this is what is known and you have got to look at what you’ve got in front of you, so look at your patient and say ‘This is what the patient presents as, or what the person is complaining of’ or however you would like to put it and then say ‘ between this and this, what do I have and what is the best manner in which I can make a difference?’ • Starting with the familiar (f=4). • Keeping things simple and related to the familiar (f=2) “I find a lot of the research books for many of our black students are very difficult to read and understand, so I bring it down to basics” “Teaching first of all means facilitating, making it easy for the students to learn.” • Integrating approaches: “I might even start with what is happening in our daily lives, not just relate it to the book, but practically, what is happening in our daily lives. Move onto concrete issues – things that are important and crucial for them to know and understand and not just to do remote learning. Things that they can actually understand and put in their own words and even add into the new information that they have. They can draw from their experiences and even add to the information that is already available in the books and the internet or anywhere. And I also like sharing with the students what they have seen maybe what they have read from newspapers and link that with what is happening and with what my learning outcomes are. “ • Providing a culture of learning: “developed that culture that they work consistently”. • Repetition and writing down of instructions. “... try and explain over and over. Write things down” “And I also like when they write an assignment, I prefer that they keep coming to me to give me feedback, so that they don’t just come at the end and submit something that is totally wrong because it is very common that our students do not understand the way the questions has been phrased”. • Supporting the connection between theory and practice:” because every person is such an individual and you are nursing people and when you look at people, they don’t fit into textbooks and I think that that is what you have got to come to grips with (f=4). • Interrogating practice and connect with theory: ” because every person is such an individual and when you’re looking at people – when you’re nursing people- and when you’re looking at people, they don’t fit into textbooks and I think that that is what you have got to come to grips with.” • One-on-one remedial teaching sessions – awareness of and sensitivity to individual needs (f=4).

Identification and sensitive management of weaker students.

- **Recognising that students' experiences drive the learning process:** "I look at the basis that they all have something to offer and that the students learn probably more from the other students than they would from me.. They all come from different experiences. They all have overcome different problems ... you would probably find somebody in class who has been through something like that ...and it is just a good thing to see how they did it and structured it and perhaps used it or perhaps not used it."
- **Supporting students** – additional materials; emotional or academic support.
- **Entering into learning partnerships.** Move together but taking into account different rates of learning: "Sometimes in teaching, you might also even try and explore things you also don't know yourself but you can learn and grow together with your student."
- **Recognising that 'spoon feeding' creates dependence:** It doesn't mean that you must just give a person everything; you want the person to think.
- **Using teachable moments (f=4):** "even if you meet them along the corridors. I do ask them things that will make them comfortable 'Did you understand this assignment?'"
- **Promoting opportunities for frequency of practice.**
- **Using humour and controversy:** "I often try to use humour to try and break that barrier, but once again, a lot of our black students are not exposed to humour and I find that quite difficult in the beginning but in the end, they do respond and I can kid them a bit, but in the beginning it is very difficult to kid them because they take it very personally." (Obviously the lecturer doesn't quite appreciate that the richness of humour within the students' culture is just different).
- **Sensitivity to cultural differences:** "I think many of our black students have been taught not to be very verbal. That they to be quiet..."
- **Clarification of expectations and guidance re anticipated problems:** "We sat down with them and said it's a lot of work. There is no denying that there is a lot of work. There is something like 13 assignments in total that need to be done. They are done in different ways: Some of them are short, some of them are long. But we have actually sat down with students and we've said to them: "Look. We can see that you are a full-time worker, you are a breadwinner, you are a mother and you have children to support etc. Let us make it easier for you."
- **Organising regular teaching contact sessions as opposed to intermitted block teaching:** "I think that you have far more contact with students. You get to know them better. You can focus more attention on those who really need it because they are with you more often. You can actually also pace their work better for them..."
"if it is spread, there will be a better distribution and I think that it will help students as well with time management".
- **Evaluating within the workplace context:** "e.g. health education sessions- we will not do them in the classroom. Students actually score better marks anyway doing it because they don't stand saying "well in the real situation, I would do the following:" (It is a real life situation, it's a real group of people ...and I think it gives them a much better feel for what is actually going to be expected from them. "
- **Requesting student feedback to enable rethinking and restructuring of programme (f=3):** "...we could get the students to tell us how it could be left there but how it could be made more streamlined, for example..."
- **Visibly guiding the connections between theory and practice** "we have gone is we have then presented the theory and then taken sessions where we have actually then said"Right, now here is a situation. Now take that theory and use it to, for example, design a medical surveillance programme for this worker or this group of workers" to try and get them to shift that way."
- **Structuring programme to meet needs of health service, student learning and professional requirements (f=4).**
- **Promoting creative thinking through guidance:** "We have also told them that there are creative ways of going around the journal articles and things like that..."
- **Recognizing individuality of students (f=4):** "The one thing that that student has actually learned is to come and say "I have a crisis with my time at the moment. I am trying to manage it but I need you to help me by giving me an extension" which I have then –"when you are ready, submit it" because I can see that that is a committed student. "
- **Awareness of individual student needs to guide response with sensitivity and awareness (f=4):** "most of us, I am sure, by this time and even before this time, would have identified the weaker student and try to

- and make sure that they do understand without making them embarrassed..”
- **Using multiple teaching strategies (f=4):** “It’s a variety ... I use a lot of audio-visuals, I use a lot of slides as a means of teaching... problem based, as well, where we look at a situation and then they break up into groups... and practice sessions... and little pre-tests before I start something technical... I try and use everything that is available to make it useful... If students do tend to lag behind a little bit, I also do one-on-one.”
 - **Lecturing to provide foundational materials (f=3)** There is quite a bit of lecturing that goes on, but it is really to just cover the real bases. “
 - **Questioning approach: (f=2)** “So that it becomes a thoughtful process as apposed to just a lecture.”
 - **Use of audio-visual aids especially slides:** “I use a lot of audio-visual aids, such as slides as a means of teaching and I have done surveys previously in class and have found that the students found slides a very useful way of learning.”
 - **Problem based learning:** “where we would look at a situation, and they would break up into groups, discuss and give feedback” (f=3).
 - **Use of group work, group discussions and skills-based learning (f=4).**
 - **Case study approach.**
 - **Reflective journaling.**
 - **Supporting student reading (f=3).**
 - **Clinical bedside teaching (individual)** – work with students (constantly) in practical setting.” I don’t believe that students will do well if they don’t spend a lot of time in the practical setting” (f=2).
 - **Promoting prior reading (f=2),** but building in safeguards anticipating that some students do not read: “tried to get them to read beforehand. We have given them readings so that they can actually get a bit of a background so that they could try and participate in the classroom. Some read, some don’t. You then can’t leave those behind. You actually have to make a way of including those that haven’t read because otherwise there is no value in their even sitting in the classroom.”
 - **Mind mapping for logical thinking.**
 - **Tutorials:** “bring your problems and we will sit as a group and we will look at it. We will try and help in areas. We will then see how the information is flowing.”
 - **Continuous assessment using a variety of methods: leads to having to complete work until it is at a satisfactory level (f=4).**
 - **Guiding large group guided experience in a practice setting** “we actually taken the students out to factories as two separate groups. That worked very well where then we did walk-through surveys with them so that they had the lecturer and they had – well, I was lucky, I had a small group of 8 – and we actually go through the plant and actually identify problems and speak about the people who are working in that environment”.
 - **Using practitioners as role models in the health services (Preceptors): (f=4)** “One of the other big things is the impact that the practitioners out there themselves make on the students...We will link them in with certain ones because there is value being linked with sound practitioners as well.. I also believe that there is value in going to clinics that aren’t up to scratch – but I think that they need to identify what a sound clinic is as well.”
 - **Teaching beyond the curriculum,** based on need. “I don’t see myself just concentrating on only what is said in the curriculum. If there is a need for me to go beyond what is in the curriculum.”

Table 9.5: Staff perceptions of the approach within the department to support critical reflective practice

The approach to support critical reflective practice is seen by staff members:

- **As a challenge: the amount of time and energy required which could negatively impact on the needs of other courses (staff, f=2);** but countered with the realization that there are benefits as students are reading, thinking about what they are doing and this results in more efficient practice (f=3):

"My concern about it is basically the amount of time that it does take. That has been my one concern. But then I think they gain from it and the fact (a) that it does make them read - and you can actually follow up that they are actually reading which I think a lot of them don't do and they don't see the value of reading. That's one aspect that gets going. And the fact that they actually start thinking about what they are doing. Because we see a lot of it in industry that they - in fact I had a phone call just yesterday that "I used to everything on everyone, and now I sit and think "Why do I do it?" And now I am starting to think, "Well, let me first do a risk assessment to determine what the person needs and then do only those activities that need to be done." And I think that that kind of benefit is coming out where they actually start to think about what they're doing. Because often I don't think there is reflection. One of the biggest problems, I believe, in nursing practice, is the fact that we don't evaluate what we do. There is no attempt to look at any kind of quality assurance in the programmes that we are running e.g. how we do certain testing e.g. audiometry. Do we ever sit back and say "Are these results a true reflection of the guys' hearing acuity? How can I be sure that they are? What could I actually do to ensure that these are true readings and true values? And I don't think that this happens enough. And I think that this is one of the things that this has made them start to think about- think about what they are doing and why they are actually doing it. Which I think has cut down on some of their workload because they realize that they do a lot of unnecessary stuff because they have never actually thought about why they do it, and they just randomly go ahead and do it because that is what they had always done."

- **Through their understanding of students' perceptions re workload issues (f=3):** "In the beginning, my students moan, and at the end they say, that was great, they didn't realize how much that helped them. Each one of them says it's been a wonderful exercise to go through. (Ruefully) And I know that some of them don't quite come through right from the start but they do near the end and they all have learned through that experience - very much so."

"And I think also they've enjoyed that (the discussions) - they enjoy the informality as well, of - when you come in and you take a topical subject and you read it and they are able to voice an opinion in class and I think that they very much enjoy those sessions and that is teaching them a lot on how to look at things and not accept things at face value. And I hope it carries on their - not just in- but in their work situation - maybe there is a lot of confrontation with other people - I think that it is very important for them to see things in a balance and not just from one point of view. So I think you know that they are starting to think "Yes, but... and trying to see another point of view and then making a decision."

- **As a means of matching student expectations to the reality of the learning needs:** "They are not quick fix qualifications, there is a lot of work we expect from them, but what they must remember is that the work that we expect from them is always related to their prac setting. So, it is not as if the work required is totally alienated from their practice and that they can't use again and we have also told them that there are creative ways of going around the journal articles."
- **As a force for student growth that results from the developmental process of the learning: (f=3)** "For me it is a good approach and for me it is actually meant for mature students. It is an approach, that the sooner it is implemented, the better..." "...I think it's wonderful... No, I do because I think it is one of the main things that actually makes the students grow quite a lot. Because in a sense, they **have** to read. A lot of students actually come into this group and they don't read. They don't read newspapers, they don't read general things, they don't know about general things and that really links very strongly to community work and its imperative that they start reading but not just reading. You know you can skim something and say, oh, oh and that has happened but their critical thinking, looking at deeper things, learning to criticize, learning to not accept exactly what is written down and to see different points of view. That is my perception really of critical thinking. Thinking about something at a little bit of a deeper level."

LISEKO'S CRITICAL, REFLECTIVE THINKING

DIMENSION OF THOUGHT	Excerpts from Liseko's journal
Analyze event	<p>As I have noticed in my own unit that the standard of care is not improving of our service delivering principals of Batho Pele. As you know equipment has been missing, drugs have been stolen by some members of the staff and some members extending their tea break. All these create unacceptable standard of care. And I think by <u>blowing the whistle</u>, you will be digging your own grave as you will feel that you have been disloyal to your colleagues. You will have been victimized also if no proper action as been taken to those people that are responsible for theft?</p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts) I remember our discussing this issue in a tutorial where Liseko did bring this issue to the group for discussion. SA nursing was plagued (and still is plagued) by the issue of intimidation – and much of this was political in nature. When NS uses the phrase "digging your own grave" - this is literally what has occurred in a number of situations in the past in SA nursing. I believe that it is far easier to have principles when lives and family are not at stake. According the SANC's Nurse's Bill of Rights, nurses have the right to "a working environment which is free of threats, intimidation and/or interference." The issue of power disparities is not just a SA nursing issue. Freshwater, 2000:481 notes: "Nurse on nurse aggression is felt to be more upsetting than that from patients (Farrell 1997, Freshwater 1998). Studies indicate that the hardest acts of aggression to deal with are not the acts of physical aggression by other nurses, but the non-physical attacks, and the hostile undercurrent that prevails. Farrell (1997) describes this as "professional jealousy", is just as difficult to deal with as explicit physical violence (Glass 1997)."(Freshwater, D. 2000. Crosscurrents: against cultural narration in nursing. Journal of Advanced Nursing. Volume 32 Issue 2 Page 481 - August 2000)</p>
Examine assumptions	<p>The study population was derived from two clinic- the infertility and the preconceptual clinic. It consisted of women who wanted to be pregnant and were highly motivated. Let's <u>assume</u> that they wanted to be fully informed and prepared fro pregnancy and were ready to adopt their lifestyle in order to minimize risks as far as possible.</p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts) Liseko's assumptions do not seem unreasonable: One can infer this hypothesis from the type of clinic consulted- infertility and preconceptual</p>
Identify and focus on salient issues from the situation	<p><u>Fish rich in diet reduces risk.</u> Indication is made that there is reductions of <u>some illnesses</u> through eating fish rich diet. Analysis Eating fish during pregnancy protect against peterim delivery and low birth weight. The rate of peterim deliveries has dropped from 7.1 % to 1,9 % to most women who hade at least 1.5 kg of daily fish intake. This has been proven by research conducted.</p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts) I see that I have not read this entry or I would have commented. Liseko quite correctly notes that there are (or rather, may be?) cultures who are not permitted to eat fish, but this is not of the Zulu culture. However, had she noted that eating fish comprising long chain omega-3 fatty acids is not part of daily living, this would have been more to the point. The suggestion of supplements is valid but I would have asked if these were available and looked at the cost if this was really meant to be a feasible suggestion. The focus on prevention is appropriate considering the primary health care model of health practiced in SA.</p>
Raise and	The question that that I think about when it comes to this situation is why is the government

pursue root questions	turning a blind eye and deaf ear about this situation? How long is it going to remain like this because the most people that are suffering are the ones who remain behind because they are loyal to their country and dedicated to their work?
Analyze emotions connected to event	<p>The most important issue in this article are the nurses who are living South Africa's health sector and look for better jobs overseas due to unsatisfactory working conditions. I have mixed feelings about all this because on the other hand I wish I can join them and explore the new world and learn new things and meet some people with different cultures, values and norms to be able to earn money that will meet all my requirements as a parent and as an individual. (and why would that be wrong?) At the same time it makes me feel said when I think of children that are left behind as child abuse in our country is high and all these results in family disorganisations. On the other hand, it brings frustration especially in working places as few nurses are left to do jobs for more than one person for an example a nurse will be allocated to run 2 wards especially when doing night duty, nurses abused by their colleagues and doctors who seem to think that nurses are their servants.</p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts)</p> <p>The issue of abuse against nurses is raised again. When I think about common themes prevalent in most nursing students' reflective journals, this theme arises time and time again. This is a complex issue. Traditionally, patient populations, especially in black communities, have been acquiescent, passive and unquestioning of treatment. This has changed significantly since 1994 with the introduction of the Patients' Bill of Rights and the SA Constitution. Unfortunately, the conditions and health care environment are not conducive in many instances, for appropriate client care and the lack of health care personnel and inadequate infrastructure have resulted in many instances queues and increasing patient dissatisfaction with resultant expressions of frustrations. Nurses do not feel that they have the power to change the system, and land up on the receiving end of the expressed dissatisfaction. This in turn, affects their perception of the nurse-client relationship. (Goyer, K.C. 2003.HIV/AIDS IN SOUTH AFRICAN PRISONS Published in Monograph No 79, February 2003. HIV/Aids in Prison, Problems, Policies and Potential. Institute for Security Studies. www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No79/Chap1.html)</p> <p>Liseko expresses ambivalent feelings. She believes in what she does, but expresses concern that those who structure her work environment do not, at least, not adequately. She indicates that she is loyal, but at the same time, she believes in her own worth. Her recommendations are practical and logical and demonstrate awareness that nurses themselves should also be part of the solution. Values such as pride and dignity, professionalism are concepts in nursing Liseko indicate that she values.</p> <p>I find her argument sound, and I hear her 'voice' is gaining in strength.</p>
Use knowledge broadly	But again I can't understand because the government of South Africa has offered some child grant to every child who have parents that are unemployed.
Makes interdisciplinary connections	<p>I took the patient personally to one of our working doctors, who saw the patient and said we must refer the patient to ENT clinic as the doctor discussed the patient with a specialty. <u>Guess what?</u> The patient was incision and drainage and then we gave him some antibiotics to take at home.</p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts)</p> <p>I love the 'guess what?'. It is a child-like rhetorical question meaning 'look at me, I have done well!'. Liseko is busy with her primary health care nursing programme, and having her diagnosis/ concern confirmed by a specialist is both rewarding and confirmatory of her clinical skills</p>
Analyze contextual issues	As we know that our country is in crisis health workers are migrating to other countries and those left have worked hard under stressful conditions worse then with aggressive abusive patients i.e physical and verbally.
Evaluate arguments, interpretations and beliefs	Before this method of preconceptual screening could be considered or taken as valid, it should be done repeatedly in a more general population such as primary health care setting and tried in a socially deprived area such as rural areas.
Draw accurate conclusions	Government should provide, people living with HIV treatment so that their CD 4 cal count can remain high making their viral load low so that their immune system can resist the opportunistic

	<p>infection such as Tuberculosis, pneumonia and diarrhea.</p> <p>§ People's lives will be prolonged - leading to less orphans which end up being government's burden.</p> <p>§ HAART should available at a less price so that everybody can afford it</p> <p>§ Accurate monitoring of people on HAART.</p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts)</p> <p>Liseko's recommendations are not unrealistic – but there as with her previous analysis of articles, fairly simplistic. She hasn't identified the rationale for the government NOT making available HAART or why there is a problem with providing the drug at reduced cost. At a superficial level, her analysis is fine. Had she looked at the cost factor comparing financial implications, including benefits, for those treated and those not treated - or just the moral issues of treatment, this would have strengthened her argument. Is there a learning benefit to a superficial analysis? I suppose that there is in that in simple terms, Liseko goes to the heart of the problem.</p> <p>Liseko does reflect that we live in a system where the primary health care philosophy is the dominant health service value: It is socialistic by nature i.e. health care should be affordable for all; and the view that the government is responsible for the care of the people in its borders. In many ways the dual system that operates in SA, socialism and capitalism are at odds, but both government and society, seem to find congruence between seemingly diverse and conflicting philosophical systems.</p>
Justifies key results and procedures, explains assumptions and reasons	<p>I think everybody has a choice of keeping the child or abort the child if she knows that she wont be able to maintain the child or she can use contraceptives if she believes that the termination of pregnancy is <u>against her religion</u>.</p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts)</p> <p>NS's observations are not unfair. She starts her argument with supporting evidence of the bonding process, which in normal circumstances, does support a close parental-child relationship. (John Bowlby, cited in Nash, E., Stock, B. and Harper, G. 1990. Human Behaviour. Juta and Co: Kenwyn). However, my questions relate to the risk factors that promote abuse - and NS would be correct in identifying one of these factors as lack of finance. Finance, however, is relative. It depends on how it is used. As NS, again correctly notes, there are government grants but if families do not or cannot live within their means, the child, again, is at risk. NS is not simplistic in her analysis. She does raise questions about power in relationships which do impact on the behaviour of partners. I try, with my questions, to allow her to see that despite available choices, it is not always possible to see or make these choices.</p>
Defend positions and issues	<p>Considering the above article I would <u>suggest</u> the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Government of SA</u> should implement some policies for the protection of health workers. - As we know that our country is in crisis health workers are migrating to other countries and those left have worked hard under stressful conditions worse then with aggressive abusive patients i.e physical and verbally. - Instead our government is concerned about patient's rights as human beings. - <u>Our patients</u> have to learn proper behaviour towards health workers because if they are aggressive and abusive to me it means they are not sick enough to be in hospital and they don't deserve our care. A sick patient wont have a strength to be abusive or aggressive to any staff member. <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts)</p> <p>(1) This is not an unusual issue (violence or aggression of patients) and has been raised by other students in tutorial sessions. Liseko although she does not note this here, is affected because of her circumstances. She works in an outpatient department of a busy state-run hospital in one of the main cities in KZN, and many of her clients, appear to become aggressive, possibly as a result of having to wait for long periods of time. I have a feeling of de je veux in that I had three students in 2002 who worked in this self-same unit, experiencing these self-same issues. The difficulty with these students (and with NS) is that they were fairly junior in a</p>

	<p>very prescribed hierarchical nursing system. Efforts to buck or change the system were problematic in that personality-wise, they were fairly unassuming, non-confrontational, unassertive nurses. Much of the tutorial sessions were devoted to increasing assertiveness skills and problem solving, taking into account their status in their department.</p> <p>(2) I like the way that Liseko draws from the article on the Scottish health service and makes the connection to the SA health service. I would have liked her to have followed up on the suggestions made for the Scottish health service to see if they would have any relevance to her own place of work</p> <p>(3) Liseko fails to look at the situation from the perspective of the patient although I understand her feelings. I know from our tutorial sessions, that it would appear that there were a number of problems within the health service in this department, which did not facilitate towards a more sympathetic understanding of the prevailing conditions of the clients by Liseko</p>
Compare ideals with actual practice	<p>On the other hand, is this the real father of the child or is it the boy friend of the mother? who prefers to be with a man more than her own child. If this report is correct- he is the father. Maybe this man abuses this woman and she does not even have a say in matters of the family, who does not know what the word abuse mean, who sees the man as the head of the family who can not be challenged or questioned in his decision?</p>
Explore implications and consequences	<p>As health workers are we always emphasise on prevention as it is better than cure so I would suggest that this kind of diet should be given to pregnant mothers like iron supplements to prevent such complications.</p>
Draw up and/ or implement an action plan based on the implications raised	
Write clearly and coherently	<p>There was a communication breakdown between us as he was coming from Nigeria. The first thing that came to my mind was that happens to some of them while they are in South Africa. Do they bury each other here in South Africa or the corpse is sent back home. But do they have enough money to transport it as they usually say it cost a lot of money to go back home + - 5000,00. What about relatives? Is there a way of informing them if one of them becomes sick or dies? This whole thing brought a lot sadness in me as I always wonder myself that what will I do if I can get sick while I am here in Durban as I don't have a close relative. Who will come and visit me in hospital?</p>
Accurately cite sources of knowledge used	<p>Nursing Times 2002: 5 February 28 Volume 98</p>
Use own thinking to come to conclusions and solutions	<p>Considering the above article I would suggest the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Government of SA</u> should implement some policies for the protection of health workers. - As we know that our country is in crisis health workers are migrating to other countries and those left have worked hard under stressful conditions worse than with aggressive abusive patients i.e physical and verbally. - Instead our government is concerned about patient's rights as human beings. - <u>Our patients</u> have to learn proper behaviour towards health workers because if they are aggressive and abusive to me it means they are not sick enough to be in hospital and they don't deserve our care. A sick patient won't have a strength to be abusive or aggressive to any staff member.
Come to terms with contradictions and inconsistencies	<p>All midwives would probably agree that preconceptual counselling is a valuable activity likely to improve pregnancy outcomes. However they would recognise that many of the women most likely to benefit from it <u>would not avail</u> themselves to such services.</p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts)</p> <p>Liseko does recognise that most SA women using the state health care system would not use these services</p>

Judgmental reflectivity	<p>My implications on the nursing practice are as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nurses have to assert themselves, put aside fear and get rid of this vulnerable attitude that makes them easy targets for abuse and feelings of inferior. Yes! - Our employers must start recognising nurses and appreciating our services. And we make them do this how? - They must pay nurses market related salaries and unique conditions of service. This will help to check this exodus of our nurses and the brain drain from our country. - Educate the society about this uncalled for hostility against nurses. - Nursing management (are these also nurses?) need to support their subordinates against abuse by other sectors in the workplace. <p>270: - Nurses themselves must unite and become a difficult to overcome force. They must start thinking about handling their own affairs, like having their own dynamic and influential people, at all decision making acts in matters regarding their work and welfare. (and they can do this how?) A lot of work need to be done by nurses themselves to reclaim their lost pride and dignity by putting our house in order to be professional, friendly and perform our jobs satisfactory. <u>Good argument!</u></p>
Identify learning needs and learning achieved	<p>Important lessons learned from giving birth and running a marathon. I personally found both giving birth and running a marathon a point at which a significant change occurs in my life. Both these achievements have build my character and boosted my self esteem. Both events are learning experiences both physically and mentally. They brought home what my mom had always said to me say as child, <u>"if you set your mind on it, you can do whatever you want in life."</u></p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts)</p> <p>Through the comparative analogy of labour likened to a marathon, Liseko shares her values. She is a runner, so physical fitness is important to her. She notes that marathons, which require grit, determination, physical and psychological preparation and staying power, have had a significant effect on her life. Both labour and the marathon are character building and exemplify for Liseko her mother's tenet that determination equates with results. Liseko talks about the building of character and the effects of achievement on self-esteem.</p>

Critiquer Questioning and Responses to Students' Reflective Journals

The following table provides an outline of the type of written dialogue [in the form of questions and comments] I had engaged in with the students and corresponding examples exemplifying the process.

A. Critiquer-Questioning to promote different levels of thinking [knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation]	Examples from Students' Reflective Journals
Rhetorical questions - Rhetorical questions are not real questions because the questioner usually knows the answer. Teachers often use these questions to discover what students know about particular topics, but these questions do not foster inquiry nor do they involve students in their own educational endeavours. Rhetorical questions are best used to simply stimulate thought with no answer expected.	<p>I said I had noticed in our discussions that both A and C appeared to be more concerned about learning and sharing than in withholding and abusing power. [10a 7 Aug, 2001; Reflexive Journal]</p>
Deductive Questions – questioning from the general to the specific. David Ausubel's (1968) research on deductive reasoning (inferring details from generalizations or the "big picture") led him to suggest teachers introduce a topic on a general basis then slowly focus on details, linking new information with known information. Ausubel recommended: 1) Present an advanced organizer (something already known) under which the new information may be "filed", 2) Present the new material in context, and 3) Strengthen the cognitive organization of the new material relating to the old. Ask questions like: "If this is true about A, B, and C, what might we conclude about D?" or "Knowing the cause(s) in these cases, what would you guess about the cause(s) in this case?" Wakefield, D.W. 1998	<p>15 April 2002 Xolisi's Journal</p> <p>Maureen's comments: Do you really think so? How important is trust in a relationship? What happens when this element is eroded? The fact that both are your friends, how has your professional position in terms of having to pass on the results, affected this relationship? Is it possible to be HIV positive, without the blood transfusion, sexual contact, (was there any other way that unknowing contact could have been made?) What does this mean?</p>
Socratic questioning: Probe assumptions questions- Many questions can center around the concept of assumptions. The student may be asked for clarification, verification, explanation, or reliability of the assumption. Students may also be asked to identify another assumption which might apply to the particular case. What are you assuming? What is Karen assuming? What could we assume instead? You seem to be assuming _____. Do I understand you correctly? You seem to be assuming _____. How do you justify this as your position? All of your reasoning is dependent on the fact that _____. Why have you based your reasoning on _____ rather than _____? You seem to be assuming _____. How do you justify taking that for granted? Is that always the case? Why do you think the assumption holds here? Why would someone make that assumption? [Paul, 1993 in TRA]	<p>Carol 6 March 2002 What does invasion of privacy mean to you? Who, specifically, in the company, did you and your General Manager apologies to? Were the specific employees aware of the breach in confidentiality or, only top management? What are the implications for this, do you think?</p> <p>In terms of the first question, do your new procedures fully address this issue, do you think?</p> <p>Carol 5 September What are the results of your interactions with Dr P? Do you get the results you want? Do you think that because 'you have always worked towards the best interest of the company' that this allows you to override his values or beliefs? How can you anticipate and manage his way of 'always being in a hurry', do you think?</p>
Questions probing belief/value system for justification	<p>Carol 13 March Do you believe that as a woman, you can have everything - the job, the relationship, and the children? Why and how? How do/can you separate out the different elements of your life - working, relationships, learning, and children? Is it possible? What is the effect? What is it that you want for yourself?</p>
Questions for divergent thinking- necessitate more wide-ranging, longer responses with higher level thought processing for example "Why is the Beatles' music so popular in Japan ?" Moritoshi	<p>Carol 19 September I have a challenge for you: try wearing ear plugs for an 8 hour work day and describe how you feel. Consider what it must be like to wear these appliances every working day for that period of time and then ask yourself the question 'How can non-compliance with health and safety issues be overcome?'</p> <p>Have you considered the BASNEF model of behaviour? What motivates people to change? What aspects of change behaviour would you incorporate into your health education model, if you were promoting the</p>

	<p>use of hearing aids? Do you think that understanding the stage of development of the individual might affect his utilization of protective equipment?</p>
<p>Questions for convergent thinking - often have short answers which "encourage similar student responses" and require low level thought processing, for example "Can you ski ? ---- "Yes, I can", "No, I can't".</p>	<p>Xolisi 14 September Xolisi: In our managing people do we only look and magnify their bad sides only or do we give lives to remember the good also about them?</p> <p>Maureen's comments: So should we make judgements? How hard it must be to be perfect.</p>
<p>Anticipatory problem solving questions – these are questions that assume that the problem can be solved, and often the questioner has a particular plan of action in mind.</p>	<p>Toko's journal 15/05/2003 [Toko was discussion an issue around unethical and corrupt behaviour of her manager] Have you considered discussing this with DENOSA? [This is the Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa] Is there any way that you can take this forward on your informal level? Perhaps we should discuss this in class?</p>
<p>Inference questions - These questions ask students to go beyond the immediately available information. To push beyond the factual in this way is to ask students to find clues, examine them, and discuss what inferences are justified. Inference questions demand that students fill in missing information. Wolfe</p>	<p>Carol's journal 11 April Why do you think that women seem to value special days such as birthday, anniversaries more than men? Is this an assumption on my part or is there some truth in the question? Does this mean they don't care ... or? How did you respond to his forgetfulness? Is behaviour indicative of the value placed on the emotion e.g. if someone regularly doesn't remember, does this mean they don't care?</p>
<p>Inductive Questions - specific to general</p> <p>Hilda Taba (1966) suggested inductive reasoning (arranging information according to inherent classes or principles) comprises the fundamental building blocks of higher thinking involve. Students should be led to infer the organization and significance of the information they are handling. To see this process in action, give students numerous pieces of information and suggest they meaningfully organize it. Strong students know how to organize and value information. Ask your students: "What is most important?", "What is least important?", and "Should you bother learning this? Why?" D.V. Wakefield [1998]</p>	<p>Janet's Journal 20 March 2003 Question: if in fact, CEO had been doing so well, why would the mother company make such a radical change? Do you think that the philosophies might not be synchronous - e.g. this CEO worked hard on morale, keeping staff happy, was involved in community outreach programmes - but perhaps did not reach the output target required? All companies are profit driven and perhaps his bottom line in not their bottom line?</p>
<p>Socratic questioning: Purpose/explanation The building up of questions in order to arrive at an explanation or understanding of an issue</p>	<p>Reflexive Journal '11a 2001Entry 11 August 13' At this stage, I asked two questions: One - what was the race group of the patient and Two- why was this question relevant? A number of students chimed in and said that if she were black or coloured, she would be unlikely to ask questions as this passivity on receiving care, generally speaking, was a cultural norm. On the other hand, Indians and whites were far more assertive and non-accepting of treatment without explanations.</p>
<p>Evaluative questions - Evaluative thinking questions are those which deal with matters of judgement, value, and choice. They are characterized by their judgemental quality. Thought processes involved while asking and answering these questions are <i>valuing, judging, defending, or justifying choices</i></p>	<p>Carol 28 March Maureen's response: In retrospect, what could you have done to prevent this from happening? Or was it important that this happen as part of the learning process?</p>
<p>Structure/ how to question - question that will enable to student to structure how to go about the process to find an answer</p>	<p>Carol 2 July What can you do to bring them closer? Ø What are you doing in Richards Bay to help fill in the gap? Ø Have you made friends to bring on home? Ø What if you tackled this side of life (social side) as rigorously as you do work or studies?</p>
<p>Questions about the question - he student might be asked to identify the question, the main point, or the issue at hand. In addition, the student might be asked to break the question into single concepts rather than multiple concepts or determine whether some type of evaluation needs to take place. The student or discussion group may also be asked to identify why this question is important. Is this the same issue as? Does this question ask us to evaluate something? Is this question easy or hard to answer? Why? ·What was the point of this question? · Why do you think I asked this question/ · What does...mean? How does...apply to everyday life?</p>	<p>Carol 11 July Does it help to reflect on what you did/ do in terms of learning these behaviours? Why/why not? Does it help to reflect on what you did/ do in terms of learning these behaviours? Why/why not?</p>
<p>Interpretation questions - Interpretive questions propose that they</p>	<p>Carol: 25 September</p>

understand the consequences of information or ideas. Asks for deeper probing. Wolfe	<p>Interesting that you have recognized the 'self-esteem' aspect of the problem. I sometimes wonder who people make the choice for - for themselves or their children.</p> <p>Did you know that this concept features quite significantly throughout your diary? Why, do you think? How do you think it affects your practice? [although you have commented indirectly and directly on this in your diary].</p> <p>How much recognition do you get in and for your work? Is it a built in feature? What do you do to elicit recognition?</p> <p>You mention that human beings need recognition. Is this a norm in our profession or in life in general? Why?</p>
<p>Questions for reflective thinking - When teachers ask reflective questions, they are insisting that students ask themselves: "How do I know I know?"; "What does this leave me not knowing?"; "What things do I assume rather than examine?" Such questions may leave a class silent, because they take mulling over. Nonetheless, they eventually lead to important talk about basic assumptions.</p>	<p>Xolisi's journal: 15 July</p> <p>What about the leader?</p> <p>So does the behaviour of the group depend upon the exemplary behaviour of the leader?</p> <p>Xolisi's journal: 3 July</p> <p>It takes courage for you to express these views.</p> <p>I have a question. If you yourself were HIV positive, is there any way you could confidently inject a client in your health care setting?</p> <p>What would be the purpose of revealing your status?</p>
<p>Probe reasoning/evidence questions- This category of probing questions asks for additional examples, evidence which has been discovered, reasons for making statements, adequacy for the reasons, process which lead student to this belief, or anything which would change the student's mind on this issue.</p> <p>What would be an example?</p> <p>Why do you say that?</p> <p>Why do you think that is right?</p> <p>What led you in that belief?</p> <p>How does that apply to this case?</p> <p>What would convince you otherwise?</p> <p>How could we go about finding out if that is true?</p> <p>By what reasoning did you come to that conclusion?</p> <p>Who is in a position to know if that is the case?</p> <p>But is that good evidence to believe that?</p> <p>Why do you say that?</p> <p>What led you to that belief?</p> <p>How does that apply to this case?</p> <p>What would change your mind?</p> <p>But, is that good evidence for that belief?</p> <p>Is there a reason to doubt that evidence?</p> <p>Who is in a position to know that is true?</p> <p>What would you say to someone who said that ____?</p> <p>Can someone else give evidence to support that view?</p> <p>By what reasoning did you come to that conclusion?</p> <p>How could we find out if that is true?</p>	<p>Reeva 20 February, 2003</p> <p>Maureen: does the research indicate this? [Do you remember our discussion at the beginning of the year re which professional group had the most impact on the health status of communities in SA?]</p> <p>Carol's journal: 13 April</p> <p>I was going to ask you how you cope with such a workload but you have answered in terms of the positive attitude. What, in addition to cultivating a positive frame of mind, have you done this year to manage?</p> <p>Janet's diary: 18 February 2002</p> <p>Maureen's response: Does pre-counselling include the eventuality that you write of? Should it? Is there any other possible explanation of the infection [other than the obvious - another partner]?</p> <p>J. No blood transfusions or any possibilities existed. Maureen - that she could recall?</p>
<p>Open questions - Questions which involve complex thinking require much explanation and detail in their answers and probably time to think and reflect. These questions are often called open or fat questions . They are often used to build up information, to allow for more personal responses and to generate further discussions and questioning. Questions which do not require any definite answer are often used as introductory questions at the beginning of a session. Their purpose may be to set the scene for the content that is to follow by steering the thinking of the students in certain specific directions. Open-ended or divergent questions promote open-mindedness and invite many answers or possibilities. They can stimulate the exploration of concepts and ideas and facilitate creative and critical thinking processes. Emphasis is on the individual. These are the kinds of questions that challenge students and their thinking. Open questions are generally contestable in that they leave us with more to think about and may not bring complete satisfaction. A good question is one that enhances and extends learning so it is important to know about the different kinds and where they fit in the learning environment. A good question should breed more questions and the desire to find answers. Good questions need to take the learner beyond the recall of basic information and challenge. Painter [1996]</p>	<p>Janet's journal: 21 April, 2002</p> <p>Question: You have been part of a merger. Has this had any impact on you? Are there any lessons you can take from this process that could help you with Change Management?</p>
<p>Questions to enthuse</p> <p>Questions that could make the reader feel good about themselves, and</p>	<p>Carol's journal: 18 February, 2002</p> <p>MAUREEN'S COMMENTS:</p>

perhaps engage them in further sharing	<p>Ø Good for you!</p> <p>Ø Is this something you should share with us?</p> <p>Janet's journal: 26 July</p> <p>J, I know you are a member of your Occupational health society. Is this a possible issue the group needs to review? Have you considered writing a paper for the Occupational health journal re this issue? What are other members in the society experiencing? [Are you on the list server - so that you can get a quick idea of general perceptions?] What is your Company doing re this issue? What do you think they ought to be doing? What can you do?</p>
Transfer questions - transfer questions provoke a kind of breadth of thinking, asking students to take their knowledge to new places	<p>Carol: 18 February</p> <p>If race were not an issue in this country, do you think people would still behave in prejudiced ways? Is it possible to use race as a general explanation for poor behaviour and overlook other prejudices?</p>
Questions for recalling procedure	<p>Carol: 5 April</p> <p>What did you say to her in response? Why?</p>
<p>Questions about knowledge - exhibits previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts and answers</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>What is . . . ? How is . . . ?</p> <p>Where is . . . ? When did _____ happen?</p> <p>How did _____ happen? How would you explain . . . ?</p> <p>Why did . . . ? How would you describe . . . ?</p> <p>When did . . . ? Can you recall . . . ?</p> <p>How would you show . . . ? Can you select . . . ?</p> <p>Who were the main . . . ? Can you list three . . . ?</p> <p>Which one . . . ? Who was . . . ?</p>	<p>Janet: 28 April</p> <p>I am just wondering about our role as nurses. Our practice has extended to such a degree that many of our nurses are 'doctoring' and not nursing. Is there a difference? Do we have the skills and knowledge to make the decisions you are discussing? Is this a concern - or should it be?</p>
<p>Questions about comprehension - demonstrating understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions and stating main ideas.</p> <p>Key words: compare, contrast, demonstrate, interpret, explain, extend, illustrate, infer, outline, relate, rephrase, translate, summarize, show, classify</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>How would you classify the type of . . . ?</p> <p>How would you compare . . . ? contrast . . . ?</p> <p>Will you state or interpret in your own words . . . ?</p> <p>How would you rephrase the meaning . . . ?</p> <p>What facts or ideas show . . . ?</p> <p>What is the main idea of . . . ?</p> <p>Which statements support . . . ?</p> <p>Can you explain what is happening . . . what is meant . . . ?</p> <p>What can you say about . . . ?</p> <p>Which is the best answer . . . ?</p> <p>How would you summarize . . . ?</p>	<p>Jenny: 29 August</p> <p>What are the alternatives in the light of what is acceptable to people? Perhaps you would be right if this were the rational. I would question this as the major reason, however</p> <p>Jenny: 23 March</p> <p>Maureen's Comments/questions</p> <p>Good point.</p> <p>What would happen if repeated injections of benzyl penicillin ?</p> <p>There is a system (cheap) of conserving water and using soap in areas with limited access to water. Do you know it (Marijke has a reading if you want one).</p>
<p>Questions to promote action / Questions about application - solving problems by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in a different way.</p> <p>Key words: apply, build, choose, construct, develop, interview, make use of, organize, experiment with, plan, select, solve, utilize, model, identify</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>How would you use . . . ?</p> <p>What examples can you find to . . . ?</p> <p>How would you solve _____ using what you have learned . . . ?</p> <p>How would you organize _____ to show . . . ?</p> <p>How would you show your understanding of . . . ?</p> <p>What approach would you use to . . . ?</p> <p>How would you apply what you learned to develop . . . ?</p> <p>What other way would you plan to . . . ?</p> <p>What would result if . . . ?</p> <p>Can you make use of the facts to . . . ?</p> <p>What elements would you choose to change . . . ?</p> <p>What facts would you select to show . . . ?</p> <p>What questions would you ask in an interview with . . . ?</p>	<p>Carol's journal: 8 February</p> <p>Dear Carol</p> <p>In some ways, it is really hard for me to respond appropriately now to entries read so many months later and also because many of your issues have been discussed in tutorials. But I will do my best.</p> <p>It is quite obvious that you have taken on a huge challenge and for me, the challenge is: how to keep both you and your family safe while meeting your other demands. Can you accept a different standard of performance from yourself in either area? What do you anticipate will happen if you continue at the rate that you do? What have you noticed about your lifestyle when trying to analyze your time?</p>
Questions about analysis - examining and breaking information into parts by identifying motives or causes; making inferences and finding evidence to support generalizations.	<p>11 April: Carol</p> <p>Why do you think that women seem to value special days such as birthday, anniversaries more than men? Is this an assumption on my</p>

<p>Key words: analyze, categorize, classify, compare, contrast, discover, dissect, divide, examine, inspect, simplify, survey, take part in, test for, distinguish, list, distinction, theme, relationships, function, motive, inference, assumption, conclusion</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>What are the parts or features of ... ?</p> <p>How is _____ related to ... ?</p> <p>Why do you think ... ?</p> <p>What is the theme ... ?</p> <p>What motive is there ... ?</p> <p>Can you list the parts ... ?</p> <p>What inference can you make ... ?</p> <p>What conclusions can you draw ... ?</p> <p>How would you classify ... ?</p> <p>How would you categorize ... ?</p> <p>Can you identify the difference parts ... ?</p> <p>What evidence can you find ... ?</p> <p>What is the relationship between ... ?</p> <p>Can you make a distinction between ... ?</p> <p>What is the function of ... ?</p> <p>What ideas justify ...</p>	<p>part or is there some truth in the question? Does this mean they don't care ... or?</p> <p>How did you respond to his forgetfulness?</p> <p>Is behaviour indicative of the value placed on the emotion e.g. if someone regularly doesn't remember, does this mean they don't care?</p>
<p>Questions about evaluation - presenting and defending opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas or quality of work based on a set of criteria.</p> <p>Key Words: award, choose, conclude, criticize, decide, defend, determine, dispute, evaluate, judge, justify, measure, compare, mark, rate, recommend, rule on, select, agree, interpret, explain, appraise, prioritize, opinion, support, importance, criteria, prove, disprove, assess, influence, perceive, value, estimate, influence, deduct</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>Do you agree with the actions ... ? with the outcomes ... ?</p> <p>What is your opinion of ... ?</p> <p>How would you prove ... ? disprove ... ?</p> <p>Can you assess the value or importance of ... ?</p> <p>Would it be better if ... ?</p> <p>Why did they (the character) choose ... ?</p> <p>What would you recommend ... ?</p> <p>How would you rate the ... ?</p> <p>What would you cite to defend the actions ... ?</p> <p>How would you evaluate ... ?</p> <p>How could you determine ... ?</p> <p>What choice would you have made ... ?</p> <p>What would you select ... ?</p> <p>How would you prioritize ... ?</p> <p>What judgment would you make about ... ?</p> <p>Based on what you know, how would you explain ... ?</p> <p>What information would you use to support the view ... ?</p> <p>How would you justify ... ?</p> <p>What data was used to make the conclusion ... ?</p> <p>Why was it better that ... ?</p> <p>How would you prioritize the facts ... ?</p> <p>How would you compare the ideas ... ? people ... ?</p>	<p>Carol's journal: 28 March, 2002</p> <p>Maureen's response:</p> <p>In retrospect, what could you have done to prevent this from happening? Or was it important that this happen as part of the learning process?</p>
<p>Probe implications/ consequences questions - The student might be asked to describe and discuss the implication of what is being done or said, the effect which would result, the alternatives which might be feasible, or the cause-and-effect of an action.</p> <p>What are you implying by that?</p> <p>When you say _____ are you implying _____?</p> <p>But if that happened, what else would also happen as a result? Why?</p> <p>How can we find out?</p> <p>What does this question assume?</p> <p>Would _____ ask this question differently?</p> <p>How could someone settle this question?</p> <p>Can we break this question down at all?</p> <p>Is this question clear? Do we understand it?</p> <p>Is this question easy or hard to answer? Why?</p> <p>Does this question ask us to evaluate something? What?</p> <p>Do we all agree that this is the question?</p> <p>To answer this question, what other questions must we answer first?</p>	<p>Janet's journal: 13 February, 2003</p> <p>What would happen if the government did not impose this legislation?</p> <p>Janet's journal: 13 February, 2003</p> <p>An interesting article - following close on the heels of the basic minimum wage packages of domestic workers.</p> <p>Can you see any connection to what is happening in industry today? I took a walk around SA Breweries - and the staff complement was noticeable by their absence. What has been the impact of mechanization or the increase thereof - on the economy/ on the worker, do you think?</p> <p>What would happen if the government did not impose this legislation?</p> <p>What is the status of agricultural workers and their families, currently?</p> <p>What are the implications of this article - and your thoughts - for your own nursing practice, do you think?</p> <p>Carol: 14 February, 2002</p>

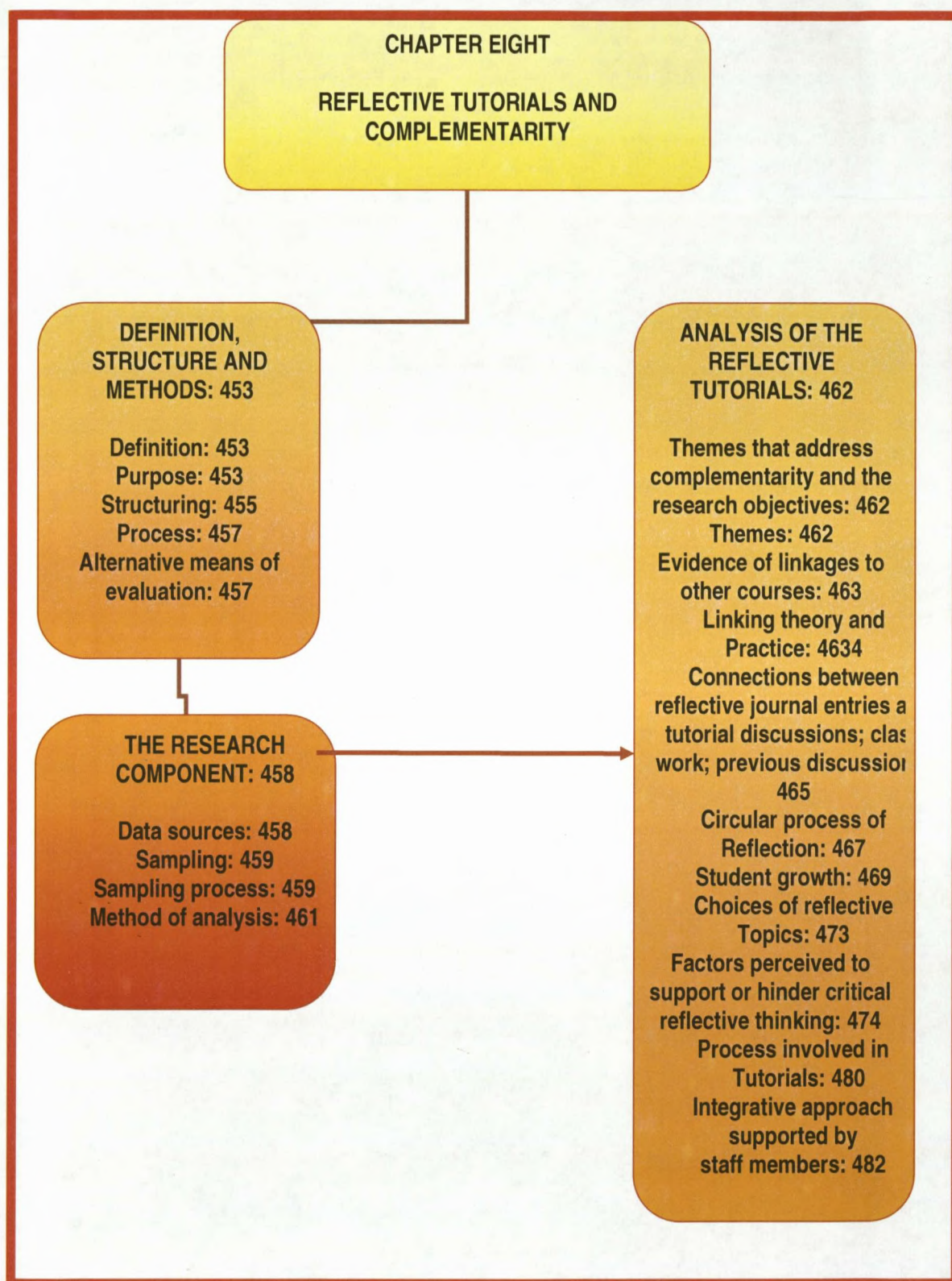
<p>I'm not sure I understand how you are interpreting this question. Is this the same as _____?</p> <p>How would _____ state the issue?</p> <p>Why is this issue important?</p>	<p>How does this perception help you as a nurse practitioner? Do you manage the contact differently with this thought in mind? What do you do to protect yourself as a nurse? Is it sufficient? You have children of your own and many children follow in their parents' footsteps and want to do what mom or dad does at work does the risk attached to your job affect what you would want for your children?</p>
<p>Closed questions - Many questions we ask in the classroom require only a simple yes /no answer or a brief response. These are usually classified as closed or skinny questions. These questions do not require complex thought to reach the answer. They are usually used to recall information, assess prior knowledge or knowledge gained after teaching. What really produces closure is neither the question nor the answer but the environment in which questions are considered. If the environment encourages the formation of questions as an important activity in its own right, and if it encourages students to use a variety of strategies regarding questions and activities as a step to further inquiry, then even closed questions may be open. Painter 1996</p>	<p>Reeva: 20 February, 2003</p> <p>Maureen: do you think that this is only peculiar to SA?</p>
<p>Questions to empower through insight development</p>	<p>Carol: 23 February</p> <p>This issue of group preparedness and team work plagues you for most of the year. How about picking up on some readings about how to improve or work effectively in a team or talking to an expert in this area?</p> <p>What else could you do to learn how to get a group motivated and working together? Could this help you in your work situation in any way?</p>
<p>Questioning about hypothesis -Typically, questions about what can be predicted and tested are thought of as belonging to sciences and other "hard" pursuits. But, in fact, predictive thinking matters in all domains.</p> <p>Skilled teachers probe for predictions as a way of making students actively aware of their expectations</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 27 February, 2003</p> <p>What would you say to Debbi Raphiti's advice "Ensure that your managers support you at all times. Open your mouth and talk?"</p> <p>How much responsibility do we as nurses bear in maintaining the status quo? (In other words, continuing to operate as we do?)</p> <p>If no-one objects to a situation, what reason is there for managers to change the situation?</p> <p>What type of pressure could we bring to get managers to change the work environment so that it is conducive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * to nurses' health and * to patients health?
<p>Probe for Clarification questions - Questions of clarification are basically asking for verification, additional information, or clarification of one point or main idea. The student would be expected to provide the information, expound on an opinion, rephrase the content, or explain why he/she made that particular statement.</p> <p>What do you mean by...</p> <p>What is your main point?</p> <p>How does _____ relate to _____?</p> <p>Could you put that another way?</p> <p>What do you think is the main issue here?</p> <p>Is your basic point _____ or _____?</p> <p>How does this relate to our discussion/problem/issue?</p> <p>What do you think John meant by his remark? What did you take John to mean?</p> <p>Jane, summarize in your own words what Richard has said. Richard, is that what you meant?</p>	<p>12a June Reflexive journal entry</p> <p>[Questions to students introducing themselves in their journal]</p> <p>Tell me about yourself. Who are you? Where do you come from? Tell me about a day/ week in your life/ work life. Tell me about your family. Tell me about your programme, how it meets/ doesn't meet your needs. Tell me about how you learned in the past and if there is difference in how you are being taught now? What are the difficulties/ values you are experiencing?</p> <p>Janet's journal : 27 March, 2003</p> <p>And so what are you trying to say here - you are doing her a favour and therefore she needs to be loyal?</p>
<p>Probe perspectives/viewpoints questions - The student might be asked whether there are alternatives to this viewpoint or perspective, how might other groups or people respond, what argument a person might use who disagrees with this viewpoint, or a comparison of similarities and differences between viewpoints.</p> <p>What would someone who disagrees say?</p> <p>What is an alternative?</p> <p>How are Mary's and John's ideas alike? Different?</p> <p>What are you implying by that?</p> <p>When you say _____, are you implying _____?</p> <p>But, if that happened, what else would happen as a result? Why?</p> <p>What effect would that have?</p> <p>Would that necessarily happen or only possibly/probably happen?</p> <p>If _____ and _____ are the case, then what might also be true?</p> <p>If we say that _____ is ethical, how about _____?</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 12 February, 2003</p> <p>What if it was one of your family?</p> <p>Xolisi's journal: 28 June</p> <p>If you were the minister of Health of SA, what would be your reasons for delaying treatment?</p> <p>Janet's journal: 27 March, 2003</p> <p>Here you have someone who has an 'in-charge' position? How do you get someone like this to 'buy into' your concept for the need to change? For 5 years, her notion of hygiene has been OK - but no longer - how can you get her to accept this 'new notion'? What could you have appealed to?</p> <p>Do you in fact, think you were wrong? What will be the outcome and what will be the cost?</p>
<p>Procedural questions - relate to classroom, lesson and student control processes such</p>	<p>Usually asked in tutorials or contact classroom sessions</p>

as "Who is absent today?"	
<p>Questions to promote synthesis - compiling information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions.</p> <p>What changes would you make to solve . . . ?</p> <p>How would you improve . . . ?</p> <p>What would happen if . . . ?</p> <p>Can you elaborate on the reason . . . ?</p> <p>Can you propose an alternative . . . ?</p> <p>Can you invent . . . ?</p> <p>How would you adapt _____ to create a different . . . ?</p> <p>How could you change (modify) the plot (plan) . . . ?</p> <p>What could be done to minimize (maximize) . . . ?</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 6 March</p> <p>What was her menstrual history? What was her state of mind? Is there not a policy on ultrasound's pr</p> <p>Wow So may questions about this. What do you know about false pregnancies?</p> <p>Why was the woman bleeding?</p> <p>Why hadn't the woman attended AN clinic?</p> <p>How did the woman cope afterwards? What kind of support would she have needed?</p> <p>Was there negligence on anyone's part here?</p>
<p>Socratic arc of questioning - But simply posing a variety of questions hardly creates a climate for inquiry. At least as important is the way in which teachers respond to the answers their questions provoke. Thus, recent research (Sacker and Sacker 1985) suggests that too often students' replies meet with little more than a passing "uh-huh" Such responses can stop inquiry dead in its tracks. In place of such dead-end situations, skilled teachers give an exchange of questions a life-course. Across a long arc of questions and answers, they pursue an investigation in which simple factual inquiries give way to increasingly interpretive questions until new insights emerge. For an observer, there is an impression of a kind of mutually constructed improvisation unfolding (Mehan 1978, 1979). In this improvisation, teachers keep questions alive through long stretches of time, coming back to them days, even weeks, after they have first been asked. Creating a climate of enquiry: across an arc of "questions and answers, they pursue and investigation in which simple factual inquiry gives way to increasingly interpretive questions until new insights emerge" . It is almost as if the questions posed form a kind of catwalk of realizable possibilities along which a student can move toward new insights (Luria 1976, Vygotsky 1978, Wertsch, 1978). Wolf, D.P. 1987:4</p>	<p>In general, students did not directly answer my questions in their journal. However, many either returned to the issues and discussed these further in tutorials or in later entries.</p> <p>Lea: 17 March</p> <p>? Maureen: very cute - but in fact, what kind of influence do hormones' play in our behaviour?</p> <p>L's response: Huge, but some don't have "human" control. I really need to become cerebral.</p> <p>Lea: 6 April</p> <p>Maureen: What are the implications for your practice?</p> <p>Maureen: Is cholera an issue on the work front?</p> <p>L's response: No but in KZN employees travel to other areas so must know signs and symptoms.</p> <p>Maureen: Where would you make this table available and why?</p> <p>L's response: travelling teams.</p> <p>Maureen: Why is a table so useful?</p> <p>L's response: So easy to read and evaluate quickly.</p> <p>Lea: 25 April</p> <p>Maureen: and this leads you to ...?</p> <p>L's response: If these are amazing and time is critical, then what can we expect to see in the next decade especially in genetics and DNA research!</p>
CRITIQUER-RESPONSES TO STUDENT ENTRY	EXAMPLE FROM JOURNALS
<p>Acknowledging individual worth.</p> <p>Individualising responses in a way that recognises the uniqueness of the student, allows the student to understand that they are valued,</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 28 August</p> <p>What a shock for you, Nandi</p> <p>Have you thought of making an appointment with management to express your concerns? I am very proud of you this was a very good reflective process and you integrated your theory on your own situation. Well done!</p>
<p>Recognising the student's personal circumstances/dilemma</p> <p>This follows on from the previous concept, and reminds both the critiquer and the student, that the critiquer is aware of the personal events or influences shaping the student's learning</p>	<p>Reeva's journal: 8 May, 2003</p> <p>I am fairly sure I have responded to this as I remember reading and thinking about it.</p> <p>A question, Reeva. Your first paragraph indicates a sense of despair and a feeling that life just takes over, with or without your control. Does this mean one should not have goals?</p> <p>Your second paragraph is much more hopeful, and personally, I can see the change in you. Would you have accepted 'your humanness' at the beginning of the year and seen it as the strength through which you now view your life? Have your values changed in any way?</p>
<p>Drawing analogies/ creating metaphors</p> <p>Gordon and Pose (1971) suggested metaphorical thinking stretches the mind and forces the learner to think critically. Analogies and metaphors require the learner to enter the land of synthesis and evaluation. Critical thinking in these creative terms may be the ultimate information-processing skill. Forced metaphors or analogies are particularly effective in instigating higher level thinking. A "forced" metaphor requires a learner to associate two ideas that are not commonly linked. For example: "How are schools like gardens?", "Personally devise and explain democracy in the context of a metaphor.", or "What do math equations and language sentences have in common?" [Wakefield, 1998].</p>	<p>Janet's journal: 14 September 2003</p> <p>I suppose most things can be rationalized - but the question is - do we always want to?</p> <p>I am a great Walt Whitman fan and when he suggests we consider a blade of grass or the essence of a mouse - and then query whether or not there is a god.</p>
<p>Identification of relevant elements</p> <p>I have observed that for my students, one of the most difficult aspects of critical thinking, was the ability to focus on key, relevant issues. In many previous instances, students had been told by others in authority was</p>	<p>Carol's journal: 10 April</p> <p>An interesting perspective. It made me think about getting older and wondering if fear of consequences was the reason for staying the same. Do you think that our value system changes as we age? Interesting</p>

relevant. I wanted them to learn to identify this for themselves and recognise the choices they were making and why.	choice of word "fall" why do you think you used that specific word?
Honesty/ authenticity Much of how the student/ critiquer relationship will develop, will depend upon the honesty of the relationship and the ability of the critiquer to provide 'reality checks' in an acceptable manner	Carol's journal: 4th September In a number of schools the teachers anticipate these sorts of reactions and put in a number of measures to try and leaven the playing fields, as it were e.g. cake and suckers for everyone at school etc, etc. There comes a time though, that children learn that life just 'aint fair' and that's the truth. How we choose to respond to those types of situations determines our own sensibilities. Your criteria for life's choices seem to me to be a reasonable one.
Providing information I saw my role as extending the student, and part of this requires a sharing of information. I chose to do this by engaging deeply in the reflections, and if I could offer anything further by means of additional sources or literature, I did.	Reeva's journal: 13 February You might be interested to know that the framework of this programme is based on the model of critical reflective practice developed by Elsie van Aswegen. She will be pleased to know that it had an effect on you. I note with interest your motivational message to the class - marks for nothing. Well, the intent is good, but believe me, you will have earned your mark - even if it isn't in the accepted traditional format. Tell me your thoughts when you have completed your programme.
Structuring the thinking process My function in these journals is to support critical reflective thinking. Ways I tried to achieve this was through trying to challenge and help students structure their thinking processes. Sometimes, this took the form of Socratic questioning and other times, through making connections.	Reeva's journal: June 2003 I am trying to disassociate myself from an event for which I was originally responsible - and so ask you to move into a hypothetical mode. Imagine a similar situation in your clinic where you are on the receiving end - what would make it easier for you to respond so that the issue is dealt with and your persona remains intact? Theoretically, the situation in class should not have evoked an emotive response, for, as you correctly note, your opinion was asked for. Why do you think it did? Could or would you change your management of this situation. If yes, how and why? If no, why not?
Providing direction Whilst much of my input was through questioning, it was sometimes also helpful to point the student in a specific direction, particularly if I was concerned about some of the decision making or interpretation of events.	Reeva's journal: June 2003 Maureen: There is a difference between being dependent on someone [this implies that they make the decisions without necessarily consulting or working with you] and independence - which means that you are in control of the situation and yourself. It doesn't mean that you assume all the responsibility and do all the work. Responsible delegation is just one of the techniques to do this.
Promoting reflective thinking	Reeva's journal: 10 April, 2003 While you mention that you have no control over your own path, perhaps the 6 months might give you space to view who you are without the support of a contact relationship. You might surprise yourself - and who knows what else might be in store for you if you open yourself up to experiences? While you mention that you have no control over your own path, perhaps the 6 months might give you space to view who you are without the support of a contact relationship. You might surprise yourself - and who knows what else might be in store for you if you open yourself up to experiences?
Reinforcing specific concepts	Well done Nandi [4 September] You are not asking her to do anything else but her job. It is amazing the power some people have over others part of being a professional person means assuming proper use of power and I like your choice of words firm and consistent.
Positive reinforcement by praising the student	Nandi's journal: 28 August I am very proud of you. This was a very good reflective process and you integrated your theory on your own situation. Well done! Nandi, you have provided a good description and supporting argument. Well done. Don't you think you should share this?
Accurate observations	Carol's journal: What other kind of stress breakers have you built into your life style? Ø Stress is a theme in your entries. What should this mean to you, do you think?
Drawing analogies~creating metaposition - Gordon and Pose (1971) in Wakefield [1998] suggested metaphorical thinking stretches the mind and forces the learner to think critically. Analogies and metaphors require the learner to enter the land of synthesis and evaluation. Critical thinking in these creative terms may be the ultimate information-processing skill. Forced metaphors or analogies are particularly effective in instigating higher level thinking. A "forced" metaphor requires a learner to associate two ideas that are not commonly linked. For	Janets' journal: 14 September, 2003 I suppose most things can be rationalized - but the question is - do we always want to? I am a great Walt Whitman fan and when he suggests we consider a blade of grass or the essence of a mouse - and then query whether or not there is a god.

example: "How are schools like gardens?", "Personally devise and explain democracy in the context of a metaphor.", or "What do math equations and language sentences have in common?" Wakefield, (1998).	
Acknowledging student's contribution	<p>Jena's journal: 28 May, 2002 Dear Jena Well your reflection provoked a lot of thought on my part. I thought about myself as a teacher/facilitator and my efforts to be non-judgmental - but is this possible? I make judgements all the time and in fact, judgements are essential element in critical thinking. Perhaps if I use the word objectively - this holds more truly to what I am trying to achieve.</p> <p>Your stories are wonderful illustrations about choices in judgement - and, importantly, you provide reasons for your decisions. It is only when you have access to reasons that you can then weigh these - and come to a decision - a judgement. When new information arises, your decisions are then re-evaluated on this light - and another judgement is made.</p> <p>I know I am not asking a question and that I am making a statement that you can disregard, as you choose.</p>
Recognition of/planning for next stage	<p>Nandi's journal: 12 February It is nice that you have summarized but it is not necessary. If you just highlight the key points this will save you some time, This is good article to start your entries off.</p>
Promoting critical thinking	<p>Reflexive journal: 7aentry2 June 2001 I went through one of her reflective thought entries. It dealt with professional practice and ethics and her analysis was both apt and thought provoking. I asked a number of questions relating to the relevancy of ethics in today's context and specifically regarding the situations nurses found themselves in today. I asked if we could afford to be ethical considering the reality of the complexity of some situations. Her response dealt with 'how can we not?' I am very interested in situational morality and would love to have debated this longer. It was good to give positive feedback. I also recommended some readings and a theorist on moral development, Kohlberg.</p>
Identifying with the student	<p>Xolisi journal: 31 May I echo your sentiments. When I read about the work that you do, and your sense of nursing, I feel the same pride.</p>
Supporting the student by: *encouragement	<p>Nandi's journal: 21 October I look forward to following your progress in future- and will always be interested in what you are doing.</p>
Linking to previous discussion/entry	<p>Carol's journal: 25 June Sounds like a good plan. We have talked about this in tuts.</p>
Demonstrating awareness of own weakness/lack of knowledge	<p>Toko Topic 6 A dilemma indeed. I didn't know how to solve your problem, perhaps we should take this to class? I do know that in life, situations are never simple- and you are going to need to resolve your dilemma between -What is right and wrong (your own morality) -Loyalty -and intimidation. If is of course easier when there are proper systems in place.</p>
Focusing/highlighting key issues Whilst as critiquer, I took my cue from the students' entries and followed up with related questions, I too, had an agenda and issues that I was concerned with, one being the nursing profession. Where appropriate, I would highlight these issues through questioning or comments.	<p>Carol's journal: 30 April How do we as nurses, form alliances of mutual respect with other health professionals? What should/ could we do? How do we as nurses, form alliances of mutual respect with other health professionals? What should/ could we do?</p>
Criticizing It was difficult to draw the line between supporting, directing and disagreeing and criticizing, especially as my role as empathetic-critiquer had clearly delineated the non-judgmental aspect of my function. Nonetheless, there were occasions when I could not let the student believe that her perspective was not flawed. Generally, the questioning method was an indirect way of dealing with this, but sometimes, I found that I had to be more direct. I believe it is in the way one phrases the criticism that makes it acceptable or not – considering the limits of my own delineated role.	<p>Nandi's journal: February 12 MAUREENS COMMENTS: Nandi, your questions are valid but perhaps you might take into account the fact that this is a club donating funding. The other issues you mention, quite correctly, should be dealt with and so perhaps you might be interested to see an additional form of funding been made available to St Mary's (see Web CT latest health link bulletin).</p>

<p>Recognising processes - restating or reframing to enable student/self to recognise what is happening</p>	<p>Jena's journal: 14 March, 2002 Regarding the checking at the Supermarket. The logic here however is: if you want to compare the costs of 'chicken casserole' tinned vs. cooked, the process may well be comparative. If however, you took the price of a banana - home grown to the grocery store - it may well be cheaper. Theoretically it should also be cheaper to take a small portion of the family's dinner and puree it - than cook separately. In certain situations, growing own vegetables might also prove more expensive (depending on what you are costing).</p> <p>Reeva's Journal: June 2003 Maureen: here you are assuming that everyone is [1] close minded and [2] considered all the alternatives and consequences and/ or [3] has exactly the same motivation or [4] that everyone gives the same amount of thought and care to their actions.</p>
<p>Requesting information Students needed to be aware that although ostensibly the journal was written for themselves, they did have a reader [s]. If I requested specific information, it meant that there were gaps in the entry and that the information proffered was not self-evident.</p>	<p>Carol: 26 August What kind of a referral letter did she write, do you know? Is there anything else she should have done to ensure that she received feedback? Sometimes, liaison by the OHN with the concerned hospital does pay off in the long term. Do you think that personalizing a situation [i.e. making personal contact] will have a positive effect? You seem to do this all the time in your work why should the results be any different for the OHN?</p> <p>Even if, as you note, nursing is just a job why should there not be an appropriate procedure for feedback? If someone works at a supermarket, they do not have a calling; nonetheless, they are still required to do a good job. Why should this be different in nursing?</p>
<p>Reminding These types of comments served more than one purpose: They enabled the students to see that my engagement with their journals was deep – I remembered – but also, it was a way of connecting themes, which is part of the recurrent, reflective process.</p>	<p>Jena's journal: 23 February How empowered are nurses to change processes? (I am really thinking about your second entry here).</p> <p>Carol's journal: 23 August Carol These tutorials have had different meanings for different people. I spelled out my intentions in my own diary entries and the difficult part is that the formula is not and has not been the same for everyone. Much of the process has depended on the individual needs of the students. In a sense, you have missed out on some of the process in that I am only getting to critique your diary entries now. However, as I recognize many of the issues, these have been discussed and debated in the tutorials. I should mention that I am grateful that you have come along with me on this journey and committed to a process that was not always overt or spelled out. You have done this with courage and shared your innermost thoughts and concerns generously and with style. You might like to go back to your reading in Book 1, pages 13-15 on critical reflective thinking and review what you are doing in light of this reading.</p>
<p>Connecting to prior learning</p>	<p>Carol's journal: 20 August As a manager, where do you draw the line? Is there a line? What would have happened if you had asked the company to buy you a computer or at least, found a way to make it tax deductible, as the work you would be doing on the computer will indirectly benefit the company? [If I remember correctly, we did discuss this, didn't we?]</p>
<p>Demonstrating awareness of own feelings/emotions</p>	<p>Xolisi's journal: 31 May I echo your sentiments. When I read about the work that you do, and your sense of nursing, I feel the same pride.</p>
<p>Summarizing</p>	<p>Jena's journal: 17 February This was a very interesting response to a potential power-play situation (i.e. routed through the Matron) I get a strong sense of your being someone very comfortable with yourself - and not needing to be "boss".</p>



CHAPTER EIGHT

TRIANGULATION OF DATA – REFLECTIVE TUTORIALS

Reflective tutorial sessions provide a platform for connections of strategies to enhance critical thinking and critical reflective practice

8. INTRODUCTION

Reflective tutorials, as a teaching and learning strategy, were held to promote critical reflective practice in the Nursing Management IV course. During the course of the discussion that occurred in the reflective tutorials, students referred to issues that had been dealt with in their journals or in class – and so the discussion continued, since learning through reflection is a circular process (See Figure 8.1). Therefore, data triangulation (or complementarity) took place and through this, I was able to obtain a comprehensive view of the process and the development of critical reflective thinking. The analysis and discussions of the journals alone would only provide one aspect of the learning experience, whereas the programme design specifically incorporated multiple strategies that together, would enhance critical reflective thinking.

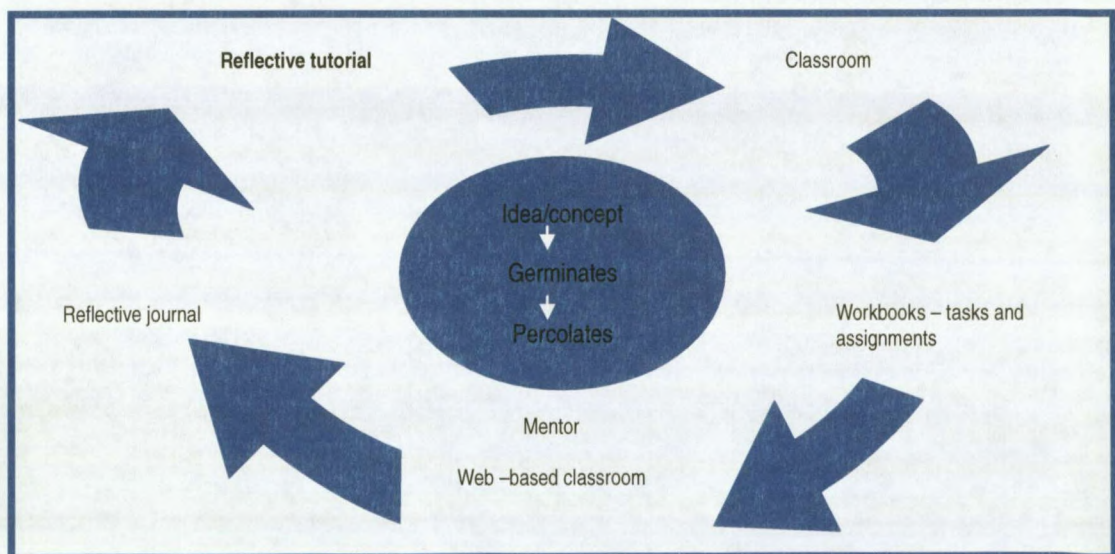


Figure 8.1: Complementarity: How integrated learning strategies work

Furthermore, the outcome for the objective relating to the carry-over of critical thinking into practice could only be met indirectly i.e. through students' narratives and dialogue. The purpose of this objective (Objective Four in Chapter Four, Section 4.11) was to monitor the process involved in reflective thinking evidenced from reflective journals and reflective tutorials and determine whether reflective thought had an effect on the resulting perceived attitudes and behaviours of post-basic nursing students in relation to health care practice.

8.1 DEFINITION, STRUCTURE AND METHODS USED IN REFLECTIVE TUTORIALS

8.1.1 Definition

In the context of *this* Management IV course, reflective tutorials are defined as small group discussions based on the learning needs of students who interact with each other informally for the purposes of connecting theory and practice and developing insights about themselves and their practice. These were pre-set, regularly scheduled discussions which provided a forum or platform for learning. Although these were student-driven, they included the facilitator. The collaborative learning was guided by structures and norms. The choice of facilitation style was an adapted form of the Socratic Method as described in Chapter Three, Section 3.8.3 and Chapter Five, Section 5.4.1. While there was no specific goal, other than those determined by the students at the start of or during the discussion, the reflective tutorial was not task-driven. Evaluation was informal and evidenced by a developing understanding of the process by both students and the facilitator.

8.1.2 Purpose of reflective tutorials

Cranton (1996) in Imel (1997) recognises three types of learning that can take place in groups:

- "instrumental (scientific, cause-and-effect information)
- communicative (mutual understanding and social knowledge)

- emancipatory (increased self-awareness and transformation of experience)“

The purpose of the small group reflective tutorial discussion was to provide a forum for dialogue, based mainly on students' journal entries, and the development of oral arguments making use of 'teachable moments' for individual students. The focus was on critical, reflective thinking and was process rather than outcome oriented, highlighting the examination of assumptions, expectations and perspectives. The facilitator provided a supportive but challenging environment using Socratic questioning, the technique of which is used to promote critical thinking (as explained in Chapter Five, Section 5.4.1). The aim was to support self-directed dialogue and equalize the power dynamics between students, and between students and facilitator as much as possible. This concept is supported within van Aswegen's model in Chapter One, Section 1.8 and a description of the student-facilitator relationship in Chapter Three, Section 3.6.3.

The dialectical nature of the discussion allowed students to see issues from multiple perspectives, to interrogate their own world view and give both voice and meaning to their constructions which would then result in emancipatory learning. According to Mezirow (1981:18) cited in Platzer, (2000:689), this is where learners "identify real problems involving reified power relationships rooted in institutionalized ideologies which (they) have internalized in (their) psychological history." Apparently, alternative perspectives will allow learners to analyse their assumptions.

The role of the educator was particularly important, in that it needed to be non-directive and not seen as one where the educator was the provider of information (Mezirow in Platzer, 2002). The idea was not to rush the discussion, particularly in view of the fact that many of the students were second-language English students, but rather to give students 'space' and the time in which to

uncover relationships and concepts. (The theme of 'space' and 'time' are motifs in reflective learning and are discussed in Chapter Three, Sections 3.4.4, 3.9 and 3.10.5, 3.12.4, 3.14.5.2).

According to Ziegahn (2001) this social construction of knowledge was promoted by collaborative group work in an environment encouraging negotiation, listening and care. This collaboration focusing on process and aimed at sharing information, ideas, and feelings accords with the communicative type of learning identified earlier by Cranton (1996) in Imel (1997). This then in turn further supported a culturally sensitive learning approach with the possibility of fostering inclusion.

The questioning approach was intended to invite decisions instead of implying criticism, which can limit participation (Picou, Cantrell and Barr, 1998). Questions were intended to open issues and challenge cognitive thinking, but needed to be introduced carefully so as not to threaten the integrity of the student. The Socratic discussion method encouraged learners to consider and evaluate their own thinking in relation to that of others. It promoted multidimensional thought and a sense of intellectual discipline and thoroughness. Those participating learned to appreciate the power of critical, reflective learning. This method used a series of questions to uncover or discover truth; it guided explorations of students, to perhaps deconstruct conventional ideas and understanding. Muscat, (1999) and Paul and Elder (2001) support this usage of questions.

The instrumental form of learning referred to by Cranton (1996) in Imel (1997) above was evidenced mainly in the form of practice supporting theory. As the discussions were largely self-directed, they were not based on facilitator-determined prior readings, but focused on student interests and needs. The purpose was to draw students out, sharpen their awareness of health and

management issues and their abilities and the use of critical reflective thinking to attain goals and avoid blocks.

8.1.3 Structuring of reflective tutorials

- Group composition: the groups comprised never more than five students and students generally chose their own membership, sometimes based on practicalities (i.e. continuity, if they had already been organized into a group for another course, for example, Nursing Research 1), and sometimes based on affinity such as previously established friendships. The group membership remained constant throughout the year, as the building of trust is progressive and should not be assumed (Boud and Walker, 1998).
- Venue: Tutorials took place outside of the classroom, generally in my office, around my desk or in a small meeting room around a table.
- Mutually suitable times, dates and duration: These were negotiated at the beginning of the year in consultation with both students and other teaching staff, so that programme times did not overlap, nor did students need to come in on other days or have to wait. The duration, an hour-and-a-half, provided enough time to engage in discussion on more than a superficial level.
- Environment: Generally, students sat in comfortable wicker-basket chairs in a circular pattern, the telephone was disconnected and the door was shut for privacy. First names were used, and humour encouraged. I strove to create an informal, psychologically safe environment of mutual respect, using active listening and a non-judgmental stance was promoted.
- Facilitation processes: I tried to motivate and empower students by:
 - ✓ offering an open, accepting attitude;
 - ✓ supporting and maintaining a positive group environment;

- ✓ recognizing the individuality of students by personal recognition of their circumstances (occupational, personal and academic);
- ✓ clarifying meanings;
- ✓ connecting ideas to theory or practice; and by
- ✓ making connections between previous discussions or written work, thereby integrating materials over time.

8.1.4 Process

Purpose, methods, norms, roles, dynamics, value and structuring of groups was discussed and highlighted during orientation to all learning programmes within the department, and then at various stages during the academic year. Students were mature, adult learners and had experience with group work as a teaching and learning strategy. Participation was a requirement, although there was no grade attached to the involvement. Students were told that the content and direction of the discussion was up to them and that my intention as facilitator was to initiate and support the discussion, but promote a student-centered rather than a facilitator-directed approach.

8.1.5 Reflective tutorials as an 'alternative' means of evaluation

The reflective tutorials were not evaluated formally in terms of allocating grades. However, these were evaluated in terms of mastery of learning which ultimately influenced grades. As Chabeli (2001) notes, reflective tutorials contribute towards integrative assessment as their focus is on the formative process where students actively reflect upon what they have learned and are learning.

For example, a student (Lisi) notes:

"to me it is time for ventilating to get someone to listen. Secondly, you keep throwing things back to me and making me think. Afterwards you find that some of these

things that you are not aware but during the discussion you are motivating my thinking so that I think, oh, does this mean this? I was not aware. And there are suggestions that you make to me and when I am out I think about that. And also to see when someone else has the same problem which gives me the strength to me it is time for ventilating to get someone to listen..." (Lisi: Tutorial: 23 August, 2002)

Chabeli (2001:21) describes reflective tutorials as an alternative means of assessment (or, in other terms "authentic or performance assessment"). This is because they proceed from and allow for further processing of the authentic issues written about in the students' reflective journals.

8.2 THE RESEARCH COMPONENT

8.2.1 Data sources

As researcher, I acquired detailed evidence of students' experiences. Guided mainly by Objective Four, but also considering the other three objectives (Chapter Four, Section 4.11) I used the data from sampled reflective tutorials and my recorded observations from my reflexive journal to:

- attempt to gain new understanding of a situation, experience or process;
- learn from the detailed accounts that students described in their own words, or that I, as researcher recorded in field notes from participant observation in the academic setting.

Critical thinking, guided reflection and reflective practice have consequences. As researcher, I wanted to know what nurses were thinking about and how they were thinking – their 'lived' experiences, which in turn would give meaning to their ability to think critically and reflectively and thereby, affect their practice. Critical reflective practitioners are multi-dimensional beings, expressing their personal, educational, professional and occupational facets through their tutorial

discussions and reflective journals. So, although the focus of the research centred on the two variables, critical thinking and reflective practice, it also ensured that the study range was far broader than just a narrow consideration of only two variables. By taking the students' narratives into account, through their reflective journals and reflective tutorials discussions, my reflexive diary, as well as references to class work, I was able to triangulate evidence supporting the reflective thinking and the illumination of the content of the students' thoughts and practice, thereby revealing their attitudes and values. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) call this methodological triangulation, which is the use of multiple methods to study a single problem looking for convergent evidence from different sources. As I was intimately involved in this course, I also used as a source of reference my own observations, some of which relied on memory and was not documented, and so is perhaps less reliable. These are referred to in the text as 'Personal observations'.

The data sources included transcripts from 5 tutorial sessions, correlating themes with those derived from 3 key student reflective journals (Carol, Jena and Xolisi) and class work checked against class plans and topics identified in the 2002 study guide. Jane Tarr, a critical reader, gave a report on four reflective tutorials, excerpts of which are included for the purposes of triangulating evidence, but also to illuminate the findings. (The concept of the critical reader was introduced in Chapter One, Section 1.10.3 and further discussed in Chapter Four, Sections 4.6.1, 4.16.4 and 4.19). Raw data and supporting evidence for all data sources is available on the supplied CD-ROM.

8.2.2 Sampling

This is in the form of an overview in Chapter Four, Section 4.16.2 and is provided in more detail in the following section.

8.2.2.1 Sampling process

Tutorial discussion sessions complemented the journal entries and comprised 20 hour-and-a-half sessions taped in 2002, of which I sampled five using a combination or mixed sampling method (Miles and Huberman, 1994:28). The sample of five provides an adequate reflection of the type of process and progression of group discussion at this level of learning in the Nursing Management IV course.

The sampling decision was based on the following:

- Three students 2002 reflective journals (Carol, Jena and Xolisi) were used for analysis. This decision was made in July/August 2002, and so it seemed appropriate to sample two reflective tutorials from these students' respective tutorial groups as I would be able to triangulate data from their reflective journals, as these journals are included as the study's main data source. I also sampled one transcribed tutorial session from another group as a check. The transcriber, who had access to all the tapes, made a choice of convenience. No tutorial sessions were taped in 2003 as I had decided to make the 2002 group the main target research group even though I changed my mind at a later date to include selectively chosen data to deepen my understanding of the research study.
- Although I recorded and have access to all the tutorial sessions in 2002, the recordings from the available recording equipment was singularly poor. I was only able to buy a better recorder mid-way through the year, and so decided not to use the sessions recorded in the first half of the year.

- One group of students was not comfortable with having their sessions recorded, and so these were omitted. Another group only allowed me to record once they were comfortable with the process.
- In two sessions, the electricity tripped out and I only noticed this after the fact, so these sessions were omitted.

8.2.3 Method of analysis

This is described more fully in Chapter Four, Section 4.24.

8.2.3.1 Analysis organised in the form of themes that address complementarity and the research objectives

The analysis of the reflective tutorials addresses the research objectives outlined in Chapter Four, Section 4.11 and the themes identified in Section 4.24.3. Each taped reflective tutorial was transcribed and considered individually and then, in order to obtain a sense of 'wholeness', was summarised and organised in terms of the themes, along with the other reflective tutorials as follows:

(a) Complementarity in the form of

1. Evidence of linkages to other courses, because of the integrated approach to learning (Objective 1). The rationale for the integrated departmental approach to programme learning is introduced in Chapter One, Sections 1.6.
2. Evidence of linkages between theory and practice as these form key precepts of critical reflective thinking (Objectives 2 and 4 and rationale identified in Chapter One, Section 1.4.5, 1.5

and 1.11.1 It is also foundational to van Aswegen's model in Chapter Two, Section 2.3.1 and Chapter Three, Sections 3.6.4, 3.6.5, 3.6.7 and 3.7).

3. Evidence of connections between reflective journal entries and tutorial discussions (Objective 1).

4. Evidence of connections between previous reflective tutorials or class discussions and the current discussion. Learning through reflection is a circular process, which sees the learner returning to a notion time and again, from different angles, until the concept has been interrogated to the learner's satisfaction (Objective 1 and 4).

(b) Addressing the research objectives by identifying and exploring

1. Factors that supported or hinder critical reflective thinking (Objective 3). This component centers on the processes involved in the tutorials.

2. Evidence of students' attitudes and values – the 'meat' of the thinking (Objective 4).

3. Perceptions of student learning by:

- Identifying the process of critical, reflective thinking (Objective 2).
- Identifying commonalities in thought processes (Objective 2) .
- Identifying the issues chosen for reflection (Objective 4).

8.3 ANALYSIS OF THE REFLECTIVE TUTORIALS

Each table is divided into columns, providing descriptions of the summarised data and illustrative quotations from the respective tutorial. Each table is titled and so includes data from the five tutorials relevant to the table title. The columns within each table are headed by the date of the tutorial and the participants' pseudonyms. The data is categorized into themes and summarized

within the tables in terms of Section 8.2.3.1. The sequencing is not particularly important but has been organised chronologically. The reader is cued by the blue colour and the italicizing of the participants' names, indicating that these are participants in both the sampled reflective tutorials and reflective journals. Normal font and black colour indicates that the participants were sampled from the tutorials only. Selected extracts were chosen, along with supportive literature, to illustrate my interpretation. However, it should be noted that the analysis is not comprehensive. It merely provides an overview of the process and the outcome of the reflective tutorials.

8.3.1 Themes

As noted in 8.2.3.1, the data is analysed in the form of the following themes:

- Linkages to other courses
- Linking theory and practice
- Connections between reflective journal entries and tutorial discussions; class work; previous discussions
- Student growth
- Factors support or hinder critical reflective thinking
- Students' choices of reflective topics
- Process involved in the tutorial.

8.3.1.1 Evidence of linkages to other courses, because of the integrated approach to learning

Although Nursing Management IV formed a subject within the student's specialty, students were encouraged to think holistically and use the tutorial session as a means of making the learning within their programme more meaningful. This meant that the reflective tutorials allowed them a

means of thinking more freely and in an integrative way. I have noticed that frequently, when students attend lectures offered for a specific course, there is a tendency to mentally 'switch gears' and in trying to focus on the learning material at hand, knowledge is compartmentalized. The connections made in the reflective tutorials are in fact one of the ways that students learn to 'think outside of the box' and integrate previous learning with new knowledge constructs, an essential process in critical thinking (Broadbear and Keyser, 2000). Melville Jones (1999) discusses the concept of 'infusion' thinking, whereby critical thinking skills are not necessarily taught within a specific subject, for example, *Critical Thinking*, but in fact are infused across subjects so that students become aware of the skill (for example, causal relationships, analysis of arguments, reliability of information and sources, inferring from evidence), understand it and apply it across contexts. This promotes an integrated approach to learning which cuts across subjects. It is not clear if learning occurs in small, incremental steps or as what Eisen (2001), citing Mezirow, recognises as 'epochal transformation'. Who is to say when these realizations or insights occur? But by pointing out the obvious and making the connections allows for what Eisen (2001:36) recognises as "permeability between instrumental and communicative" learning. Figure 8.2 depicts the strategies within the course where such connections are made explicit.

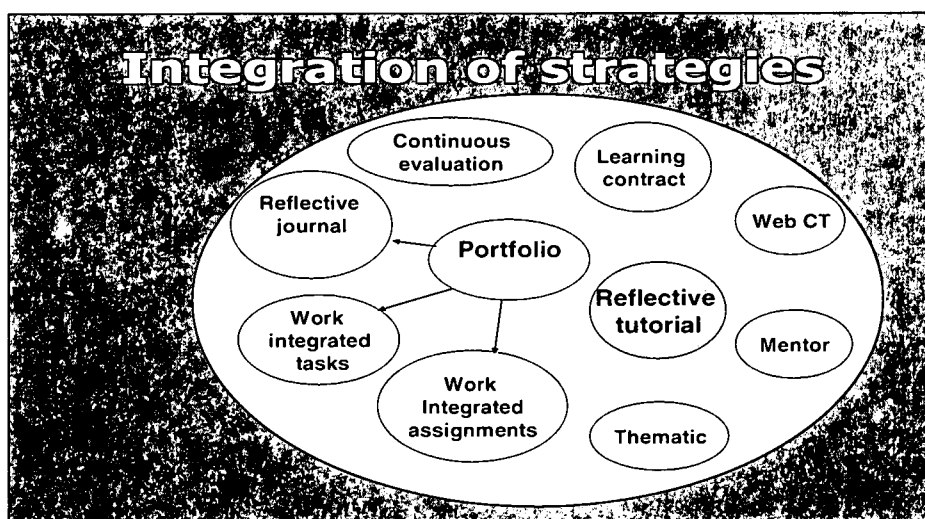


Figure 8.2 Integration of strategies

There is plenty of evidence of linkages, but only a few are shown as a demonstration in Table 8.1 in Appendix 8.1.

8.3.1.2 Linking theory and practice

Theory informs practice and practice informs theory. These notions are inextricable and interlinked and are supported in Chapter Three, Sections 3.4.5, 3.6.1, 3.6.4, 3.6.5, 3.6.7 and 3.7. The whole point of the tutorials was to reference the reality of the students' workplace settings and make the connections between the theoretical underpinning and their practice. This was not overt, and often occurred through self-discovery. Theory and practice are linked by storytelling (Nehls, 1995). When teachers and practicing nurses share their experiences, students learn to appreciate that nursing knowledge can evolve by reflecting on practice. Students learn to expect differences in practice based on experience and begin to recognize areas in which they need to focus their attention. Reflection on clinical practice is not only a way of learning nursing but also a way to contribute to nursing knowledge. This link between theory and practice can be explained further by acknowledging teachers-as-learners and learners-as-teachers within the context of the classroom and clinical experience. Also, by emphasizing reciprocity, a community of learners is built (Koenig and Zorn, 2002). An example of the theory-practice link is in the following excerpt dated 2nd August, 2002. The issue under discussion was assertiveness. It formed part of the course material that had been dealt with in class. I had asked Xolisi if she was comfortably able to say 'no' in situations in her workplace (she worked deep in the heart of a traditional rural area in the eastern Cape):

Xolisi: "Ja, I do. I remember one time we are the school health team, we had a social worker so she was kind of (I don't want to say lazy), but lazy. She actually didn't come (to the school). We had to go and pick her out from her office (laughter). So, we use to do, we can't do her work, but we used to see the clients and all that, until somebody said no, we must not work for her. Let us refer all these clients to

her. So, that she will see how it is to work alone, because when he was working, when we were working as a team, the load wasn't that much, even for her because we were there to help. Now that maybe seeing that the load is even more that she is working alone, it will change something in her and it really did. "

Xolisi had previously mulled over this issue in her reflective journal. It was a clear demonstration of putting theory into practice, and through relating her story, she was able to provide an authentic experience of this happening. I think that it was also a very creative way of teaching a lesson and allowing for the development of insight, without the social worker having to 'lose face'. Other examples of evidence of linkages between theory and practice are identified in Table 8.2 in Appendix 8.2.

8.3.1.3 Connections: reflective journals, tutorials; class work; previous discussions

Sometimes as the facilitator, I would remind the students about the connections between their reflective journals, tutorials; class work and previous discussions. One of the ways I accomplished this was by starting the tutorial with a summary of what I had recalled from a previous reflective tutorial. I was also very conscious of using 'teachable moments' and where issues connected with class work or diaries, I (or the students) would acknowledge and develop these. It was helpful to have a theme approach to the course, where the situational analysis of the student's workplace formed the spring-board for most other issues as topics of discussion in class, reflective tutorials and journals. (Table 8.3 demonstrates evidence of connections in Appendix 8.3). A sound situational analysis provided a context, from which I could then view the student's practice with understanding.

In another example, attention is drawn to Jabu's reflective journal:

Maureen: "What, what am I doing in your diaries? Are you handing in diaries? "

Jabu: "Yes. "

Maureen: "Okay, what am I doing in your diaries? What am I personally doing in your diaries? "

Jabu: "I think - to see our critical thinking and reflecting skills. "

Maureen : "How?"

Jabu: "I think sometimes it's helping because you do a diary entry or table, you analyse your diaries or the situation and then you reflect on it. Maybe than after you've marked it you come with some opinion and some other suggestion that you did not think of. So, it's sort of a two-way interaction, sometimes I do benefit from it. "

Maureen: "... do you realise that the questions that I ask, may not necessarily benefit you, but that your own reflections are maybe much, much more valuable? In other words, the fact that I'm asking questions might even not be important, but the fact that you are writing things down at all. ... there is a lot of time and energy that you are spending doing this. You know that? Of course you know that. I'm saying to you, do you, ... do you see the benefits to yourself at all in that process? Or are you sitting there and thinking, oh, oh. "

Boniswa: "Ja, sometimes, it depends on the maybe on the article, let's say newspaper article that you have chosen; because now when you have to analyse it you have to think of other things, not just what is written down. You have to think about of other things and you have to observe your own feelings about the story that they are talking about in the article. So, somehow, you improve your way of thinking and your way of analyzing things. "

My reflexive journal provides earlier and further thoughts on connections.

Reflexive journal: 31st October, 2002

Whilst reviewing the summative test, it struck me sharply that some of the students' responses rang true and others, not so clearly. I read their responses in light of their diaries, their input in tutorials and their reflections on their tasks, each of which has in a sense, allowed me to triangulate the truthfulness or validity of their responses. This has applied in the examples supplied in the test for example, when they wrote of improved problem solving skills, and gave an example of this process, and on a number of occasions I was able to match this up to previous work. This wasn't done deliberately. It has, however, been one of the interesting and unsought benefits of both the course, and my having to evaluate all facets of the course. Of course, this could prove not to be a benefit, if different people are working with different aspects of the students' work and we are not communicating about what we see or read with each other.

8.3.1.4 Circular process of reflection

The reflective cycle that takes place within the individual may be different to that that takes place within the group. It might take time to process thoughts until one is in a sense, ready for self-insight to take place. In the group, as the discussion was free-flowing, it was easier to raise difficult thoughts or thoughts that were perhaps uncomfortable to an individual, but were of little concern or a non-issue to others in the group. In this way, the group self-regulated the communication and therefore, the thinking that took place. Simpson and Courtney (2002) note that one of the cognitive critical thinking skills is self-regulation where one constantly monitors one's own thinking in line with the universal criteria of, for example "clarity, accuracy, consistency, logic, significance" etc. and take the appropriate corrective actions. In the reflective tutorial, sometimes members of the group took on this role. For example, in the circumlocutory tutorial on the 2nd of August, Rea was complaining about the lackadaisical attitude of the staff she worked with:

Rea: "It really gets to me because at the end of the day, even if I am limping or whatever, if you look at the stats (she means to compare patient numbers in terms of work loads) it's like you (Rea) now really (have) seen a lot compared to the rest (of the staff)."

Maureen: "So then let me ask you: "Why do you stay?"

Rea: "Because I love what I do".

Rowan points out the contradiction:

Rowan: "But you are moaning about what you do".

Rea justifies her position:

Rea: "I'm not moaning about what I am doing. What I am trying to say is that as you mention people are doing it (working as a nurse) for other reasons. So, people must understand if (that if) they are in this job situation, (they have a job to do and therefore) this is what they (are) meant to do. They need to pull themselves together and do the job, not leave it to one person or so... It has gone so bad now Maureen,

in the sense that the team leader decided that she doesn't want to be team leader anymore."

Rowan again points out that complaining worsens the work situation: "But you know, I think some of these team leaders don't want to be in charge when they've got such de-motivated staff, and staff that are just moaning and groaning. "

Rea: "You don't have a choice, you don't have a choice, if it is your time to be (Rowan: How come you don't have a choice?) be team leader, you have to be team leader. If it is your turn, you can either stay" (Rowan: "I will back that one up") (or quit, I think Rea means)

Rowan again questions Rea's stance. Jena joins the discussion:

Jena: "You know, I take an advantage of passive people, I am telling you. I do take advantage, because they are influential, you can influence them. "

Maureen: "How would you do that? "

Jena: "Well, I am assertive person. "

Rea does present herself in the role of the martyr, but gets short shrift from her colleagues. She is comfortable enough within the group to argue herself out of that role by removing the focus from herself to the team leader, but still the group doesn't let her get away with her passive stance or martyred role. Although the group have focused attention on dysfunctional work behaviour, Rea still feels safe enough to continue sharing in the discussion which moves on to another direction. Other examples of evidence of the circular process of reflection are identified in Table 8.4 in Appendix 8.4

8.3.1.4 Student growth

Chabeli (2001:25) notes that reflective tutorials promote clinical reasoning skills. The following extract demonstrates Lisi's recognition of her poor study technique and the logical way she has now approached this (this after previous discussions). Lisi (14/6/2003) is explaining how she is now trying to deal with, with what for her, was previously an impenetrable "mountain" of work in her new position at work and her studies, but has recognised that "one bite at a time" helps reduce the

mystery and burden. Carol remembers the critical thinking technique taught in class 'use mind-mapping', she suggests. I offered Lisi a way out by suggesting that the problem lay with me in the way I had presented the course initially.

Maureen: "You were given everything right at the beginning... you were given all the materials, all the assignments, all the tasks, all the dates were handed to you. The only thing I didn't hand to you were all the workbooks... given as you have needed them... Maybe you have been overwhelmed by the amount?" But Lisi demonstrates self-insight and repudiates the excuse.

Lisi: "In fact it was not the way it was given. It was how I approached it. Because sometimes giving you the whole scope. It is good for myself to go through and see how much work you got. But it was how I approach it. That is where the problem lies."

Both van Aswegen (1998) and the Foundation of Critical Thinking in Broadbear and Keyser (2000) describe intellectual traits essential for the development of critical thinking to include intellectual humility, intellectual courage, intellectual empathy, intellectual integrity, intellectual perseverance, faith in reason and fair-mindedness. I would suggest that Lisi demonstrated smatterings of these traits in this excerpt.

Both students recognise that there is limited place for rote learning in the learning process in the course, and that learning is more meaningful when it relates to life. In the tutorial of 23/8/2002, Carol notes that she had been discussing the Management course with another lecturer in the department as well as her difficulty in learning for the upcoming test:

Carol: "I found, I don't know what to study. What do I study? Fine, I can read the work and read the textbooks, but I can't study, study it. I think it is aimed towards changing your behaviour and the way you think. And that is the hard part."

Lisi notes: "...it is a guide...these guidelines are going to help me, not only now... I have grown , I have matured, especially in the Management side, even in the Occ. Health...once you are in the situation, then you start to learn...for example, problem solving. I could solve problems, knew I needed to get some facts here and there, now it is becoming more structured. (Now, when I am in the situation) doing it, that is when you are going to internalize it and make it your own, not just for the exam."

Carol: "You learn through experience".

She discusses a previous educational experience, also a management course:

"I didn't have this interaction and that was the difficult part. I didn't change behaviour in that course... because it wasn't practical".

Adult learning principles as described in Chapter Three, Section 3.2, recognise that learning takes place when the learning is perceived to be relevant. Lisi notes her renewed interest in management, even though it had formed part of previous learning programmes because " now I am doing it, so it has meaning to me now ".

Table 8. 5: Student growth with regards to critical, reflective thinking

Carol, Lisi , Ria 14/6/2002
<p>Lisi focuses on self-identity and the theme of racial prejudice and the effect on her functioning. How writing her thoughts down in her journal allows her to distance herself and obtain perspective, rather than pursue her initial reaction of aggressive behaviour. Valuing of self. Willingness to consider reorganization/ restructuring of work to deal with load. "As I deal with the tasks, that makes me feel like I am going somewhere... It motivates me to do more. This mountain now, I have started a piece of it. Now, instead of taking on the whole world, I can start somewhere. I will make it." Carol: Comments on her setting of personal goals.</p> <p>Carol: " The problem with Lisi and I is that we have both experienced quite extreme changes this year: We have changes jobs, changed homes, relocated to different place. And for me personally it has been a huge challenge and the studies are that much harder and the changes that have occurred have had a huge impact on me physically, personally and emotionally. It is only in the past two weeks that I am beginning to surface. "</p> <p>Maureen: "That is quite a shock"</p> <p>Carol: "It IS. I thought I would be alright. I said to myself, in June I will be alright. The house will be livable and I will be able to get down to work. But June moved to July and then to August and I can honestly say that it is only in the past</p>

two weeks that I have my little space that I can do my work and I have never had that for the whole of this year. My life has been a mess. I have been living out of boxes and suitcases, so ya. But, I see the light at the end of the tunnel and for me it is not just a piece of paper. I have grown with this course since last year and I have said this to Judith (her subject specialty co-ordinator) as well. I have grown professionally a lot especially with the occupational health last year and the management this year. Because I was in the field and I didn't have the tools. I also look at it differently now and I have grown professionally."

...Maureen: "But what about your continued development? How do you ensure that the quality of service that you are delivering is appropriate?"

Carol: "That is why we are here!"

Boniswe, Bisa, Jabu

25/7/2002

Student growth: This is not directly observable from these transcripts. It was a process that had taken place over time. However, as I indicated, there was quite a lot of anger in the group as a result of working in, what for them, was untenable circumstances.

- Frustration at the lack of recognition given by the authorities to the work that the poly-clinic offers

Evidence from tutorial:

Thembi: "Our service, or our organization. It is not easy. Number one, that Clinic is part of the hospital, it is not like other things. And number two, as far as I can see, in fact I am quite sure - they not even aware of what Primary health care is, this is number two. And they are so stubborn even to take that Clinic out of the Hospital, so, that it can be an independent. Because of that now, everything is from the main hospital, and even with the staff like, this month we got these people moving back to the hospital for one year. "

- Frustration at the lack of teamwork

Evidence from tutorial:

Maureen: "But perhaps as a group, is there something that you, that (you could do), would you see that as a possibility and if so how? "

Jabu: " I have a problem. I don't have nothing, I don't have a group there a team or what. We are there but everyone is different with her own complaints, her own stress or whatever. "

Boniswe: "You can't even make a team" (laughter).

Jabu: "I don't even see a team maybe we can try to be a team. Maybe three of us or two of us (Boniswe: but with the rest) the staff as a whole, I don't even see how can you start. "

- Frustration with lack of boundaries and colleagues/management overstepping boundaries with little respect for the students – called "kids"

Evidence from tutorial:

Jabu: "And another thing, there is people who are Senior to us, we found them working there. The problems were there but they've never done anything. Even if you talking about this thing they seem, I think it looks like they used to it. It is no longer a concern, maybe it is for this moment and they are not concerned. So, being the juniors, if I can say like that, you feel like you are helpless you can't do anything, because you know they are all Seniors, what, what, and you are from school. And I am really a junior, even if I complain they are like used to it. But they are not concerned like me... I accept it, really, I am younger than them I can accept it. But in the working situation we are all Professional nurses. Worse in front of the patients, maybe if I am joking in the tea lounge, you can say that, I can understand, not in front of the patients. Calling me a kid, do that and that, Aai, aai, it doesn't sound right, it doesn't at all! "

- Fear of working with abusive patients; frustration with lack of management support for nurses' safety

Evidence from tutorial:

Boniswe: "Ja, it is difficult, because you know whatever happens between you and the patient, the patient is always right, no matter what happens. The patient is always right with the management, so, because they even attempt to assault us. "

- Failure to feel part of the institution; difficulty in identifying

Evidence from tutorial:

Boniswe:	"And when the situation analysis was taking place we were not involved. "
Maureen:	"This means quite a lot to you to be involved? "
Boniswe:	"Ja, it does, because now we are working there, we know the situation and when somebody from Maritzburg is called to do the situation analysis. "
Jabu:	"Because there was that lady from Maritzburg. I remember the first time I met her I did not know she was doing this thing, from Maritzburg. She was treated like any other patient. She was sitting there in one of the rooms and she asked me: "Sister are you going home now", because I was taking my bag, I said no! You know, not even noticing who is that person asking me you going home. I said no, than I went out, only to find that she followed me with her card now. "No, I am a Doctor from Maritzburg. I am doing situation analysis". I was just amazed, I did not know there was somebody who was doing something in our Clinic, and we were not informed at all..."

I think that by getting them to recognise this anger, the students were able to see issues a little more realistically each time, mainly because of the questioning, some of which were meant as reality checks e.g. they complained that they were not involved or consulted about the situational analysis. However, on questioning, they recognized where the responsibility lay (with their institutional staff, not with the external person) and Jabu had approached Sr K early in the morning to ask what was going on. They were very afraid to commit to a decision and appeared to take a long time thinking about decisions – for example, Jabu or Boniswe (can't remember which one) finally wrote a letter to a senior manager complaining about the structuring within their service. This was only done after much consideration of possible consequences. Nonetheless, the letter was written, and a positive change resulted. Bisa, who spoke about victimization in racial terms, did take up this issue with the matron concerned and the matter was dropped after a decision to Bisa's satisfaction. While these actions took time to put in place, they did take place and are evidence of the students' growth.

Systems or practices they considered to be useful to try to manage the problems they faced showed a sound reasoning process:

- ✓ use of theory (knowledge base, protocols e.g. IMCI; correct use of statistics for motivation);
- ✓ knowledge of people;
- ✓ anticipation of potential problems (community assuming power);
- ✓ using the hierarchical system;
- ✓ trying different practices such as using a community member as an information giver;
- ✓ working as a team;
- ✓ quietly closing door to go to tea;
- ✓ identifying staff to rotate on tasks (writing of statistics);
- ✓ waiting (problem sister would be going on pension);
- ✓ Considering other options e.g. immigration.

Xolisi, Jena, Rowan, Rea
2/8/2002

I think that growth can be evidenced in the questions they ask; their ability to move the discussion forwards by challenging but with respect to each other; their ability to recognise multiple perspectives; their ability to analyse issues more deeply; their linkage of theory to practice and the ability to think for themselves. The fact that the group felt uncomfortable and even angry, to the extent of Jena walking out of a class on sexual education, but then participated in a reflective tutorial on this issue, is a positive one. Attitudes were challenged and there were moments of discomfort which is a start to the double-loop learning discussed in Chapter Four, Section 4.6.4.2.1.

Carol, Lisi 23/8/2002

Carol's reflection on her difficulties of working with her research group (Table 8.1): Maureen: "Have you ever discussed that with the others?" Carol: "No. No. I think that that is probably the problem. We never talk. We get together and we discuss the research... we never get to how we are as a group?" I posed a suggestion that perhaps there might be other reasons for the students in her group not engaging in the research process. Carol: "I must admit, it is not like the girls are not working. They all are working and pulling their weight, whenever they have to...In my chapter ... I just felt like I wasn't getting enough info. from them." ... Lisi: "We need to sit down and discuss what is needed." Carol demonstrates a willingness to be open, characteristic of a critical thinker. Her openness to other perspectives shows a maturity that is particularly commendable, considering her real frustration and earlier expressed anger.

Other examples:

Lisi: "Secondly, you keep throwing things back to me and making me think "

Carol's decision to buy a home computer indicating desire to support further learning.

Recognition of what stage of learning they are both at:

Lisi: Learning is "...aimed towards your change in behaviour and the way that you think. That's the hard part."

Carol: "It is only when you are truly engaged in this problem, that you internalize the knowledge/ learning, make it your own."

Catharsis resulting in openness to learning

Xolisi, Musa, Zinzi 8/10/2002

I think that the discussion provided evidence of fairly sound reasoning processes, although evidence, particularly on the immigration side, was fairly shaky.

8.3.1.6 Students' choices of reflective topics

These have been categorized in Figure 8.3 into the following themes: (1) Self-identity; (2) Issues affecting the capacity to cope; (3) Work related issues; (4) Academic (learning) issues and (4) Issues related to nursing profession. The detail is identified in Table 8.6 in Appendix 8.5.

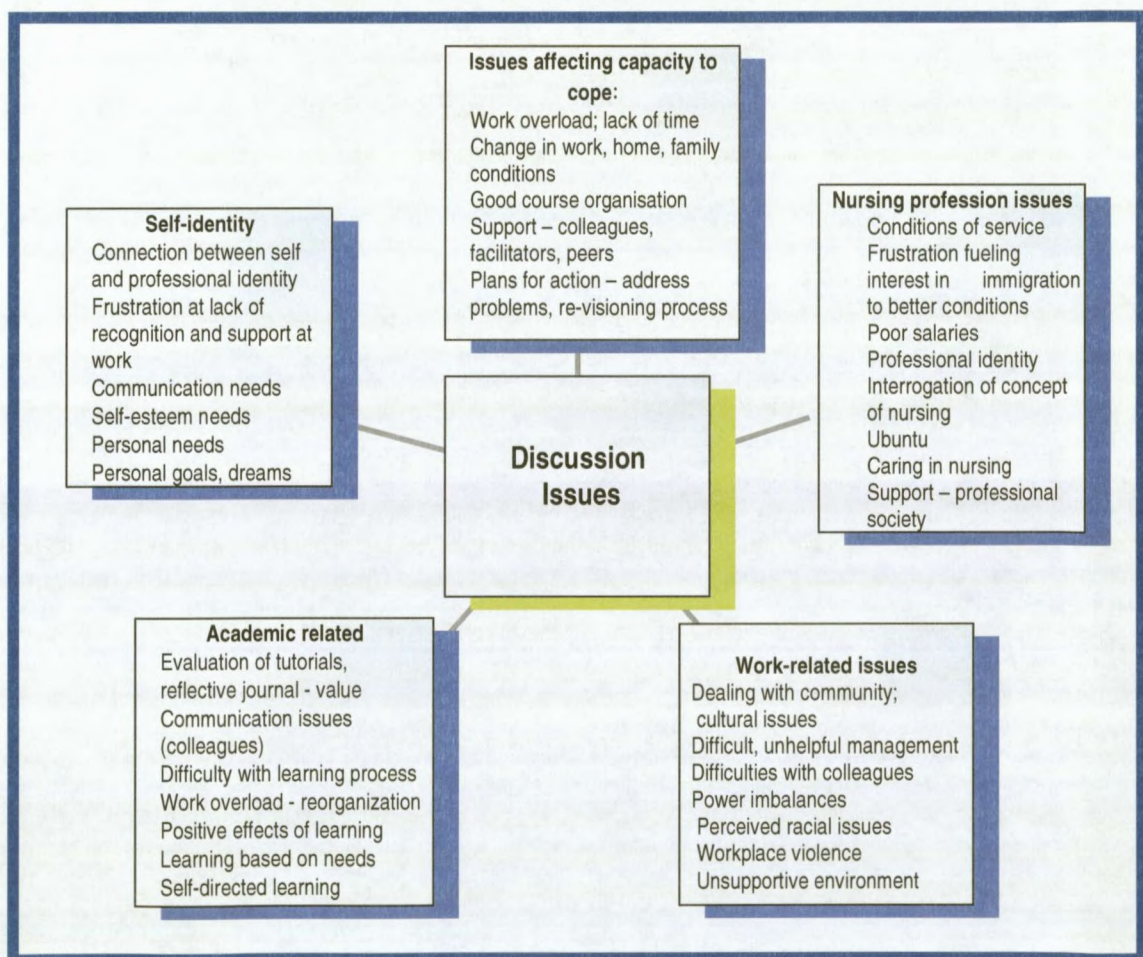


Figure 8.3: Issues chosen for discussion in the reflective tutorials

8.3.1.7 Factors perceived to support or hinder critical reflective thinking in tutorials

This section highlights factors hindering the process of the tutorial engagement that affect the thinking process. These factors could be within the group or with the process itself, or could be within the individual or even the relationship between the student and myself. Kuiper and Pesut (2004:384) cite Shell's 2001 survey of teachers involved in baccalaureate programmes which identified the following barriers: "student characteristics of resistance and attitude, inadequate time, perceived need to cover content and dispense information, resistance to teaching style changes, institutional barriers, lack of knowledge of the concept, and lack of self-efficacy in ability to teach critical thinking."

Barriers or issues related to learning environments and the process of reflection have been discussed in Chapter Three, Sections 3.4.4, 3.10.2.3, 3.10.5 and all of 3.10.6. Most of the work in this area has been undertaken by Boud and Walker (1993 and 1998). Others, such as Platzer, Blake and Ashford (2000), Mezirow (1991), Newton (1996) and Boud and Miller (1998) have added to this body of knowledge.

Table 8.7: Factors perceived to support or hinder critical reflective thinking in tutorials

<i>Carol, Lisi, Ria</i> 14/6/2002	<i>Boniswe, Bisa, Jabu</i> 25/7/2002	<i>Xolisi, Jena, Rowan, Ria</i> 2/8/2002	<i>Carol, Lisi</i> 23/8/2002
Supportive: Lisi rethinking her position on leaving, particularly when she deconstructs the workload. Offered tangible help on revisioning	Supportive: The students did open themselves to discussion and to trusting the process and were willing to answer the questions asked honestly. Hindrance: Initially, our	Supportive: freedom to ventilate; sharing of thoughts; alternate perspectives; appreciation of different cultural contexts; comfortable with each other evidenced by ability to challenge (non-threatening) , tease and laugh with each other. All from same discipline of nursing – so familiarity with	Supportive: Apparent group cohesion: fluid discussion indicating comfort with process and environment; comfort in deciding topic; comfort in being able to end discussion; Questions that looked for evidence; which promoted critical reflective thinking. Provision of workbooks and study guide as prompts "But right now I am in a

<p>work situation so that she is better able to conceptualise organization and structure</p> <p>Hindrance: work overload; time limitations; stress (recurrent theme). (See 8.3.1.5)</p>	<p>relationship and even perhaps the language and cultural barrier which did seem to have an impact on understanding. It took time for me to clarify matters.</p> <p>I also think that prior socialization, both as a result of the nursing hierarchy and as a result of certain rigidity in their previous education systems (questioning and challenging was not considered polite) impacted on their ability to freely reflect.</p>	<p>background.</p> <p>Hindrance: blockage of reasoning initially by strong feelings; set ways. As facilitator, had not been party to strongly felt experience so could only question. Difficulty in assessing 'reality' of feelings. Event very recent, so students did not have the benefit of distancing of the issues and leveling of feelings.</p>	<p>management position so that this information helps me a lot. And I am adding on my previous knowledge. It has meaning for me now and I am adding to it because I need it now"</p> <p>Supportive work organisation: Provides a generous loan for Carol to buy a home computer to facilitate her learning "2%." Both students' fees were being paid for by their organisation.</p> <p>High expectations of themselves- both supportive and hindrance.</p> <p>Hindrance: work overload; time limitations; stress; "extreme changes this year: We have changes jobs, changed homes, relocated to different place. And for me personally it has been a huge challenge and the studies are that much harder and the changes that have occurred have had a huge impact on me physically, personally and emotionally." Although both reflect on the value of working in groups, they also acknowledge the difficulty in working in groups (Table 8.1)</p>
<p>Supportive: Apparent group cohesion: fluid discussion indicating comfort with process and environment; comfort in deciding topic; comfort in being able to end discussion; evidence of laughter indicating ease in situation. Evidence of correcting my misperceptions with sensitivity and ease. Questions that looked for evidence; which promoted critical reflective thinking.</p> <p>Hindrance: Perhaps too much paraphrasing or clarifying or advice giving on my side?</p>			<p>Xolisi, Musa, Zinzi 8/10/2002</p>

In Figure 8.4, I have included the barriers to reflection that I have identified over the process of the study. These have included my observations of the selected groups' reflective tutorials as well as those observed in non-selected reflective tutorials and with other groups of students over the study period. Generally speaking, the tutorials have worked well and I have not experienced extremes in terms of negative behaviours (see Figure 8.5). As mentioned, these are adult learners who were well aware of the critical reflective methodology integrated within their course of learning. They had been well oriented to the process and had participated in determining the learning contract in

Chapter Five, Section 5.4.2.6. Many of these barriers that do affect the reflective process are usually in place in the early stages of the reflective tutorials. Sensitive interpersonal relationships as well as all the supportive elements within the process generally negate most of the limitations of the perceived barriers.

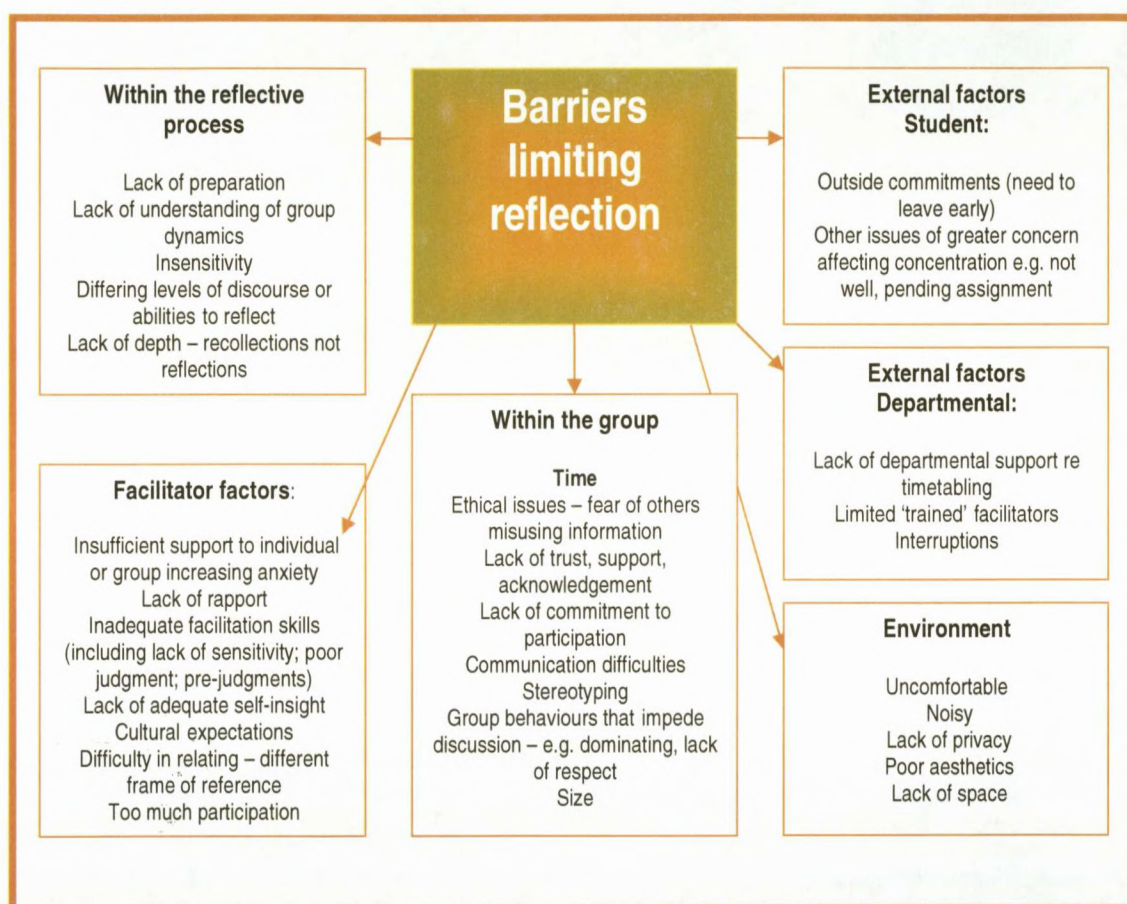


Figure 8.4. Barriers perceived by the researcher to limit reflection within the reflective tutorial

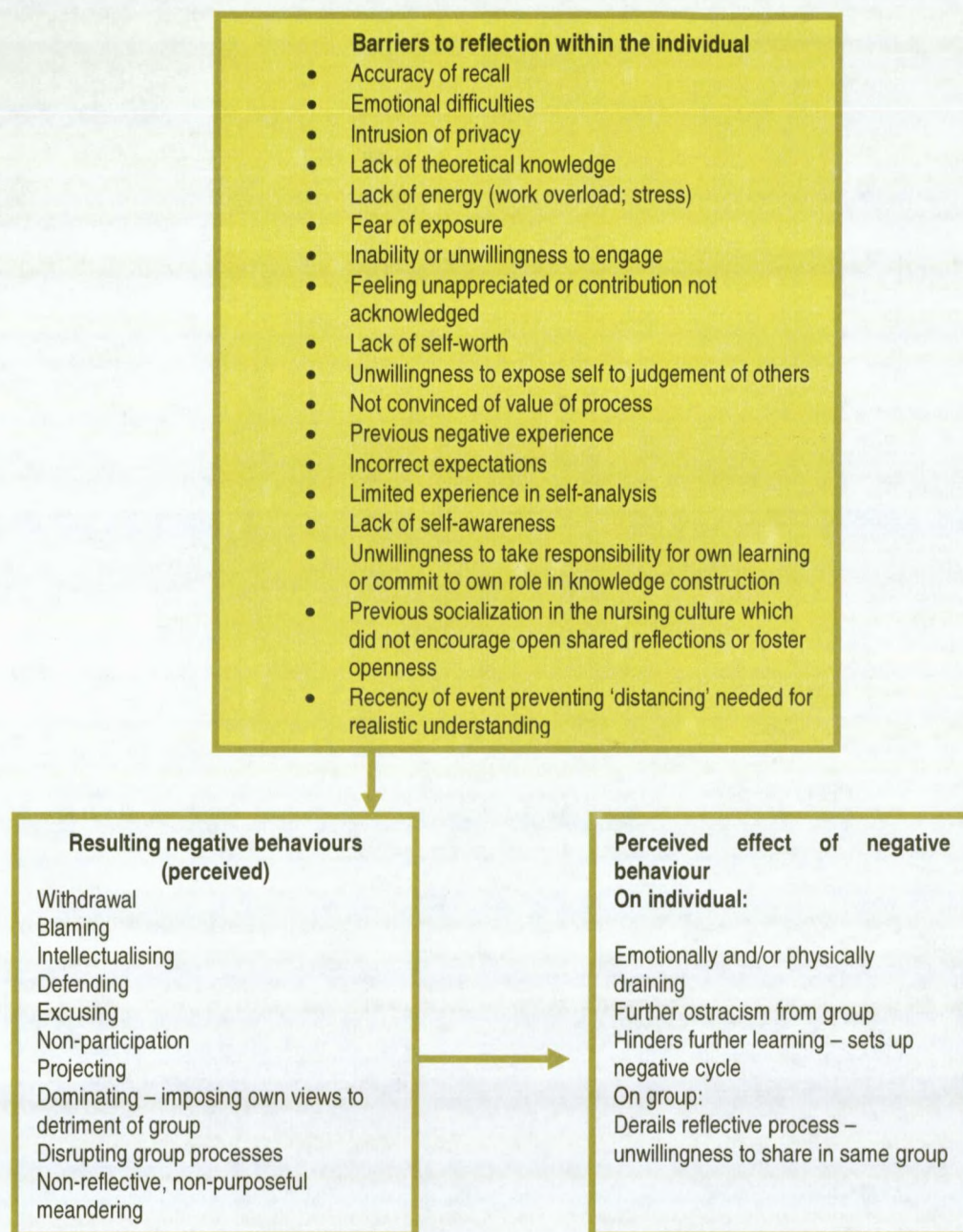


Figure 8.5: Perceived barriers to reflection within the student; perceived resultant negative behaviours and perceived effects of the negative behaviour

In a similar fashion, I also observed the factors that supported reflective practice, and again, these observations took place over the study period and included all the reflective tutorial groups with whom I worked.

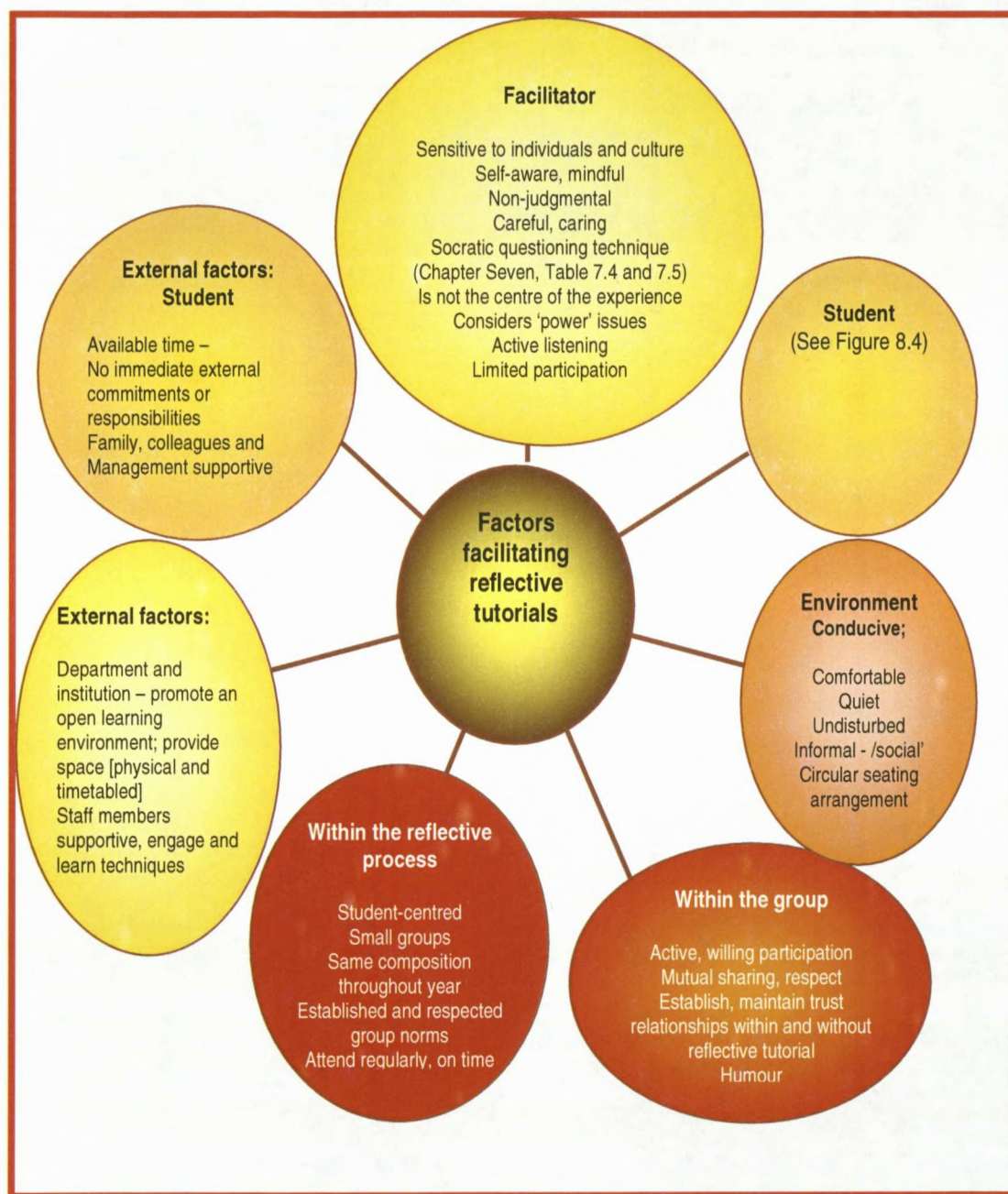


Figure 8.6: Factors perceived to support reflective tutorials

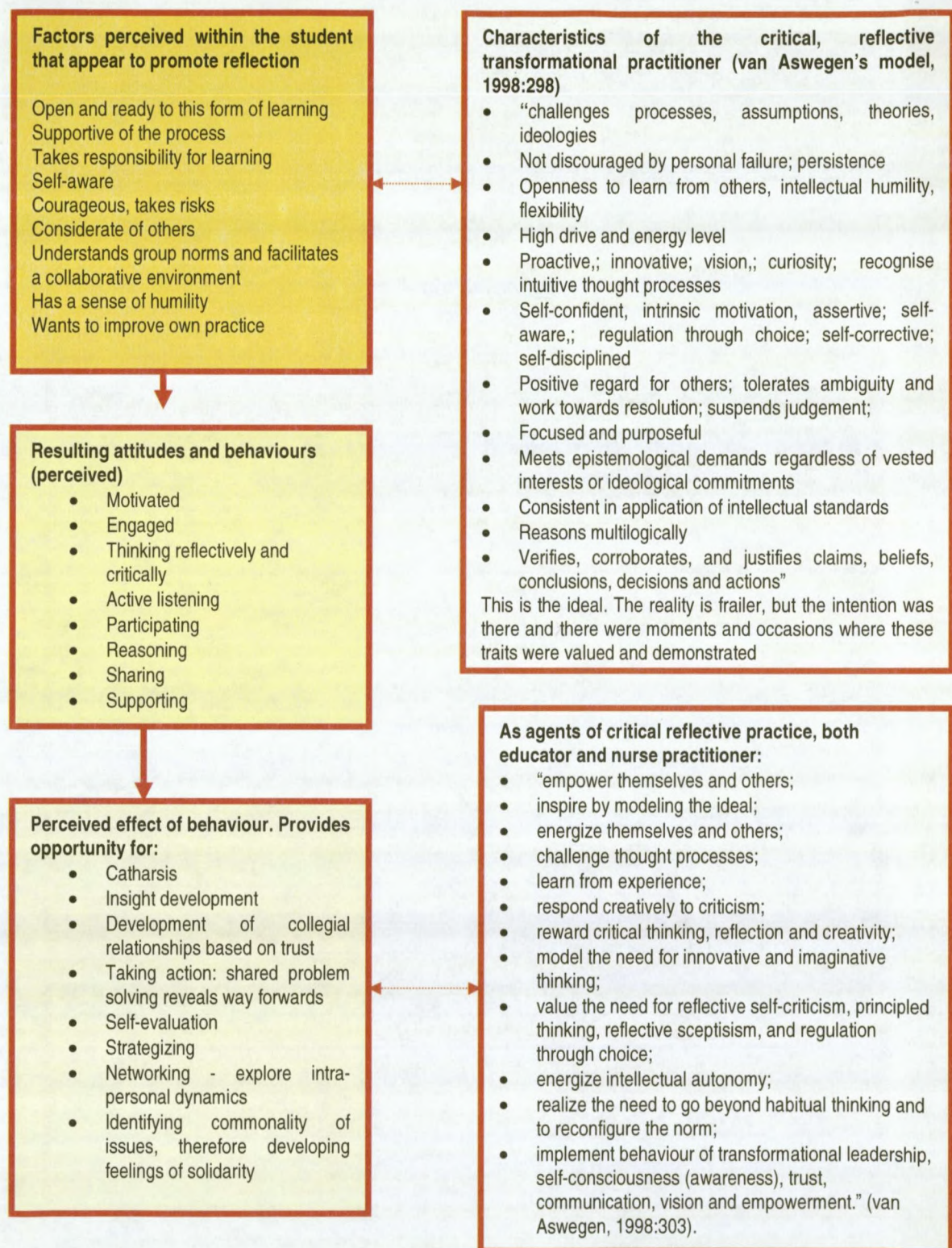


Figure 8.7: Perceived factors within the student promoting reflection; perceived resultant positive attitudes and behaviours and perceived affects of the behaviour - (in the light of van Aswegen's model)

8.3.1.8 Process involved in the tutorial

This addresses Section 8.1.4. There were a number of processes involved in the tutorial and as the facilitator, my guidance was determined by my understanding and appreciation of the role of facilitator. This is clarified in Chapter Three, Sections 3.6 and the whole of 3.8. Process is dependent on climate and as Eisen (2001:39) notes, for learning through peer dialogue to occur, "objectivity, openness, and equal opportunity for participation," is required. She adds that, "Still, the most obvious ingredient is having one or more trusted partners with whom to dialogue." I do not think that the openness with which the students spoke or the range of subjects or the delicate nature of some of the topics – could have occurred had there not been a climate of trust and equal opportunities to share. Table 8.8 in Appendix 8.6 describes the processes in each of these tutorials.

In Figure 8.8, I have included the processes that take place within the reflective tutorials that have been identified over the duration of the study. These have included my observations of the selected groups' reflective tutorials as well as those observed in non-selected reflective tutorials and with other groups of students over the study period. These have been discussed in Section 8.1

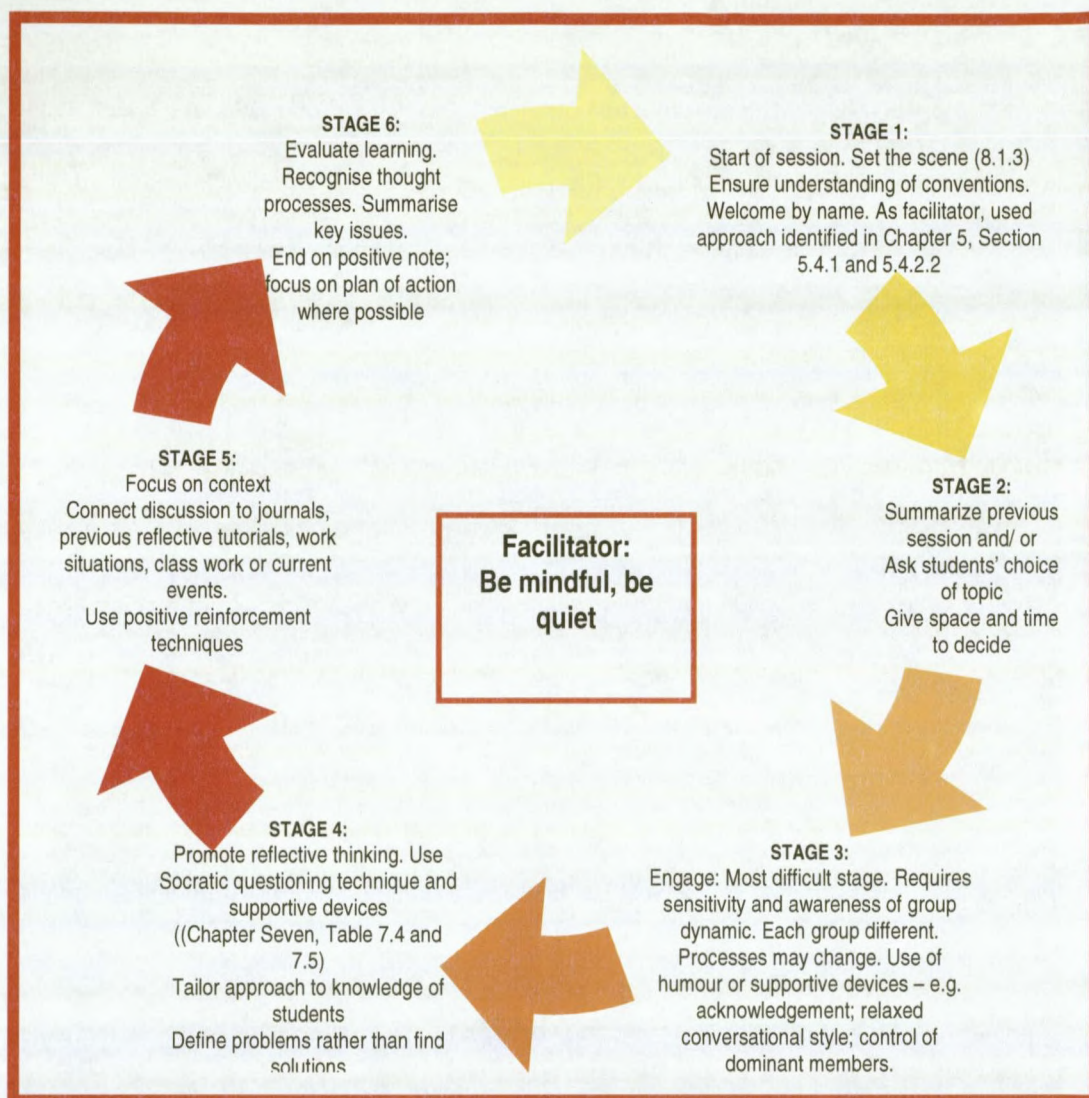


Figure 8.8: The reflective tutorial process

8.3.1.9 Integrative learning approach supported by staff members

Reflexive Journal: 12 June, 2002

Of note, a comment on the increasing amounts of information that nurses need to manage, therefore requiring different approaches to nursing education...Also, because of changes to the health care delivery context, and changing expectations, we need different approaches to learning.

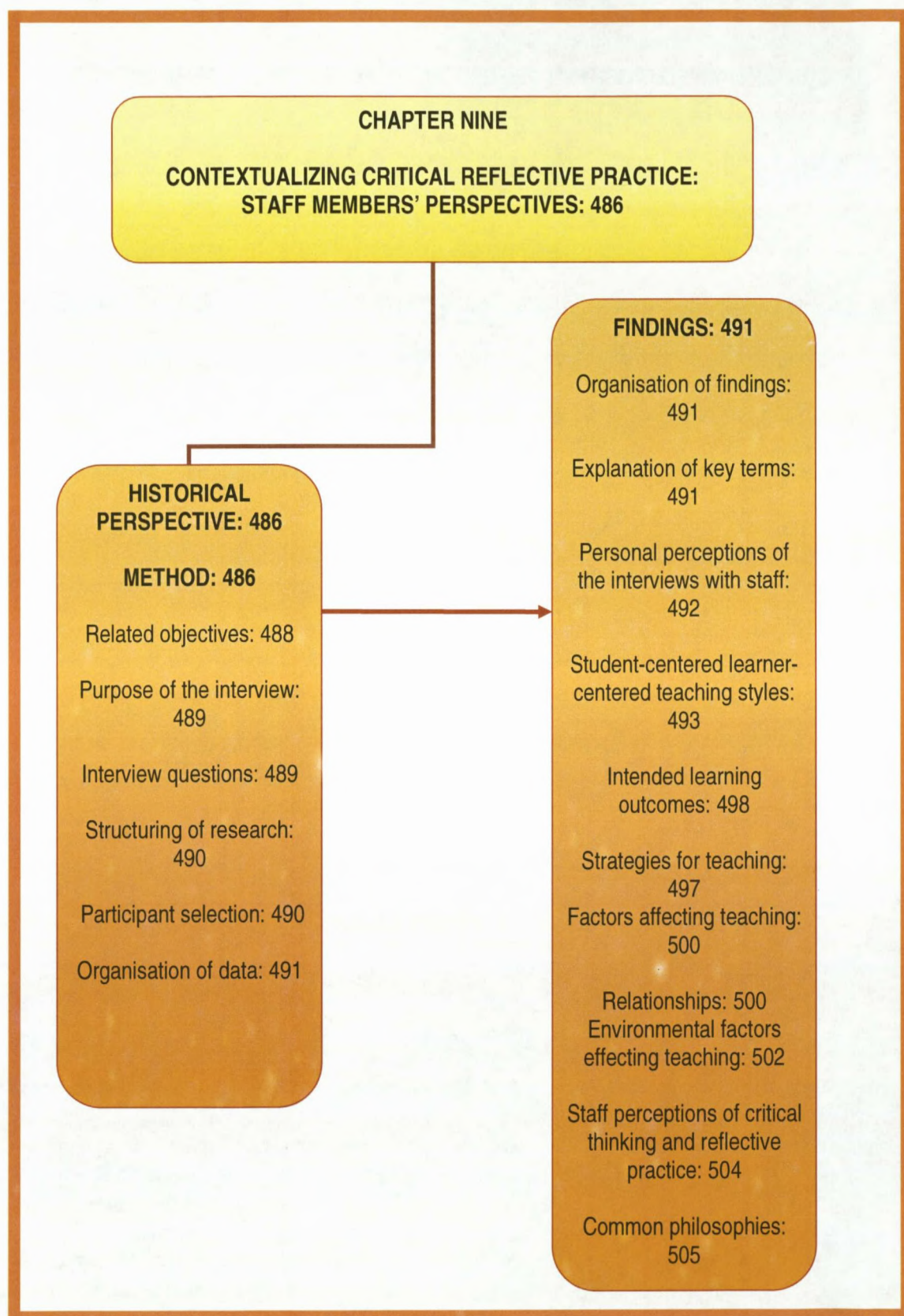
This is a general theme discussed in our nursing department. Finances, time, limited staff are constant issues. Also debated regularly are methodologies. Sometimes these are in response to problems, but sometimes in anticipation. For me, a very positive aspect of working in this department is that the team approach is strongly promoted. Over the past 10 years or so, team teaching, team support is a standard norm for programmes. Even when subjects are serviced by external departments or specialist lecturers, the nursing input or rather, the departmental input is a fundamental norm. It is very difficult to teach a subject in the department in isolation or for lecturers to teach ineffectively for too long, as there have been a number of measures put in place (informally, and seemingly unnoticeably because they are now part of the system). These include sharing notes, requesting information of specialties, sharing students' concerns. If I am having a problem in my class, it is almost inevitable that someone else will hear via a student. This is generally handled with much sensitivity and kindness as general concern for each other is markedly evident.

It becomes clear that the reflective tutorials offer the students opportunities to think about learning as well as opportunities to expand their reflective capacity by exercising their reflective abilities through reciprocal reflection. The feedback within these discussions is invaluable as it is part of the formative process, with the emphasis on development, rather than on evaluation (Eisen, 2001). This is done by considering the 'whole' person, and takes into account the various dimension of the individual – personal, spiritual, social, political, occupational. The reflective discussions do not have boundaries, other than those created by the situation and the participating students. Ironside (2004) focuses on the 'collective' working within the group, which, she notes, accentuates the "social embeddedness" of knowledge and supports the consideration of issues from multiple perspectives, and this was reflected in the students' ongoing discussions with each other.

8.4 CONCLUSION

As one of the vehicles of course delivery, the reflective tutorials provide evidence of student-directed learning. It is not possible to definitively state that reflective tutorials, as defined within the Nursing Management IV course, enhanced learning over and above other forms of learning. Nonetheless, they did support co-operative learning and as Johnson (1992:1) noted, "there is significant evidence that co-operative learning does produces higher achievement, more positive relationships among students, and healthier psychological adjustment than do competitive or individualistic experiences." As one subjective index of success, the active and non-conflictual participation of students in the process does appear to have encouraged a greater depth of understanding of issues, particularly when linked to other vehicles of learning, such as the reflective journals and class discussions. Reflective learning is a cyclical process and opportunities to explore issues on multi-dimensional forums can only but enhance the process, particularly for students who are more comfortable with oral rather than written

mediums. Through familiarity with and continued use of the reflective tutorials, perhaps these will come to be seen as a venture into just another territory, enriching the journey of self-discovery along the way. As Theodore Zeldin (1998:14) eloquently notes: "Conversation is a meeting of minds with different memories and habits. When minds meet, they don't just exchange facts: they transform them, reshape them, draw different implications from them, engage in new trains of thought. Conversation doesn't just reshuffle the cards: it creates new cards".



CHAPTER NINE
CONTEXTUALISING CRITICAL REFLECTIVE PRACTICE: THE STAFF MEMBERS'
PERSPECTIVES

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This is a case study of a course, Nursing Management IV, which has carefully been constructed within a framework of critical reflective practice. This course, however, cannot be viewed in isolation as there are various contexts and role-players who have had an impact on both students and my thinking and behaviour. This context has been fully described in Chapter One, but Sections 1.3, 1.4.1, 1.4.3, 1.5 and 1.6 relate specifically to this chapter which considers some of these role-players, the departmental staff members, who had varying degrees of influence on the course offering.

9.2 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In 2002, the department of nursing at the Durban Institute of Technology was a relatively small department of nursing which had been in existence for over 30 years. For the first 20 years the full-time staff complement ranged between 1 to 3 staff members, with a focus on community nursing science, offering a full programme in community health nursing and a certificate course in occupational health nursing on a once-weekly part-time basis. In those early years, teaching was fairly didactic following traditional content-based programmes, but accommodating the adult-based nature of the students. The department had since grown, having spawned 5 more programmes and re-curriculated all existing programmes in terms of SAQA requirements. All programmes were offered at post-basic or post-graduate levels, from higher diplomas through to doctoral degrees. All

except one, the Advanced Midwifery programme, had a common element: the teaching focused on health services outside of the hospital sector.

Initially, perhaps because it was a small department, the few staff members had to become cognisant with all aspects of the programme and the team-work approach seemed inevitable. Even when nurse educator discipline specialists were brought into the programmes, they were encouraged to study further in other nursing related disciplines, to enlarge their range of knowledge and to support more rotation within the department within the programmes. Staff members had been encouraged to work in areas of special interest, but also to be sensitive to the needs, abilities and interests of others. The permanent staff members, six in number by the end of 2002, were complemented and supplemented by a number of part-time staff, sometimes up to 20 in number, involved in a range of activities, such as clinical supervision, marking or lecturing, for varying periods of time. While permanent staff members had their own offices, intimacy was promoted through the open-plan office complex with the communal, centrally placed glassed-walled tea-lounge and office doors opening onto a corridor surrounding the tea-lounge. Open access and communication was encouraged.

Perhaps because I had been a staff member for 16 years or so, I made certain assumptions, both as a colleague and researcher. I assumed that there was a common, active departmental philosophy and that the tenets of this philosophy drove the teaching and learning in our department. In 2002, I articulated the following philosophy which had emerged as a result of my understanding of the joint reflections by staff, offering it to students and staff members for comment:

The philosophy of the Department of Postgraduate Nursing Studies is to provide programmes that are student-centered, service focused and that will allow students to pursue evidence-based practice, develop insights, find meanings in ideas and experiences, explore creative modes of enquiry, examine assumptions, form values and ethics in keeping with the moral ideal of the caring scholar-nurse practitioner, respond to social needs, live fully and advance the profession. The learning environment is open and is intended to nurture, support and challenge students to meet individual goals of academic and clinical excellence.

On the whole, it was accepted, but it was agreed that we should also include a statement on staff development so that staff knowledge and skills remain current. Also wanted was a statement that would reinforce relevancy of programmes in keeping with health-service needs.

9.3 METHOD

9.3.1 Related objectives

I believed the philosophy outlined above was central to my perception of both my teaching and the research project. I could not view this project in isolation and the effects on the students as being purely as a result of my facilitation of learning within the course. I recognized that there were a number of variables that influenced the outcomes, not the least of which was the influence of key staff within the department.

Consequently, two of the research objectives were to:

- Monitor the process involved in reflective thinking evidenced from learning diaries; tutorial groups and staff reflections and whether reflective thought has an effect on the resulting perceived attitudes and behaviours of post-basic nursing students related to health care practice.

- Identify enabling and inhibiting factors within a department of a higher education institution that would support or limit the use of such a model for the development of critical reflective practice.

9.3.2 Purpose of the interview

Therefore, I decided to interview nurse educator staff to:

- Identify broadly, their philosophy and understanding of the concepts of teaching and learning within their own programmes. This would allow me to reference their theoretical basis for teaching and learning in light of the model of critical reflective practice.
- Identify their strategies for teaching. This would allow me to determine if there were points of congruence between staff, and between staff members and myself.
- Identify factors within the department and classroom environment that would support or limit teaching and learning. This would allow me to identify enabling or limiting factors, in general, within the department, that would impact on teaching and learning.
- Identify possible common philosophical constructs that would connect our teaching practice.
- Identify their perception of critical thinking and reflective practice and their values in relation to the process of teaching and learning. These secondary objectives would allow me to view the commonalities regarding teaching practice and concerns and would allow me to contextualize the teaching of critical reflective practice in terms of the teaching staff.

9.3.3 Interview questions

Therefore, the questions asked reflected on:

- Philosophy of teaching

- What staff members would like for students to achieve while in the programme (or after)
- Methodology of teaching used and why
- Value/ benefits of their teaching approach
- Difficulties / problems related to this method
- What staff members understood about critical thinking and reflective practice?
- How important was this approach for their teaching?
- Perception of my (Maureen's) programme and approach
 - (a) in their capacity as lecturer
 - (b) in their capacity as course coordinator - this question was for those staff members whose students were in my Management IV course

9.3.4 Structuring of research process, selection of participants and organisation of data

The research process, in terms of sampling, process, development of the data generating instrument, access to data and themes have been described in Chapter Four, Sections 4.12, 4.15, 4.16.2, 4.22 and 4.24.3. The whole of Section 9.3 provides additional detail.

9.3.4.1 Participant selection

The total permanent lecturing staff complement in the Department of Post-graduate Nursing Studies was six. I carried out unstructured interviews with four fellow permanent staff members, (whose names have been replaced with pseudonyms), Musa: 6/9/2002; Judith and Petro: 6/10/2002 and Brenda: 8/10/2002. The fifth and sixth staff members included my supervisor and me, and for research-based ethical reasons, were not included in this sample.

9.3.4.2 Organisation of data

The results of the 5 hours of transcriptions were paraphrased and collated. I then organised the findings into categories that naturally derived from the purpose of the interviews (Section 9.3.2) into Tables 1 to 5. The accompanying figures illustrate the themes formed from the categories. Actual quotes sourcing the summary statements were directly transcribed. In the findings, I have used (f=) to indicate where more than one staff member expressed a perception (frequency). My reflexive journal was further used to triangulate data, and the relevant sections have been included and identified by date, indentation and colouring of the text.

9.4 FINDINGS

9.4.1 Organisation of findings

The following tables highlight the staff members' beliefs and understanding of education within their teaching context in terms of their philosophy and methodologies of teaching (Table 9.1 in Appendix 9.1); the perceived learning outcomes desired or that resulted from their teaching approaches (Table 9.2 in Appendix 9.2); the teaching strategies or processes employed by staff members (Table 9.3 in Appendix 9.3); the environmental factors that support or limit teaching and learning (Table 9.4) and philosophies within the department common to the teaching staff (Table 9.5 in Appendix 9.4) and staff members' perceptions of the value or limitations of critical reflective practice (Table 9.6). In line with the qualitative research approach, it is not intended to provide for the generalization of findings to other nursing education departments, but rather provides a context for this broader study.

9.4.2 Explanation of key terms

As the terms 'teaching,' 'teacher-centered' and 'learning' and 'learner-centered' are used frequently, they need to be explained. 'Teaching' is the process of educating the student so that the student (hopefully) arrives at a stage of understanding knowledge, so that they are able to integrate this knowledge in a meaningful way i.e. 'learning'. 'Teacher-centered' is where the focus in this educational process is on the teacher and the methodologies used by the teacher in order to impart this knowledge. The teacher decides the 'how', 'when', 'where' and 'what' of learning. Learning, however, is an active process and the saying, 'you can take a horse to the water, but you can't make it drink' encapsulates the difference between the process of teaching and learning. The metaphor of drinking equates with that of learning. 'Learner-centered' is where the focus of the educational process is on the needs of the student. It is also perhaps, important to differentiate between 'needs' and 'wants' of students. A student may not be in the position to determine what exactly it is that needs to be learned and this may or will require the intervention of the teacher who might have a deeper understanding of student-learning requirements. But still the focus of concern is with the individual learner and working *with* the learner rather than *on* the learner.

9.4.3 Personal perceptions of the interviews with staff summarized in: Reflexive Journal: 9

September 2002

...In general, the responses from the three staff members are as anticipated... (However) my perceptions of our working relationships did not tally with their responses at this moment in time. I have been writing about teamwork and the positive sharing relationships within the department. All three said this had been the case, but was no longer so. Why, I asked? Perhaps because of the negative feelings engendered by the merger, suggested one. A need for personal survival, said another. No need, said a third.

I anticipated two of the three to speak positively about critical thinking and reflective practice and they did. Their spoken values about learning and students tied up with this. All commented on the amount of work but also believed that the level required the input...

9.4.4 Differentiation between student-centered and learner-centered teaching styles

The preparation of nurse practitioners who are able to think critically requires a culture where intellectual challenge and discussion are encouraged. According to Moore Schaefer and Zygmunt (2003) student-centered teaching styles promotes critical thinking, independence in learning, an interest in lifelong learning and creative problem-solving skills. There does not appear to be any dissent amongst the staff members that these are their intentions (see Table 9.1 in Appendix 9.1) – the difficulty or perhaps just the differences, seem to lie to a lesser or greater degree on how to get there.

According to Moore Schaefer et al. (2003:239) dependent learning is promoted by teacher-centered approaches where the locus of control is tightly maintained by the teacher. The student is a “passive recipient of information”. Generally, they suggest, one main teaching style is preferred, particularly where excessive content needs to be taught over a limited time period, and formal evaluation becomes valued above informal assessments.

In student-centered learning, teaching is determined by the needs of the student rather than prescribed content. It is characterized by an active engagement in the learning process by both student and learner in a negotiated, collaborative learning environment where a foundation of trust is created, promoting creativity, questioning and debate (Moore Schaefer et al., 2003).

It would appear, that generally speaking, staff members were more student-centered in their approach (Tables 9. 2 and 9.3 in Appendices 9.2 and 9.3). For some, this had developed with experience and others seemed to be more intuitive. Once staff member in particular, a very good teacher, enthusiastic and charismatic, while committed to excellence and to her students, was somewhat reluctant to hand over control for the learning process and this seems to be evidenced

in her possessive view of the students as 'her babies'. Her approach to teaching was highly structured and lecture focused. However, I recognise that she too, had changed with experience and I see this in her ability to recognise her role in student failure: "So we can moan all year... OR we can say, we need to change the way we have presented things so THAT doesn't happen any more and we can make the student change." I also see this in her movement to less teacher-centered teaching strategies such as group discussions and in a greater flexibility in her approach to students.

Although the propensity is for student-centered teaching, there were feelings of ambivalence, perhaps driven by a sense of responsibility for ensuring that all students performed to an acceptable level. Some staff members not only made time for problematic or slow students, but were sometimes very directive in the process, allowing the responsibility for student learning to fall back in their court.

A good example of this is the staff member who recognises the value of prior learning: She

"tried to get them to read beforehand. We have given them readings so that they could get a bit of a background so that they could try and participate in the classroom. Some read, some don't. You can't leave those behind. You actually have to make a way of including those who haven't read otherwise there is no value of them even sitting in the classroom."

Moore Schaefer et al. (2003) suggest that teaching could be problematic in situations where staff members see their goal as instilling knowledge rather than in supporting students in learning how to learn. This, particularly if there is dissonance between their role as nurse and caregiver and their role as educator where they continue with the role of caring and doing *for*, as it may negatively impact on student growth. It was notable that two of the participants acknowledged valuing students as individuals and as important participants in the learning process, although this was

implicit in the statements of the other two staff members. Respect for the students as well as an appreciation of their sharing of their students' learning experiences was apparent. All staff members connected learning with personal growth. This was probably the one factor that helped ameliorate their expressed concerns about the effort and time evinced by the critical reflective approach in the Nursing Management IV course. The concern related specifically to the reflective journal "but then they gain from it and they are actually reading - which you can follow up - because normally they don't read and they don't see the value of reading. And they are actually starting to think about what they are doing."

Notes another: Students are "learning to criticize, learning to not accept exactly what is written own and to see different points of view. That is my perception really of critical thinking. Thinking about something at a little bit of a deeper level."

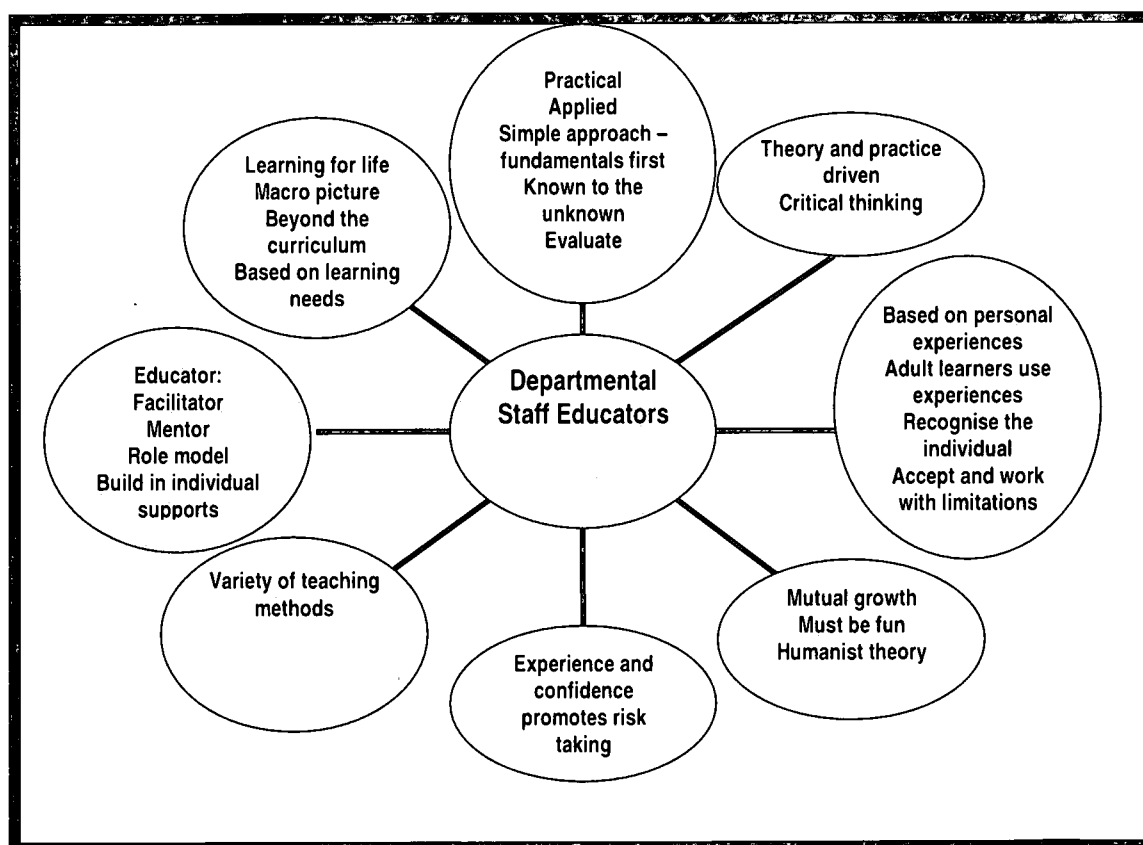


Figure 9.1 Philosophies of education and main teaching approaches of staff members

9.4.5 Intended learning outcomes

It would appear that there were elements of concurrence in desired student learning outcomes (Table 9.2 in Appendix 9.2). Staff members valued the concept of student growth, rather than paper qualifications and recognised that this was more likely to occur in an environment of openness and respect. The academic learning was valued in terms of its support of appropriate practice and there was a strong awareness of the connection between teaching, the student and the broader society. This is discussed in the following excerpts from my reflexive journal:

Reflexive Journal entry: 12 June, 2001

Petro (staff member) and I have often talked about the students and what we learn from them: It isn't necessarily theory and nor do they often have the power over the English language to express themselves or articulate in a manner guaranteed to place themselves in a good academic light. However, if we take the time and look beyond these inadequacies, there is a great deal that we learn that does not form part of our own knowledge base or our own understanding. We encourage each other a lot not to miss these nuggets of enlightenment, and share them whenever we meet with each other. I am not sure if I have expressed myself correctly, but the point I am trying to make is the need to be open; not to make absolutist assumptions about my own knowledge base; and to try and not be arrogant about my beliefs. I know that when I do this, there is so much that excites me when students reflect on their own practice. Their minds,... constantly worry me, thrill me and challenge me. I learn so much from them and I am constantly fearful that in my own ignorance, I may say or do something that will discourage any of their explorations. As I read this, I realize how idealistic I sound. The irony, however, really lies in my ambivalence: I have also become fairly cynical about students, and realize that there are a number of reasons why they pursue a programme. It is the few rather than the many who are truly here for an education. Many have other agendas. Perhaps it is because of this cynicism, that when there are demonstrations of keenness and insight, that this does give me joy.....

Reflexive Journal Entry: 24 September, 2002

Although we write in our outcomes the fact that core outcomes for lifelong learning are implicit in all our programmes, this personal self-growth is or could be valued in different degrees by different lecturers. It is still hard for many of us, I think, to move away from the purely content approach. I think that there is a feeling of safety when students have demonstrated in the academically acceptable manner, that they have learned specific skills etc. It is when that learning is indirect or not formally noted in tests, that this becomes problematic for us as lecturers. For me, it is also really important to understand that the outcomes that we, as staff or a profession, have denoted as key, may in fact, not be so for the student. Or that the manner of achieving these outcomes may vary in ways that we might not even recognise.

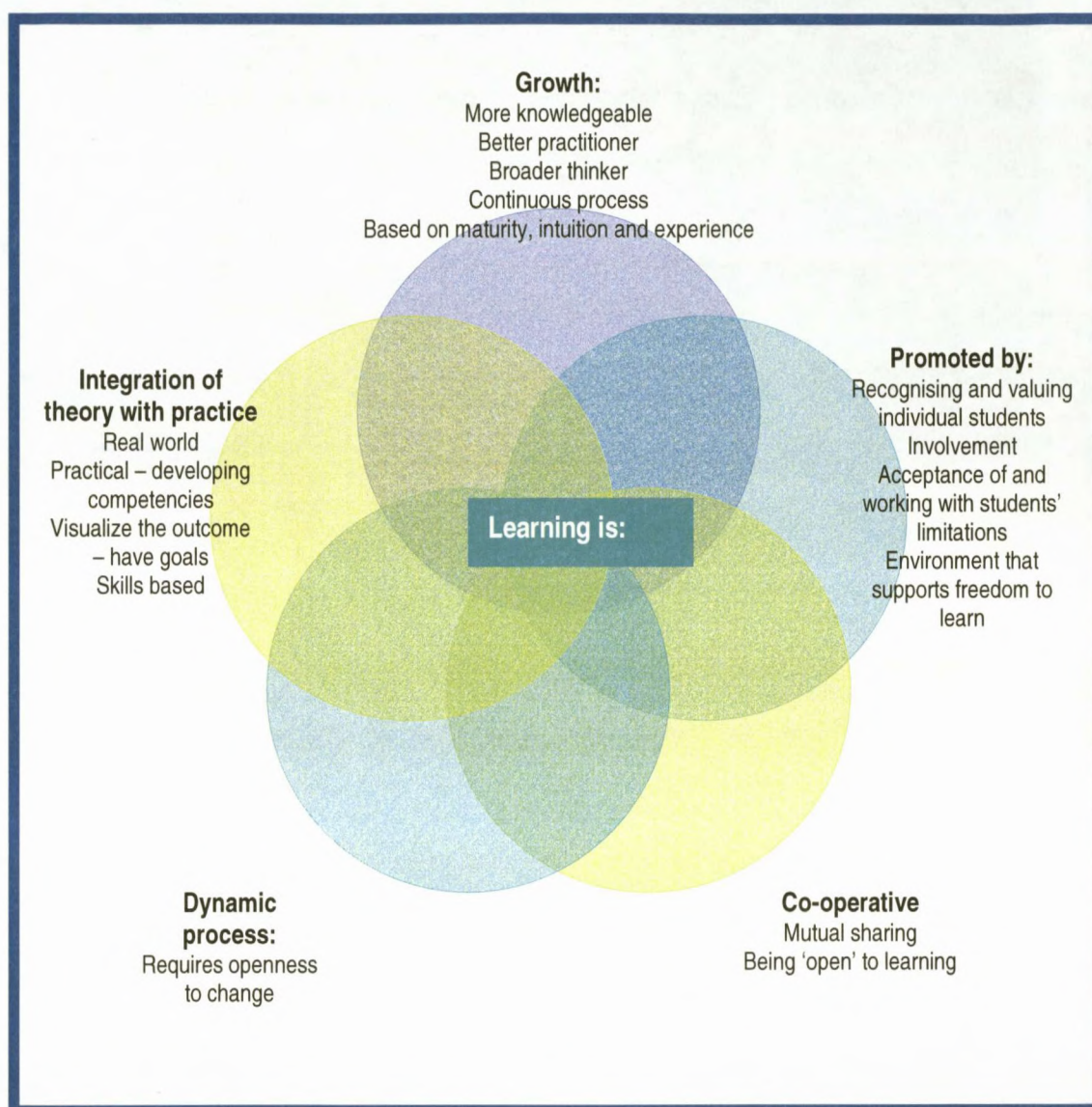


Figure 9.2: Staff members' perception of learning

9.4.6 Strategies for teaching

Staff members utilized a number of strategies to support learning and integrated a number of adult learning principles (Table 9.3 in Appendix 9.3). The use of the variety of teaching methods reveals that staff members understood that students required different methods to learn different processes. For example, by relating concepts to experience (and all students had had a number of

years of exposure to the nursing culture), they were able to shift students' learning from understanding the simple to grappling with complex concepts. According to Schaefer et al. (2003), this also allows staff members to use previously learned nursing knowledge and build on this for new, more complex knowledge gains. The valuing of the individual student was also revealed in the willingness of staff to use personalized instruction and support those students 'at-risk'. Higgins (2004) clearly acknowledges the role of the one-to-one tutoring in the success rates of these students. This recognition is described in the following reflexive journal excerpt:

Reflexive Diary entry: March 20, 2001

Our department engages in a strategic planning process on a formal basis once a year and informally on almost a daily basis. There was a very clear concern that Management IV was not being taught in a way conducive to the needed outcomes. Although most of our students did not reflect these concerns in their feedback of the programmes, the department was aware that a number of projects indicated a need for skills development.

As evidenced in Tables 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 in Appendices 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3, there is a very clear alignment between the staff educators':

- philosophies of education and main teaching approaches;
- perceptions of learning; and
- teaching strategies.

It is also clear that the staff members recognised and appreciated that they were working with adult learners, but they also appreciated that the learners had a diverse range of needs and that their levels of education also varied. This, then, impacted on the different approaches taken by the staff members and accounts for the importance attached to pre-determining students' existing knowledge foundation and learning needs. Strategies in accordance with adult learning principles were put in place, as were the number of scaffolding supports for those students in need. In general, these also align with the departmental philosophy. Considering the difference in our

natures and style of teaching, it is obvious that there were strong, supportive synergies in this department, of which I was a member.

Knowing their students	Staff members teach by: Using appropriate techniques	Developing a culture of learning
Identifying and understanding students' learning experiences	Continuous evaluation	Support students – but not their dependence
Establishing a knowledge foundation	Teach from the known to the unknown	Develop learning partnerships Teach beyond the curriculum
Building on students' personal experiences to integrate new learning	Teach from the concrete to the theoretical	Cultural sensitivity (multi-cultural classrooms) Promote group work
Provide remedial teaching to bridge gap between previous and required learning, with sensitivity	Teach from the familiar to the unfamiliar Keep things simple Clarify expectations Repetition	Use real work contexts (integrate personal with professional and health service needs)
Pre-test and tailor teaching accordingly	Connect and interrogate theory and practice in the 'real' world	Invite student evaluations
Adult learners – experience drives practice	Use questioning technique	Problem-based learning
Students are unique – consider individual differences where possible	Use teachable moments Multiple teaching strategies and audio-visual aids Promote opportunities for practice	Case studies Reflective journaling Mind-mapping Prior reading Tutorials Clinical bedside teaching Preceptors
	Use humour and controversy	

Figure 9.3: Key tenets to teaching utilized by the staff members

9.4.7 Staff perceptions of factors within the department and classroom environment that would support or limit teaching and learning

According to Moore Schaefer et al. (2003), a learning environment is created by teachers' views on learning and their teaching approach and can be affected by many factors (Table 9.4). One staff member reflected on a student-factor - prior content-based learning experience: "This is something that we identified this year. They can regurgitate theory, but they can't take that information and use it to the benefit of their working environment. "

She was most concerned by what she saw as questionable motivation:

"This year this group, the majority of them have come in to the programme for the wrong reasons – the majority have come in for an easy way out from the 7/7 shifts, the night duty, weekend work and things like that and they really don't understand what is involved – in a nutshell, what (the programme) is about."

9.4.7.1 Staff relationships and me

Staff relationships were particularly important to me, during the particularly difficult time of the merger, as I reflect in the following journal entries:

Reflexive Journal Entry: Document '6a entry6diary26 May 2001'

Once again, I should note how patient everyone in the department has been with me. They know I must be working, but they have seen very little in the way of results (completed research). Most of my work seems to be linked to the computer and not lecturing but they do not complain. They have also put up with my moodiness when I felt incapacitated without my computer, and generously allowed me access to theirs. They are all incredibly special people, from Thembisa, who endlessly fulfils my coffee needs, through to the secretaries and cleaners, and the rest of my colleagues. If they can find ways to help me work better, they do. This generosity of spirit is not because I am unique, but because this is how they all interact with each other. Our absenteeism rate is negligible, and I have often come in over week-ends, evenings or holidays, to find one or more staff members working voluntarily. This concept may seem out of place in my job, but in fact, it is fundamental to the issue of learning i.e. creating an environment that is stimulating, motivating and supportive.

Reflexive Journal entry: 31 October, 2002

Sarah suggested that it was critical that I note the effect the merger of Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan has had on our learning programmes, particularly in terms of this programme. When you live with a system, you tend to complain about it, fight about it but ultimately, if you want to survive, you try to adapt, sometimes wittingly and sometimes not at least, those are my thoughts. What is different this year that has affected the way I have operated this course and what would I have done differently? The big message, the unremitting message is: there is no money. Work with what you have.

On the one hand, as I pick up the phone, a message is being sung over the answering service that this is the Powerhouse of Education and that we offer exciting, creative programmes comparable to any of those offered globally.

On the other hand, computers ought to be a major feature in all faculties in this institution. The Faculty of Health has no common computer facility that will allow students to freely access Internet. There are pockets of computers in various departments and the Marketing Department has kindly allowed us access to its computers this year. These don't have open Internet access. Because the On-line Learning Centre had invested in training and the Web Ct programme, I asked them if we could use their facilities (about 7 minutes walk away under the library) and they have been great and most accommodating. I have such a lot of respect and liking for so many people in this institution. The mood is unequivocally one of depression, frustration, and uncertainty. Despite the element of conflict that pervades the campus, on an individual basis, people are still great. I am certain that the reports of dropping student numbers is real and it feels like a lot of people jumping ship. Things have got to be better out there, anywhere. Systems have tightened up and the creative element that was promoted by a more free enterprise system is being systematically stifled. Of course this has an impact on the department and staff is affected. We seem to be working harder with fewer rewards. The institution is larger and sometimes it feels as if we are being lost in the mega picture. While we probably represent the middle range of many other nursing institutions, access to resources (e.g. databases, internet, computers, student tea lounges, student tutorial rooms; a more aesthetically pleasing environment; a safer environment; easy access to transport and more importantly, safe transport) which many international nursing institutions take for granted, is not that easy here. Freedom of speech is being stifled... It is almost like a new order is inevitable, and one joins, puts up or leaves. This perception is not enabled by the constant battles being waged by the trade unions of both campuses, or by the fact that retrenchment packages, affecting retention of posts, are being offered and taken. Transform, transform, transform. Belligerence rather than co-operation seems to govern our communications. Our department stands to lose between one and four staff members (granted, one is a graduate assistant, whose time would have been up anyway). The sense of unease is pervasive. I know that I feel guilty (but not too much) when I photocopy additional readings for students whereas a year or so ago, this would not have entered my head. Amidst all of this is SAQA. Need I say more? We are constantly rethinking, rewriting our courses to meet changes being set by the Technikons, by the Department of Education, by the SANC (who provides no clarity of directions and who force many nurse educators to second guess teaching and learning processes). A climate of uncertainty pervades this arena. Where is the leadership? This, then, is the backdrop to the study.

It can be seen through staff member effort at climate building that members valued relationships with their students.

9.4.7.2 Environmental factors

I see the working environment as critical in either supporting or limiting staff creativity and output.

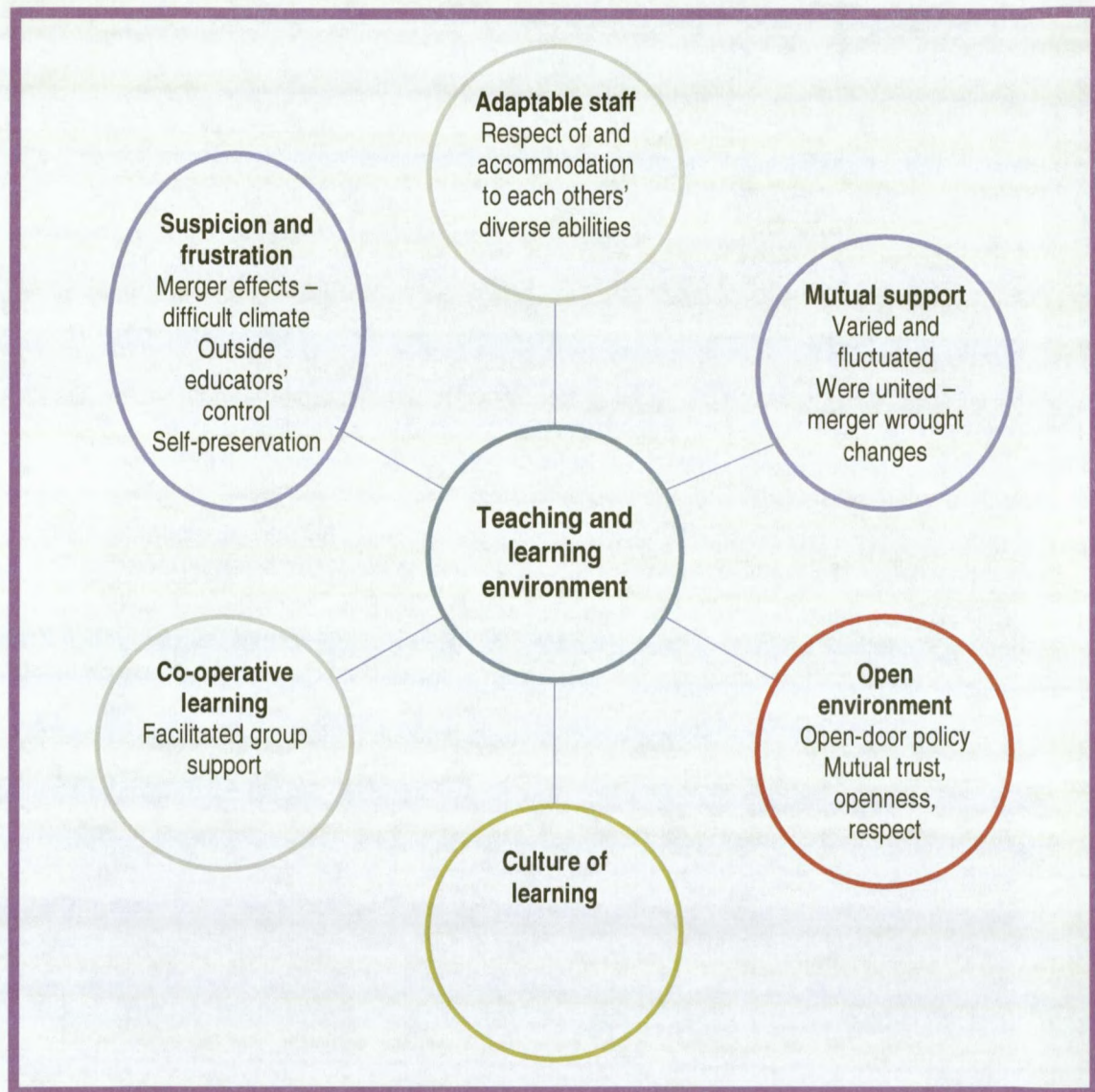


Figure 9.4: The environmental factors perceived by staff members to support or limit teaching and learning

Table 9.4 Environmental factors perceived by staff members to affect teaching/ learning

Teaching and learning environmental factors within the department and classroom context:

- **Affect teaching and planning:** "Setting the environment. Sometimes it is not easy. It is, it could be a big big challenge. There could be things that are beyond your control."
- Require adaptable staff. **Need to be creative and make the environment work for you** – adapt e.g. no air conditioner – classes outside. "You can even be creative – what if you go and sit under a tree?"
- Support an open-door policy – being approachable and available but ensure effective use of time (f=2) **Open-door policy – being approachable but ensure effective use of time.** "Using the open-door policy. That is one way of saying the environment is quite – we are approachable."
- **Create an environment of openness, trust and respect:** "I think that I try and make the course quite – not personal – but you know we have an open-door policy, for a start and that we are there, and I try not to have a big distance between me and the students, and I think that helps – that I am a facilitator more than just standing there reciting things. I also make them very aware that what they have to say is very important in class and that we value their opinion and we that look at those and will discuss around those. Just generally treating all the students with a high degree of respect and making sure that they know that they are very important and that we value what they say... That is one of the main issues for me to try and do that."
- **Providing a culture of learning:** "developed that culture that they work consistently."
- **Ensure a supportive environment by recognizing and facilitating group support:** "I don't structure it. I promote it, and it also happens by itself. People find somebody that they have got something (in common with)..., as they start talking, and getting to know each other, they find people that they perhaps latch onto, or is a mother figure or from previous experience, and they definitely find a lot of support. And I have noticed even in the groups, when one of the students when things are down, and she has voiced that in the class, she said: "I have got a lot of support from the group."
- **Produce an environment where departmental staff members impact upon each other because of integrative nature of programmes:** "we all do impact upon each other. I think that every person in the department has a role to play in each other's programmes and I think that is very important, because it brings to each of the programmes a different passion, a different dedication, and a different outlook."
- **Fluctuate:** "I think that the environment fluctuates and it definitely depends on not only where personally I am right now, and my needs but also where the other person is right now - what their needs are. I don't think that the dept is particularly poor in supporting each other in terms of teaching and growth, but I also don't think we are totally on top, and I think that it just, it depends where each person is individually at that particular time."
- **Are supportive within the department promoting teaching practice:** "I think possibly it is being exposed to many different ways of teaching because of our department and I can see (I have also sat in on a lot of lectures and I have also studied for a long time) and I can certainly see what has worked for me and have tried to take the best from each person and adapt my way of teaching...I think a supportive department has played a huge role."
- **Promoted team work within the staff on previous occasions. Currently, the climate is a difficult one – one of self-preservation due to affects of the merger:** "Lately, I have actually just been feeling that the department is not working together as a unit. I must be honest. I've got this overwhelming feeling at the moment, you know, we've got all these changes taking place in the technikon and if there is one thing we shouldn't be doing and that is fighting amongst each other and there is just – there is almost - there is almost a sense of self-preservation. I know that that's a very strong term, but it is almost a case of- you see people concerned that – that - not that **they're** going to be alright – I am not talking of -- it is a very difficult to

verbalise – it is almost - it is almost like a sense of "don't enter my environment, don't shake up my environment because that is the one thing that I am sure of at the moment.": That is almost the sense that I get, and that as soon as things go wrong, there is a great deal of animosity and - or negative energy. There is an overwhelming... instead of trying to come together, and work together at the moment, I just feel there is a lot of disjointed... I know it is also a bad time of the year, but I never used to feel like that and I can only think it's the impact that all the negative about the merger has made and brought about, because that was always one of the things that was always a pride about the department that everybody would always work together. I mean it will still happen, if someone is not available, somebody will go and stand in and lecture and that kind of thing, but I get this sense of self-preservation at the moment. And it is not entirely, I don't entirely mean it as a negative thing, but there have been a number of events over the last couple of weeks that have... kind of stirred that emotion as opposed to other emotions. But, ya, at the moment, there is not the same degree of unity that we used to share."

9.4.8 Staff perceptions of critical thinking and reflective practice in relation to the process of teaching and learning

Although there was no doubt that all staff members threaded elements of critical, reflective practice through their teaching programmes (Table 9.5 in Appendix 9.4), it was not always recognised or valued as such. Staff members, well qualified in their discipline but not in the formal theory of education, appeared to take a longer time to appreciate the value of process rather than outcome in teaching. However, as can be seen from their comments, that although they were still concerned about these issues, these have been qualified with an acknowledgement of the value of the gains (Table 9.6). Critical reflective thinking, as a consistent theory, requires process learning where results are not immediately obvious. This approach requires a long term commitment, perhaps because of the time and effort it requires. I would suggest, however, that although results of content learning may be more easily assessed in formal testing, this is often superficial testing, the nature of which is transient. In contrast, there are other less formal means of evaluation such as those seen in process evaluation, as in writing portfolios, which reveal the longer-term gains (Sorrel, Brown, Cipriano Silva & Kohlenber, 1997). The concern with testing is possibly because of the pass-on effect left by a system where standards of accreditation and curriculum development

for nursing education emphasize a content-driven approach. I discuss my attempts to bring staff members 'on-board' in the following journal entry:

Reflexive Journal 26 May, 2001

We have set up a structure to try and ensure that if students do have problems, it is brought to our attention. Both course coordinators, Nomsa and I, have been made aware that the class feels under pressure because of the workload. I first sat down with Nomsa and discussed their concerns: they related to workload; perception of workload; difficulty in establishing actual workload; too many readings. After some discussion, we decided to have a meeting with Sarah and the two course coordinators. Depending on the results of the meeting, we would then decide what to do in response to the students' complaints.

Nomsa and I were both concerned that the two course coordinators were not 'on board' with regards to the management approach or the reflective journal. We decided that as regards the students, the message would be: 'if you have a criticism, it must be constructive'. I also thought we should mention that we would be happy not to provide readings and that the students to locate their own. I was fairly sure that they wouldn't support this tenet, and as events transpired, they didn't.

The first meeting went well. We noted that our major difficulty lay in the fact that we had been given a compacted period of time in which to offer the programme, despite a departmental undertaking to ensure that the programme would be run throughout the year. Somehow, the course coordinators did not timetable this but were happy for the changes to occur next year. All agreed that the approach was the correct one, and that we were to continue along this path. I also explained the journal could be accessed in a way that accommodated other learning needs so that students did not have to duplicate work. I anticipate that we will receive greater support as a result of this exercise.

9.4.9 Philosophies within the department perceived to be common to the teaching staff

While each staff member did have a distinct personal philosophy (Table 9.6), there were certain elements identified as common to all which highlighted a supportive, collective, team approach to teaching with a focus on student centered teaching. This is discussed in the following journal entry:

Reflexive Journal entry: March 20, 2001

One of the joys or benefits of working in the department is that the staff does have different styles and approaches. Among other things we do have in common, however, is that we are all committed to teaching and try to set high standards for our students and ourselves...

All our programmes have course coordinators, and, generally speaking, these lecturers provide a major part of the teaching or facilitation of the programmes. Certain subjects can be taught independently in that a lecturer(s) is responsible for that section.

The philosophy of the department is to teach programmes in an integrated manner as possible, and the way I think this works most effectively is if those involved in the teaching/facilitation of the programme work closely together by constant feedback and discussion regarding future planning.

Because I (and many others in education) don't believe that any subject or component of a subject can be taught absolutely in isolation, by reflection and feedback, a constant cycle of awareness of exactly what students are learning or being exposed to feeds back into new preparations or adaptations of how material will be managed. An excellent example of this would be last Friday's (March 16) sessions. This however, is almost an unwitting example, in that it was only after discussions with Sarah (who covered research methodology in the morning) that the realization of what had occurred had in fact supported the later learning example.

In the morning, students had been introduced to nursing frameworks and models in terms of theory development in their class on research methodology. Subsequent to that was a discussion on families, using various models to explain ways in which to view or perceive families in terms of functioning/ roles/ dynamics /interactions etc. I consciously linked the concept of model/ framework development to research, not knowing that that had been discussed in the morning. Later on in the afternoon, my colleague, Nomsa, who is team teaching nursing management with me, was teaching the class to analyze situations in terms of a 'recipe,' a problem solving model. I then asked the group to identify the different critical thinking techniques they had used to do the situational analysis. They identified the use of personal experiences; associated examples; problem solving; visualization; debate; discussion; creative thinking; use of a model or framework amongst others. I picked up on the 'recipe' and related it once again to research frameworks and to their understanding of families.

I believe that it is these kinds of connections that will allow students to transfer knowledge more easily and to be able to identify the relevance of theory to application and the real world.

Table 9.6: Common departmental philosophy

The common philosophical elements include the:

- Departmental aim for collective approach: "there are some people who see things differently. But what I think happens, is that we try to come to a collective approach"
- Sharing resources; respect for colleagues: "And I have always seen everybody photocopying stuff, sending stuff for photocopying, for her students over and above the things that you would normally do."
- Supporting others e.g. being aware of needs and providing these materials or support (f=3) "...we always share that information."
- Working beyond required working day to meet students' needs: "I find that working here and also taking that extra mile and also availing yourself, even after hours for your students, we do do that – if it means that you don't go for lunch or you don't go off 4, we do do that for our students...Students can phone them" (and me) over the week-end."
- Student-centered teaching: "Students should feel free to learn. The environment should be such that she is in a position to learn and I am only there to guide and support. A person should move... – there must be growth, there must be new experiences. There must be new knowledge that one gains out of that learning. It must also stimulate that person to think."
- Similarity of principles, although the delivery is different (f=4): "I think there is a common thread. We might all differ in our presentation and things like that but the philosophy is the same, in fact. I think we follow similar

thinking. It has leaned far more away from just pure theory to more problem-based and hands on. Maybe I have it wrong – but that is what I think. But the general principles of education are the same, I think”.

“I think that we all have the basic philosophy of providing a good health service to the clients out there. I think that’s the philosophy which underlies a lot of our teaching is one of producing excellence for the health services rather than just particularly for the student. Yes, the student is important, but what is our ultimate aim? Our ultimate aim is to improve the health of people and I think that that is the commonality that runs through all our programmes.”

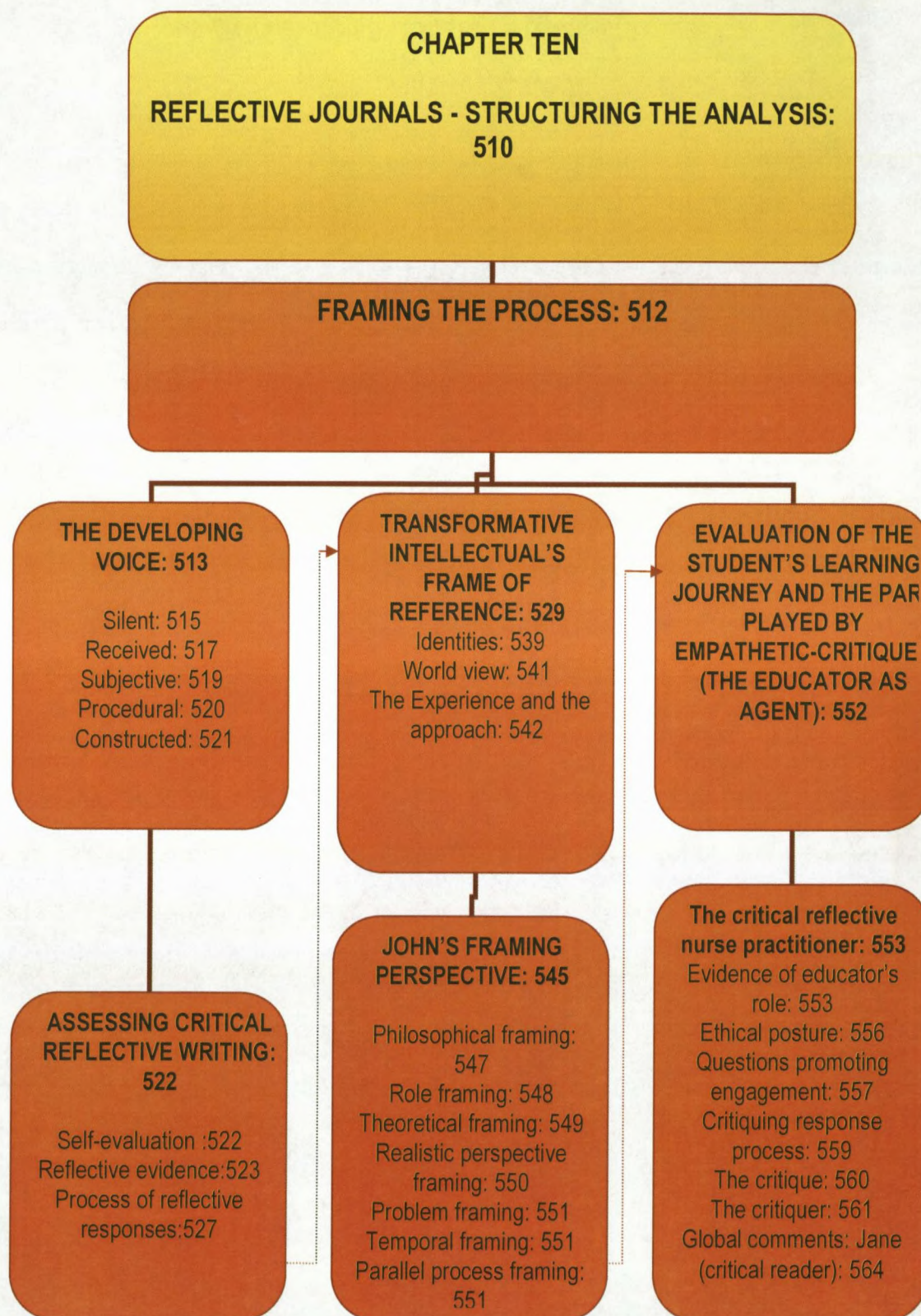
- Philosophy driven by recognition of the factors influencing student learning (e.g. prior experience, work and domestic demands) balanced by need for quality education.
- Common framework: “It has leaned far more away from just pure theory to more problem-based and hands on.”

9.5 CONCLUSION

Jackson (2004) asks the question “Who is the self that nurses?” She reminds us that nursing as a profession is more than being knowledgeable – it is the integration of the mind, body and soul which requires constant renewal and care. As nurse educators, we can sometimes be blinded by the “additive curriculum” as the body of knowledge of the profession expands, but if we do not invest in the long-term growth of the student, in all that the term ‘growth’ implies, we should not really be in the business of education – but rather, in one of training. The role of guide in the students’ exploration of learning is not just a vacation job, to be adopted in the hope of quick monetary returns, but a role that needs to be entered with care, with respect, with understanding and an appreciation that each student would ultimately become the driver of her own coach, caring perhaps, for our own loved ones.

This chapter has allowed me a broader understanding of the staff members philosophy and their understanding of the teaching and learning within their programmes, as well as their teaching strategies and the factors that they perceive to support or limit their practice. There are definite points of congruence between us, and the differences are not profound. From these interviews, it becomes clear that the common alignments in teaching philosophies are supportive of my teaching

of critical reflective practice. The real concern appears to be connected to factors outside of our control - for example, those instigated by the merger process. This can be illustrated by (a) the environmental disharmony brought about by jockeying for political positioning; (b) by having to re-negotiate and re-establish legitimacy in new hierarchical order or (c) the frustrations of having to cope with new systems and structures not necessarily perceived to be 'academically friendly'.



CHAPTER TEN

REFLECTIVE JOURNALS – STRUCTURING THE ANALYSIS

10. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a framework to underpin the analysis of the reflective journals in the following chapter, Chapter Eleven. The purpose of *that* chapter is to monitor the personal, professional and academic growth and development of eight students through their reflective journals. This growth and development through critical reflective practice is underscored by the study objectives 1, 2 and 4 in Chapter Four, Section 4.11.

To monitor this growth, I first have had to configure the viewing of these eight journals as a medium for critical reflective practice. This chapter therefore provides an overview of the structuring, organisation and purpose of the *analysis* of these reflective journals. It considers the students' various usages of the reflective journals, as well as an explanation of how these journals were characterized. It also considers the empathetic-critiquer/ facilitator's responses as part of this process. I have then provided a theoretical framework to explain the perspective with which I read and understood the journals, and which formed the basis for my analysis. The justification for the use of the theoretical constructs has been contextualized with use of explanations and examples relative to the Management IV course. However, from the outset it should be made clear that this is a tentative framework, based on my interpretation of the tenets. Because of the deep philosophical nature of the theories derived from some of the theorists who have influenced this development, my understanding and interpretation can only be partial – and therefore, tentative.

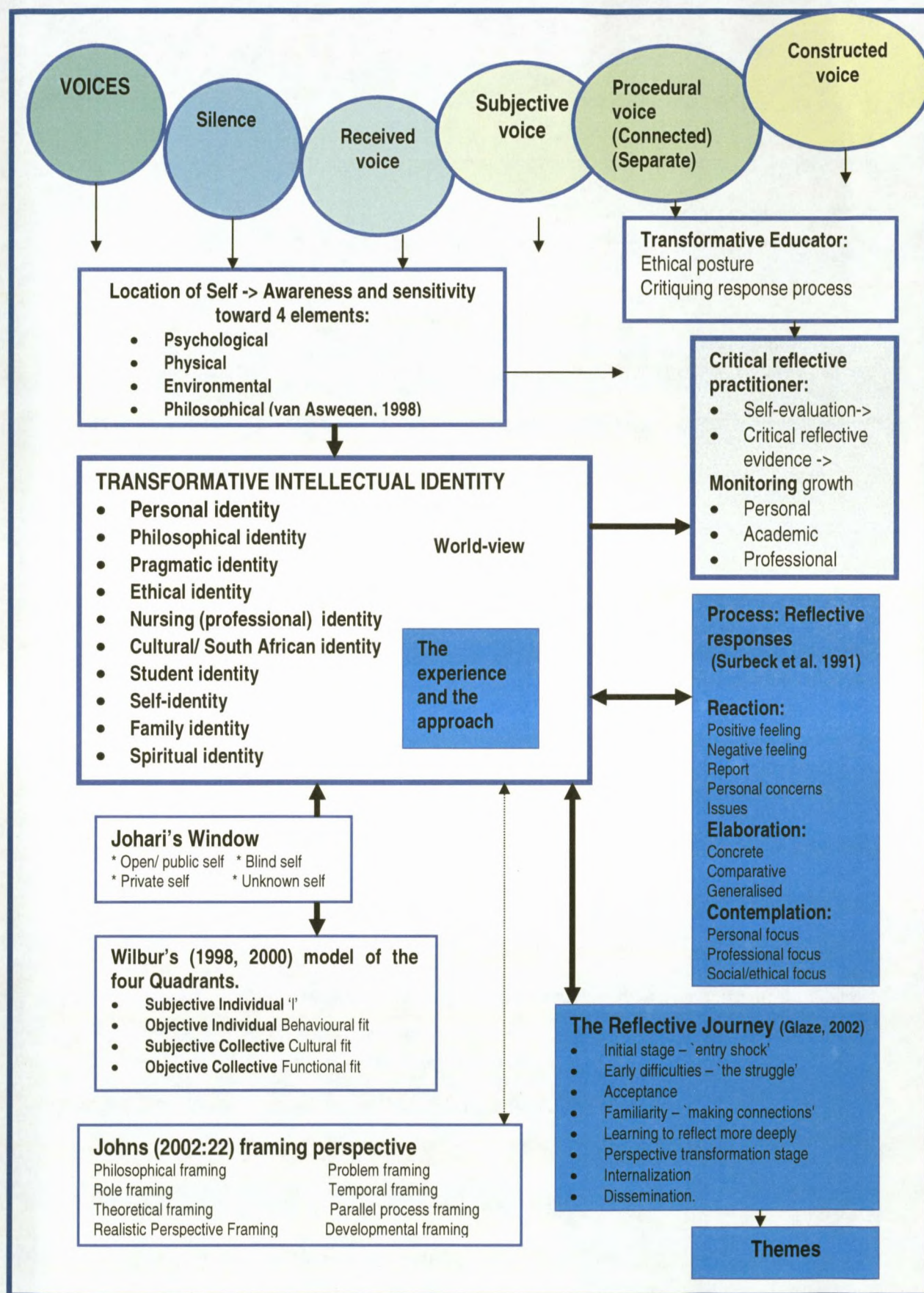


Figure 10.1: Theoretical Framework for Analysis of Reflective Journals

10.1 FRAMING THE PROCESS

While Chapter Four, Section 4.24 provides an overview of the data analysis used in Chapter 11, this chapter provides an in-depth explanation of the framing.

As the researcher of these learning journeys, I started out thinking about ways in which I could 'see' and interpret the reflective journals. As Johns (2002) warns, I had to be conscious of the risk entailed of 'seeing' the journals through a filter of my own interests, or my own established way of viewing the world. Accordingly, I used as one of my lens, the three research objectives where the two variables, critical thinking and reflection, formed a key theme.

I then decided to let the data 'speak' to me without regard to other frameworks or the literature. This produced an initial process of coding and categorization to create themes described in Chapter Four, Section 4.24.3., some of which have been dealt with in Chapters Seven and Eight. In order to explore these themes, I started to develop a theoretical framework (the final completed coherent framework is depicted in Figure 10.1). The purpose of this framework was to provide me, as researcher and educator, with an understanding of the student as a 'whole' person engaged in a critical reflective process, as well as an understanding of the context needed for meaningful empathetic-critiquer and facilitator responses. The analysis should be seen in the light of this framework.

At the same time, it should be noted that while each journal was broadly considered in terms of this framework, the framework was used in different ways. Certain components were:

- (a) Consistently and comprehensively considered, e.g. transformative educator (the critiquing response process), critical reflective practitioner (critical evidence), themes and monitoring growth;
- (b) Considered broadly and briefly e.g. location of self, voices and identity

- (c) Considered comprehensively only in certain journals e.g. location of self, voices, identity; or
- (d) Considered as part of the overall journaling process e.g. the experience and the approach (the reflective process and the reflective journey).

The completed framing was based on the research question, the objectives, van Aswegen's model and the literature. I could not find studies on the analysis of reflective journals although Smith (1998) through a 3-year longitudinal qualitative study does use data from written critical incidents reflecting on undergraduate student nurses' practice experiences and classroom discussions analysed using the constant comparative method. The literature was useful in providing various rubrics and theoretical constructs, but despite a reasonably thorough search, focused on process and outcomes rather than analysis of actual journaling narratives of students. This has been daunting as I was faced with so much text (the year's journaling work of eight students and the critiquing responses) and no clear way of how to collapse yet retain the authenticity of their experiences. I have been on my own in this regard and have had to rely on the data and my subsequent interpretation. So, in addition to the above, this framework was derived from the data and my subsequent analysis, which had been explored through my reflexive journal in light of my experiences as an educator. This framework is intended to demonstrate what worked for me, and which could perhaps be used by others interested in this approach, in the future.

While this chapter is the prelude to the chapter on the eight students' journaling narratives, the concept of reflective practice is interwoven throughout the Management IV course. Therefore, the following sections not only provide an explanation of the framing concepts for the journals, but also for other aspects of the course, for example, the reflective tutorials. Accordingly, I have highlighted this by providing brief relevant references and illustrative evidence.

10.1.1 The developing 'voice'

The concept of 'voice' is a powerful image, has featured throughout this thesis and forms a 'lens' to view the unfolding layers within the narratives. The voices indicate development in reflection, regardless of the method. It was through the students' voices (written and oral) that their practice, their values, their thinking and their feelings were revealed to me. The reflective journals were particularly useful as a method of revealing 'voice' and encouraging reflection. Those students, who expressed limited 'voice' in class, perhaps through technical inability, now were now 'forced' to use voice. Trust and revelation became mutually intertwined. While the ability to trust me as the facilitator did not necessarily indicate a concomitant desire to reveal the self, it did help. The very nature of the reflective journaling and tutorial process also encouraged revelation. While I cannot presume to believe or state that what was expressed was in fact, the essence of the writer or speaker, it did convey a sense of the person. This expressed voice therefore became the lens through which I 'saw' the student, the person.

In Chapter One, the reader is directed to the 'voices' present in the thesis. In Chapter Three, Sections 3.6, 3.11 and 3.12.11.1 as well as in Chapter Four, Section 4.6.3, voice has been identified with empowerment and self-expression. This theme is also woven through Chapter Six, Section 6.2.10.9, Chapter Seven, Section 7.1.4, 7.2.4, 7.2.6.5, Table 7.3, 7.3.6, 7.3.8. It continues into Chapter Eight in Section 8.1.2 and is again picked up in Chapter Nine, Table 9.5.

Christopher John's (2002) text, Guided Reflection. Advancing Practice is significant in terms of interpreting and guiding my own study - specifically his use of 'voice' and his 'theoretical perspectives.' John's (2002) analysis, based on Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) is particularly helpful in analysing the stages of development of student 'voices' in terms of their journals

and reflective abilities: It sets the stage for contextualising Duke and Appleton's (2000) marking grid for reflective evidence table, which is clarified in Section 10.1.2.2.

Through Belensky et al. (1986) Johns (2002:38-40) identifies 5 stages of the developing voice: "silence; received voice, subjective voice, procedural voice (connected and separate) and constructed voice." I have depicted this in Figure 10.2.

10.1.1.1. The silent voice

The first level of development is the voice of those who remain silent, or who have no voice and are dominated by authoritative others. I was particularly aware of those in my class who listened without active interaction and had difficulty in expressing themselves or who chose not to express themselves. While this remains a generalized statement, this appeared to be more prevalent amongst the black African students.

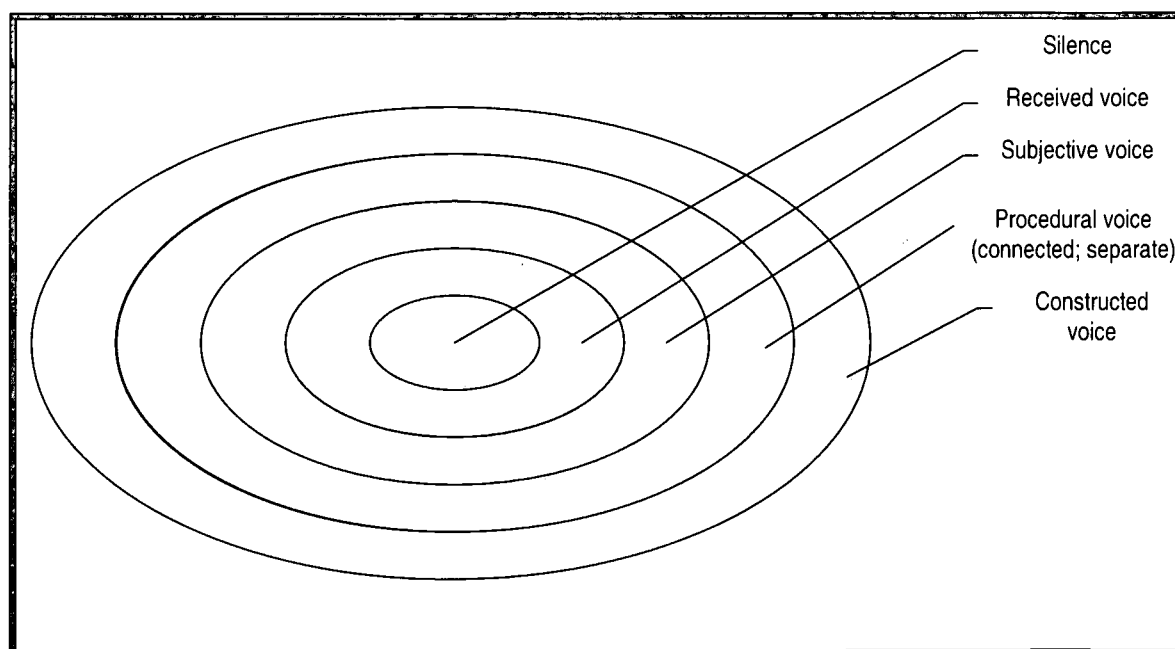


Figure 10.2: The developing voice

In a focus group on 31 October, 2003 (Chapter Seven, Section 7.4.3) specifically focusing on black African students, with respect to second language issues, the group affirmed "In class, we don't respond - even when we know the answer. In us not to answer - especially if there are those who will respond." In other words, even though a student might have a 'voice', she would knowingly choose not to use it if there were others who would fill in the void. Learning to voluntarily verbalise, discuss and debate as a means of reflection and a movement to further understanding was generally not part of their previous socialised educational experience. In fact, as intimated in Sections 7.4.5.2 and 7.4.5.10, this process would have been actively discouraged in both the home and in the educational setting, perhaps because as Banda, (2003:80) notes, in "most African societies the younger person is not expected to initiate or appear to control the direction of a conversation, with an older person."

Johns (2002) however, does note that although the 'voice' is silent, it has the potential to be realised through the reflective process, and in the case of the students, through their reflective journals and the tutorials. Johns (2002:39) correctly realises that even though there is the means, this does not mean that the potential could be unleashed. Many struggled with this activity. One of the reasons for this, Johns suggests, is their technical inability to reflect as they could only use the voice of others (the received voice) having denied their own "intuitive sense". Students, in their journals, had a choice in the type of entry they made i.e. a reflective entry, a reflection on a health related news item or an analysis of a journal item. I had hoped that they would use their journals and not be the 'silent voice' as in the class situations. Through their writing, I wanted students to unleash their voices and find themselves in their practice. I also wanted them to read and become more conversant with the world around them and link theory to practice. It is a choice that they themselves had to make. I became aware that second language black African students tended to opt for the news article, as it provided a concrete means of support. The technical inability to reflect and the language barrier were

fairly obvious reasons. The following reason is more concerning, suggests Johns (2002:39). If a student did not know who she was, she would not be able to express herself. He raises the concern that the empowering intent of reflection could in fact result in disempowerment for those who were unable to effectively engage in the reflective process, resulting in the apprehensions identified earlier in Chapter Seven, Sections 7.2.6.6 and 7.2.6.7. This was a risk I took as an educator and so tried to ensure a number of supportive strategies to scaffold that risk i.e. a supportive environment, self-evaluation, a collaborative contract and tutorials.

10.1.1.2 The received voice

The second level, the 'received voice' is the voice of authoritative others - where the student takes the information on someone else's authority but, because she does not question this authority, is unable to process the knowledge in terms of her own 'knowing.' So the student is able to accept and even question or reproduce the expertise of acknowledged authorities, but without the ability to critically understand. Johns (2002:39) suggests that it is extremely difficult for the student on this level to reflect, as she is unable to respond to

"reflective cues beyond simple description. They lack the resources to be critical of self. Reflection is experienced as confrontational and threatening. At this level practitioners want a didactic style of guidance that fits with the experience of being filled up. Yet they resist being emptied because the words of others have become embodied".

At this level, he suggests, that the work of the guide is to gently "plant the seeds of doubt" and to try to act as a mirror or reflection for the students to enable them to see themselves within the process. This phase and Johns' description resonates with me, as this is the level I found myself working with many of the students, and gently, gently did I pose questions - not with authority, but almost

hesitantly, from the voice of the non-expert trying to establish my own knowledge base. Initially, I was concerned that I might be at a disadvantage in that while I felt I could identify with the students as nurses, I was not practicing within their specific fields. However, as Johns (2002:31) clarifies:

"A good guide will always challenge the practitioner to access an appropriate technical literature or steer the practitioner to access relevant sources for such information. Indeed the resourceful guide can ask for copies of such material in order to expand her background, and then use this literature to challenge the practitioner as appropriate."

I did this on a number of levels with the students: (a) through requiring them to attach news or journal articles which formed the source of their discussions or reflections; (b) by directing them to internet sites or library sources; (c) through considering their reflections and reading up on and attaching additional material to support or refute or question their conclusions or (d) asked the student to share the entry for a class, on-line or tutorial discussion. I also recognise, as does Johns (2002:31) that

"a guide with a similar background may be at a disadvantage if the guide subsequently over-identifies with the practitioner's experiences or responds in the light of their own experiences. A lack of shared background will enable the guide to ask more naive questions which may otherwise be taken for granted within a shared background".

I found this lack of identification to be particularly useful in the light of the students' workplace experiences. Although these workplaces were sufficiently generic in that they were health care contexts and there were patients, and nursing did take place, this similarity was also marked by the strong contrast offered by the dissimilarities of the workplace contexts. Our department was not attached to these sites and was not answerable to anyone in healthcare management, other than the

obvious politeness required by visitors and users of the health care facilities. I had no authority in these contexts, nor was I personally familiar with the personnel, and so had no vested interests in these sites of practice. This independent autonomy from the student workplace sites allowed me to question freely without the normal political constraints experienced by on-site nursing colleges and therefore, my questioning of systems and conditions theoretically, was without overt prejudice. My concern was generally, for quality nursing practice, and specifically, the development of the student's nursing practice, and therefore, my engagement with the students, was a focus on the process rather than the outcome.

In discussing the voices from the multiple aspects of the course, Johns (2002:33) notes that the listening (as in the case of the tutorials) or the reading (as in the case of the journals) requires "an awareness and suspension of personal ambition, dominant perspectives, values, defensiveness and weight of tradition." This is validated by a student's response to the critiquing process in Section 7.2.6.7 "M..s approach is constant in that her critiquing encourages your thoughts, not hers. "

10.1.1.3 The subjective voice

The third level of development 'subjective knowing' is where understanding is derived from highly personal interpretations and value filters and is where the student begins to listen to her inner voice, questioning the validity of some of the "knowledge" that is presented to her. She thinks in simplistic, concrete terms and sees information as "good" or "bad", as "true" or "false," rather than being able to consider the complexity of a situation in all its gradients or levels. Of enormous value in this phase, is the perceived permission the student invokes to express the self freely, voice her own opinions and connect with others. However, as Johns (2002:39) warns, "at the subjective level, the practitioner's voice is unsubstantiated."

10.1.1.4 **The procedural voice**

The fourth level is that of Procedural knowing where the student is "able to realise self within the simultaneous and complementary processes of separate and connected knowing" (Johns, 2002:39). Knowing comes from fitting pieces together in logical and rational ways where the student applies objective procedures for receiving and conveying knowledge. This voice is divided into two levels:

(a) **'Separated knowing'** is a level of knowing where theory connects with practice in a way that is meaningful to the student. Students begin to see that authoritative sources do not always have the answer and learn to doubt and question. They use impersonal procedures for establishing truth and begin to respect their own abilities to think, reason and form conclusions. "The voice of separate knowing is argument" (Heiber, 2003).

(b) **'Connected knowing'** is the level of respecting one's own views, feelings, and opinions, and at the same time focuses on understanding and appreciating the different beliefs and perspectives of others. It emerges from the context of personal experience (rather than in established authorities) and is grounded in empathy and care (Heiber, 2003). This connection to the experiences of others gives meaning to the student's own experiences and allows the student to value herself and feel empowered. I found that by sharing incidents and stories on-line through Web CT that this self-valuing did take place. "I gained a sense of friendship, part of the family where I can share my feelings about any issue and get responses within a moment and good ideas to solve that problem or feel good afterwards" noted one student. Another identified that this sharing "Definitely helped change way of thinking, connected one's thoughts to one's feelings, and therefore one's actions are more structured and slower." Students found this process enabled them to identify with each other "I was able to understand some of the difficulties the others have to endure especially in Government."

Johns (2002:39) suggests that "people who experience self as predominantly separate tend to espouse a morality based on impersonal procedures for establishing justice, while people who experience the self as predominantly connected tended to espouse a morality based on care". I think that this is a key statement and has significance for my study.

I have been wondering a great deal about the entries I saw in journals, and it is notable that students did not identify easily with patients, nor did they appear to establish relationships of any length of time. Most of the students in our programmes were involved in fields where the relationship with clients was ephemeral - for example, the primary health care nurses would see patients on a consultancy basis e.g. assess, diagnose and treat and were unlikely to meet with these clients again. If and when they returned to the clinics, they would, more than likely, be seen by colleagues. Even those nurses who worked in hospitals would not necessarily get to 'know' their clients. Care was still task based (on the whole) and not primary care centred. Journal entries appeared to be more concerned with the system that supports the care giving, rather than with the individual. Most of the nurses we taught were bowed down with the process of survival or mechanistic nursing, as opposed to the specific care of the individual patient. It is no wonder that many of the reflections dealt with their disenchantment with the system, rather than the joy of the nursing process. Nonetheless, the sharing of experiences had a major effect in enabling students to view different perspectives, and this was a notable, common outcome of students' evaluation of the process of sharing, dialoguing and debating "It motivated me to look into other perspectives".

10.1.1.5 The constructed voice

Constructed knowing builds on the subjective and the procedural levels to arrive at a constructed knowledge stage which allows for thinking to occur in a very flexible and sophisticated way enabling

the practitioner to speak in an informed, passionate and assertive voice (Johns, 2002). Intuitive hunches are integrated with rational and complex thinking. Students understand that 'truth' or 'knowledge' is continuously 'under construction'. Knowledge becomes contextualised and students recognise themselves as creators of their own knowledge through their experiences, and that their understanding and knowledge gained and built or 'constructed' is of and through these connected experiences. Constructed knowers integrate all parts of the self in knowing.

10.1.2 Assessing critical reflective writing

A reason for initiating reflective journals was to promote critical reflective writing and practice. I needed a mechanism that would enable students and I to assess if and how this process was occurring and allow me as educator and researcher a means to monitor the process of this development (Objectives 1, 2 and 4).

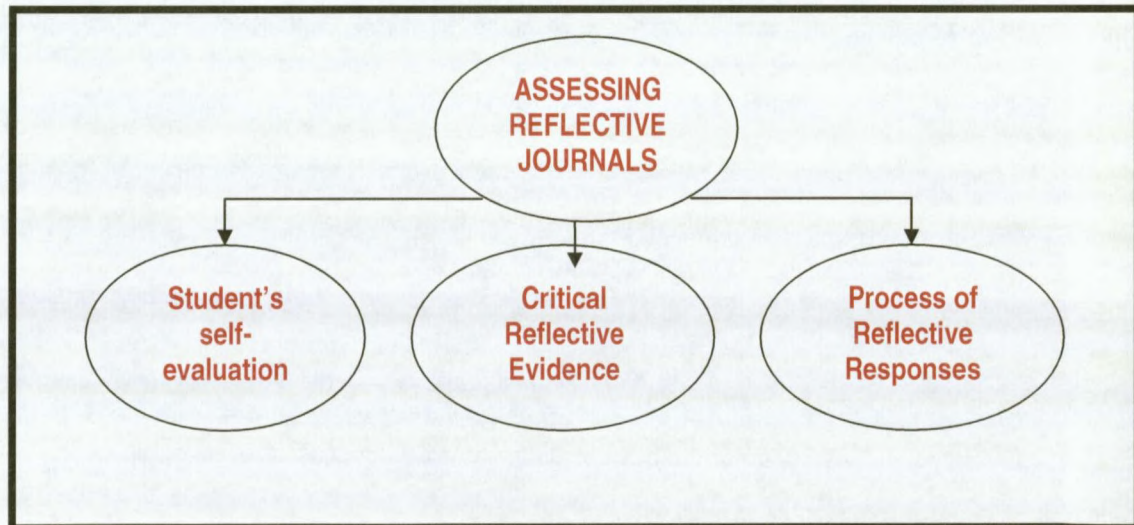


Figure 10.3 Assessing Critical reflective writing

10.1.2.1 Self-evaluation

There is extensive debate around the area of assessment of reflective writing, some of which is discussed in Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.4. Section 7.2.2 sets the ground rules and rationale for the

students' self-evaluation of their reflective journals but it is worth reconsidering the rationale for self-evaluation (Teekman, 2000:1129). Reflective writing brings its own criteria which fall within what Teekman (2000: 1128) notes as Sense-Making philosophy.

“Sense-Making proposes that information is a product of direct and indirect human observation, and does not exist independently, and external to, human beings (Dervin,1992). Human interpretation and knowing is always connected and situated in a historicized context of people, settings, activities, events and power relationships. Sense-Making assumes that structures such as community, culture and social organization which are created, maintained, challenged, reified, changed, resisted, or even destroyed in human communication, influence the actions of the individual.”

Accordingly, the notion of self-evaluation is justified because it is based on the Sense-making philosophy as follows:

- Description of the events are viewed from the student's perspective
- Perspectives have a space and time element and therefore are situational
- Because the perceptions are those of the student, they should be examined from the student's perspective.
- The meanings are in relation to and not independent from or external to the student.
- Students should have the right to write what they want without external pressure.

10.1.2.2 Reflective evidence

The purpose of initiating the reflective journals was to provide a mode of supporting and developing critical reflective thinking and practice. I needed a framework with which to view the journals in order

to see whether this was happening. I included an amalgam of the following frameworks in order to arrive at *Table 10.1: Critical reflective thinking criteria*. These criteria were based on Duke and Appleton's (2000) Reflective Evidence which has been amalgamated with van Aswegen's Table of Reflective Evidence (1998:138) and combined with key criteria statements of Facione and Facione's Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric (HCTSR) and the Levels of reflectivity from Richardson and Maltby, (1995):235-242. This marking grid (or rubric) for a reflective evidence table is mostly derived from Duke and Appleton's (2000: 1557-1568) quantitative study assessing the development of nursing students' reflective skills in a palliative care programme over an academic year.

Rationale for using Duke and Appleton's (2000) Reflective Evidence Rubric as a guide to *monitor* rather than as a specific tool to *measure* critical reflective writing

In considering Duke and Appleton's (2000) categories of reflective evidence in the light of the students' reflections for the purpose of analysis, I frequently wished to add riders to the coding e.g. the category 'describing the situation.' Yes, the situation was described, but could have been described more fully. Or the category 'Raise and pursue root questions.' Questions were raised, but there were differences with respect to *how* they were raised and *how fully* they were pursued. Also, there is a big difference between a *formal assignment*, where students are expected to consider all aspects of the issues – and these *reflections*, where students could choose what to discuss and choose the level for the discussion. The fact that they chose to pursue certain elements within their thinking allows me to make broad judgments about their abilities to think critically or reflectively – rather than about *the level* of their reflective thinking. It only allows me to determine if they were using specific components of critical reflective thinking – which is one of the reasons for choosing not to fully use the extended rubric, such as the one offered by Duke and Appleton (2000).

So, while this grid was extremely useful, I had to adapt my usage of the grid by omitting the gradients (the different levels of performance listed in the table were graded from the positive to the negative) as I found the multi-levelled gradients too refined for my purposes. Had this been a single essay that was being graded, the refinement of the different levels of performance would have been appropriate – but not on a student's whole year's entries. I found the rubric too complex and difficult to use, having tried it with one set of journal entries.

The criteria for the adapted marking grid are organised in a logical progression, moving from description to analysis, to judgement and arriving at action. Those criteria in-between indicate the gradients between the different levels. This resulting grid has been used for the analysis of the students' reflective journals.

Table 10.1 Critical reflective thinking criteria

DIMENSION OF THOUGHT. Ability to:	FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPT
1. Describe the event or situation	Explaining and illustrating the incident or experience Richardson and Maltby (1995) Level 1
2. Analyze event	Ability to use knowledge from a variety of sources in order to analyze the situation
3. Examine assumptions	Not taking anything for granted: checking suppositions.
4. Identify and focus on salient issues from the situation	Recognising and centering on the most important matters, concerns or questions of the experience
5. Distinguish relevant from irrelevant facts	Being able to separate the important from the insignificant aspects of the information
6. Clarify issues and conclusions	Simplify and explain the issues and deductions clearly, in a way that is easily understood.
7. Raise and pursue root questions	Core questions that deal with the origin or core of the problem. Ability to ask questions that delve to the heart or the essence of the issue
8. Analyze emotions connected to event	Ability to analyze own feelings and those of others Richardson and Maltby (1995) Level 2
9. Question and consider a wide variety of points of view	Analyze alternative perspectives
10. Use knowledge from a variety of sources in order to analyze the situation	Ability to take information from a variety of sources in order to examine a situation
11. Use knowledge broadly	Ability to make lateral, creative connections with knowledge

12. Makes interdisciplinary connections	Ability to look beyond the nursing perspective, and make linkages with and to relevant members of the health team.
13. Compare perspectives and theories	Contrast concepts and suppositions about issues
14. Analyze contextual issues	Ability to place the event or situation in the context of broader social, political and professional perspectives and to analyze how these perspectives influence the event or situation.
15. Synthesis for new perspective	Ability to draw together and summarise description and analysis in order to present a new perspective or to revision an existing perspective
16. Transfer ideas to new context	Taking ideas from a familiar, accepted context and using them in a different scenario or setting
17. Generate novel ideas	Ability to be creative and arrive at new or different solutions or thoughts
18. Fair-mindedly follows where evidence and reasons lead	Impartially and rationally pursuing the facts of the matter
19. Evaluate arguments, interpretations and beliefs	Comparing and judging the reasoning, explanations and beliefs that form the basis for the contention. (Interprets evidence)
20. Draw accurate conclusions	Make precise, correct deductions based on evidence
21. Justifies key results and procedures, explains assumptions and reasons	Give good reason for the main solutions and course of action, clarifying theories and grounds for thought
22. Defend positions and issues	Providing support for standpoint and concerns
23. Solve non-routine problems	Get to the bottom of unusual dilemmas or predicaments
24. Identify and discuss the implications for practice that arise from analysis & synthesis	Ability to identify and discuss the implications for practice that arise from analysis and synthesis
25. Compare ideals with actual practice	Ability to contrast 'perfect' with practice in the real world setting
26. Explore implications and consequences	Investigate the possible inferences and repercussions of potential action (or consequences of actual behaviour)
27. Draw up and/ or implement an action plan based on the implications raised	Ability to draw up a plan of action built on evidentiary support
28. Write clearly and coherently	Clarity of written expression
29. Accurately cite sources of knowledge used	Correct usage of referencing techniques
30. Evaluate the credibility of sources	Correct use of personal judgement in assessing the reliability of informants or data bases
31. Use own thinking to come to conclusions and solutions	Independence of thought in deducing answers
32. Self-evaluate own work	Ability to self-assess
33. Openness to change or possibility for change	Ability to consider the need for change or other options - being open to other possibilities Theory of possibilities?
34. Come to terms with contradictions and inconsistencies	Recognise and accept the ambiguities and incongruities thrown up by the exigencies and 'messiness' of life.
35. Judgmental reflectivity	Awareness of value judgements and subjective nature (Richardson and Maltby, 1995) Level 4
36. Identify learning needs and learning achieved	Ability to identify learning achieved and learning needs - (also known as conceptual and theoretical subjectivity (Richardson and Maltby, 1995) - reaching a level of critical consciousness as well as identifying a need for further learning. Level 5

While Table 10.1 has been used for my analysis as the researcher, a simplified version of this table is suggested for student usage for self-evaluation of their reflective journals as in Chapter Seven, Figure 7.1 and Table 7.6

10.1.2.3 Process of reflective responses

A reflective response refers to the reflective manner in which students respond in writing in their reflective journal to social, academic or professional issues, situations or feelings relative to their learning experiences.

Surbeck, Han, and Moyer (1991), in studying journals of student teachers through naturalistic research, developed a framework of categories and subcategories of student entries to better understand the thinking of students and encourage them to become reflective practitioners. They knew that the students' responses would reveal their thinking about their profession. The categories of responses reflected the way in which students had written their entries in response to their thinking.

Table 10.2: Framework of student responses (Surbeck, Han, and Moyer (1991:26)),

<i>Reaction</i>	<i>Elaboration</i>	<i>Contemplation</i>
<i>Positive feeling</i>	<i>Concrete elaboration</i>	<i>Personal focus</i>
<i>Negative feeling</i>	<i>Comparative elaboration</i>	<i>Professional focus</i>
<i>Report</i>	<i>Generalised elaboration</i>	<i>Social/ethical focus</i>
<i>Personal concerns</i>		
<i>Issues</i>		

- **Reaction:**

These are student responses to class content, including peer teaching, discussions, activities, lectures, environments, instructors, peers, and articles read.

Sub-categories:

1. Positive feeling: described feelings of satisfaction about themselves, others, or class activities
2. Negative feeling: described feelings of dissatisfaction about themselves, others, or class activities
3. Report: described factual events - happenings in class (no personal feelings)
4. Personal concerns: described issues that affected themselves personally that had an impact on their class activities
5. Issues: concerned educational issues, problems and related information.

- **Elaboration:**

This is an expansion of the students' first reactions by explaining their feelings, verifying their thinking, giving examples or referring to other situations

1. Concrete elaboration: elaborating on a specific instance which evoked a reaction
2. Comparative elaboration: comparing their initial reaction with other situations e.g. previous experiences, (working or personal)
3. Generalised elaboration: Expansion by referencing theories, general principles or philosophical context.

- **Contemplation:**

These are the students' initial reactions linked with further elaboration and including thinking about personal, professional, social / ethical issues.

1. Personal focus: thoughts about themselves or personal problems
2. Professional focus: thoughts about their teaching, their students, educational issues, practice, goals and attitudes as teachers
3. Social/ethical focus: thoughts about social, ethical and moral issues

Surbeck, Han, and Moyer (1991:27) found that there was common sequencing - reaction-elaboration-contemplation - at least partially developed in most journals. The contemplation category was the least applied. When the entire sequence was used, they noted "a greater integration of information." They recognise too, that behaviour is very much directed by thinking, and the journals allow for an exploration of deeper probing into their practice.

On reflection, there are very similar processes and sequencing that take place in my students' journals, but perhaps because of the key question "What are the implications for your nursing practice?" contemplation receives an increasing focus as the journals progress.

Themes: The themes that were derived from the journals fell into similar categories as personal, professional, social / ethical issues were considered.

10.1.3 Transformative Intellectual's Frame of Reference (with allusions to van Aswegen's model)

This framework was developed in response to a coding analysis of the data generated by the first student journal (Carol) and then subsequently, with the other students' journals. It was corroborated with van Aswegen's (1998) model and also drew on the literature.

10.1.3.1 Identities

Exploring and locating identities: Johns (2002) clearly observes that it is within the experience that the individual sees herself and others, and that this experience is contextualised. It became apparent as I engaged in reading and responding to the journal entries, that not only were there different 'voices' but that there were different layers expressing the multifaceted identities of the writers, which resolved into the identities noted in the Transformative Intellectual's Frame of Reference (Figure 10.1). The layers of this experience are sometimes clear, with specific boundaries, and sometimes juxtaposed, where the identities become blurred. Kroge (2003:155) describes this:

"An individual's identity involves a complex interplay of multiple spheres, such as the interpersonal, the ethnic, the occupational, the economic, the political etc. These parts of a person coexist dynamically to create a continuous conception of life from past through present to future. Ideally, the individual should simultaneously have free psychological access to and movement within all these identity dimensions."

Location of self: In order to find identity, the self needs to be located. A key concept in van Aswegen's 1998 (271-272) model is the self.

"The role of the self can be explicated as the source of the practitioner's perception, affect and behaviour. The metacognitive, cognitive and affective aspects of the self are subsystems of the self and under control of the self as agent".

Key to the issue of critical reflection is the ability of the reflective practitioner to engage in reflective self-criticism, which, she notes, can only result from a positive self-image. A high level of self-

consciousness is a prerequisite for true reflection. This self-consciousness or self-awareness comprises an awareness of one's location and sensitivity to four elements:

- psychological (the inner being, the emotive, the drive, the personality and the self-concept, all of which require a sensitivity to the inner and outer world),
- physical (the body, its physiology, sensations and potential),
- environmental (a relationship between the self and the social environment) and
- philosophical [one's world view and the meaning of life for the individual – which also accounts for one's values and ethics: (van Aswegen's 1998:272)].

(A) Personal identity

In developing the theoretical construct, personal identity, I have been influenced by the writings of others who have helped me in weaving together the pattern formed within Figure 10.1.

- **Wilbur's (1998, 2000) model of the Four quadrants**

Johns (2002:7) is particularly helpful in his suggestion that "*experience* is the way an individual perceives self and others" in relationship to a particular situation or event. Clearly the perception and conveyance of this experience and the self within is highly subjective for how can such an experience be "known"? Johns (2002:7) partly bases his understanding of the reflective practitioner and her experience on Wilbur's (1998, 2000) model of the Four quadrants which allows for the integration of "partial views of knowing self within experience" as demonstrated in Figure 10.4.

	Subjective (left hand path)	Objective (right hand path)
Individual	Upper left ‘I’	Upper right Behavioural fit
Collective	Cultural fit Lower left	Functional fit Lower Right

Figure 10.4: The four quadrants as a model to integrate partial views of knowing self within experience (Johns, 2002:7).

The left side reflects the subjective self and the right, the objective. As Johns (2002:8) notes, the model helps “to place the “I” in context ...of inter-subjective cultural meanings, within existing social systems and contradictions between interior thoughts and feelings and observable practice. It is the peeling back of layers to reveal the integral core of the experience.”

The individual subjective view: The intent of the reflective process is to explore the subjective world of the experience in order to reveal the inner nature of the self. There are many theorists, particularly in the therapeutic field (Freud, Luft and Ingham, Jung, William James and Wilbur to name but a few), who have used a similar process where the individual is able to move beyond the conscious level to the deeper subconscious levels, searching for insights about the self. To or for the reader, these experiences are not directly observable and so I have to trust that this conveyed reflection is reliable. However, the writer may unwittingly distort this reflection as a result of many subconscious influences – and it is for this reason that both Johns (2002:7) and van Aswegen (1998:298) place such emphasis on the traits required for true critical reflection such as intellectual

humility, integrity, empathy, authenticity, sincerity, courage, perseverance, commitment, faith in rationality and sense of justice.

The individual objective view: As the educator, it is possible to see the student in a different light to that perceived by the student herself. This may be as a result of different cues given by the student, or through triangulating with other situations which reflect an altered view of the student or through insights shared by others e.g. staff or colleagues. This perspective may not correlate with the student's own perception of the experience and my job would be to help support and guide the student to viewing the experience in a more objective light.

Collective subjective view: The way the world is experienced is strongly influenced by societal cultural norms and mores, which in turn, affects the way in which one responds to the world. Reflections would reveal this collective subjective view and allow the student access "to understand these patterns of relationships and ways they have influenced (you) within experience" (Johns, 2002:8).

Collective objective view: Reflections enable students to interrogate the cultural and social systems that impact on their everyday lives. By reflecting on their working environments, they learn to understand the health care system on a macro and micro scale, and how nursing, as a cultural system, fits within the larger system. By interrogating the different elements, they begin to see patterns emerging and the value or problems inherent in the systems.

- **Johari's Window**

Johari's Window is a conceptual model for describing, evaluating and predicting aspects of interpersonal communication (Luft, 1970 in Jordaan and Jordaan, 1989). As a metaphor, we both give and receive information about ourselves through the window. The information flowing is dynamic as this model supports movement from one pane to another as trust ebbs and flows and participants exchange feedback. The relationship between the student and me becomes bound within these windows and we both view each other within this model.

Open/ public self Things you know about yourself that others do	Blind self Things you don't know about yourself and others do
Private self Things you know about yourself and others don't	Unknown self Things you don't know about yourself and others don't

Figure 10.5 Johari's Window (the basic structure)

- **Open/ public self**

This window symbolises the free and open exchange of information between the self and others; it is the individual's public behaviour that is available to everyone. The pane increases in size as the level of trust increases between self and others, as more information - particularly personally relevant information - is shared. The 'openness' of this area, indicates a sense of trust. As the empathetic-critiquer and discussion facilitator, it is important to correctly gauge whether or not the student is open and able to receive feedback, as misreading the cues or signs of openness, could result in conflict with or withdrawal by the student.

- **Private self**

For some reason or another, the individual keeps this information hidden from others. There is a fear of risking too much, with exposure to criticism and uncertainty. This masking is a form of protection for the self and revelation is controlled by the individual. The problem with this window is that the reality of the situation leading from a true understanding of the individual may remain blocked. I see my role as empathetic-critiquer in facilitating this unblocking, so that both student and I are working from the same page as it were and that there is an honesty in our relationship that allows for 'truth'.

- **Blind self**

It is quite possible in relationships with others to communicate all kinds of information of which the self is unaware, but others pick up. They do this by verbal cues, gestures, the way things are said, the tone or timbre of the voice or the style in which the self relates to others. The extent of this insensitivity to one's own behaviour and what it may communicate to others can be surprising and disconcerting. How others respond to one's behaviour is very dependent on their overall attitude towards the individual and their capacity of tolerance and flexibility to accommodate this behaviour.

The blind spot is very important in terms of personal development and demands considerable self-awareness and control. If affection is felt, threshold of tolerance will be high, but distancing will take place if no affection is felt. In a working relationship low affection/esteem for the other and blind-spot behaviours is a recipe for interpersonal conflict. It is for this reason (if I have interpreted Luft correctly), that relationship building between facilitator and student is so important and where reflection influencing self-awareness is so powerful. This type of personal learning involves the

difficulties of building new, consistent modes of behaviour. The focus of critical reflective thinking is on nursing practice, and students are not conscious that this learning, in fact, addresses their own personal behaviour. The very same strategies implicit in reflective practice are inherent in changes of the inner self. These include firstly, awareness about the blind spot behaviours. There has to be a need and willingness to do something about it. This culminates in action. Again, my role as facilitator is to promote this self-awareness and support the types of thinking and behaviour that promote self-development. Nevertheless in many life situations, people have to and do accommodate to the behaviour of others and if 'others' behaviour is impulsive or irresponsible, they can do considerable damage.

- **Unknown self**

What affects me as empathetic-critiquer and the reflective writer may be below the surface of awareness of both parties. Previous experiences may give rise to aversions learned through experience. Both parties may have unrecognised resources and traits. Learning opportunities and exchange of feedback in a supportive settings may allow for these influences to surface and be opened - but only if the desire is there. I am very aware that as empathetic-critiquer, I am moving into a very sensitive realm, which requires self-understanding.

- **Giving Feedback**

People wittingly or unwittingly hurt others by giving critical feedback about blind spots. As empathetic-critiquer, I could also be exhibiting my blind self also - using my critique to service my own needs (revenge, humiliation, misguided intolerance). Feedback comes from the Private Self and it is important that the timing and circumstances are appropriate and that the receiver is not only

open but also requests the feedback. It is likely to come best from someone who is acting in the Open Arena. Such feedback is only likely to be useful if the relationship of both is within the open areas where there is limited distortion or ambiguity of meaning. The openness and constancy of feedback, as well as awareness that feedback processes are taking place, is supported by my research into the critiquing process.

Both the model of Four quadrants and Johari's window provide insight into the concept of personal identity, and although they have some common elements, they are different:

- The first, because it considers the person within her experience.
- The second because it focuses on communication, through which the conscious and the unconscious aspects of the self are revealed through interpersonal relationships.

The following identities were themes revealed through my coding of the journals and developed out of my understanding of the data:

(B) Philosophical identity

This is the student's personal philosophy on life (life view) and attempts to connect the past, present and future. More than this, it tries to relate the student's individual experience to the more universal experiences of mankind and incorporates the student's values, principles and morals

(C) Pragmatic identity

This relates to the individual's practical, down-to-earth, realistic perception of the world as it is. I see the philosophical and ethical identity as values the student aspires to – but the pragmatic self is the

one that lives in the real world where idealism sometimes gives way to pragmatism. The conflict arises when there is cognitive dissonance between the reality and the individual's morality and the individual is not able to reconcile the two.

(D) Ethical identity

Nursing is a moral enterprise, and the core of the profession is its moral tradition. Nurses are taught that respect for the dignity and humanity of their patients is deeply bound to the service tradition. Ethics, morality and philosophy of the profession need to be congruent with the personal code; otherwise this can result in conflict. It became clear during reading and analysis (the coding) of the reflective journals, that this was an area of concern to students. Moral and ethical issues crossed boundaries between work ethics and personal ethics and were generally rooted in the ethical conflicts that arise in a world of rapid changes, requiring the students to constantly reflect and review attitudes and beliefs in their application to new situations.

(E) Self-identity

Self-identity refers to the individual's personal sense of self. It is subjective and linked to her experiences of those aspects of self-identity that allow the individual to perceive herself as a unique, whole person. This is clearly incorporated within *personal identity* – but self-identity goes beyond the individual (while still incorporating the sense of self) to include others in their understanding of this self.

This concept of self-identity is closely related to the *self-concept*, the difference being that the self-concept is the self-evaluation of the individual characterising herself, whereas the individual identity is closely linked to how the person views herself in relation to others and her social environment.

Both concepts are fundamental to the development of the self-identity. Therefore, the individual identity is both identifying self with others as well as defining the self as a unique person with unique characteristics, traits, needs, drives, attitudes, beliefs, interests and values (Gerdes, Moore, Ochse and van Ede, 1998). These descriptors can be identified in the student journals through their relationships with family, client, doctor, colleague, health care worker and community; by traits exhibited by the students reflecting the identities of the students and by recognition of their needs. Emotional security is closely tied to self-acceptance and self-disclosure, a key element in the reflective process. This is linked to the ability to express feelings openly, but with due regard to the feelings of others. This sharing of the inner experience with self and others is fundamental to self-acceptance, which in turn influences the individual's ability to accept others (Gerdes, et al., 1988).

There is a certain amount of overlap with the revelations seen through Johari's Window.

(F) Nursing (work) identity

Work plays a fundamental role in determining the identity of the individual, and in fact, could be said to define the person. It impacts on the individual's position in her community, where she lives, what relationships are established and the daily pattern of her and her family's way of life. The individual's potential as a human being can be realised through work and can determine how she views herself. Part of this can be identified in the journals through issues on Batho Pele (responsiveness to clients) and good practice; the student's personal philosophy on nursing; how she views poor practice (stories about poor health care practice) and how she sees herself or others managing health care problems.

(G) Cultural/ South African identity (social identity/ ethnic identity)

South Africa, as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society has emerged with a complex social system, and our historical development has shaped our core values. Particularly in the wake of the post-apartheid system, the influence of country, culture, politics, history have formed a frame of reference for individuals in South Africa that are critical to their self-perception. Public messages on who they are, how they rate as well as the legislation that supports the way that the individual is perceived, impacts on self-perception. These issues are identified in the journals through the students' choice, understanding and interpretation of their national being and issues that are being discussed are South African life issues, racism, cultural concerns, political issues and concern regarding broader issues e.g. at community, national or global levels.

(H) Student identity

The students we work with are adult learners, many at different stages of their lives. They are professional nurses and most are studying to improve their qualifications, skills and professional practice. Their motivation to learn is varied and the factors that influence their student identity focus around their learning needs, the difficulties they encounter such as time issues, understanding of requirements and materials and workload pull. They are also affected by relationships between peers and teaching staff, as well as the resources available. (These have been highlighted in Chapter Six).

(I) Family identity

It is possible that the family identity affects the students I work with more than perhaps in undergraduate programmes. Most of these students are strongly affected by their family commitments and as noted in Chapter 6, Section 6.6, many are single parents and are the main or strong contributors to the maintenance of the family system. Families can provide either a support or

a burden to the student. Each student who charts her learning course must take her family needs into account.

(J) Spiritual identity

The act of reflection requires the art of introspection for the purposes of transformation, to whatever degree, so that the old and the new self-views are integrated within a new self-definition. Wade (1998:714) suggests that this transformation, is in a sense, a process of psychic and spiritual self-healing, where one extends awareness "beyond the outer mind" to an expanded state of consciousness. Pierson (1999:297) observes that nurses work with clients in everyday relationships that range from the mundane to the sublime and she suggests that while focusing on "restoration of inner harmony and potential for growth", they do not rely on technical knowledge but intuitive, creative, aesthetic and "spiritual and experiential approaches of knowing, being and doing." Nurses enter the profession with a clear concept of the definition of health as "a dynamic state and process of physical, psychological, social and spiritual well-being" (Pierson, 1999:295), and so it stands to reason that well-being does not just apply to their clients. A holistic awareness and acceptance of the integrated self can lead to a heightened and healthy awareness and sound world view.

10.1.3.2 World view

A world view is the particular perspective with which an individual sees the world. Perception of the world depends on multiple factors and influences, from socialization in early childhood through to simply frame of mind at a particular point in time.

In 4.6.4.2 I explored the concepts of single and double loop learning. Greenwood (1998) indicates that the serious reflective practitioner goes beyond basic problem-solving into the realms of double

loop learning where she doesn't just look for a means to an end, but also explores the consequences and appropriateness of the intended action. In this way, values and norms underpin the reflection as do the social structures within which they function. Greenwood (1998) believes that only by reflecting on this 'world' of their creation, can their intended actions become meaningful as they connect their behaviour with their purported values and beliefs.

10.1.3.3 The experience and the approach

This component of the student's frame of reference involves the journey undertaken. It describes the actual experience and how they have approached the reflective journey. This is identified in the journal in terms of their rationale for reflection, their evaluation of the process, insights developed about their reflections and their valuing of journal as summarised in Tables 7.7 and 7.8.

(Again, these identities (A to H), the world view and the experience and the approach were uncovered during the coding process of the data, and were interrogated within my reflexive journal. They are outlined in Table 10.4 as the Transformative Intellectual's Frame of Reference).

Additionally, the journey also incorporates the framework developed by Glaze (2002) to neatly describe this process, although she does note that that there is no clear delineation between stages, as they frequently overlap one another and nor do all student progress through all stages:

The Reflective Journey (Glaze, 2002: 265-272)

- **Initial stage – 'entry shock'**

As in Glaze's study, as my students were introduced to their assignment on reflective journaling, the students both verbally and in writing, articulated their concern and dismay about the amount of

prospective effort required (as demonstrated in 7.3.6.18). As the journaling assignment progressed, there was a growing awareness that the task required far more of them than they had initially anticipated.

- **Early difficulties – ‘the struggle’**

In her study, Glaze recognised students’ earlier struggles with the reflective process as they were more comfortable initially with concrete learning styles and structured format, as opposed to the narrative. However, as the course progressed, students found the reflective process also fostered their academic skills. While I personally did not worry about grammar, syntax or spelling, I did focus on argument development and this, along with narrative style, too was difficult for a number of students, as seen in Chapter Seven, Section 7.3.6.20.

- **Acceptance**

Again, I find similarities with Glaze’s experience. Students in general recognised the need to have a safe environment and to negotiate the process in order to establish a relationship of trust with the ‘empathetic-critiquer’. This took time, as seen in Section 7.3.6.18.

- **Familiarity – ‘making connections’**

Glaze required students to base their reflections on “appropriate reflective literature”, in other words, literature that supported what they were thinking and saying. She was, however, working with students at a master’s degree level.

I did not require this for their reflective narratives, although this was an expectation with the sections linked to news and journal articles. Those who did ground their reflections did find them valuable, as

seen in Sections 7.3.6.12 and 7.3.6.13 and as Glaze (2002:268) notes: "This process fostered awareness that the literature was beneficial in helping them to illuminate difficulties experienced in practice and in confirming and validating their feelings".

• **Learning to reflect more deeply**

Glaze used Goodman's (1984) levels of reflection, whilst I used van Aswegen's (1998) Question Prompt in Table 6.2, both of which served the purpose of helping students to reflect more deeply. Notes Glaze (2002:269): "It encouraged students to consider broader social forces, issues such as emancipation and justice and political factors".

• **Perspective transformation stage**

As Glaze notes, this is very similar to Schön's concept of framing and reframing, which allowed students to 'see' the situation in a new way, through the process of reflection and analysis. Glaze (2002:270) supports this by explaining: "Students identified how analysis of their critical incidents enabled them to change their thinking. They became much more aware of how social forces shaped behaviour." Chapter Seven, Section 7.3.6.7 exemplifies this stage.

• **Internalization**

While Glaze identifies integrating the reflective process within the students' current thinking, I identified this process in 7.3.6.2 under active learning.

• **Dissemination**

This component of Glaze's reflective journey found no reference to my study. Glaze (2002: 269) describes it as one where

"Most practitioners were keen to promote reflective practice. However, they perceived that the majority of their colleagues had superficial perceptions of what was involved in reflecting effectively. They were concerned that colleagues considered themselves to be reflective when in fact they were not."

Table 10.3 Transformative Intellectual's Frame of Reference

1. Identities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal identity• Philosophical identity• Pragmatic identity• Ethical identity• Self-identity• Nursing (work) identity• Cultural/ South African identity• Student identity• Family identity• Spiritual identity
2. World-view
3. The experience and the approach

(Key factors, internal and external, identified within the journal, influencing and guiding the practitioner's reflections)

10.1.4 John's Framing Perspective in relation to and influencing my perspective

Johns (2002:22) developed a framing perspective, mainly for the guidance of practitioners wanting to fulfil the scope of potential learning. His is a comprehensive approach with each perspective forming a cue to challenge the practitioner to explore her potential for reflective practice This is not too dissimilar to the **Transformative Intellectual's Frame of Reference** which I developed and which is

shown in Table 10.3 John's Framing Perspective is useful in that it can support, elaborate or add to my own framing.

Johns (2002:21) notes, "Philosophical framing helps the practitioner to know the nature of desirable practice". Johns has developed a Model of Structured Reflection, which is not that dissimilar to the Question Prompt I adopted from van Aswegen (1998) in Chapter Seven, Table 7.2. There is a significant difference in our approach however. Johns used a *guided* reflective approach where the process of reflection was key. Each student had a specific purpose and was guided accordingly. My intent was different in that the purpose of these reflective journals was to:

- Provide a means for engaging students in a learning process on a continuous and regular basis, particularly in light of the limited student/lecturer contact
- Promote critical reflective practice
- Provide a forum for an awareness of current events as a macro context for nursing practice and support critical thinking
- Encourage academic literacy through practice and the provision of a psychologically safe environment
- Promote self-directed learning

This has meant that my guidance has been more in terms of technical assistance, in orienting students to the framework, structure, process and rationale of reflective journaling and acting as an 'empathetic-critiquer' by using a questioning approach to support and challenge their thinking processes. The students were free to choose the direction, the topic and the process and were limited (depending on how one views this) by a self-evaluation rubric on critical reflective writing as well as being asked to respond to the question "What are the implications of this reflection on your

nursing practice?" However, the fact that he used a different approach does not affect the validity of its use for my purposes. The focus for both is on promoting reflection.

10.1.4.1 Philosophical framing

Although our approach is different, we both would agree,

"the effective practitioner requires a clear and valid vision to give purpose and direction to her practice. I emphasise *valid* because beliefs and values are confronted for their appropriateness within a wider, contemporary view of the nature of nursing and health care" (Johns, 2002:22).

This forms the basis for Philosophical framing. I see that the philosophical perspective that underpins the practitioner's personal philosophy must impinge on her work philosophy – and if there is harmony between the two, I believe that her work practice will be sound. It is quite significant that one of the first tasks the student undertakes is to determine personal and work philosophy and identify congruence between the two, or find an approach that will harmonise the two. This is included in the **Philosophical Identity** of the **Transformative Intellectual's Frame of Reference**. Initially, this task is theoretical and idealistic, but students are constantly challenged to understand, appreciate or reject conflicting philosophies so that at the end of the learning process, they should have determined who they are and why they function in the way that they do. This lies clearly within the boundaries of van Aswegen's (1998) model in that the transformative intellectual's energy source for critical reflective practice lies in:

- Recognition of the importance of intellectual humility, intellectual courage, intellectual empathy, intellectual integrity, intellectual perseverance, faith in reason and an intellectual sense of justice

- Concern for and emotional involvement in *care* for, growth of, and *empowerment* of others
- The ethical norms and values of the nursing profession
- Recognition of the need for *expert* nursing practice (van Aswegen, 1998).

10.1.4.2 Role framing

Johns (2002:23) recognises the boundaries that are formed by the practitioners in terms of their understanding of their roles and relationships. This is particularly important in the South African context where role clarification becomes somewhat blurred as a result of an overburdened, understaffed health system (Lehmann and Saunders, 2002). The role of reflection, suggests Johns (2002:23) is to “clarify role boundaries with others and enhance the practitioner's sense of autonomy, authority and responsibility, besides developing effective ways of working with others towards mutual goals”. Again, this is clearly within the scope of van Aswegen's (1998) model.

The roles that I have identified so far, are the practitioner's role as a nurse within the community of nursing; a nurse as a staff member working within a health care organisation; a nurse within a nurse-client relationship; a student at DIT; an student with collegial, staff and mentor relationships; a woman; a nurse within an interdisciplinary group of staff members and an individual as part of a family and community context.

These are delineated in the various identities of the **Transformative Intellectual's Frame of Reference**. The issues of concern lie within the role boundaries, the power and authority relationships with others, suggests Johns (2002).

10.1.4.3 Theoretical framing

Theory underpins practice and where reflection finds congruency between personal knowing and theory, this enables theory to be assimilated more easily and acceptably into daily practice, suggests Johns (2002:24). Theory is not just accepted "at face value but critiqued for its value to inform or frame emerging practice issues." One of the challenges I faced as an educator was precisely this questioning, understanding and integration of theory with practice. I chose to approach this issue by using the workplace as the context for praxis and focused on students' understanding of theory through experience, identification and integration (Chapter Five, Sections 5.3.2.2 and 5.4.1). As an educator, I commonly found that students in general were comfortable with learning theory by rote and so chose to approach this issue simply and practically. I believed that many students are disconcerted by the technical language and format of theory and so reduced the focus on labelling, tabling and referencing theory. Instead, I chose the narrative format of story telling by a questioning technique in their tasks and tutorials. In other words, I asked students to tell me about what they did and how nursing management (as this was the subject) was approached in both their workplace and home in their own words. These tasks were supported by readings, which provided a theoretical underpinning of the tasks but were not a focal part of the outcome – and in fact, became almost incidental to the process. In this way, theory became part of the process – but in a subtle, unobtrusive way. This same approach was used in the reflective journals. The theoretical framing of Johns (2002) connects to **Student Identity of the Transformative Intellectual's Frame of Reference**. John's (2002) focuses on accessing this theoretical perspective through the practitioner accessing, critiquing and assimilating relevant theory within the practitioner's personal knowing in ways that make sense of her experience and that inform her practice. van Aswegen's (1998) model supports the intentional use of *deep* learning approaches as the cognitive and affective skills needed to engage in critical reflective process which must be taught, practiced, refined and reinforced.

10.1.4.4 Realistic perspective framing

Very simply, Johns (2002) recognises that in order for practitioners to become not merely passive recipients dominated by external events or factors or, as van Aswegen (1998) would suggest, not become autopilot nurses, they need to understand the forces around and within themselves in a realistic manner. These social norms and forces need to become transparent and then the practitioner needs to find a healthy way of living within the system that will be congruent with her own value system. This realistic perspective framing finds resonance in the **Pragmatic Identity** of the **Transformative Intellectual's Frame of Reference**. As Johns (2002:24) notes

“Just because we can understand something differently does not mean we can change it. In response the guide supports the practitioner to ‘live with and chip away these forces’ as a process over time whilst keeping in focus a strong vision of what she wants to achieve.”

Johns (2002) also warns that the guide has an ethical responsibility in attempting to push the practitioner through inflexible obstacles and that sensitivity is required. Again, this is supported by van Aswegen's 1998 model where the educator as transformative intellectual sees critical reflection during teaching and learning as a significant step towards developing an antidote for *autopilot* functioning and reliance on others. This is where the educator allows learners to search for ideas, manipulate knowledge and experience; tries various approaches and occasionally breaks rules and encourages self-responsibility and self-critique in learners by questioning self-limiting beliefs (habits of mind). Johns (2002) focuses on the concepts of acceptance and understanding that issues in practice that may appear immutable, may in fact be immutable, or only open to slow change through different approaches by means of challenging and supporting the practitioner.

10.1.4.5 Problem framing

Johns (2003:25) uses guided reflection to enable practitioners to clarify issues and problems within the problem solving process of a "reflexive spiral." I have accommodated this section under Reflective Evidence in Section 10.1.2.2.

10.1.4.6 Temporal framing

Johns (2003:25) looks at the experience in terms of how it "loops together to give the narrative its distinct pattern, coherence and reflective dimension, linking the present with the past whilst anticipating the future." This is reflected in **The experience and the approach** in the **Transformative Intellectual's Frame of Reference**. This also finds resonance in van Aswegen's 1998 model in the context of critical reflective practice where the interaction between the external and internal environment is dynamic, dialogical and complex and is expressed through the narratives in the reflective journal.

10.1.4.7 Parallel process framing

This is an interesting form of framing whereby Johns (2002) draws a parallel between the journey taken by the practitioner in parallel to the guided reflection – both in terms of the guided reflection experienced by the practitioner and her practical experience as well as the guided reflection by the guide and the student. I can relate to this through the parallels experienced in my reflexive journal and the reflective journals of the students. Johns (2002:25) notes, "In parallel process framing these dynamics are surfaced and worked with consciously even though they operate on a more subliminal level. This also reflects the way guided reflection and clinical practice mirror each other as holistic practices." How I experience the students' reflective journals and other participation in the Management IV course has developed through this reflexive process, which is part of the research

process. At the same time, how does the student perceive the connection between the process of journaling (or other forms of reflective guidance) and their practice? This is reflected in **The experience and the approach** (with particular reference to evaluation and valuing the process) in the **Transformative Intellectual's Frame of Reference**.

10.1.4.8 Developmental framing

Johns (2002:25) final framing culminates in the practitioner realising worthy practice by either "constructing appropriate framing structures within the unfolding research process or by accessing and juxtaposing structure from extant theory." In my study, the students do realise worthy practice, but in terms of their self-evaluation, which is a far looser structure than that envisaged by Johns. However, one needs to keep in mind that John's students are operating on another level (mostly at Masters' level).

John's Framing has provided a useful mirror for viewing the journals, as well as a very good framework for viewing reflective practice. While it does not directly impact on my analysis, and so has not been directly used as such, it has presented me with a sounding board to consider my theories.

10.2 APPROACH USED TO EVALUATE THE JOURNALS AS A MEDIUM FOR CRITICAL REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND THE PART PLAYED BY EMPATHETIC-CRITIQUER (THE EDUCATOR AS AGENT)

The purpose of the reflective journals was to support critical thinking and reflection, to enable students to journey through a medium of learning that would promote their development as critical reflective practitioners. The means of evaluating this development is partially addressed by the Theoretical Framework for Analysis of Reflective Journals (Figure 10.2). Van Aswegen's model and

the research objectives must also be included. But the analysis, to be comprehensive, must also include the critique of the journals. As critiquer, I was part of the journaling process, and so I had to consider *how* and *in what form* my critiquing took place. So, two tables were developed in Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.6.7, one on types of *supportive responses* to student entries (Table 7.4) and one on types of *questions* to promote student responses (Table 7.5). As I was the empathetic-critiquer, and crucial to the process, I analysed and interpreted the part I played as agent, but I then also had to find a way in which the findings could be authenticated and checked for accuracy. So, I decided to use critical readers to authenticate this process and have clarified this in Chapter Four, Section 4.20.

This study has been guided throughout by van Aswegen's model, in which reflective journaling was an acknowledged teaching and learning strategy. Therefore, the model also provides a medium for analysis of the journals in the following chapter. Because the model too, needed to be tested, I have included the criteria for both the critical nurse practitioner as well as the nurse educator as the agent, in the role of the empathetic-critiquer.

10.2.1 The critical reflective nurse practitioner

The explanation of this section of the model can be found in Chapter Two, Sections 2.4.2.1 and 2.4.4.1 and 2.4.4.3. According to van Aswegen (1998:297-298) the critical reflective nurse practitioner does not accept her practice or that of others at face value. She is not afraid to confront the processes of nursing practice and proactively tries to find ways to improve practice. In this way, she is both a role model and an inspiration to other as she shares her vision and is constantly searching for opportunities for self-growth and empowering others in creative and flexible ways. She achieves this through "open communication and trust."

Monitoring growth (personal, professional and academic):

I have used van Aswegen's (1998) model to support learning that will promote this form of practice and the critical readers, Mari, Sarah and Jane, were asked to review the student journal globally in terms of the following questions:

(1) Has this student demonstrated growth through her reflective journal in terms of van Aswegen's (1998) concept of a critical reflective practitioner in her professional, personal and in her academic capacity as a student of learning? (2) What evidence is there to support this?

Van Aswegen (1998:298) provides a comprehensive overview of the critical reflective transformational practitioner (i.e. the nursing student) and the professional nurse as agent of critical reflective practice (i.e. the educator) which I have summarised in Figure 10.6:

Characteristics of the critical reflective transformational practitioner <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenges• Persistent• Openness and humility• Purposeful, forceful and energetic• Search for knowledge and answers• Proactive, innovative, intuitive• Self-confident; self-aware, self-disciplined• Tolerant; suspends judgment• Focused• Multilogical thinker• Consistent intellectual standards• Academic integrity• Positive regard for others• Reasoned thinking• Courage, empathy• Sense of justice• Moral integrity	The professional nurse as an agent of critical reflective practice: <p>She is a practitioner, manager, role model, leader and innovator, functions in an integrative way. Her practice is self-regulated, independent, empowered, and caring. To realise this role she consciously uses critical reflective skills to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• engage in critical reflective withdrawal• promote quality nursing care and caring attitudes in other nurse practitioners• promote sufficient self-knowledge, skills and experience• function in an interdependent and interrelated way• practice, through critical self-awareness and reflection• interrogate theory as a basis for nursing interventions• promote a nurturing environment which supports growth, autonomy and self-actualization. While accepting and respecting others, she takes control over her own destiny
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Figure 10.6: The critical reflective transformational practitioner (Van Aswegen, 1998)

10.2.2 Evidence of my role as the empathetic-critiquer

The educator's role in the student's reflective journey is to dialogue with the student, through an empathetic mode of critique in the student's reflective journal. (This is further explained in Chapter Two, Section 2.4.4.2 but summarised in Figure 10.7). The purpose of the empathetic critique is to

promote, support and enhance the student's ability to think both critically and reflectively, and so empower the student through the learning process. It requires intuition and judgements so that the critiquer can, as John's (2002) notes, read the signs and help the writer surface the issues. The three critical readers, Mari, Sarah and Jane were asked to review my role in the light of van Aswegen's criteria of the transformative educator and provide corresponding evidence to support their contentions.

10.2.2.1 Conceptual definition: the transformative educator as agent

<p>The critical reflective educator (transformative educator) engages with learners to promote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • empowerment through autonomy • positive self-concept in learners • alternate ways of knowing and practicing • search for ideas through experimentation and exploration even if it means occasional rule breaking • self-responsibility • habit change and alteration of self-limiting beliefs • the process of reflection (withdrawal, reflection, re-entry) better understanding • use critical reflective learning techniques/strategies to challenge or change habitual thinking and behaviour • a supportive environment while recognising that reflection can be emotionally disruptive <p>The resulting transformative intellectual</p>	<p>Characteristics of the transformative intellectual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ empowers self and others ▪ models the ideal; ▪ energizes self and others; ▪ challenges thinking; ▪ learn from experience; ▪ responds to criticism in a healthy way; ▪ values critical thinking, reflection and creativity; ▪ model innovative and creative thinking; ▪ open to self-criticism, skeptical and principled thinking; ▪ reflective scepticism, self-regulation through choice; ▪ intellectual independence; ▪ self-awareness of need to constantly challenge thought patterns; ▪ has vision; ▪ leads through self-awareness, using meaningful communication patterns, promoting trust and healthy interactions
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Figure 10.7: The registered nurse practitioner and educator as *agents* of critical reflective practice and transformation (van Aswegen, 1998)

According to van Aswegen (1998:301-302) the transformative educator is one who marries "the language of critique with the language of possibility". She demonstrates professional maturity and her concern and obligation lies with a desire to improve practice. Her focus is on fostering innovative, flexible and creative patterns of thinking, with a major emphasis on challenging predetermined and rigid modes of thinking – "including principles, theories, policies and "right" ways of thinking and

behaving.” She endeavors to enable students to become empowered to become “responsible agents” by encouraging critical reflective thinking.

10.2.3 Ethical posture: Perspective on ethical student/educator relationships

Both through responding with written dialogue through the reflective journals or verbal dialogue in the tutorials or class discussion, I have become increasingly aware of the need for sensitivity and care or ‘mindfulness’ of my relationship with students, a concept further elucidated in Chapter Three, Section 3.9 and Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.3. Much of my engagement is as a result of an intuitive awareness, but how to share this with others or in fact, monitor myself, is not so easy. Rich and Parker (1995) support this concern, warning that supportive reflective sessions can evoke uncontrolled emotional responses through cathartic sharing of personal stories and strongly advocate a humanistic Rogerian support for these students. This requires a comprehensive and explicit preparation of those in control of the sessions. If not, it is more than likely that these experiences may be harmful, or at the very least, counterproductive as deep seated vulnerabilities may be exposed and threatened.

A text by Freedman and Combs (1996) titled Narrative Therapy, within which a chapter titled *Relationships and ethics*, struck a chord within me. Narrative therapy deals essentially with the world of clinical therapists who use the narratives (stories) of their clients’ lives in order to help their clients arrive at meaning and fulfillment through the understanding of these experiences within a therapeutic relationship. I, on the other hand, am not involved in a therapeutic relationship with my students, but in a sense, am desirous of setting up a relationship within an educational context that will also allow

the students to understand how their social realities, specifically their personal, occupational and educational reality, have been constructed. This requires trust and sensitivity.

Freedman and Combs (1996:268-269) offer a question guide provided by Michael White and David Epston - that directed them in their choices of theory and practice. I have modified it to fit with van Aswegen's Critical Reflective Practice model for learning and education:

10.2.3.1 Questions promoting engagement with and understanding of student perspectives

1. How does this model allow you to see the student?
2. How does this approach compel you to engage with students so that they are empowered?
3. How does reflective dialogue through reflective journaling or Socratic discussion affect the way that students relate to you?
4. How does it have them view themselves?
5. How is the student being redescribed/redefined by it?
6. Does it invite students to see the facilitator or themselves as experts on themselves?
7. Does it divide and isolate students or give them a sense of belonging and collaboration?
8. Do the questions you ask "lead in generative or normative directions (e.g. propose alternative or conserve dominant social practices)?"
9. Does the model require the person to enter the educator's "expert' knowledge or does it require the educator to enter the "world" of the student?
10. What is the model's definition of "professionalism"? Does the idea of "professionalism" have more to do with the educator's presentation of self to the student seeking to learn?

The insights provided by Freedman and Combs (1996) on the processes resulting from this questioning framework resonate with me.

I have been struck by the value of questions as opposed to pronouncements of right and wrong or directions indicating a specific way of doing things from the early stages of this project – which is also why the Constructivist approach to teaching and learning holds so much appeal. Questions, suggest Freedman et al. (1996) invite examination, which means that those following this educational process are not given directions on how to respond but rather, are invited to consider their practice, their own process of response and the results of their response. This approach pays respect to the individual, rather than compliance to a set of rules.

Freedman et al. (1996) suggest these ethics are about relationships and people and do not indicate absolute truths. This should then allow the valuing of the individual student whose 'voice' is being heard. It enables a sharing in their experiences, which requires an ethical stance of acceptance for their thoughts. It is the students' thoughts that are central – the empathetic-critiquer's questioning and responses are peripheral.

Freedman et al. (1996) indicate that ethics are about effects on people's lives. There is a micro picture in the intent of the journals, but the macro picture focuses on students developing an insight and understanding of themselves, and through this, becoming better practitioners.

If students are to trust their teacher, a relationship that supports this trust is important (and so I return again to the echo of Johari's Window). Which leads me to a central issue: if this relationship between student and teacher demands more of one than a teacher is willing to give, it is not appropriate to

teach in this particular way. Perhaps as Freedman et al. (1996) suggest, it is time that ethics dictate the relationship.

10.2.4 Critiquing response process: A way of 'seeing' and understanding the reflective journals

There are certain questions asked by Carey (2004) in her Narrative workshop on *Re-authoring*, that complement White's and Epston's Question Guide and coalesce around some of my thinking on how I viewed the students' reflective journals. Yes, I developed a frame of reference using the filters of the students' 'voices', my understanding of their sense of self and how this was defined within the journals. But I did more than this and Carey has encapsulated this with her "Questions to ask of the outsider witness" – the outsider witness in this case being myself as both the empathetic-critiquer, but also as the researcher:

Critiquer response process: Processes that would enable the empathetic-critiquer to facilitate understanding of the reflective journaling process

1. **Identifying the expression.** Here I was caught by what stood out for me in the relationship between the student and I and it usually helped me to initiate my interpretation of the student's journal. There were certain things about the student – a characteristic, an incident or a series of incidents that allowed me to see the student in a specific, unique light.
2. **Describing the image.** Once I had remembered and considered these 'pictures', I then thought about how I saw them and how these events or pictures affected my image of the student. As Carey (2004) asks "How did it shape your thoughts about who this person was in

terms of what is important to them? What was suggested to you about this person's purposes, values, beliefs, hopes, dreams and commitments?"

3. **Embodying responses.** Once I had thought about describing the image, I frequently reacted personally to the student's thoughts and ideas, especially if they touched a personal chord of my own. While I understood the need to see issues as the student saw them, I could not avoid thinking about the entries in terms of my own values and what moved me.
4. **Acknowledge transport.** As I processed the entries and the thoughts that bound them together as a cohesive whole, I found my thoughts shifting. I had returned to these journals a second time in a different way, and often saw things more clearly or in a slightly (or markedly) different light.

10.2.5 The critique

Feedback is a critical part of this reflective process and has been discussed in Chapter Three, Sections 3.12 and 3.12.2 as well as in Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.6.7 and Table 7.4. The type of feedback in the reflective journals is different to the constructive critique required in a formal academic exercise, for example, the assignment.

I developed a framework, **Critiquer questioning and responses to students' reflective journals** (Table 10.4) or the analysis of the type of written questions and comments I had engaged in with the students. The following is an excerpt from this table, providing an example of just one of the types of questioning included in the journals.

Table 10.4: Example of critiquer questioning and responses to students' reflective journals

Critiquer-Questioning to promote different levels of thinking (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation)	Examples from Students' Reflective Journals
<p>Socratic questioning: Probe assumptions questions- Many questions can center around the concept of assumptions. The student may be asked for clarification, verification, explanation, or reliability of the assumption. Students may also be asked to identify another assumption which might apply to the particular case.</p> <p>What are you assuming? What is Karen assuming? What could we assume instead? You seem to be assuming _____. Do I understand you correctly? You seem to be assuming _____. How do you justify this as your position? All of your reasoning is dependent on the fact that _____. Why have you based your reasoning on _____ rather than _____? You seem to be assuming _____. How do you justify taking that for granted? Is that always the case? Why do you think the assumption holds here? Why would someone make that assumption? (Paul, 1993 in TRA)</p>	<p>Carol 6 March 2002</p> <p>What does invasion of privacy mean to you? Who, specifically, in the company, did you and your General Manager apologies to? Were the specific employees aware of the breach in confidentiality or, only top management? What are the implications for this, do you think?</p> <p>In terms of the first question, do your new procedures fully address this issue, do you think?</p> <p>Carol 5 September</p> <p>What are the results of your interactions with Dr P? Do you get the results you want? Do you think that because 'you have always worked towards the best interest of the company' that this allows you to override his values or beliefs? How can you anticipate and manage his way of 'always being in a hurry', do you think?</p>

Although the critiquing is important, the focus of this research is on the promotion of students' critical reflective practice. Therefore, although I have analysed my critique in terms of the Critiquer Questioning and Responses framework with corresponding evidence to illustrate the process, it has been moved to Appendix 10.1. (A simplified version of this framework has already been introduced in Chapter Six in the form of Tables 7.4 and 7.5). I have, however, retained the critical readers' comments in order to verify my own interpretation of my practice.

10.2.6 Critiquer/facilitator as transformative educator. Global comments: Jane (critical reader)

"From the outset in my analysis of the journals, the Facilitator has demonstrated that she is a Transformative Educator, applying the principles contained in van Aswegen to positive effect.

Embodying a Holistic Approach to this exercise, the Facilitator encouraged students to encompass the global concept of including all stakeholders and relevant factors in this exercise. This involved

not only students, staff and Management, et al, but also considering more deeply the communities they serve, as well as keeping in touch with the global concept and current affairs by accessing articles or information – not only Nursing Literature - for their journals, and commenting on them.

The selection of the articles is wide ranging, as can be seen from the journals and referenced on the Journals Listed Entries Section. Insofar as tutorials are concerned, the Facilitator as 'prompt and goad' looked at challenging issues that had been referred to, such as the video for children, abortion, HIV/Aids, and recognition of professionalism, others.

Through the Facilitator's comments and questions in the dairies and tutorials, she has constantly urged students to consider their assumptions, beliefs, and practices, through a process of rigorous reflective practice – evidenced in the Socratic Debate on the issue of changing the system, a Tutorial (Bisa, Boniswe and Jabu), and in the Tutorial involving Zinzi, Musa and Xolisi. This has not only enabled students to extend their understanding of their Nursing practice, but of other issues that directly or indirectly impinge on their practice.

Circular questioning, the discussion and returning to issues, both professional, personal and academic, both in the journals through comments and pertinent questions, and as evidenced in a current tutorial, or at another date, was effectively handled, often with the matter reaching a satisfactory resolution.

The increasing challenges offered by vascillating parameters in this country, and its effect on the country, economy and practice as a whole, was a major theme in this exercise. Cultural practice, traditional values and their impact on the way that people think were issues sensitively handled by the Facilitator.

On the theme or issues of HIV/Aids, this elicited in-depth inter-action. Sometimes this was based on public generalisations and mis-information, and it was here that both the Socratic and Circular Questioning were most effective. The Government's attitude towards treatment, the negative effect on the economy where the wage-earner's have been most severely affected, the enormous burden of caring for children who have lost parents, lead to profound debate among the students, with the

Facilitator urging reflection on these matters and possible solutions. Most students appeared aware that the problem was not just a one-on-one thing, but that there was a need to take action: all were truly concerned and even more so those practitioners most directly affected.

It was agreed that condoms were not all that reliable (Jena – questioned this in a tutorial), and that abstinence was a positive behaviour but that ways of encouraging abstinence had been tried, using all forms of media – but with little success. The Facilitator's guidance was very useful, encouraging students to express how they felt after thinking the matter through, by comments and questions in the journals and challenging issues in the tutorials.

This issue also encapsulated sexual behaviour – and the need for education of all parties from children to adults wherever possible. The thorny issue of the 'very' explicit video for children, led to much debate and conflicting opinions. Here dealing with moral principles, including abortion, the Facilitator appeared to face a difficult decision in encouraging objectivity among the students. It is to her credit that a level of this was obtained and the contentions issues if not totally resolved, appeased!!

By applying theoretical constructs such as those of the exploration of mind set and identity, the deeper understanding of the self, extending the multi-layered aspects of this exercise, some students appear to have accepted that both within and without the self, we are all composites, and that whilst some people seem easily identifiable and classifiable, it is not that simple.

...The Empathetic Critiquer, ... (referred to as the Facilitator in the journals and Tutorials) formed a crucial link in this practice, and the flexibility afforded the student, was instrumental in their development: the responsibility for achieving was shifted into their court."

10.2.7 General comment

I have come to the realisation that I have approached the analysis of all journals using a similar approach – a positive, optimistic approach. My perspective on these students' journals is a positive

rather than a negative one, where I have looked for evidence supporting development and learning rather than evidence to the contrary. Initially, on first using/ developing the reflective evidence table, as I analysed the student's entry, I would cross-link the item with the student entry and occasionally make a mental note that I had not set up the table to reflect what the student was NOT doing or what the student could/ should be doing. And then I would remind myself about my brief to the student: They could write about whatever they liked and how they liked as long as they noted the implications of the reflection for nursing practice, and considered the evaluation rubric as a yardstick for global evaluation. This rubric allowed them to reflect that aspect of critical reflective thinking they *had engaged in* rather than the thinking they *had not engaged in*. It did not note or value the permutations of thinking in the reflective writing for each entry or the counts of critical reflective thinking. It merely required the students to keep the rubric in mind in evaluating their entries in an open-ended evaluation. I too seem to have adopted a very similar approach to that I use as the sympathetic-empathetic-critiquer.

10.3 CONCLUSION

Johns (2002:51) notes that there are a number of different models or theoretical frameworks that can help frame research and that can help focus on discrete elements informed by the data or frameworks that provide a more global perspective of the theory. He describes frameworks as having the ability to be "imported from extant theory or constructed within the analysis of experiences as the research unfolds". However, the important thing is that he recognises that the framework must be able to allow for the construction and testing of theory for improvement of practice. Such a framework, he notes, must be sufficiently responsive to be able to incorporate the complexities, contradictions and nuances implicit within practice, yet sturdy enough to accurately delineate the pathway of the research in a manner that convinces the reader of the authenticity of the process.

But Johns (2002) also recognises that frameworks can provide an erroneous impression that the research is far tidier and more orderly than it is in actual practice. I have tried to marry the need to reduce the complexity of the journals and the analysis into categories and themes, but at the same time, I have not wanted to lose the essence of the personal journals and so, have tried to weave selected entries in a way that reveals the individuality of each student. Because there are a number of 'voices' reflected in each narrative (the students, the 4 critical readers and myself), I have tried to cue the reader through the use of single spacing, either prefixing entries with the name of the 'voice' where appropriate or used consistent font colouring as a means of identification. I have also retained the students' original phrasing and spelling, and only corrected the spelling in minor instances when it might confuse the reader.

This chapter then has provided an overview of how the analysis for the eight student journals is framed and an explanation of the theoretical framework. The following chapter sees the application of the theoretical framework in terms of the reflective journals, and hopes to demonstrate how the relevant objectives driving this study have been met.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

11.1 INTRODUCING THE JOURNALS OF EIGHT STUDENTS

Every time I read a student's journal, I became deeply moved and aware of how fortunate I was to participate, albeit indirectly, in their lives on so many levels through the journal 'window' into the very souls of these unique and special human beings.

All students' entries affected me in some way or another. I found that on first reading, I experienced an emotional response 'transport'. I have felt enraged at word pictures of blind uncaring bureaucracy or mindless bullying of a student. I have smiled at the pleasures shared and noted. I have felt the warm glow of pride and joy, through vicarious participation in splendid deeds or heart-warming experiences. I have also been moved on occasion, to tears. I felt like I had stumbled across an unexpected and enormous gift and cannot fully express how appreciative I was to be sharing in the lives of the students. The reflective journals filled me with enormous hope and optimism and this at a time when nurses were openly disillusioned with the health care system. There have been and are many types of responses by nurses in general, to this disillusionment, and the resultant behaviour often described in the media was and is disheartening and worrying. And then I read the journals. It is hard to disguise one's value system as the choices of entry, the manner and choice of the reflection and the choice of action expose these. I started to understand the reason for the writer's choices, and in general, these were usually comprehensible and reasonable, given the context and constraints of the systems within which these nurses work. My frame of reference was frequently different to that of the students, particularly when I took into consideration culture, age, educational experiences, fields of practice and professional practice experience factors. Through the journals, I was often able to understand and appreciate the different frames of reference and celebrate the commonalities.

11.1.1 Analysis of journals and choices of inclusion

The following chapter comprises the analysis of the reflective journals of eight students. If this thesis only included these eight journals, I would have no hesitation in providing a comprehensive analysis of each journal in the text of the thesis. However, in the interests of the reader in terms of rendering this chapter more manageable, I have made the following choices:

- Each element of the framework for analysis (Figure 10.1) is covered in one or the other of the students' reflective journals so as to provide an example of how the analysis took place. These selected elements are illustrated at the end of each journal analysis in Figures 11.1 to 11.8. Sometimes these elements are discrete and clear, and other times, they are interwoven within the narrative. The initial journal, Carol's journal analysis, is the longest, as it is the most comprehensive.
- In the interest of the examiners, each journal and its' more complete analysis is documented in the attached CD-rom dealing with raw data.
- The critical readers' completed analysis is incorporated in this CD-rom and only selected illustrative aspects are included in the thesis. I have prefaced those sections indicating the commentary of the critical readers with their names and use of different colour fonts.
- The memos originally used to interpret the journal entries included my references to the literature within the text of the memos. I have chosen to retain this process as it provides a sense of the immediacy of the analysis *within* each entry. Global analysis retains the correct referencing format.
- A data trail comprising the retyped journals, with corresponding memos and data coding, is available in electronic format on a CD-rom.
- Students' quotes either follow the traditional presentation (quotation marks, indentations and 1½ line spacing as apposed to 2 line spacing).

It needs to be borne in mind that my analysis reflects positions taken at the time of the students' reflections and so that although, for example, the government's stance on various issues such as making ante-retroviral treatment for HIV AIDS more accessible has changed since the writing of the journals, I have only dealt with the issues as they stood during the time of the journaling.

I consider this to be the most critical chapter of the thesis as it contains the essence of the students' journey in critical reflective practice. But it has been the most difficult chapter to present as I have wanted to do justice to *each* of the students. This is therefore the longest chapter of the thesis.

11.1.2 Organisation of sections and choice of presentation style

As already explained, certain components will be considered in selected journals, but overall each of these components will have been considered in depth. The choice of the flow of the presentation has been partly guided by the framework for analysis (Figure 10.1). However, I have also tried to stand back and allow the writing to flow, consciously considering those elements within the student and her narrative which rose to the surface and jostled for place in my narrative. In order to do this, I used the *Critiquer response process* (Figure 10.1) as it formed part of the framework for analysis as a way of 'seeing' and understanding the reflective journal. The components included (a) identifying the expression; (b) describing the image; (c) embodying responses and (d) 'acknowledging transport' or the emotions brought about by the change in perception. This is a qualitative study and as this component focuses on personal reflections, I have used a discursive reflective style of writing deliberately in this subjective, expressive component to allow for the revelation of the authentic characterization of each individual journal. Therefore, the presentation of the journals will vary. Journal analysis will however, cover the following aspects:

1. The 'essence' of each journalist is highlighted in italics at the start of each journal
2. Introduction and contextualising of student and reflective journal
3. Observed identities
4. Self-evaluation of the reflective journal
5. Location of the self
6. Themes
7. Personal, professional and academic growth
8. The student's critical, reflective thinking
9. Relationship with empathetic-critiquer
10. Empathetic-critiquer's support
11. Student's 'voice'
12. Journaling process – the reflective journey and reflective responses
13. Overview with accompanying graphical illustration in light of the framework for analysis.

11.1.2 Presentation of evidence selected from journals

The essence of this chapter comprises an introduction to the student narratives, the written journeys of the students, which give substance and colour to the individual learning experiences. The students' narratives are powerful and have evoked strong responses from their readers:

(Pat, Critical Reader, 2004): "Journals are a delight to read. In all journals I got the impression of an internal process, journals did not appear to be written with 'eye on the publisher' or in this case the facilitator. It seemed to me that the students felt 'safe' in the environment of the journal... I felt privileged to be given an insight into these special people who were honestly grappling with ethical/practical ways of delivering their very essential services."

Carol's journal

11.2 CAROL

Striving for excellence despite the challenges of displacement – the consummate professional

11.2.1 Number and types of entries

Carol made 50 reflective journal entries and analysed 10 news and journal articles, which in effect went far beyond the prescribed requirement.

11.2.1.1 Introduction, background and observed identities

The narrative is in the present tense to correspond with the excerpts from Carol's journal.

I first met Carol at the end of her first year of her Bachelor of Technology: Nursing (Occupational Health). She was a petite 32 year old South African Indian woman who appeared both confident and competent. Although Carol did not discuss her appearance at all, this does form part of the self she portrays to the world. She dressed elegantly and professionally and was an attractive person with a bubbly, appealing personality - slender and delicate looking but with an iron bar in her backbone. She was absolutely dependable and presented herself in the same way as well. She was organized in person and presentation and took pride in her work and her profession. Integrity, reliability, order, structure, excellence are words I would use in describing Carol - and these are reflected in her journal.

Carol has a strong family identity. She was a mother of two daughters, 7 and 3 years of age. (15

March Carol):

"Today is my daughters third birthday and I feel sad that I cant spend the day with her. I usually take the day off or even a half a day off on my children`s birthdays and we spend quality time together. I have their portraits taken, we go out to lunch etc..."

Carol's reflection is indicative of the working mother's pull between family and work needs - and the associated guilt. The focus in most of Carol's diary is around work, studies and her family. Carol's family is very important to her - and this includes her extended family back in Durban. It relates a lot to her Indian culture and the closeness of the extended family. Part of the struggle of moving to the new town arises from the physical break from her extended family. She struggles a lot with the guilt of trying (and not always succeeding - in her own mind) of being a 'good mother, a good daughter, a good wife, a good student and a good worker.' Many of my questions (both within the text and in discussions) relate to what is enough - or can she ever be enough to all? There is a slight hint at the source of her guilt being the fact that she has made a choice about coming to class as opposed to continuing a 'good tradition'.

"Other than my immediate family & work, I don't belong to any group. I have a few close friends i.e. my parents, brother, sister, aunts, uncles and cousins whom I am close to and I socialize with them." (Carol, Questionnaire One: February, 2002). At the beginning of 2002, Carol was in the process of transferring from her Durban-based work branch to another branch in a northern city, three to four hours travelling distance from DIT. The uprooting of herself and her nuclear family from her extended family and all that was known and familiar to her was extremely traumatic and had a major effect on all aspects of her life – her marital relationship, her role as primary care giver to her children, her new job and her role as student. Carol chose to explore these at length in order to come to terms with this change and developed a deeper understanding through the cathartic process of journaling and discussion. (23/08) "...REFLECTION

I am not sure that this is what Maureen expects from us but I do know that I have to be honest. I have most certainly benefited from these tutorials in that I have a better relationship with Maureen and I have benefited from talking about my concerns as it forces me to reflect on my

actions. I have changed my attitude towards the workload as I have to move forward and complaining is not going to get me anywhere. I will make every attempt possible to get my work up to date and will look at every thing that I do positively, and this will enable me to grow professionally. I have my diary entries up to date even though they are not typed, I feel like I have achieved something. “

Her identity as both a woman and a South African Indian resonate throughout her journal. (18

February Carol):

“...Reflecting on this issue ... I wonder if racism is still the issue. I once remembered reading a survey of the pathetic customer service here in South Africa. I had the feeling that I was treated the way I was, could be because I was an Indian female. Indian females are generally very passive and don't usually fight back. I really don't know.....”

Carol, who has a very clear sense of what is required by clients, feels slighted when she in turn is wrongly served. Carol is Indian, and fairly naturally, as a South African, considers the race issue, as a reason for behaviour.

Carol was one of the few students to write so extensively. Carol notes that she and her colleague use the tutorials to 'vent'. Sometimes the issues in themselves, may have seemed insignificant and Carol talks about 'complaining'. Just as counselling sessions allow clients to develop insight through the process of circular questioning; these tutorial sessions achieve similar insight development. If Carol is to develop a better balance in her life, she needs to reflect on those aspects that cause imbalance or disharmony. She sees it as complaining. I see it as exploring as a means of understanding, and thereby starting the process of coming to terms with herself, her lifestyle choices and her decisions.

Carol was also a wife and the occupational health nurse practitioner in-charge for a pathology laboratory in a major region in Kwa-Zulu Natal. In her role as wife and mother, she describes this role as

"I am the Primary player in this family. I do the housework, cook, see to the kid's homework, extra curricula etc. I do the shopping; paying accounts, even take out the dirt. I also do the functions of my husband, like sort out the rates, sort out the filling, organize the tax claims etc. I am always the one to take the kids to doctor when may one sick, spend night awake when they are sick, take them to the clinic etc. I also get up at 04:00 o'clock to give my 3 year old bottle. Dad does never does this." (Carol, Questionnaire One: February, 2002).

This role and relationship with her husband formed a major theme and source of confusion and uncertainty throughout her journal, often in terms of what Carol failed to say, rather than what she actually said.

Carol's work and student identity were interconnected: Carol was a registered nurse, midwife, community and psychiatric nurse, having completed a four year integrated nursing programme through an Indian nursing college (before nursing colleges had become racially integrated). She had partially completed a B.Cur degree with a distance-based university, but had suspended her studies in order to complete the occupational health based degree at DIT (then Technikon Natal), as occupational health nursing was her work-related discipline. She went on to complete her B.Cur the year following the completion of her B.Tech. degree. When I met Carol, she had sufficiently met the requirements for the Nursing Management IV course to qualify for an exemption. However, after discussing the components and the proposed approach to the course, she decided that it would be in her best interests to register for the course. This decision probably typifies Carol's whole approach to learning – she was focused on promotion within her work, yes, but her primary interest was

"To ensure that I have the knowledge and skills to carry out my function as an occupational health nurse. I look at every experience either good or bad as a learning experience and I believe at everything in life happens for a reason."

Her reason for ongoing learning was "For self-improvement and providing a more professional service. (a) My inner desire to achieve my goal. (b) My belief that knowledge is power (c) My family motivation." (Carol: Questionnaire One: February 2002). Carol's responses to this questionnaire formed major themes for her journal. She described herself as

"I have a strong personality, in that I am a "go getter" and I stand strongly in the things I believe in. I also have a soft side to my personality in that I am very emotional and cry easily and I don't like to hurt other peoples feelings...I am a very ambitious and I strive for excellence."

I think that Carol's description of herself, reflects her self-identity.

"In our lives we come across many people that are just carried along through the years and never really perform or make a difference. How can I as a manager deal with people like this? This takes me back to management by objectives and staff empowerment plays a major role. I think it is essential for a manager and employee to sit down together and plan their goals and objectives together" (Carol, 3 July).

Traits such as efficiency are very important to Carol. She is one of the students who has been able to internalise the concept of 'being a manager' and she is constantly looking at all avenues and areas of life that will provide her with material to manage better. She works hard, she is efficient - yet caring and doesn't ask of others more than she would ask of herself. Her ability to constantly question her own practice and her own value system are illuminating. She sees herself as an 'enabler' which is why she so appreciates the management style of the one manager (the humanist - democratic style) as opposed to the autocratic style of management. She recognises that the personal factor is the one that enables and motivates herself.

Evidence of Carol's student and work identity are clearly identified in her approach to learning and work. (8 February Carol):

"I sat down later that evening and tried to plan how exactly I am going to plan my time and my year, and realized the only way to do this is to work from day one and I got out a diary and physically wrote this entry in bed. It gave me the opportunity to reflect at the end of a hard day. Nb. I have decided that this is how I will be doing my diary entry and it will be typed at the end of each month. This will enable me to enjoy what I have to do."

Carol spells out how she is going to manage this assignment - many of her reflections deal with issues around organisation and timing - ways in which to facilitate the maximum usage of both. By spelling them out, she concretizes them and this helps to make them manageable.

(15/7) "I flew to Johannesburg this morning. I am on a 4 day "Internal Auditors Course". As I read and analyse Carol's diary, I become increasingly aware of the number of courses and workshops she is taking to improve on her professional knowledge and practice. She writes about these workshops in a matter-of-fact way and reflects on a portion of what she has learned along the way. It is also clear that her company has invested quite a lot as it is supporting her financially and other ways.

"I desperately need to buy a computer in order for me to get through this year. I am backwards with my tasks and assignments and I have come to the realisation that I have to do something about it immediately. So I applied for a loan from my company for R6000.00 and I was told that the money will be in my account by Thursday, 22nd August 2002." (Carol, 20 August).

Carol is clearly constructing her own learning needs and environment.

Carol is organised - and structure and direction provide stability and a sense of purpose. While she believes in herself, the fact that her new boss also believes in her is a motivating factor. "Dr. E, my new boss is very supportive and she believes in my capabilities." (Carol, 24. June). Rather than battling against - she is now working towards something.

11.2.1.2 Carol's self-evaluation of her reflective journal

There is congruence between Carol's self-evaluation of her journal, the criteria and my perception of her journaling process. Carol meets the criteria required (Figure 7.1 in Chapter Seven) on critical thinking

"I found that together with the knowledge that I had gained from the lecture room I had grown professionally and personally. ... A typical example were the steps in problems solving, I used this both at home and at work with great success." (See also Table 11.2)

She met the requirement for number of entries despite the pressures of work, home and her specialty subject "I had to systematically keep a diary from February 2002 until September 2002. This involved a minimum of three diary entries per week, two newspaper articles per month and one journal article per month".

While she discussed current professional and /or health issues, "The entries encouraged me to relate on experiences and situations and interpret these using the knowledge gained in the classroom and through recommended readings" she also used the opportunity to reflect on issues affecting her personal growth,

"The diary was also critiqued on a monthly basis by our lecturer and this helped establish a more personal student /lecturer relationship. I found myself discussing personal issues as well as professional issues and being able to open up more easily."

While Carol was not asked to reflect on the journaling process, it can be seen that her comments place her squarely in the context of the model where the initial stages indicate 'the struggle'

"I started this assignment at the beginning of the year and looked forward to it although I at the time did not really understand the real purpose for the assignment... Submitting the entries to the lecturer on a weekly/monthly basis was tough, as I could not get organized despite having

a plan. I was totally disorganized and did not have a clear path to follow. (Not having a personal computer added to my problem). I was annoyed by my lack of ability to get organized and only found my footing in June 2002."

She then moved on to the stages of acceptance and familiarity with the process allowed for the making of 'connections'

"A couple of months down the line I started to see the benefit of looking at situations in my personal and professional life and reflecting on my decisions and choices, and being able to see my faults and praise my good judgment with the help of my lecturer".

She has learned to reflect more deeply, "I feel that I have done so much and definitely have a better understanding on reflection and its benefits and perhaps deserve a good evaluation. I also realised that this self-evaluation is reflection."

An example of the perspective transformation and dissemination stages is provided

"As I put my diary together at the end of the year I compared my diary entries from initial months to later entries as the year progressed and I found that the later entries were more in keeping with reflective thought and thinking and not merely a straight forward account of what had occurred".

A process of internalisation can be seen in the following entry

"In July I came to the realization that this course is aimed at changing behavior into a "manager". I found that I was making decisions and using concepts and knowledge learnt without even being consciously aware of it."

Here Carol meets other criteria by reflecting on the relevance of her reflection to her professional practice and demonstrates where she changed some aspect of her practice resulting from the reflection. Of particular importance is Carol's recognition and self-insight on issues that plagued her time and again as self-insight is a major step to change

"The important thing is knowing my shortfalls and where I went wrong i.e. poor planning, poor organization and taking on more than I can handle."

She has considered the criteria concerned with presentation and did present her reflective journal in a neat, logically presented manner and a "table of content is however included to guide the reader."

Carol also considered the problems that she encountered and is honest about what she did and didn't do

"The assignment was long and time consuming and in order to follow the guidelines appropriately would require a full time dedication through the year. I did not follow the guidelines as instructed as this was impossible considering the workload with assignments, tasks as well as other specialized subjects. I did not attempt to fill in the gaps at the end of year as I felt that this was a waste of time and defeated the purpose of the assignment...

...Another shortfall was that I had not responded to comments or issues raised by the lecturer and this may have been at a disadvantage to me. I am also aware that she expected a response but never responded as I took each day or incident as separate issues and never really discussed previous experience as much as I should have. I have completed the evaluation form and found that this difficult and frustrating as I know that I don't deserve a good evaluation as I have not fulfilled all the requirements but on the other hand I feel that I have done so much and definitely have a better understanding on reflection and its benefits and perhaps deserve a good evaluation.."

Carol is overly harsh with herself, but this is in keeping with her critical self. As she herself notes, she sets herself high standards, and I am not sure if she would ever be totally happy with the outcomes. She does however recognise the values inherent in the exercise, or I doubt whether she would have put in the effort or revealed so much of herself, "My overall view is that I have enjoyed this year and have grown into a manager and look forward to putting what I have learnt into practice. "

She also recognises her personal learning and professional growth. Much of her work related to problem solving and in this way, she was able to marry theory with practice and reflect on the results.

For example, (3/09)

"...As I sat in the foyer of the reception waiting to start watching this video on safety the maid was busy mopping the floor. There was no sign to say the floors were wet, the water in the bucket was brown and filthy and she was not mopping properly.

REFLECTION: Companies spend so much of time and effort on health and safety that they often forget the most important aspect of health and safety and that is housekeeping. Good housekeeping in my opinion is the key to a successful health and safety programme. In management focus on the simple things is just as important as any major issue. "

Carol has been well taught. She is both observant and she can and does make connections between what she sees and the theory underpinning practice.

11.2.1.3 Location of self leading to awareness and sensitivity toward 4 elements:

Psychological, physical, environmental and philosophical

It became increasingly clear as Carol's journey progressed that the physical, psychological and environmental elements within which she had located herself were closely entwined, each impacting on the other. Physically, Carol was well aware of stressors that impacted on her feelings of anxiety

and she called upon her physical reserves in order to meet her work, family and study needs. This affected her sleeping pattern and her levels of irritation appeared to rise with the demands. The harder she felt that she was required to work, the tenser and more demanding of herself, she became. **(10 April)**: "I felt very unsettled and irritated with the change." Carol uses the word "irritated" a lot - for me, this reads as if her threshold for tolerance is limited, which in turn affects her opportunities for happiness. However, she has now taken to include a section on Reflection - which is where she is now taking time out to try to analyse her feelings. She says 'I "could" learn a lesson from this - thereby allowing herself at least the possibility of the opportunity for change. The reflective tutorials and her reflective journal became her means of catharsis and this becomes more evident in her following reflection: **(17/5)**:

"We had a management tutorial today and I find these sessions quite interesting as we discuss issues affecting us personally and professionally, it is a kind of a stress breaker. REFLECTION: I find like all I do at these sessions is complain about my busy lifestyle. I need to do something rather than continuously say I am drowning with work. "

This does seem to be a theme - however justifiable. I note that Carol is structuring her life - but as time goes on, it seems that she is letting up on herself a bit. It must be very hard to be a perfectionist and not have enough time to see everything through - no wonder she feels frustrated. I too, have noticed that the tutorials tend to relieve stress in that her perfectionism is constantly questioned.

(16/7): "Johannesburg is cold and I am lonely and miss my kids terribly. " Not the first time Carol has connected the weather to her state of mind. She uses the word 'lonely' and once again, there is the notable omission of husband (and friends) from the equation. Carol also talks about not trading her "busy hectic family life for anything" - and I am wondering if by keeping very busy, that she is able to paper over the void created by this loneliness? Or does the business prevent her from other

relationships? The environment was also demanding, in that she was torn between two worlds, that of her parents and family in Durban, and that of her two children and husband in Richards Bay. The need for a new home in Richards Bay seemed quite symbolic, representing the break between the two worlds, but also the centre for her quest for stability. Throughout the early stages of the journal, I get a sense of the lack of belonging, of rootlessness. Family is important as it provides us with roots. Here Carol talks about being uprooted "we have to move out" and the feeling of being unsettled. While this is a usual experience for most people, I can sense it is very hard for Carol as she appears to like to control or have control over her destiny. A home of her own symbolises her ability to provide controls and stability in her life. (77):

"My house is finally starting to take shape. The tiling is now complete except for the kitchen. The company that I had got to do the cupboards has caused major disaster and I have thrown them out. The job is half done and in absolute mess. I am now having a problem finding a carpenter to finish the job. NB: The kitchen is incomplete since May 2002.

REFLECTION: Quality of service delivery is essential for customer satisfaction. I think it is very important to do what you say you are going to do and never lie or make idle promises. Also, "Do it right the first time every time!"

This entry signals quite an aggressive phrase. Carol is using extreme words such as 'absolute' and 'major.' This house means more to Carol than just bricks and mortar. She is rebuilding her life, and trying to find clarity about who she is within this metaphor. Her previous entry discusses the need to be assertive and differentiate between assertiveness and aggressiveness - and her skills are clearly been tested here. She herself believes in and values traits such as responsibility and reliability. Her house is an extension of herself and those external builders do not conform to standard. She justifies her stand by noting the time period being given in order to complete the job - and I get a sense of her living in this disorder for two months and getting really frustrated. Carol does everything she can to

create order in her life. It must be very hard for her to hand over the 'building' to others - especially when they are not competent.

Philosophically, Carol notes: "...I realized that I am really afraid of death and dying. " Carol's concerns and the raising of these concerns seem consistent with the uncertainty she was experiencing in other avenues of her life. I would suggest that the trauma of moving had created a crisis in her life - which threw a lot of other issues (normally disregarded) into sharp relief. She had, in a sense, lost her extended family, and so her fears turned to her immediate family. (9 April): Carol asks the question "Will I be happy' and then names that that makes her happy - personal growth and professional growth. She has ambitions - will they be stultified in a smaller town - where she has no support systems? I can relate to and feel her apprehension. Carol: "...Will there be a back slide in my life in terms of personal growth and professional growth? I guess only time will tell. I am generally very resistant to change. I become comfortable and hate to be disturbed from it." Carol makes reference to the need for stability. It seems that she works hard to create a structure that will bring stability. Carol makes numerous references to her resistance to change - and discusses this quite openly and frequently in the tutorials. For me, this resistance is more a fear of the unknown and is a reasonable reaction.

However, Carol does have a pragmatic identity and much of this is related to her self-awareness 1/05: "Richards Bay is very laid back. Nobody seems to be hurry to get anywhere and shopping is obviously not a priority. Perhaps this will help with my stress levels." Carol realises the need for a positive approach, and a connection between this and stress reduction. I do find her connection between the slower lifestyle of her new home town and her need to reduce her stress levels hopeful.

(4/09): "...I wondered how can I not feel guilty for not being able to always satisfy everybody's needs and wants. This is a tough one as I am very aware of other people's feelings. I think being non-judgemental is the most important aspect and also to make decisions based on facts and to be able to live with the consequences of decisions." I am reminded about Carol's courage. She is sensitive and thoughtful, but the premises she bases her life's philosophy upon are not easy and uncomplicated. She is someone I would trust to appreciate the human factor, but look beyond that to a more Utilitarian philosophy of acting in the interest of the "greater good".

Carol's world view is not just located within her own sphere but it is affected by her own references:

(2/8). "Went on a field trip to Cato Manor settlement area and I was horrified at the way these people live..."

REFLECTION: "I realized that I am so fortunate. I don't have to think twice about where my next meal is coming from or if I want something I just buy it without giving it a second thought, or having to dream about one day having a particular luxury. I have a house with 5 bedrooms, 2 lounges etc. and these poor people live in a shack with 5 families in two little rooms. There is no electricity, no running H₂O and no sanitation. This was a real eye opener. I would love to take my children to see this as they are also so spoilt and don't know hardship..."

MAUREEN'S QUESTIONS:

What kind of advantages does this life style bring?

Is it possible that there are benefits to living in Cato Manor?

I have included the empathetic-critiquer questions as they form part of the rationale for the component in my framework for analysis in Figure 10.1. (Section 10.2.3.1 *Questions promoting engagement with and understanding of student perspectives*) in which I try to 'see' the students

position and connect my understanding of Carol's perspective to promoting insight with the intention of empowering the student.

Carol is judging the living conditions based on her own frame of reference. While there is no doubt that the conditions are very disparate, she is making assumptions that conditions equate with misery. She has not looked at the notion that people living in this area actually are closely connected to each other, something she is missing in her own well-appointed home - hence the questions. Some irony reflected in this perception. Carol expresses her ongoing concern with these issues: (23/9): "What can be done to cope with this high cost of living? People are battling to merely survive. I really am at a corner with this issue. I don't know how to deal with it." Carol has spoken about four times about the issue of the 'haves and others have-nots'. It is a dilemma for her - how to live in a world where her job exposes her to others who live different life styles to her own. There is a certain amount of guilt expressed through her observations.

Carol's diary forms a pattern - she connects work, life, studies, and as she reflects on issues, she writes about them. The purpose of this journal assignment was to provide students with the opportunity to enrich their aesthetic knowing and acquire the meaning of their practice and their sense of self within a context by reflecting on their narratives of choice. Whether Carol is finding out more about herself in her various roles, or is providing me with the opportunity to learn more about Carol could almost be seen as one and the same thing.

11.2.1.4 Themes: I have chosen excerpts from the various entries reflecting the themes on identity and factors affecting identity: dependency and family relationships; roots; professionalism and nursing; striving for perfection; pressures; learning; the South African identity. Sarah (critical reader)

identified the following themes: Empathy – Maureen for Carol (10/9); Carol for patients (15/02); Constructive criticism – (9/04); Positive reinforcement – (22/03); Strong work ethic – (26/03); Problem-solving – Carol writes letters when things at work go wrong. (30/04) – “I was furious as this is totally unacceptable practice. I immediately logged a major investigation.”

11.2.1.5 Carol's personal, professional and academic growth as evidenced through her journal

Table 11.1: Characteristics of the critical reflective transformational practitioner and examples of evidence as noted by critical readers, Mari and Sarah.

Characteristics (Van Aswegen) & Evidence of Growth	Critical readers (Mari and Sarah) examples of evidence
Challenges processes, assumptions, theories, ideologies	Mari: “I was furious as this is totally unacceptable practice and I immediately logged a major investigation. Ethics/ professionalism/ self-identity” (Professional)
Not discouraged by personal failure persistence	Mari: “I have looked back at the stress, rushing around as well as extra work and I have decided that this is a learning experience.” (personal, professional and academic)
Openness to learn from others intellectual humility, flexibility	Mari: “Children generally adapt more easily to change than adults do...I could learn a lesson from this.” (Personal)
High drive and energy levels	“There is so much to do but I am enjoying every minute of it.” (Professional) “...motivational talk, which truly inspired me” (Academic) Work ethic – “I reflect on my days at work and I love what I do and I am self-driven in my job...”
Pro-active, innovative, vision, curiosity recognize intuitive thought processes	Mari: Reflects about the way she handled a problem – confident. “I would not have changed the way I handled it, even though it bugged me tremendously.” (12/02)
Self-confident, intrinsic motivation assertive, self-aware, regulation through choice, self-corrective, self-disciplined	Mari: “I love what I do and I am self driven in my job” (professional) She is assertive about instilling self-esteem in her daughter. 25/9 – “Many people frown at the thought of Ritalin, but studies have shown that Ritalin is extremely safe and has no long term effects. Reflecting on my this issue and management, this makes me realise that sometimes decisions or choices have to be made on gut feeling and philosophies and values. I also realised that human beings need to be praise and recognised and their self esteem rules them.”
Positive regard for others, tolerate ambiguity and work towards resolution suspends judgement	Mari: 3/06 – “I learn best by talking and discussing issues, especially with occupational health as not much is known about many issues. We learn through experiences and other peoples' experiences. Therefore I am all for professional groups, viz. SASOHN for professional growth and development.”
Focused and purposeful	Sarah: 22/03 – “I have looked back at all the stress, rushing around as well as extra work and I have decided that this is a learning experience. If there are findings/non-conformances then I will look at it as a learning experience, and use these findings to my benefit.”

Reasons multilogically	Sarah: 31/07 – "I know my job of marketing is going to be tough and these are the sort of problems I will encounter, but I looked at WHY/"Why do these professionals act so irresponsibly?"
Verifies, corroborates, and justifies claims, beliefs, conclusions, decision and actions	Sarah: 2/8 – "I think I need to do a general health evaluation and include basic needs in the questionnaire and thereafter plan health surveillance as I do know that the home environment affects the employees work performance."

11.2.1.6 Carol's critical, reflective thinking

Table 11.2 Carol's critical, reflective thinking and supporting evidence

Critical Reflective Thinking	Evidence from Carol's Reflective Journal (my analysis)
1. Describe the event or situation	<p>A busy day at the office with preparation for the external audit. There are several last minute issues to attend to EG. Health and Safety Training, First Aid Training etc. I have been working long hours with no breaks in between. I reflect on my days at work and I love what I do and I am self driven in my job, so I actually should not be complaining. However I sometimes have to do the jobs of others that are being paid to do the job.</p> <p>EG. One of our laboratory managers had been given the task over a year ago of obtaining a clearance certificate from the municipality for disposing of effluent into the municipal waste. He had not done it and I have had to visit the Etekwini Municipality , get a pollution officer to visit the lab and thereafter a clearance certificate was issued. 11 March</p>
2. Examine assumptions	<p>10TH April 2002</p> <p>It was M's first day at her new school (Arboretum Primary). She was a bit anxious and at the end of the day she said to me that she enjoyed it more than her previous school.</p> <p>It was also my first day at my new office. I did not have a computer or much to work with. I felt very unsettled and irritated with the change.</p> <p>REFLECTION</p> <p>Children generally adapt more easily to change than adults do. Perhaps adults are more afraid of the consequences of change eg. Fear of the unknown. Children usually take change in their stride and enjoy the situation rather than focusing on merely the outcome. This is probably why they appear to adapt more easily.</p> <p>I could learn a lesson from this. Take chances in life. Change is innovation and growth. ie personal and professional growth.</p> <p>One would never know what is on the other side of the fence until one climbs over and falls into a river or falls into the garden of Eden.</p>
3. identify and focus on salient issues from the situation	<p>Part of my job description is to market pathology to industry. Today I visited a sister at a chemical industry and did not get a very good response as she complained bitterly about the service that we provided. She complained that she never got results on time and that she did not trust the accuracy of the results etc.</p> <p>Remembering at the back of my mind that "the customer is always right" even though they are sometimes not, I was calm and answered her questions honestly and clarified any misconception that she had. I also explained in detail how our testing is conducted and the Quality control that we have in place, and the possible reasons for delayed reports. Back at the office I thought about the events of the meeting and I would not have changed the way I handled it, even though it bugged me tremendously. I felt</p>

	<p>confident that I had given it my best and I have confidence in the company I work for and the quality of its service. I guess I have to learn to cope better with rejection and not take work issues too personally. 12 February</p>
4. Analysis of event	<p>12/08/02</p> <p>One of our technologists sustained a needlestick injury as a result of sharps (i.e. used needles) being received in a shopping bag from a doctor's rooms. The employee had to be put on anti-retrovirals for a month, and the psychological and physical stress from this is dreadful. The HIV status of the host is also not known (s there were over 100 used needles in the packet).</p> <p>I have sent out a letter to this doctor and awaiting a response. NB: letter attached. REFLECTION: This seems to be a recurrent problem. I have had a few similar incidents which I have previously reflected on. We have tried educating our customers (Dr's.) and this has been unsuccessful as it was unrealistic. We have to now look at readdressing our own staff. The following steps were taken:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All couriers picking up used sharps from doctors rooms will be "retrained" on the company's policy and procedure. (Attached) Their training logs will be signed and attendance registers filled. There after should a courier pick up sharps that is not properly packed, they will be issued with a major non-conformance.
5. Analysis of contextual factors	<p>Attended an Environmental Management system course at Deloitte & Touche. It was very enlightening and an eye-opener. REFLECTION: The National Environmental Management Act No. 107 of 1998 is an excellent piece of legislation, but what good is it if it is not enforced? 25 June</p>
6. Distinguish relevant from irrelevant facts	<p>Another common occurrence that makes me wonder about the knowledge of doctors is how much do they really know about health and safety. They often call me when their staff or themselves have a needlestick/sharps injury and they are in a total frenzy not knowing what to do. 30 April</p>
7. Fair-mindedly follows where evidence and reasons lead	<p>The sister insisted on seeing me personally and she had several complaints and problems. She was furious that she had personally received an account for a patient's blood test and she was furious. On investigation I found that she had used the wrong request from which drove the billing to be incorrect. I had to re-educate her on which forms to use and when to use them. REFLECTION: A part of the job as "Public Relations Officer" is to rectify problems and mistakes of others. I sometimes find this quite frustrating as if people did things right the first time, every time this would make life so much easier for all concerned, i.e. customer, employee and organisation. 25 June</p>
8. Evaluate arguments, interpretations and beliefs	<p>It was a terribly mishap on our part and I together with our General Manager had to visit the company and all we could do was apologise, we were wrong and we promised that every attempt will be made to prevent a recurrence. I had to also issue major non-conformances to the persons concerned, and a whole new procedure had to be put in place. EG. All occupational health account queries were to come to me first. Dictionary setups on the computer had to be changed etc. 6 March</p>
9. Justifies key results and procedures, explains assumptions and reasons	<p>It is my daughters 8th birthday. She had a party at the Spur with 6 of her closest friends which she chose. I fetched them from school at 13h30 and a little girl came up to me and said that she also had a birthday coming up and that she was having a pool party and "M's name is first on my list"</p>

	<p>I felt awful as M had not invited this little girl and had never mentioned her in any of her conversations. Perhaps she and M are not really friends and she wanted to express her disappointment of not being invited.</p> <p>REFLECTION</p> <p>In life it is not always possible to satisfy everybody.</p> <p>Children are very honest little creatures and also very sensitive. They are affected very easily by rejection of any nature, but then so are adults.</p> <p>I wondered how can I not feel guilty for not being able to always satisfy everybodys needs and wants. This is a tough one as I am very aware of other peoples feelings.</p> <p>I think being non-judgemental is the most important aspect and also to make decisions based on facts and to be able to live with the consequences of decisions. 4 September</p>
10. Defend positions and issues	<p>Left my kids at my mum's place in Durban as I am scheduled to leave for Johannesburg for two days at 18:00.</p> <p>REFLECTION:</p> <p>Our jobs are just jobs and the most important people are our families. They can't be replaced and neither can we. At work nobody is indispensable. We are just a number and will be and can be replaced at any time.</p> <p>My focus is going to be more on my family from now onwards, although I will do my job and fulfil my objectives and put in a full days work for a full days pay. 25 June</p>
11. Solve non-routine problems	<p>Reflection on my practice: We don't dispose of any hazard into the atmosphere/environment. Our chemical hazards and biological are disposed of via a registered disposal company and I have visited their disposal site in Ixopo to ensure that they do what they say they are doing (re: according to legislation). 13 June</p>
12. Identify and discuss the implications for practice that arise and from analysis and synthesis	<p>I flew to Johannesburg this morning. I am on a 4 day "Internal Auditors Course".</p> <p>REFLECTION:</p> <p>In-service Education is vital for the customer (quality service), the company (growth, quality service & increased profits) and the employee (Personal and Professional development).</p> <p>It is impossible for every professional to know everything, that is required for a job and in-service education helps to bridge the gap in the formal education. This is a typical example. I am an Occupational Health Nursing Practitioner expected to do Health and Safety audits. This is not focussed on in my formal training and the company has acknowledged this and invested in my doing the training.</p> <p>The knowledge I gain on this course will be a big advantage to me professionally, as it is practical and focuses primarily on my job as OHNP and marketer. July 2002</p>
13. Compare ideals with actual practice	<p>But reflecting back on my day I will have to do something about the poor response even if management is not very supportive as I am the occupational health nurse and I must comply to the Nursing Act and the occupational health and safety act.</p> <p>I have decided that I will address the Head of Department monthly meeting on this issue. 13 February</p>
14. Analysing feelings	<p>This is what I am afraid of loosing when I move to Richards Bay. My family plays a very important part in my life.</p> <p>They are my support structure and I am so fortunate that I have such a close knit family.</p> <p>I am afraid that I will not be able just get into my car and see them when I am feeling down or need support. 1 April</p>

15. Explore implications and consequences	I handled the issue by reporting it to the pathologist and managers concerned and unfortunately they did not give me much feedback, all they requested was that I submit the names of the persons that did not pitch. No feedback was given to me. I feel that management are not supporting me enough and I have worked very hard to get health and safety of the ground at Lancet Lab and sometimes feel that I am fighting a losing battle. 13 February
16. Identify learning achieved and learning needs	REFLECTION: I learn the best by talking and discussing issues, especially with occupational health as not much is known about many issues. We learn through experience and other people's experiences. Therefore I am all for professional groups viz. SASOHN for professional growth and development. 25 June
Draw up and/ or implement an action plan based on the implications raised	See No. 4
17. Ability to use knowledge broadly	Attended a mental health workshop and the definition of a "Mentally Healthy Person" made an impact on me. Being mentally healthy involved 3 aspects: Viz: 1. Feeling good about oneself. 2. Being comfortable with other people. 3. Being able to meet life's demands. REFLECTION: I looked at my own mental health and tried to identify whether I met all of the above and realised that I am mentally healthy. 25 June
18. Write clearly and coherently	All entries
19. Accurately cite sources of knowledge used	Started collecting data for my research. REFLECTION: I am amazed at how little compliance there is to the existing draft standards in spirometry based on the American Thoracic Standard Patient preparation is almost non-existent. July 2002
20. Evaluate the credibility of sources	Reflection on my practice, we don't dispose of any hazard into the atmosphere/environment. Our chemical hazards and biological are disposed of via a registered disposal company and I have visited their disposal site in Ixopo to ensure that they do what they say they are doing (re: according to legislation).
21. Use own thinking to come to conclusions and solutions	Dr P was not very impressed as he had scheduled to be in Pietermaritzburg on Tuesday and I was assertive and arranged the meeting, and if he could be present would be a plus however these problems must be resolved and My job is to ensure that my clients are happy. REFLECTION Firstly I get the impression that Dr P does not like my style of dealing with issues. I am very dedicated to my job and have always worked towards the best interest of the company. I once said to him that I am here to do a job and get a full days pay for a full days work and I am not here to make friends. I will never do things just to please him or any other person in authority. I work according to my objectives and my professional and legal responsibilities. 5 September
22. Self-evaluate own work	But reflecting back on my day I will have to do something about the poor response even if management is not very supportive as I am the occupational health nurse and I must comply to the Nursing Act and the occupational health and safety act. I have decided that I will address the Head of Department monthly meeting on this issue. 13 February

<p>23. Openness to change or possibility for change</p>	<p>I am not sure that this is what Maureen expects from us but I do know that I have to be honest. I have most certainly benefited from these tutorials in that I have a better relationship with Maureen and I have benefitted from talking about my concerns as it forces me to reflect on my actions. I have change my attitude towards the workload as I have to move forward and complaining is not going to get me anywhere. I will make every attempt possible to get my work up to date and will look at every thing that I do positively, and this will enable me to grow professionally. (Carol: 23 August)</p>
<p>24. Come to terms with contradictions and inconsistencies</p>	<p>REFLECTION</p> <p>Firstly I get the impression that Dr P does not like my style of dealing with issues. I am very dedicated to my job and have always worked towards the best interest of the company. I once said to him that I am here to do a job and get a full days pay for a full days work and I am not here to make friends. I will never do things just to please him or any other person in authority. I work according to my objectives and my professional and legal responsibilities.</p> <p>Dr E on the other hand has been very supportive (she is the pathologist that I report to as of the 01/01/02, and she manages issues very much like I do. She is also in charge of marketing and understands marketing better than Dr P.</p> <p>Reflecting on these two managers and their style of management. Dr P is more the autocratic manager who is always in a hurry and never gives me the chance to say my bit and when I do say any thing I get the impression that he listens but does not hear. He has his mind made up and is not very open to suggestions. He irritates me and demotivates me in many ways. I feel that he is not very concerned of growing the business so why should I bother so much.</p> <p>Dr E on the other hand has her her faults however her management style empowers and motivates me. She is always there when I need advice or help with an issue and gets me very involved in decision making. We have set my objects together and has left me to get on with the job. 5 September</p>
<p>25. Synthesis for new perspectives</p>	<p>10TH April 2002</p> <p>It was M's first day at her new school (Arboretum Primary).She was a bit anxious and at the end of the day she said to me that she enjoyed it more than her previous school. It was also my first day at my new office. I did not have a computer or much to work with. I felt very unsettled and irritated with the change.</p> <p>REFLECTION</p> <p>Children generally adapt more easily to change than adults do. Perhaps adults are more afraid of the consequences of change eg. Fear of the unknown. Children usually take change in their stride and enjoy the situation rather than focusing on merely the outcome. This is probably why they appear to adapt more easily.</p> <p>I could learn a lesson from this. Take chances in life. Change is innovation and growth. ie personal and professional growth.</p> <p>One would never now what is on the other side of the fence until on climbs over and falls into a river or falls into the garden of Eden.</p>

11.2.1.7 Empathetic-critiquer's support

(Mari): There is plenty of evidence that (a) the critiquer has demonstrated support of student growth in critical reflective thinking through her critique and (b) provided evidence as a transformative educator (Van Aswegen). Some examples appear below.

Table 11.3 (Critical Reader: Mari and Sarah): Critiquer support of the student's growth process

Characteristics (Van Aswegen) & Evidence of Support	Evidence: Maureen's questions and responses to Carol's entries
Mari: Marries language of critique with the language of possibility	"What is it about you that motivates you to walk the extra mile?" "If you were a manager, what would be your concerns? What would you do if you couldn't solve these issues in their entirety?"
Mari: Demonstrates professional maturity	"For me, the challenge is: how to keep both you and your family safe while meeting your other demands." "I can see how traumatic this move is for you and how very afraid you are."
Mari: Desire to improve practice	"How important are consequence for behaviour change?"
Mari: Fostering innovative, flexible and creative patterns of thinking, with a major focus on challenging predetermined and rigid modes of thinking	"I could learn a lesson from this. Take chances in life. Change is innovation and growth. I.e. personal and professional growth."
Mari: Endeavours to enable students to become empowered to become responsible agents, by encouraging critical reflective thinking	"What are you going to do to prevent this from happening again or to prevent yourself from being used in this way?"
Sarah: Yes, the critiquer has demonstrated support of student growth in critical reflective thinking through her critique. Proof: Asks many questions -	12/02 <u>Procedural</u> – "How did she respond to your explanation?" To promote action – "How would you manage the situation yourself?" 15/02 <u>Open Question</u> – "What do you like about being a nurse?" <u>Anticipatory problem-solving questions</u> – "How would you have handled this situation had the results been negative in terms of the client and in terms of yourself?"
Sarah: Maureen encourages Carol to reflect upon her behaviour.	23/02 – Constructive suggestions on a personal, professional and academic level.
Sarah: Emotionally understanding	21/03 "I can see how traumatic this move is for you and how very afraid you are."
Mari: Praising,	"you continue to impress me with your approach to life."
Sarah: Good evidence of Maureen's own critical thinking. <i>What worries me though is that I see no proof that Carol has answered many of Maureen's questions – what use are they then?</i>	9/04 – "So, positive speak was just a cover up?"
Sarah: Puts herself on an equal footing with student and admits to mistakes.	12/4 – "I am not renowned for my organisation and planning (seems ironic that I teach in the management programme) and it was a comedy of errors kind of day."

Sarah: Links Carol's research to her job.	26/04 – "what is it about the research that you most enjoy and why, do you think?" "What impact will it have on your professional practice?"
Sarah: Makes constructive suggestions.	2/07 – "What if you tackled this side of life (social side) as rigourously as you do work or studies?"

Sarah asks a reasonable question: Carol did start submitting her journal late, but as I read, I responded. Additionally, many of the issues raised in her journal were raised again in the tutorials. During one tutorial, I suggested to Carol that perhaps my comments, coming so late, were of little use and that it might be better if I reserved my questions for the tutorials. Carol was quite adamant that although she did not necessarily respond to me in writing, the questions and responses were valuable triggers. This supports findings in Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.6.4. Carol also acknowledges that she reviewed her journal in its entirety at the end of the year, where the responses were an integral part of the process.

11.2.1.8 Structuring of Carol's reflective journal and Carol's voice

I find Carol's train of thought fascinating in that she reflects upon situations - and then makes connections and linkages outside of but related to the original situation or thought. This synthesising for a new perspective is where Carol constantly uses experiences to look and make new connections and provide new perspectives.

Carol has a notion of professionalism and is proud of her own practice within this category. She is also not afraid to take action and deal with issues. She is not concerned about issues of intimidation - which seem to be more prevalent in areas or centres where black African nurses work. She has a keen sense of 'self' and the power of her position and operates on the basis of a moral imperative - Deontological ethics - where to act morally is to do what is rational, universal and desirable for the

whole human race without regard for the consequences. She sees her practice in terms of theory and is constantly reviewing both – in some cases, practice brings to mind the theory and at other times, theory informs her practice – but they are linked. An example of this is her journal entry dated 5 September, 2002:

“Reflecting on these two managers and their style of management. Dr P is more the autocratic manager who is always in a hurry and never gives me the chance to say my bit and when I do say any thing I get the impression that he listens but does not hear. He has his mind made up and is not very open to suggestions. He irritates me and demotivates me in many ways. I feel that he is not very concerned of growing the business so why should I bother so much.

Dr E on the other hand has her faults however her management style empowers and motivates me. She is always there when I need advice or help with an issue and gets me very involved in decision making. We have set my objects together and has left me to get on with the job.

I have used her as a sort of mentor this year. I have often learnt things by just watching her and observing her style. She has once said ‘A good manager can go on holiday for 6 weeks and his department will run smoothly’. “

She has moved beyond the stage where she allows the voices of others to determine her practice. To inform, yes, to dictate, no. It is at these times that I would suggest that Carol's ‘voice’ is constructed.

11.2.1.9 Conclusion

Figure 11.1 provides an overview of the analysis of Carol's journal in terms of the Theoretical Framework for Analysis of Reflective Journals as defined in Figure 10.1.

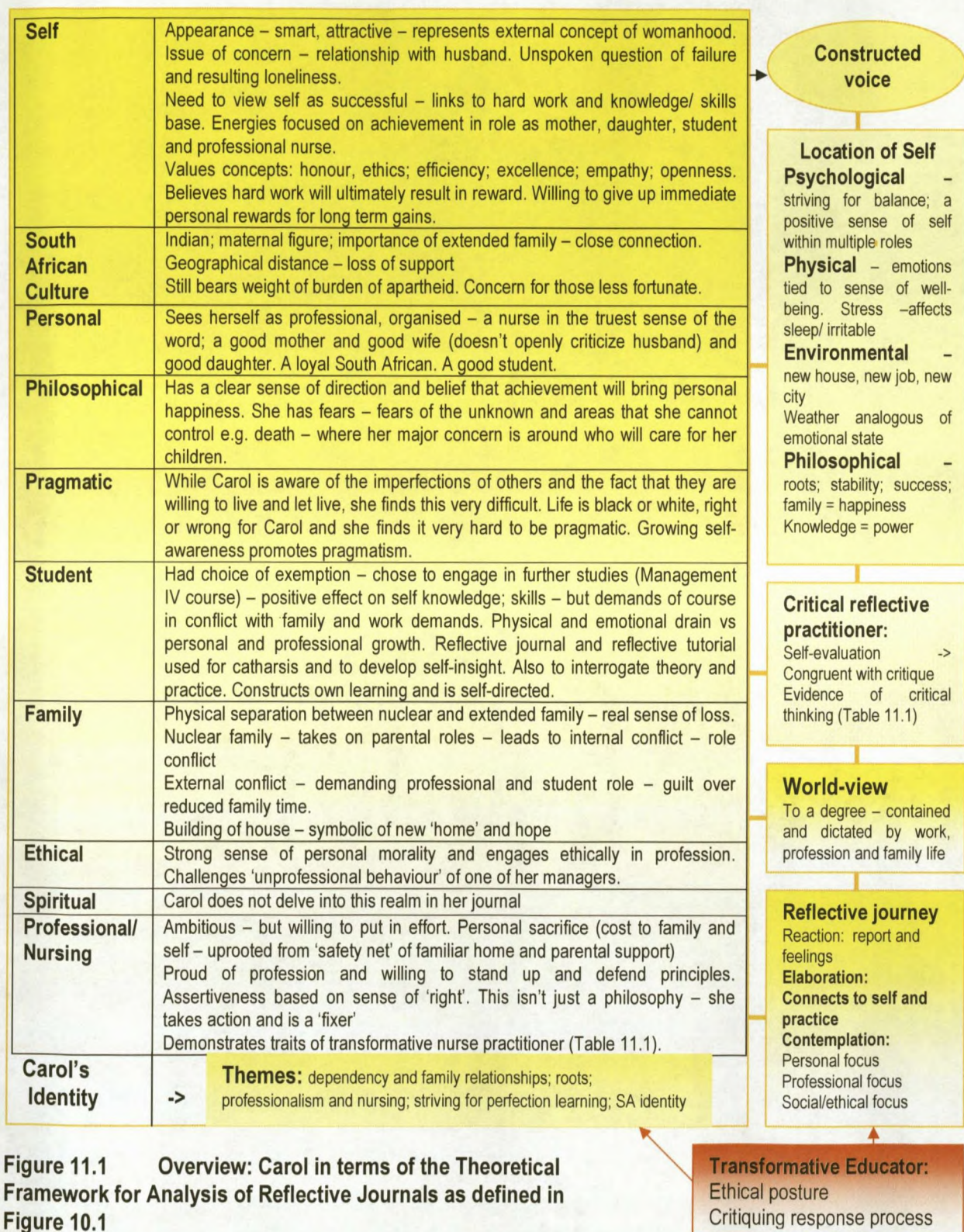


Figure 11.1 Overview: Carol in terms of the Theoretical Framework for Analysis of Reflective Journals as defined in Figure 10.1

Jena's journal

11.3 JENA

Adhering to a deep-rooted value system (highlighted by her active pro-life stand on abortion) coupled with professional practice

11.3.1 Introduction

Jena submitted 56 journal entries in 2002. In my raw analysis, I included 23 reflective entries taken directly off Jena's computer disc, and analysed 20 of these because they describe a segment of Jena's life and the 'real' issues she grapples with. These span the academic year and include a couple of news articles. The rest of Jena's entries included journal and other news articles.

11.3.2 Location of the self

Jena was a second year part-time Primary Health Care student, completing her B. Tech. nursing programme. She was in her early thirties, single and had emigrated about 7 years prior to the study from Switzerland. (It is notable that English was her second language and while she was more prolific, and perhaps more sophisticated in her writing than other South African second language students, her phrasing, syntax and spelling were just as confusing). She lived in a major city, about an hour's traveling distance from class, had independent financial means and held down two part-time jobs. One was a night position in a busy ward in a private hospital and the other was a part-time day job in a privately run primary health care clinic, where the doctor, a woman, was also the district health surgeon and a missionary too. She became Jena's mentor.

Jena's geographical location in effect, locates her in all of her spheres. Environmentally, she had a foot in two worlds. She had distanced herself from her first world home, Switzerland, to live and work amongst the poor (the PHC clinic), which, in effect solidified once she has completed her degree providing her with her needed PHC skills. At the same time, during her studies, she worked night-duty at a private city hospital, which provided her with both experience and funds. On completion of the course, Jena ultimately gave up her home in the city (but not her common sense – she needed the income, and so rented out her home) to live on the grounds of a boarding school in exchange for some of her nursing skills, and went to work full-time in the clinic of her mentor, the missionary (personal knowledge).

Physically, Jena was a softly-spoken but prepossessed woman who dressed fairly conservatively but well. She carried a state-of-the art laptop computer with her to class and came to class prepared. She planned in advance and her work was always on time. Her basket contained everything she needed for the day. Psychologically, Jena was self-confident, but it was of the quiet variety, underpinned by a questioning hesitancy reflecting the possibility of a certain vulnerability. Jena never presumed on relationships and seemed to have a fine sense of boundaries. She seemed to have a tremendous respect for the personhood of others (see entry Feb 17 in Section 11.3.4 below), which sometimes made her assertive positions seem surprising. However, if I think that this self-confidence came from a deep introspection and self-understanding and a strong religious and moral core, (her philosophical location) it is then not at all surprising.

Unlike most of the students, Jena was single, and also unlike most of the students who would leave after the class had finished at 17h00 to get back to their families and do the things busy moms do,

Jena would often stay behind and chat. The class had nominated her as class representative, mainly because of her organisation, commitment and self-confidence. It isn't, however, a prestigious title. It is more to do with the person who doesn't mind passing on messages, representing issues fairly as delegated by the class or just locking up the classroom after class. This meant that Jena would pop in to hand in student journals or tasks and would stay a while, often discussing issues arising from class discussions. I enjoyed Jena, who had a mind of her own and didn't mind contradicting me or engaging in further debate. I found her principled and pragmatic and dogmatic only on 'right-to-life' issues. She was judgemental, and I recall her saying the same of me, which influenced some deep introspection on my side! She was staunchly Catholic, an active member of a group supporting 'right-to-life' and was inflexible about her position on abortion.

May 3: Abortion:

"To discuss the issue "abortion" is difficult if the point of discussion is the fundamental question whether or not to do abortions and the two sides debating are standing on different shores. No point of agreement can be reached unless one wins the opposition over. The simple biological truth that life starts with conception and that the right to life is a fundamental human right marks the abortion "wrong". In arguing that a woman "has the sole right over her body" and "what about the quality of life of a woman in distress who cannot afford the child to be born" becomes nullified if we take the right to life seriously for all mankind, also for the ones which cannot defend themselves or argue their own cause. Unfortunately some people overlook that the Unborn has an independent Life with the right to be defended and the equal right to live as his mother. The unborn cannot speak up for himself and is invisible, hidden in the womb."

While it did seem to me that she was blindly inflexible on this issue, at the same time, she had read widely on this issue and had many sources to support her stance on abortion. Initially, I tried to play devils' advocate, but this issue was too close to Jena's heart and principles. Too close, at times, I thought, for as she became more emotional, her ability to argue appeared to me to be more illogical.

She must have addressed at least 6 journal entries to this issue and I finally decided not to respond with questions and suggested to Jena that she move on – which she gracefully did. There were many other issues to explore. Jena truly did engage in introspection and I know that it was often a painful process for her. She seldom took stances without prolonged reflection and agonised at times, about her decisions. I think that when Jena took her nurse's pledge, she meant it with all her heart.

11.3.3 Content themes identified

The number of counts where I coded references to the various themes must be seen in context. The number of counts just reflects the type of issues she was reflecting upon at the time and the number of times that she returned to these issues in my selections of the sampled journal. It can only provide a general perspective of the issues she was considering, but nonetheless does provide a fair depiction of her concerns. This concept applies across the board with all the students.

Table 11.4: Content themes identified in the selected entries of Jena's journal

Second language issues (f=3)	Cultural references (f=1)	Work related issues (f=4) – although there were a number of sub-categories	Management issues (f=4) although there were a number of sub-categories
Relationships: (f=11) Colleagues, clients, management	Batho Pele – issues on concern with good nursing practice(f=10)	Concern with poor nursing practice (f=10)	Personal philosophy of nursing (f=3)
Issues related to the reflection on conflict in terms of the external environment (f=2)	Issues related to the reflection on conflict in terms of Jena's internal psychological environment (f=1)	Moral ethical concerns/ (f=7) Work ethics (f=1) Reflections on value system (f=9)	Learning and practice (f=11) Link to own life (f=1)
Power issues (f=17)	Factors leading to personal fulfilment (f=2)	Reflections on self-identity and traits (f=11) Openness to change (f=6)	Recognition of self -value (f=2) Self-worth
Work organisation (f=1)	Client's attitude to care (f=4)	Abortion/ religion (didn't count but Numerous)	HIV AIDS/ (f=2) PHC (f=6) Health issues (f=2)
Communication(f=4)	Insights on life (f=13)	Voices (f=4)	Challenges (f=2)

f = frequency of references coded in selected entries.

It becomes fairly clear from the table that the themes Jena explored were mainly fixed around preserving her moral integrity. She clearly identified with the concepts of a 'good nurse' and saw herself reflected in the accepted characteristics of a critical reflective nurse practitioner and transformative intellectual and tried to behave accordingly. She engaged in discussions around issues of power, was concerned about its use and misuse, particularly when it affected those more vulnerable. She recognised abuse of power and was very comfortable in managing the issues and situations with confidence, as she was comfortable with herself. But she didn't wade gung-ho into situations but rather, weighed up options and reflected on implications and consequences.

23 Feb: "...I do not believe what is wrong and right changes in this world although some believe that and "adapt" readily. But I do think we have to be open to necessary changes and are often not only answerable to response to new courses of actions but are also obliged to bring changes about. "

She had considerable self-insight which is why I am not sure if her stance on abortion is a 'blind-spot' or in fact, merely a strong moral position. She was willing to take risks (her sometimes unpopular defences on issues) and was clear about issues that mattered to her. Unlike some of her more vulnerable colleagues, Jena knew what it meant to be what (Kelly, 1998) calls a "moral agent" – in her belief that she had power of decision and action.

"Patients visiting the clinics come often their preconceived ideas about the treatment they would like to receive. E.g. a mother asks me: May I please buy an injection for my child for his scabies?

The child is already crying from the moment he sees me, as he was obviously told by his mother before hand, that she would "by him an injection". The child has scabies and mild

impetigo, no fever or swollen glands. All he need is topical treatment and good health education for his mother.

It is sometimes difficult to resist such appeals. It makes one feel one cannot please the person by rejecting the request. This mother was perhaps used to receive the treatment she asked for in past clinic visits.

Reflection

As health care worker we have to agree and if possible adhere to guidelines to uniform treatment. Otherwise the patients go "shopping" to different clinics until they receive what they ask for. It will also make the "resistant" health care provider appear the "bad provider" in the eyes of the community. No doubt the "give in" strategy is the easier way, but not the better solution."

While Jena had a high regard for relationships (between her clients, her peers, her work colleagues) and generally reflected before she acted, she did not appear to be easily influenced by others in her life choices. This did not mean that she did not open herself up to different perspectives – on the contrary as an entry in my reflexive journal (27b 6 December) reflects:

Jena came to see me near the end of term and said that as a result of one of my comments in her diary that she had gone to her research group to ask for feedback (she had been concerned about her role in her research group and wasn't sure whether she had read the situation correctly). She said that this had resulted in 'sweet nothings' from the group except for P's analysis. Jena said she recognised herself in P's responses, which were fairly blunt. I continue to be impressed with Jena's courage and honesty.

11.3.4 Examples of Jena's journal entries, the critiquing and micro-analysis

Jena's first journal entry is included as an example of a complete entry. I have also included an excerpt from a later entry that links with this, demonstrating Jena's reflective process. The inclusion of these entries is to provide a sense of Jena's thinking and writing style as well as my empathetic-critiquer questions and commentary. It also includes examples of my micro-analysis of her entry,

bearing in mind the (a) *Critiquer response process* and (b) *Questions promoting engagement with and understanding of student perspectives* elucidated in Figure 10.1.

Jena: 17. Feb. 2001, **Entry 1**



"There is always enough food for reflective thinking of problems and experiences encountered in the nursing field. I can choose an actual problems without having to invent them" [Maureen's comment/ questions: Good](#)

"The following problem in a particular team on night duty weighs on the shoulders of managers, from me a team leader to night matrons and chief matron. I work every weekend night duty in the medical ward of a private hospital with otherwise two alternating teams, (one staff nurse and two nursing assistants each).

The history:

I found the particular "problem team," never as easy going as the second one. The staff nurse and one nursing assistant were very close to one another. I had to watch my "moves" to keep a good team spirit. Via the night matron I was informed, they had a particular problem with me and expected me to "address them". I found out it was about the round about way via the matron." [Maureen's comment/ questions: And?](#)

"The staff nurse was very eager to share in my responsibilities, which I recognised as her special need and granted. We settled reasonably well as a team."

My interpretation: Jena is the professional nurse in this scenario and therefore the senior person in the ward. However, while she has status as in the seniority of her rank, she is a part-timer, which also affects her power position. Jena chooses to use her power to empower her colleague

Jena: "After about a year, after I came back from a short leave I noticed a change in "atmosphere". The two above described member had become "sworn enemies". From reports from the night matron I was informed how they "inundate" her with complains on every shift about one another. Team leaders have a very difficult time with the two fighters and stand-in and temporary staff does not want to come back to work with the team. They feel very uncomfortable. The two members tried to involve me into their fight as well. During my absence the staff nurse had implemented ridiculous new rules, which thought to be true by

newly or not permanent employed professional nurses and other staff members. She tried to convince me too, that the rules where true: "New orders from the matrons", she said. Of course I found out soon that it was not the case and rectified matters swiftly."

My interpretation: I want to smile at Jena's response. She takes very little at face value and is not afraid of the system and believes in verifying information.

Jena: "Though the matrons seem to side rather with the staff nurse in this fight as she presents herself more polite and mature, I am careful not to side and to show by example (and a few words when opportunity arises) that work and teamwork matters more than their personal grievances against each others. But still: From being the better working team of the two I work together with, they have become the worse. As communication fails largely (except when bickering), work suffers."

My interpretation: When Jena says she rather 'shows by example' – this is an important philosophy for her. She lives the life she believes and has a great sense of fair play.

Jena: "During my shifts there are no mayor eruptions of the fighting. They realize my expectations. When one of the two comes to me in private to tell me about her misery I encourage her to use her goodwill towards all team members, perhaps by telling one two examples I had in my work experience about these matters. By all this I avoid to come across as "preacher" or to get involved into the petty details of their fight."

My interpretation: I think it is quite significant that Jena recognises the manipulative possibilities inherent in this situation and recognises the manipulative technique of attempting to draw her into the situation through involvement in the details of the fight. I also think that Jena could moralise and to her credit, resists.

Jena: "The management in the hospital refuses to change the member of the teams. Because in consequence other teams would have to be torn apart, which function very well. I thought it was inevitable that something would follow. The atmosphere in the team is too uncomfortable, especially for the once involved in the fight. Either one of them would resign (which I believe

management hopes) or be absent on sick leave. Not long after the nursing assistant was booked off for about two to three weeks with "backache".

Maureen's comment/ questions: Good anticipation on your behalf.

Jena: Reflection

In a team work situation the interacting of the members plays a key role in the quality of work. As we all see the next ones weaknesses and strength, we also have to recognise ours. If we remain constructive in our critical thinking, we are to complement each other and form a good team, which enhances each others motivation and work performance.

Though the management's attitude is: The well functioning of the team lies in the hand of the team leader, in the above situation I can only make difference by good example and grabbing situations where I can bring about change of attitude in the rest of the team. If they are totally unwilling, I can do little.

I believe my reaction at the beginning of my work relationship with the team when I easily gave in to their special requests without making a long face plays out in this situation."

Maureen's comment/ questions:

This was a very interesting response to a potential power-play situation (i.e. routed through the Matron) I get a strong sense of your being someone very comfortable with yourself – and not needing to be "boss".

How do you feel about the way the matron handled this situation?

What do you think would happen if the member come to you regarding her grievances, and you used something called circular questioning? (Talk to me and I'll explain how it works).

My interpretation: I think that my comments reflect how I feel about the way Jena handled the situation. It is a complex, albeit common, situation, and I think that Jena's reflections on the process indicate a maturity in her thinking and managing the situation. I asked the question about the matron because she does not come off very well in her managing of the situation. The comment on circular

questioning is to provide Jena with an enabling tool to process a similar situation. It is often used in Family Therapy to good effect as a means of promoting self-insight.

Jena: "Further thoughts, management

Speed up work this does not always mean lesser quality. Set priorities, delegate.

Very holistic e.g. to see the other person to be just as valuable as one self but with more needs. Beautiful, the patient realise that above many other things.

The surgery's' patient load has picked up markedly."

My interpretation: I love this short entry which briefly maps out some ideas. It provides a reflection on her own personal belief system where she sees patients in a holistic light ' to see the other person to be just as valuable as one self but with more needs' and notes that the patient recognises and appreciates her valuing of the patient in this way – and she uses the word 'beautiful' to acknowledge this. Jena does this in the same way someone would value their own artistic contribution and so her nursing is an art – and patients are the canvas, to be valued.

"22 August 2002, Entry 24



Diary Entry no 37

Jena: My very first entry was about a team problem in the medical ward on night duty. Things have settled down now. The two people involved in the fight, as staff nurse and an auxiliary nurse are now prepared again to work together. They are however not the close friends as they had been."

My interpretation: Again, Jena returns to an original reflection and considers the status of the situation. I notice Jena's willingness to think well of people where she can although she does seem to have a realistic perception of the situation.

Jena: "They keep at a distance make have perhaps even a more "professional" relationship. They deliver really good work quality and are actively involved in running the ward and are

taking responsibilities. The nursing assistance had been accused being lazy. I find no such signs now and she is an intelligent observer." Maureen: I remember.

Reflection

"I believe that the situation, as it is know, is better than before the conflict came about. They are not so "buddy-buddy" anymore, which prevents them from teaming up against me as a team leader. This is often a real danger, especially if there are strong-headed members in a team. A reason to criticise a team leader can almost always be found". Maureen: Sad, but true. Why, do you think?

"The symptoms of the problem that had existed in the days of conflict I can now recognise as the signs of the burnout-syndrome, in this case do to "internal sources" namely team conflict."

11.3.5. Relationship (dialogue) between Jena and myself

Each student is different and responds to a different approach. Their reflective journals go the 'heart' of who they are, their very identity and so it behoves me as their empathetic-critiquer to find a way to respectfully communicate with the student so that I am supportive, but not unconditionally accepting; challenging, but constructively so and directive, but obliquely so. This is a key concept in *Questions promoting engagement with and understanding of student perspectives* in Figure 10.1

5 b 20 June, 2002. Reflexive Journal entry:

Jena: One of the students, Jena, stayed behind after a class. She helped me to return audio-visual aids to the department centre, and, for some reason or other, became engaged in a discussion on the abortion issue. As I was in no hurry, we sat down, had something to drink and the discussion became quite lively. I am well aware that J has strong feelings about 'right-to-life' and has expressed these in her diary. I have explored my own feelings about this issue and, on the whole, am still ambivalent. There are so many arguments on either side of the spectrum, and I suspect that if I am ever personally affected i.e. through my family, I might not be so ambivalent. The point that I am making is that my position is not firmly fixed and I am definitely open to the fact that others can and do take strong positions, and that that is fine. Nonetheless, I am tuned to questioning and challenging, no matter what the position and the discussion was based on this perspective. Jena, however, is passionate in her beliefs and she informed me that she had explored all possible aspects of this issue, and as a result, had developed a fixed position. In that case, there was no point in further argument and I felt we had ended the discussion on a friendly note. In a follow-up journal entry from Jena, it would appear that Jena had felt that I had overstepped my boundaries, and although she was careful of her phrasing (she used the third person), she challenged my role. Jena followed this up with a note to say she hoped we could still be friends. I had to think long and hard about this as I valued Jena enormously, and needed to respond to this challenge in a way that would clarify my position and allow her to continue to be forthright and honest. I remember feeling very proud of Jena for having the courage to pen this entry, and later discovered that she had discussed whether or not to do so with a colleague. This was my response:

Dear Jena

Firstly, I need you to know that I appreciate your frankness - truly. Also, of course we will still be friends! I have thought long and hard about your response and how best to reply to you. You are absolutely correct in noting that I must ensure that you apply the critical thinking process in your topics and that my personal opinions do not matter, at least, not to you. My job in my written critiques is to do just that - critique i.e. question, challenge, support and enable critical thinking. Additionally, I need to ensure that you feel sufficiently supported in order for you to continue to write freely and without feeling confined by the opinions of others: This is your truth. I don't have your original entry with me and so I can only comment on what I remember (which may not be entirely accurate). I am fairly sure that I used a questioning technique as regards the article you discussed and I am also fairly sure that I commended (and not bemoaned) your position taking into account your rationalization and justification for your perspective. That, in fact, was the reason for my verbal commendation to you. I wanted you to know that I was pleased with you. I do remember your asking whether or not you still had to defend your position on abortion and my asking if you had considered alternative perspectives.

You said you had and I noted, in that case, there was no reason for you to follow up on your entry. I do remember telling you that the diary entries were entirely for your own benefit, and not for mine. (I do ask a lot of questions and only when these questions trigger off a reason for you to answer, do you need to do so. Otherwise, they are only questions, my questions).

I need for you to differentiate between your diary entries and a discussion: A discussion assumes that there is more than one point of view - and that is what we had, a discussion. As a result of the discussion, I felt challenged and interested and thought quite a lot (as it seems you did) after the discussion about the validity of my own perspectives on abortion, and more interestingly, on my own perspective on moral ladders or moral positioning. I probably need to thank you for your honesty and hope that I will be more self-aware. As I made very clear right in the very beginning, I am not all knowing and nor am I always or even, often, correct. As you so correctly note in your entry ".....that science was "value free" and only giving "raw" material about things to which we add "philosophy and ethics". I have learned since that this is not true. Now the Government wants us to believe that this can be done in education. Is a teacher able to separate his own moral from his "value free" teaching?"

You may not specifically have been referring to me in the above (on the other hand, you might have) - but your question is valid. Of course I bring value judgements to my class/ tutorial discussions. The question is: do I encourage/ support your right to make alternative decisions based on critical thinking and reflective practice? If, and when I don't, I need to be challenged. I also thought it might be appropriate to paste in a short section from the pointers given to you early on this year on critical thinking for reflection and reconsideration: ...(omitted here) Jena, I value your contributions, both through your diary entries and in discussions - in class and tutorials. I hope you will continue to be frank and question as you do.

This response seemed to have a positive affect on our relationship and Jena's entries.

11.3.6 Jena's self-evaluation of her reflective journal (November, 2002)

I read Jena's diary evaluation on conclusion of my analysis and think it is a fair reflection of what I have read. She has encapsulated key issues and concerns dealt with during the year, and has focused on the value of the reflective process for her own growth, learning and development.

"The diary was a valuable tool, enabling me to connect management theory with practice of management at work.

The diary entries helped me to analyse and reflect on problems. As a team leader on night duty in the medical ward and also in my clinic work where I am the only qualified sister, management issues come up frequently. The diary has increased my understanding and consideration of co-workers in the team. One or two entries at the beginning had rather unrealistic conclusions and needed revising during the course of the year. In this way it has assisted me to find better solutions."

Jena identifies something that does happen with all students, but has not been made explicit. "Keeping a diary increased my observation powers, as working through an incidence afterwards in form of a diary entry has helped me to see and understand things better."

She reinforces what other students have also identified in Chapter Seven, Section 7.3.6.3 – making the implicit, explicit.

"By reflecting in a written format I could recognise problems, which perhaps otherwise I would not have seen. It also encouraged me to analyse my actions and reactions. During the year I was confronted with new ethical (some rather unethical?), concepts in the solution seeking for problems in the South African population, concerning health and life stile. The diary has helped me analyse concepts, ideas and arguments. It has also enabled me to strengthen my arguments and to give them clearer definitions and meanings. In order to be able to produce reflections on news and journal articles I was forced to work through newspapers and journals. This little persuasion has caused me to be better informed and created the habit of looking out for articles relevant for my profession."

Jena considers the limitations of journaling from a generic angle and suggests that these "depend on the other person who reads and evaluates it." She confirms that the relationship between the empathetic-critiquer and the writer is critical. "The relationship to that person determines how free one feels to express feelings and views. It also matters what input comes from that person. It can be encouraging and helping to find the right direction in management." Jena then acknowledges our relationship and where it has been effective in her journaling process "Maureen has been very valuable as "diary-assessor" and has often given me good direction without hindering me".

11.3.7 Conclusion

I get the sense that Jena seldom goes for the 'easier' answer. She practices by a seemingly inflexible code when her own principles are on the line. There is a willingness on Jena's part to question herself and her assumptions. She demonstrates a humility that is genuine and has a great sense of obligation to her clients. It is very easy in her position to be prescriptive and authoritative and Jena consciously questions herself in this regard and opens herself to her clients, who, while certainly less educated in the field of health care, come with experience and the knowledge born of life experiences, to which Jena herself has not been exposed and which she recognises and values.

14 March: "The people I deal with have their own life experience and can discern between valuable advice and *"the other sort"*. To gain credibility I have to examine my own knowledge, correct it and also be sensible for the needs of the people"

Hers is a world of theory and some practice – and she is aware of the gaps. At the same time, she doesn't just accept wholeheartedly their requests but opens them and herself to scrutiny. Jena anticipates situations and responses and is far more proactive than reactive

In terms of Jena's thinking, she is able to provide good descriptions of situations, placing them in context and linking issues from previous reflections, demonstrating her use of the reflective cycle. I note as I read Jena's entries globally that she returns to issues and concerns on a number of occasions and looks at these from different perspectives. Jena writes concisely and key issues are addressed. She examines assumptions and looks to her practice to test those assumptions. Where original theory does not answer needs, she looks beyond the box.

Jena's observations deal with her daily work and a number relate to her relationship with rural Zulu patients. I like the words Jena uses about her relationship with her clients – 'negotiation' and 'partner' (30 March). They reflect much of what I am trying to achieve in my relationship with my students and so I am particularly appreciative of her approach. Her approach is also congruent with the Primary Health Care approach to health care management. Her reward lies in the mutual acceptance of this approach and the mutuality of respect. This notion of care is reflected in many entries but is beautifully depicted in her entry dated June 2, Entry 13 where she reflects on a journal article on the notion of caring and draws a connection to the "Cross cultural relationships (which) present a challenge to learn to understand a different reality for a different people". She writes: "Real concern cannot be put on like a piece of clothing. It will be artificial and the other person will see through it. But I believe it has to do with determination and can be learned." Jena's metaphor of concern and clothing are particularly poignant and remind me of the story of the emperor and the invisible cloak.

Jena's reflection on her difficulties of working with Zulu clients and a translator (30 March and 22 April) spoke directly to me, and in some ways helps to answer my own dilemma of working with second-language students. We do not speak the same language or have the same culture – and this affects my ability to "obtain a person's confidentiality". There is no way I can truly 'know' the student from within – the 'implicated' self, for, as Jena says, "In a person's language the culture reveals itself. One can gain knowledge of the other person's way of thinking." But I can observe and learn from students' reflections and behaviour and as Jena notes, can "realise a person's distress or happiness and many other moods just by observation" in the same way as they can, suggests Jena, "sense(s) my impatience or genuine concern".

Nursing is a physically and emotionally draining profession. The pandemic of HIV AIDS is all encompassing and affects and drains those who work with patients with this debilitating condition – and at this stage of Jena's reflections (Entry 9, 13 April), there is very little other than palliative care, that Jena and her colleagues can give. It is no wonder that nurses resort to the coping mechanism of distancing (Kelly, 1998). The danger, as Jena correctly notes, is that the behaviour or response becomes habit forming. Jena reminds me and herself of the emotional and physical investment as she revisits her philosophy and professional code of practice.

23 March: "For my practice this means I am learning to listen to requests and to become sensitive to different circumstances with their different needs. It however does not mean to be stepped over by the community seeking help and to give in to malpractice as the easiest way out. "

I have to admire Jena. She is clear about her role as a nurse and can differentiate between herself as a person and herself as a nurse. What more could be asked of her? I also have to admire her definitive stance – which she has not taken on blindly – although I think she is now at the stage where she has developed sufficient argument and collated adequate evidence to support her position and is no longer open to change. Her thinking appears to be solid – and even if it weren't, I am delighted that she is thinking and mulling over the issues. Many of her reflections deal with the core of her morality and her sense of self and she is not afraid of whom she is or the directions her morality takes her. I don't always agree with her but I salute her integrity and her passion and her willingness to spit in the wind.

After analysing Carol's diary, I developed the Framework of the Transformative Intellectual's frame of reference and under the section on Personal identity, I included Johari's Window. Jena's entry resonates in terms of the window of the Open Self. Her reflection also brings to mind John Donne's Devotions No.17:

No man is an island intire of itselpe, every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is lesse, as well as if a promontorie were, as well as if a mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any man's death diminshes me, because I am involved in Mankinde

In entry 5, 14 March, Jena reveals her 'voice'. She approached an issue from a logical and analytical perspective and provided a base for her rationale, and reasons for her initial assumptions.

"... Without my own personal experience of weaning a child, I adhered faithfully to the "fresh food teaching". When I ask the mothers to list the food they gave to their child, I often hear brand names of "shelf food" from supermarkets catering for the small child. My rather stereotype answer to the rural mothers would be that this products where rather expensive and unnecessary and she could easily cook her own pumpkins or other mashed food..."

But, she has taken her approach to this issue further by checking for herself and not merely accepted current thinking.

"The other day I actually took an effort to look at the different product of "first solids" for infants in a supermarket. I was surprised how cheap they are It is easy to "gobble up" conceptions unchecked, perhaps even with a wrong understanding, and pass it on The people I deal with have their own life experience and can discern between valuable advice and "*the other sort*". To gain credibility I have to examine my own knowledge, correct it and also be sensible for the needs of the people. It is also easy to fall into the trap that lesser educated people are less capable. Is it right to presume a mother cannot work out her own budged just because she is rural?"

She makes a sound case for checking out the validity of her assumptions by noting that she herself is not a mother – and this process of analysis enables her to speak with far more authority (the Procedural voice – of Separated knowing – where she connects theory with practice in a meaningful way).

A recurrent theme noted in Jena's entries was concern with the passing on or sharing of knowledge. This is ingrained in every South African nurse from the initial stages of their training, and although it is inculcated within all nurses, not all nurses show the same generosity in the sharing. Jena doesn't jump to negative conclusions, but rather seems to give mankind the benefit of the doubt. It is her respect for and sensitivity to others that can change situations. She is also not afraid to discuss issues with others. Hers is a continuous learning process. Mentoring was one of the strategies put in place to support students and Jena worked constantly and continuously with her mentor. This was a positive and successful relationship clearly seen on the occasion when Jena brought her mentor to the class workshop on mentoring and thanked her for the richness of the relationship, which she valued.

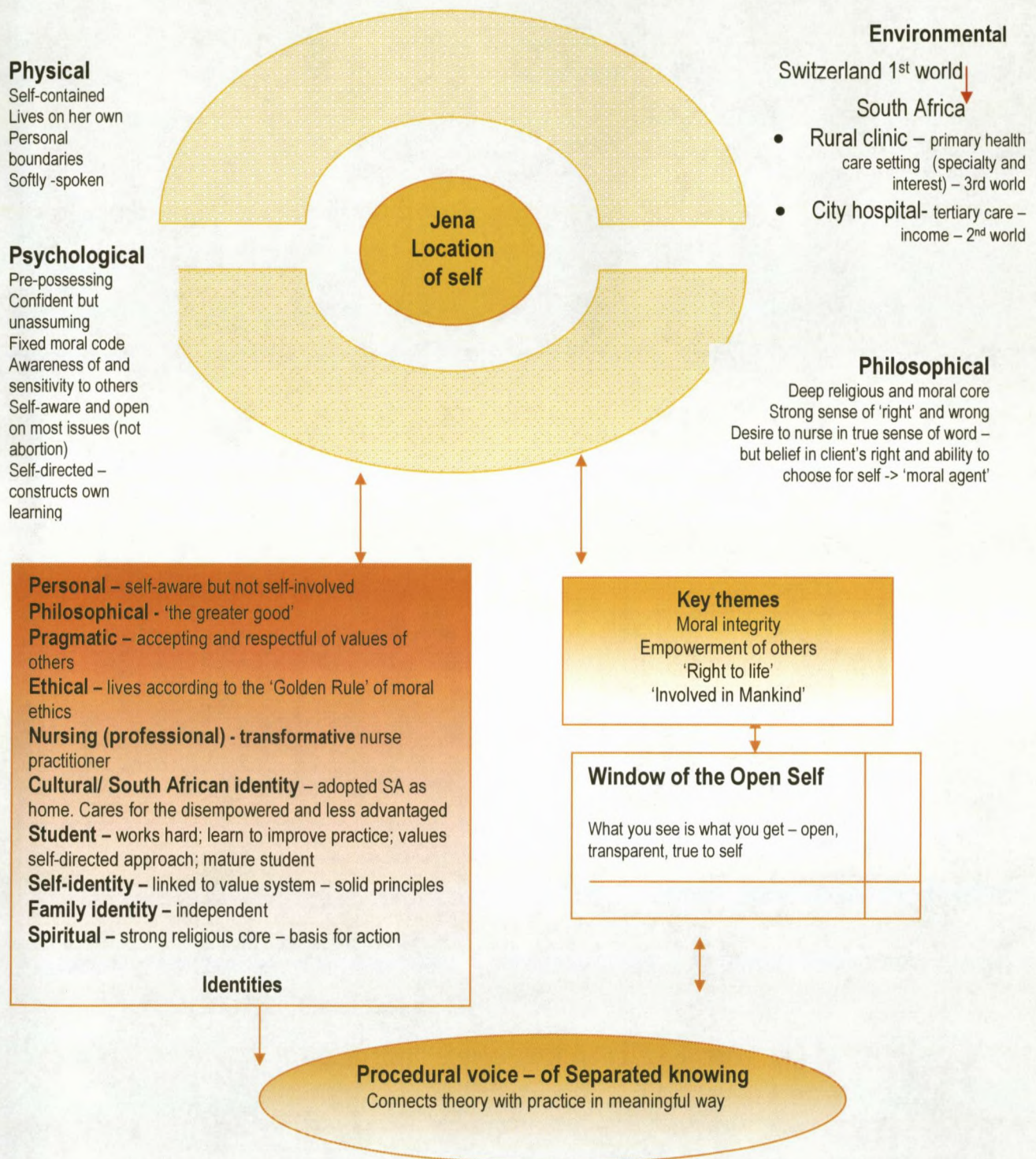


Figure 12.2 Overview: Jena in terms of the Theoretical Framework for Analysis of Reflective Journals as defined in Figure 10.1

Liseko's journal

11.4 LISEKO

"Sound professional practice, tempered by empathy" (Jane).

11.4.1 Introduction

Liseko's journal was fairly easy to analyse within her actual text, but much more difficult to present as a narrative, the main reason being that the majority of the entries were not really narratives, but rather, commentaries and analyses of journal or newspaper articles. Mari (critical reader) also comments on this difficulty:

"This student's growth is more difficult to track due to the way in which diary entries are ordered (not chronologically). It was also a more difficult task to analyse this piece, as language obstructs logic and hampers her ability to express her points clearly. Initially Liseko's arguments are simplistic, e.g." Government should provide...every clinic should have a counsellor so that clients can have an access and long waiting has will be limited." It is only in September that Liseko reveals some of her personal circumstances and expresses concern for a patient, who, like her, is vulnerable because of no close relatives."

Although the crude analysis centers on 20 entries, which are included in the raw data, I have chosen to summarise some of the issues she dealt with, with accompanying quotations and analysis. This is to provide a sense of her writing style, approach and thought processes.

One of the limitations of my study was my failure to repeat all the same questionnaires presented to the students from the previous year (2002), which meant that I did not have access to the same demographic information on Liseko. So I did not get to 'know' Liseko in the same way as the 2002 students, and my 'knowing' depended on what she revealed in her journals and tutorials. Initially, I

had not intended to extend my study beyond the 2002 group, but the study took on a life of its own and became a participatory action research study.

11.4.2 Overview of Liseko and her narrative

Liseko was not a student who claimed my attention. She was not as timid as Nandi (one of the other students whose narrative is included in the study) but was quiet unless called upon. She too, was young, in her early twenties, and seemed quite self-contained. She did not seem to need to be noticed or want my attention but she was probably one of the most conscientious of students. Work was handed in timeously and corrections were done without argument. In a class of many individualists, I remember her as a pleasant, reliable student. She was originally from Swaziland. Xhosa was her home language and English her second language (Chapter Seven, Section 7.4.3). Liseko did form part of the focus group discussion on second language students and her thoughts on journaling are revealing:

Liseko: "Ya, with diaries, there is a requirement about what you write about. You go there and try to understand what is it you are supposed to write about but you won't understand even the words that are put in there. You try to get a dictionary. You try to simplify the words but it's really difficult" (Focus group, 31 October, 2003).

She revealed little about her personal life to me and seemed more comfortable surrounded by her colleagues than with me on a one-to-one basis. I don't think I could say that I 'knew' Liseko – it was more her actions and text that were revelatory – and then only, to a degree. As Mari (critical reader) notes "it was difficult to "get to know" Liseko, since she reveals little of her own thoughts, feelings and experiences. But she leaves some clues – she is a marathon runner, and her mother taught her that she can do anything if she puts her mind to it. "

Reflecting on the work we did in small group discussions, I remember feeling quite frustrated in an initial tutorial when I discovered that she was working in a similar environment to three previous students, and was experiencing a number of the difficulties that they too had experienced. I had hoped that their experience would have been helpful in resolving issues, particularly practical issues. It reminded me that understanding how to resolve something did not necessarily mean that steps would be taken, and this notion again raised the issue of power relationships and how these impact on decision making in hierarchical systems. I asked Liseko to visually map out the problem related to clients having to wait in queues and visually determine the barriers impacting on this problem. Through questioning, I tried to help her determine the workflow pattern and potential solutions. It seemed so easy to me and I could see that she could see the solutions. But I could also see that the solutions would probably go no further than the paper exercise because we had not discussed or worked through the biggest barrier – the inequity in power relationships in the unit and the fear of the unknown. The invidious power of the hierarchical system and the invidious positioning of the junior professional nurse practitioner were powerful barriers. I wanted Liseko to challenge not only this, but also her own cultural norms. Challenging seniority, age, experience and the status quo does not come easily. There is a Zulu term that I had to come to terms with - 'gashle' – meaning 'go slowly'.

11.4.3 Content themes in Liseko's journal

Thematically, Liseko reflects on personal, professional and academic issues as evidenced through selected excerpts from her journal.

Learning New information	Cultural factors	Work ethics/ Conflict	Motivation	Achievements
Management issues- unprofessional	Relationship with: wit colleagues / clients/	Power / disempowerment issues	Dysfunctional health care environment	Health issues: Dietary HIV AIDS

conduct/ lack of leadership	managers			
Gender issues	Good/ poor nursing practice (Batho Pele)	Impetus to leave Nursing in SA	Child abuse Family issues	Clinical learning
Personal philosophy	Value system	Self-identity	Valued traits	Self-value

Table 11.5: General themes identified in Liseko's journal

Liseko uses her journal to try to come to terms with her concept of nursing and the profession balanced against the reality of a sometimes iniquitous system which permits unethical behaviour. As Jane (critical reader) notes, her "faith in her profession and the need for maintaining standards, as with other diary entries, is evident, and incidents such as the stealing of drugs, entry 6, and that of equipment, Regional Experience 2, as well as that of negligence, are issues reflected in other diaries." She uses the concept of Batho Pele (good practice) as her benchmark and as Jane (critical reader) observes "'blowing the whistle' appears anathema to her". Liseko appears to try to understand the issue of power imbalances by looking at the issue from different perspectives – but this is not easy and her frustration and feeling of powerlessness is evident in entries where she discusses work overload; limited staff because of the effects of emigration, HIV/AIDS and promises not kept. Against this backdrop, one is aware of the sensitive nurse.

Jane (critical reader) observes: "Her relationships with patients are explicit in her empathy and compassion for the Nigerian who is dying of Aids. Evidence of cultural associations such as 'burial is a critical factor' have resonance here. Her humility and humanity, firmly based in her religious beliefs, enables her to put herself in his shoes, and her wish that he see his family before he dies. She shows a professional commitment to consider the patient's welfare above all else."

11.4.4 General analysis

Selected examples of Liseko's journal exemplifying the process and her individual style.

Topic 14 Date: 2003 / 04/ 10

Liseko: "One of these days, a patient was seen by one of the primary health care sisters with history of painful leg. Even though a patient visited the private doctor, there was no improvement on her condition. According to the sister's assessment the patient's condition was stable. The sister referred the patient to the doctor. And on this day, the advantage was on the patient's side because her number reasonable enough to be allowed to register for the doctor as she was number 45. So there was no excuse to send the patient home.

While the patient was still waiting in the hall for her file and to be called to see a doctor, she suddenly complained about shortness of breath in so much that the patient had to be given air as she felt sweat. Patient taken to room 4 where the vital signs were done and one of full time doctor was called.

The doctor just made one eye on the patient and shouted (at) the nurse who called her as she said she was for (a) cold case and the patient looked stable. While the doctor was still busy shouting the sister, the patient started again when she left with shortness of breath and gasping respiration. Imagine in that tension between the two, they have to see the dying patient, resuscitation was done and another doctor was called but eventually patient died in the clinic while she came to it walking and talking to herself.

At that point in time I just wondered how life is unpredictable. How can one die without saying goodbye to her family and loved ones and how are they going to take the news? How do they think about the staff who delivers the health care to their community?

Coming back to the doctor who perceive the sister who called her as stupid, I wonder what she thinks about herself now, does she feel great about her immediate action or does she feel guilty or is she that kind of person who does not care?

Why do doctors always perceive nurses as stupid, where did the problem start? I think it the high time now that we show them what we capable of and we not victims of submissiveness let alone humiliation among patients."

This story conjures up a picture of our health services – long queues of passively waiting patients, who have either walked or taken a long time to get to the clinic and then must wait their turn. If there are too many, they might not be seen. Staff members are overloaded. It is hard to imagine any reasonable human being responding angrily to being called, as in the case of the doctor. If I consider the patient/doctor ratio in the South African health services – it becomes more understandable. The rift between the medical profession and nurses is once more raised through this story. Both disciplines are working towards the same goal, but team work and respect towards each other is not evident, nor does there appear to be any understanding of each other's perspectives. It seems to be very much a we/they situation and an appearance of disparities in power relationships. Liseko uses the word "submissiveness" and if the relationship between doctor and nurse is such that the nurse does appear submissive and non-challenging, it is also understandable as to why it might be seen that doctors "always perceive nurses as stupid."

Maureen's response: You make some excellent points and you ask very good questions.

Question: What kind of follow up is there after a death in your work?

Have you ever considered staff multi-disciplinary meetings to discuss special cases-such as these - as a learning tool?

How can you prevent something like this happening again?

Do you use a form of triage in your work?

The purpose of these questions to Liseko is to promote a better understanding between doctors and nurses and to be able to use incidents such as these to improve quality of care. It seems to me that accountability of health care members is missing unless a process like this takes place – a post-

mortem conference, as it were. It also worries me that the questions Liseko raises about the family members is likely to go unheeded unless there is a formal process that forces this type of discussion.

1. Liseko Regional Experience: I Date: 2003 / 05 /15

Liseko: "Recently there was a patient who came to my consulting room, complaining of abdominal pains without any relief from the treatment that was given by private doctor four days ago. I send the patient for registration so that she can be seen by the doctor and fortunately for her, she had a reasonable number, meaning she could be seen by the doctor. One of the sisters was doing then screening of the patient in the hall and it was round about 12h00 this time when I saw the patient with many other standing in the room 2 door where I am working. I asked what was the matter? They said they wanted to ask something. I told them they must go to enquiries / in the hall where there is a sister who is responsible for questions. Fortunately the sister was coming to room 2, I called another patient on the queue, leaving the others at the door as they were also asking the same thing from this sister. I thought she told them the same thing "To go and wait in the hall as she would have address their questions."

While I was still busy I heard the rough exchange of words between the sister and the patient that I saw in the morning and there was some barging of doctors. When I came out sister and the patient were in real fight. As I wouldn't go out, I quickly phone security man but fortunately the security man came by as he could see the chaos at the door. The sister had a swelling above the upper hip and the patient was still hot looking forward to the fight, irrespective of being separated by security and her boy friend. The sister took her bag and marched out of the clinic and the patient followed her asking where she was going and she said she was coming back as she was going to town and she told the patient to wait for her as she was coming back. The sister in-charge of the clinic was attending the meeting at matron's office when the incident happened. We tried to ask the patient involved and the boyfriend and the spectators, what happened. The patient said she wanted to get inside the consulting room and asked me if it was possible to get a note that say she is still waiting in the clinic as she was expected to come back (to work) and resume her duties but the sister couldn't allow her as she told them to go the hall. Its then ugly exchange of words and swearing came in and those that were watching said it was the sister that started by hitting the patient.

What I know is that this sister is the one who does everything that she wants. No one can confront her including the sister in charge. If she happened to be allocated with to see the patient, just make sure that you'll be the one who will see to finish..."

My interpretation: This reflects Liseko's own sense of lack of power and resentment. If she (or anyone else, it seems) is allocated to work with this nurse, she (Liseko) will end up doing the work.

Liseko: ..."She can sit in her room without seeing patient, she can go to town anytime of the day and do her shopping and come back with her home grocery. The amazing part is that her register is always full just like everyone's as if she saw patients.

Sister in charge came back from meeting and she was told about the incident. The patient was called again to narrate the story. Seemingly not everything went well as the patient was attacking the sister in charge and another sister saying that they were taking her side.

What I can say is that, the incident was never reported to the matrons simple because the sister who was involved was still sitting home booked off sick by her private doctor. Seemingly this was not the first incident where the same sister hit the patient before. As the sister in-charge is afraid of her, she couldn't dare report her without her concern."

Maureen's Response: Where do the responsibilities lie in this situation?

What are the consequences if the patient or anyone else reported the assault?

What do you understand about the concept of 'whistle blowing'?

My interpretation: The issue of aggression and lack of professional behaviour towards patients as well as the intimidation of nurse on nurse is again raised in another descriptive incident. Liseko's description is both evocative and confusing. I cannot clearly follow the story, perhaps because of the difficulty in language usage and the lack of clarity in the naming of the characters. Nonetheless, the gist of the story is clear as is Liseko's judgement, although it is obliquely stated. Liseko makes

inferences rather than clear judgements and is quite careful about not taking ownership of these judgements. She might be aware of the implications of this behaviour, but she stops short at naming these. By not taking ownership, she does not make a choice about her role in this debacle, which has been fairly low key (although she did call Security and did try to ascertain the facts of the matter). But she has not involved herself. I get the feeling that if she (Liseko) behaves in a professional manner and is honourable in herself that is as much as she is willing to risk. It is fairly easy for me to make these judgements for I have never been in this situation where my person is at risk. I have heard enough stories from different sources to be aware that this level of aggression and intimidation is apparent in sectors of our health care services and so cannot dismiss Liseko or her colleagues' fears as being unrealistic. As a nurse, my blood boils and I feel outraged at the behaviour of the nurse and those who allow for her continued poor behaviour. It is a fairly typical, recognised response for nurses (and others) to 'get a sick note' when things don't go well. (Personal experience from stories recounted by student nurses) and avoidance tactics are required. Liseko infers that this nurse cheats "The amazing part is that her register is always full just like everyone's as if she saw patients" and that this incident was not even reported further because the nurse in charge "is afraid of her". It is incidences such as this, which support the concept that health care services are being undermined. These types of incidences also reflect on the moral turpitude of some nurses, and the fact that they continue to practice without being challenged seems to me to be indicative of the lack of nurse leadership, and social systems that support this behaviour. While patients did respond with aggression, the fact that their complaints were not channeled further through the formal system for correct address indicates either their lack of faith in the system or the lack of knowledge in how the system works or in a passive acceptance of the system at higher levels. Wurzbach (1999:94) suggests that nurses have difficulties in defending patients' rights because of potential job loss, initiation of adversarial relationships or because of a trying work environment. Other constraints to

establishing or maintaining a moral culture in nursing include conflictive interpersonal relationships, poor role definition, and "societal ambivalence. All are tied to nurses' past experiences, with other practitioners (primarily physicians), experiences in the institutional hierarchy, and lack of individual respect, autonomy and choice."

Liseko's dilemma with her colleagues is what Kelly (1998) and Freshwater (2000) refer to as horizontal violence. This intimidation of colleagues is not just the term for inter-group-conflict or general bullying, but, says Freshwater (2000) it is also an embodiment of how groups of disempowered people direct their frustrations as a result of being excluded from the empowering process.

2. Liseko Regional Experience: II Date: 2003 / 05 /15

Liseko: "Recently, equipment has been missing in the room, where observations of patients that are acutely ill are done. Some of these patients that wait in this room are waiting for registration but cant wait in waiting room because of their conditions. This room cant cope without being fully equipped with instruments such as defibrillators to shock patients that are resting, Bamanometers, Thermometer, Glucometer machine etc.

The problems have been identified and reported to the sister in-charge. Those days it is difficult to get equipments from stores as motivation for that goes through motivational statement and a registration has to be done before the equipment is issued. Meeting has been called among professionals only to discuss the ways that can be implemented to prevent this so as to allocate someone who will investigate this matter. What is demotivating in all these task is that the sister in-charge discusses all these problems with all her friends starting from porters, general assistants and enrolled nurse and the manner in which she talks about it is demoralizing in stealing the equipment. Imagine their reaction, even with investigation it won't be successful because the one who is stealing will be on the lookout for the investigator. What

I can say is that, maybe she does not want the culprit to be caught because it is possible that it might be here "Boss or friend".

My interpretation: Liseko nails the problem. The person in charge should, but does not have, a clear authority boundary. Live and let live, seems to be the prevailing motto – and it is this attitude that will and apparently does, allow moral turpitude, both by herself and her staff, to prevail. Mari (critical reader) observes: "Professionally Liseko sees where the faults in the healthcare system lie all too clearly...Her critical thinking process has led her to analyse her situation accurately, but the dilemma is what action to take to try and correct this without putting her own person in danger. Is this a failure of imagination, or is it the fault of an inflexible system? Probably a bit of both. As Maureen has noted Liseko is a junior nurse in a very hierarchical system where bringing about transformation is difficult, if not impossible at times. She has succeeded in seeing and naming the flaws in the system, where she needs to do more work is in finding strategies to improve her workplace."

Liseko: .. "The reason why I am making the accusations is because one day when I was looking in the same room, the sister in charge came looking for one of porters that is close to her but unfortunately he was not there and this day she was in a hurry to go home and her wallet was kept by this man. Now she had to open his bag and take out the wallet. The unfortunate part is that one more sister was in this room when she opened her bag. We all got the shock of our life when she found the bag was full of drugs such as Colestomine, Bicillin and Berotec. To our surprise she left the things in the bag, saying that she is afraid to take them out as this man will ask her what she was doing in his bag. Until today the matter was never forwarded to any authorities, it was left like and I don't even think that she reminded the man.

What does one have to do in such incidents? Do you commit yourself in improving these conditions knowing that there is no background support of the local authority?"

Maureen's responses: Have you considered discussing this with DENOSA?

Is there any way that you can take this forward on your informal level?

Perhaps we should discuss this in class?

My interpretation: I sense Liseko's feelings of powerlessness. In a study undertaken by Kelly (1998:1134) on how new nursing graduates adapted to the 'real world' of the hospital in terms of their ethical and moral integrity, she found that they went through 6 stages: "vulnerability; getting through the day; coping with moral distress; alienation from self; coping with moral distress; and integration of new professional self-concept." Kelly (1998) suggests that in an effort to maintain moral integrity, the nurse had to redefine her self-concept and identity mainly because their perception of their own criteria of what it means to be a good nurse was not reconcilable with current professional conduct. This is particularly relevant when nurses enter new professional arenas.

Mari (critical reader) also comments on the issue of power raised in Liseko's journal. "Liseko narrates incidents of oppression of nurses, not her own experiences, but mostly as witness or as a reader of articles. This probably means that Liseko resonates with these victims. Liseko expresses her concern with many power issues, and this is a good first step, even if she doesn't take on the issues."

11.4.5 Liseko's professional and academic growth

A global review of Liseko's journal indicates immaturity in some of Liseko's thinking and this has been identified in the micro-analysis. Mari (critical reader) connects Liseko's thinking and my analysis in an overview of the findings: "However, there are also examples of where critical thinking has failed to happen. For instance in Topic 4 Liseko argues, having read an article about the importance of VCT for HIV sufferers, that: "Every nurse in a clinic should be able to counsel the client and appropriate equipment for counselling so that if the patient is willing to test can be done immediately." As

Maureen accurately notes, this is not possible in a developing country like SA where clinics are understaffed as it is.

Similarly, Liseko occasionally misses the point in her analysis of articles and understanding of her own role as a nurse. She focuses more on her experience of being a nurse than on how her behaviour impacts on the patients she is meant to be helping. Maureen, "When I now read Liseko's response to the article, I think she has missed the point. The point relates to the system that works for the client whereas Liseko is more concerned with the nurse and her burdens." As Maureen puts it: "A dilemma indeed. I didn't know how to solve your problem, perhaps we should take this to class? I do know that in life, situations are never simple- and you are going to need to resolve your dilemma between - What is right and wrong (your own morality) - Loyalty- and intimidation, It is of course easier when there are proper systems in place."

It must be noted though that Liseko does think of strategies to empower nurses – there is a noticeable improvement in her thinking through the diaries. All she needs to do by the end of the year is implement them. "A lot of work need to be done by nurses themselves to reclaim their lost pride and dignity by putting our house in order – to be professional, friendly and perform our jobs satisfactory." Maureen: "Good argument!"

However, I do not think Liseko has grown enough personally in that she remains passive when confronted with wrongdoing in her workspace. When describing theft she writes, "Until today the matter was never forwarded to any authorities, it was left like and I don't even think that she reminded the man." Maureen asks "What does one have to do in such incidents? Do you commit yourself in improving these conditions knowing that there is no background support of the local

authority." I hope that Liseko does take action – albeit in a small way – in the future when aware of the unethical conduct of her colleagues."

"Liseko's recommendations are not unrealistic – but there as with her previous analysis of articles, fairly simplistic." I agree with Maureen that Liseko has accurate but simplistic intellectual insights into healthcare issues. There is room for growth in the complexity of her argument. "At a superficial level, her analysis is fine." She needs to learn to analyse issues more deeply – looking at issues from both sides. For instance considering why the government does not want to make HAART easily available, and also, in her complaints about the impact of patients' behaviour on nurses, she needs to try to understand the patients' points of view. As Maureen observes, "When I now read Liseko's response to the article, I think she has missed the point. The point relates to the system that works for the client whereas Liseko is more concerned with the nurse and her burdens."

Similarly, Maureen notes that Liseko's logic is shaky when she analyses an article on preconceptual counselling. "I am querying Liseko's logic here. In essence, Liseko has grasped the fundamental concept of generalizability in research in that two clinics are insufficient to propound this concept. However, she doesn't really understand the concept of a reliability study where the researchers were checking on the reliability of a tool for eliciting information – a pre –appointment questionnaire compared to history taking by a doctor. The clinics Liseko mentions, there would be limited opportunity to test this approach for the reasons I have noted.

However, if I think of Liseko's reasoning in terms of whether this method of preconceptual screening should be considered, her argument is valid. This approach may be useless in the SA PHC context. The tool may be valid but other changes in the health care system might need to be put into place in

order to ensure its usage." Liseko is getting there in terms of developing more complex reasoning but she needs more practice. 'I do see Liseko moving into a more complex mode of reasoning'."

11.4.6 Evidence of Liseko's critical, reflective thinking (See Appendix 11.1)

11.4.7 Liseko's self- analysis of her reflective journal

"In many diaries I used my own thinking in order to come to conclusions and solutions." Liseko then goes on to label the other thought processes ("Defending positions and issues...", "Action plan based on implications drawn"..., "Examinations of assumption...", "Exploration of consequences and implications...", "Generate novel ideas...", "question the situation and brings about new opinions...") and identifies where these are demonstrated.

11.4.7 Conclusion

Has Liseko grown? What kind of a voice does she present with? Liseko was one of the few people who took the criteria, named them and provided examples of how these were included in her journal. Her organisation of her journal was precise and she met the requirements of the assignment correctly. Most students did a bit more of the one type of entry and a few less of others and were more casual in their approach to the assignment requirements – but not Liseko.

I do sense that Liseko has grown. In general, I felt that Liseko focused mainly on the descriptive aspects of the reflection. The determination of actions as a result of the reflections is not obvious and generally has been proffered as a suggestion rather than a fait accompli. On reflection and on reviewing Liseko's entries, I think I have been too hasty. I think that she has used the space to try to understand the issues with which she is faced (see Figure 11.3), and the fact that she returns to the

same issues on more than one occasion, indicate that these issues have given her pause to reflect. Conway (1999:1) cites Usher, Bryant and Johnston (1997):

"Successful reflective practice entails engaging in a continual rescripting of one's own practice, not in merely having it rescripted and played back by others. In 'practical' terms, keeping a journal (and sharing its content with others) is the key to this".

She has at least named, although not moved to the point of managing her demons, as they are not easy to deal with in a fairly harsh system. This is a big step, I think, for Liseko. I get the feeling that Liseko, being at junior level, knows that to fit in with the system, she has to pay her dues and do her job unquestioningly. It does not seem as if there is anything wrong with Liseko's clinical nursing skills: It is the environment within which she works – the people and the structures – that present her with the greatest challenges. I do not know whether she thinks it worth the effort to accept those challenges. I am reminded of the ubiquitous monkeys – see no evil, hear no evil and do no evil. If Liseko tries her best to do her best (and ignores the actions and effects of others) she will survive. For me, the hope lies in Liseko's description and understanding of these situations and the effect these have on herself and others, with the accompanying recognition that she needs help. Kelly (1998:11) sounds a warning note citing Dwyer (1994) "Habitual silence in the face of perceived wrongs results in permanent changes in ethical values." It could become easy to fall into the trap of engaging in behaviours that dehumanise patients without the accompanying ethical and moral conscience that are considered to be part of the transformative practitioner's caring framework.

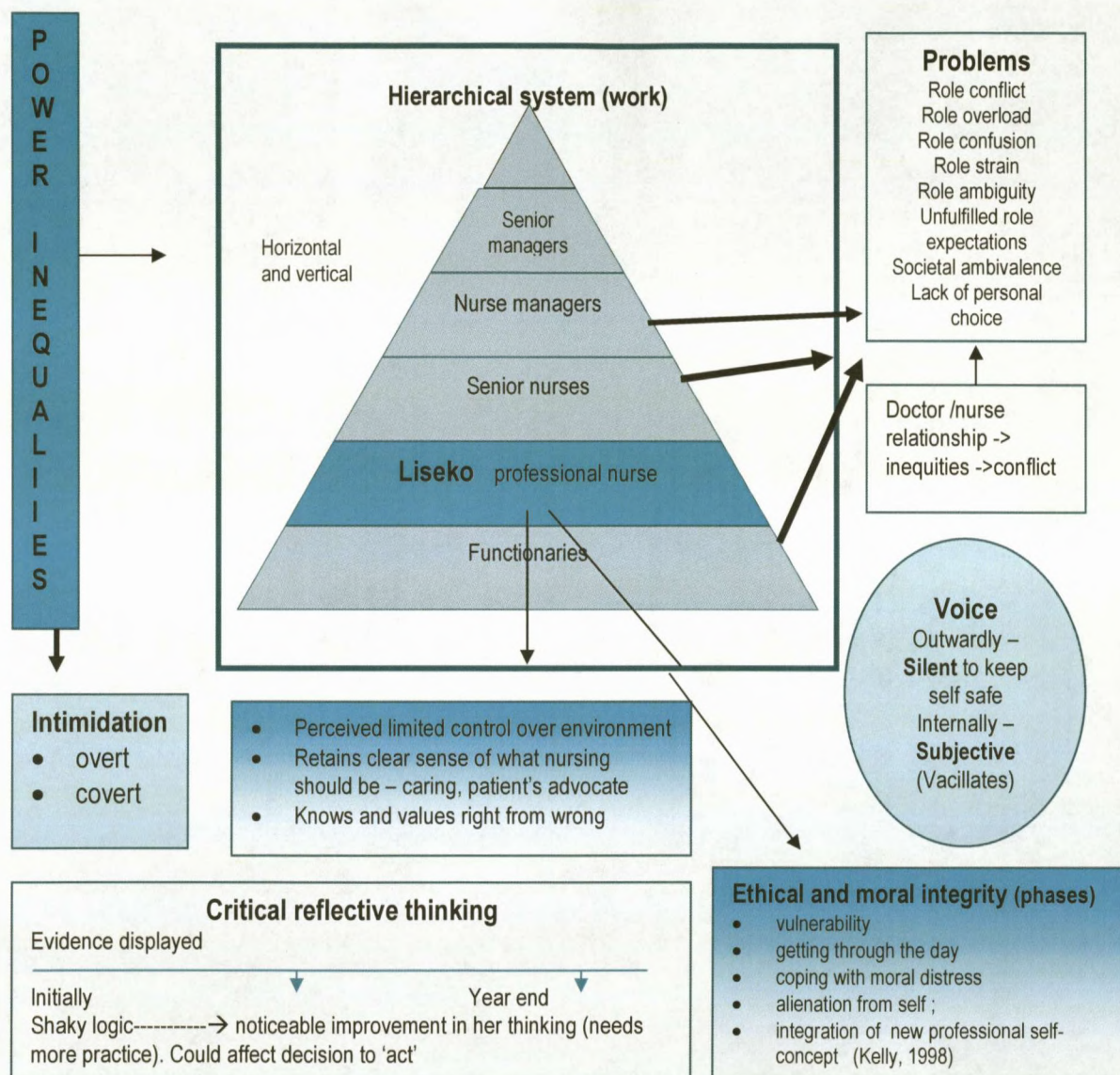


Figure 11.3 Overview of key theme (Power) and Liseko's dilemma

Janet's journal

11.5 JANET

"Maintaining a balance between professional, personal, and academic life, with humour and grace"
(Jane, critical reader).

11.5.1 Introduction

In this journal, I have chosen to interweave the analysis rather than separate it out into categories.

11.5.2 Janet's identity and voice

Janet was a mature woman on the early side of fifty, with two grown sons. Janet returned to work after a considerable period of being a housewife and mother. She had a basic nursing qualification and returned to her studies the previous year for a Bachelor of Technology degree in Occupational Health Nursing. This transition could not have been easy (I am assuming - as we did not discuss this) and while on the one hand, she was almost overwhelmingly confident about her abilities - and with good reason as she was an excellent nurse and had many years of life experience - at the same time, she demonstrated great vulnerability and constantly questioned herself. This vulnerability was demonstrated in her unwillingness to practice as an independent Occupational Health Nurse practitioner (she worked for an agency rather than the organisation, although the management of the organisation had indicated willingness for Janet to change status. Janet put this reluctance to change down to her sense of loyalty to her agency, although the agency was clearly benefiting unfairly). In an effort to live up to her own high expectations, Janet put in twice the effort and a number of our tutorial discussions revolved around this need she had to excel. Good enough was not good enough for Janet, although, interestingly, she had different expectations of others. She made tremendous demands upon herself. I played devil's advocate on more than one occasion, challenging Janet's need for perfection (particularly where it seemed to be bordering on an obsession). It was an area

that Janet did not wish to address. Initially, in trying to understand Janet better, I discussed my perceptions of Janet with two colleagues who had also taught Janet and knew her in her work capacity. This process allowed me to be more sensitive with students at times where I might otherwise overstep boundaries.

Janet used a colloquial style, informal, friendly and with a wry touch of humour which made me immediately amenable to wanting to read more. Through this style, she brought a personal, very human element which, almost unwittingly, drew me to her, not to mention that she initiated her entries with "Dear Maureen." I loved Janet's humour. As Mari (critical reader) observes "It was characteristic of Janet and defused many situations for her, I feel sure. Janet uses humour throughout, to comment on life as a satire. Her tongue-in-cheek perspective helps her to make sense of the daily grind and its accompanying problems and hardships: "I'm on the Mayo clinic diet at the moment and I can't comfort eat. I thank God for Prozac!!!"

Janet ends her diary with an adaptation of one of Shakespeare's poems

"My diary, my diary, my Degree for my diary!!! Modification of King Richard III written by W. Shakespeare.

To write a diary or not write a diary - that is the question.
Whether it's nobler in the mind to suffer
the onslaughts of reflective thinking,
Or to take arms against a sea of bad marks,
And by opposing end the chance of a degree? To search, to write -
Plenty more: and by growth to say we end
The heartache and the professional stagnation
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a communication
Devoutly to be wish'd. To learn, to grow,
To grow, perchance to succeed, Ay, there's the rub:
For in that professional growth what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this resistance to diary writing,
Must give us pause. There's the respect
That makes sweet sound of so long success."

...: This is another prime example of Janet's advanced approach to problem solving through humour and creativity."

I think that her humour allowed me to respond equitably to some of her more outrageous comments (and Janet could be outrageous at times). It also allowed me to tease her back freely and promoted a healthy relationship. Not everyone's humour is similar to mine and sometimes my jokes appeared to come amiss with some students. I 'got' Janet. She made me smile and it was part of her charm. Her humour, however, did not subsume her intellect but allowed her to explore issues in a lighter hearted, less pompous manner. Her tongue-in-cheek conclusion indicated her ease with herself and others. Her conclusion also indicated her ability to condense and integrate the concepts she has noted in a cheeky summation. Throughout our relationship, I was aware of the subjective nature of my interest in Janet. She made me laugh but she also exhibited a number of traits that connected with my own value system. She reminded me of my first two years of teaching where it was very difficult to separate the personal from the professional - and I had to learn to move beyond this if I was to survive. Most importantly, I recognised in these early stages of teaching, that yes, it was important to relate to students, but if I was to facilitate their learning, I had to also be more objective and ensure that there was a part of myself - distanced - so that I could observe the process, reflect and facilitate. So I know that with all the students I work with, I look to find that personal something that I can connect with and to. For me, this is part of the building of the trust relationship. In terms of Janet, it has been our e-mail diary relationship that I have especially valued.

Friendships were enormously important to Janet and the fact that she reflected on relationships and the importance of relationships time and time again, demonstrated this. 6/03 - "Tenacity is what counts. We all need to be a source of encouragement to each other. On occasions we need to feel

not so alone, and know that there are others in the same boat." These relationships were also supportive in the work context "Lastly, how would I survive if I didn't have the constant encouragement of my colleagues? Often I feel tired and wonder if the workload is too much. It's then that my colleagues at work come and visit." Janet would regularly distribute quotes, pictures, or comic expressions and share these with peers on the web. I think she saw her role as the optimist and the motivator - and being liked was also important to Janet. She was extremely frank and expressed her opinions forcibly but with good humour. Her close friends in class were mainly white and were comfortable with her frankness and humour, because I think that they understood the 'heart of gold' that underlay all her expressions. I don't think she was aware that this openness, loudness and frankness was not culturally acceptable to some black African students - who were not quite sure how to take Janet (my perception is based on comments of a focus group of black students at the end of 2003 in 6.3.4.1).

Janet was an excellent nurse, and believed in proactive measures. AIDS was a major issue in South Africa and she planned her occupational health programmes accordingly. This understanding of mine is corroborated by evidence: she obtained the national Occupational Health Nurse's prize for the best outstanding student the previous year. Her clinic, where she operated as the only health practitioner, received a high NOSA (National Occupational Safety Association) rating. We raised both these issues in our tutorial discussions and Janet was highly regarded in the department by other staff members.

Janet was an active member of SASOHN, the South African society for occupational health nurses. It is a politically active and viable society and used as a forum in South Africa for change. It has a fairly strong political lobbying clout with the South African Nursing Council. On a personal level, I don't

believe that South African nurses are nearly as vocal or active in the political agenda of health care in South Africa, in comparison to, say the United States nursing fraternity. So Janet's suggestion in one of her journal articles of using this group as a forum for change is particularly noteworthy.

Janet, 2/5/2003: "Nurses are primarily concerned about the health of their nation. Employment and a healthy environment impact positively on the health status of the people... The potential income source encourages more people to rummage in household garbage bags and scratch on garbage dumps. This is an area that could result in many diseases being spread.

Suggestion: Legislation needs to be passed to make households separate paper waste, tins and glass so that collection poses no risk to these people's health. This is an area where SASOHN could become active... Suggestion: For waste collection, especially medical specific legislation needs to be considered for the micron measurement of the bags. SASOHN could be active here... I will continue to reinforce the significance of recycling on their health. Where many of our employee's families are unemployed I will be able to encourage them to channel their ways in the direction of recycling."

Janet intrigued me. On more than one occasion she took on the unasked-for responsibility for the organisational culture in her industry and on more than one occasion, she found ways to bring this to the attention of the various members of the management structure.

"The most important issues at the moment are that the employee's morale is down and they feel rather insecure about the future of their Jobs. As I have reflected as to why they should feel insecure I think it is mostly those employees who have not done their absolute best in all situations. They have probably taken chances and gotten away with it, in the past. The general feeling is that if you don't perform you will be shown the gate! ... I've spoken to the Operations Manager about this as it has been of concern to me" (Janet, 20 March, 2003).

I have noticed this with other entries from other Occupational Health nurses. I didn't explore this with them, but I am wondering if this phenomenon is because they do work independently, do not necessarily attend management meetings but have a bird's eye view of proceedings because of the

nature of their practice i.e. they meet and treat all staff members, irrespective of level, without (seemingly) vested interests. Perhaps this wide view allows them to be more objective? Janet worked in a male-dominated world and was comfortable with her femininity. Janet uses a combination of these factors and her desire to ensure appropriate treatment of an HIV infected client:

"Knowing that Terrance's CD4 count was low and that he was deteriorating rapidly and having the knowledge that X Industry has a special fund for the HIV / AIDS programme, I went to see Paul the HR Manager. I told him I was beginning the process for a medical board of an employee. I could not contain myself; as I was telling Paul of the case I started to cry. X Industry did not want to set a precedent and treat HIV / AIDS employees with anti-retroviral for fear of there being too many cases and then not being able to maintain the costs within the budget. The budget is R100 000.00 per year and has been the same for the last two years. X Industry had spent a minimal amount on VCT and immune boosters over the last two years, and the money is in the bank. I told Paul that we could save a life or at least give it a try if only we could use the money and send him to McCord Hospital where the treatment was available at a much reduced cost. If the employee recovered enough to come back to work he could take responsibility for half the cost of his treatment. I was told that the cost of treatment would soon be coming down to approximately R300.00 a month. Paul went and spoke to one of the three Directors and then gave me consent to send Terrance off to McCord Hospital. X Industry would pay for treatment and blood tests. This decision applied only to this specific case, and all future cases would be decided on their own merits..."(Janet, 10 August)

This is a wonderful story about a nurse with imagination who has the courage of her convictions. By Janet's juxtaposition of this story and of the news article about a hospital which had "gained a reputation as a place where people with HIV are treated with dignity and compassion, (so that) the hospital was flooded with destitute patients," (Janet) encapsulates much of what has been happening on national level. HIV AIDS has been prevalent in this country for at least 20 years. For years, both government and the private sector have been slow to respond to what has become pandemic. The South African government (and I would also suggest the global community at large) have become

inundated with statistics and arguments about the causes, affects and management of the disease. South Africa (and other third world countries) have become embroiled with big Pharmaceutical organisations (and because of their lobbying strength, countries producing the pharmaceutical agents) in a debate about the patent rights and usage of generic drugs and the moral or immoral effects of the high costs of drugs for impoverished communities. The common citizen was left with the impression that that both government and big business believed that this problem could just be swept away under the carpet and out of site. Planning for the effects of the pandemic up until recently had seemed ineffectual and at best, only window dressing. The issue, however, can no longer be avoided. There are those who have taken their moral responsibilities seriously and have engaged in proactive planning and others who just don't have the finances or wherewithal to do so. I can appreciate the dilemma experienced by Janet's company.

I can just imagine the impact of Janet's tears – a feminine, emotional response. However, Janet is plucky and determined (I think of her as a bantam cock) and, I would imagine, seldom if ever, resorts to tears. When she does, it must have a big effect. I would believe that Paul (and the director) would realise her commitment to the Company and to the staff and appreciate the alternative options she had made available to them. It must be very difficult when a relationship of trust and respect have been established, to reject the emotive effect of tears, particularly from one of the opposite sex, or the plea that "we can save a life".

Just a comment on Janet's thought of using prayer to help with the recovery of Terrance.

"What will the future hold? I wish and pray that Terrance would recover to the extent where he could come back to work. Not only for himself but also so that others too would be given the opportunity to receive anti-retroviral treatment. In addition, if Terrence does well, then

management will also see the economic benefits to implementing this program and give it greater support.”

The theme of the spiritual runs strongly through Janet’s reflections and she finds solace and support from this source. Also notable is her sense of purpose and hope. Although she constantly engages in reality checks, her sense of hope and optimism seem to take her (and concomitantly) her clients through some very dark places into the light. I feel very safe about Janet’s journey through life because of her positive attitude.

“Under the apartheid government, institutions for blacks were perceived to be inferior, and this stigma has remained with them even post 1994. In a merged scenario institutions would lose their individual identities, resulting in a new identity of the merged institution” (Janet, 21 April).

Janet uses a news article to comment on the merger of local technikons (highlighted in Chapter One, Section 1.4.1). I don’t know why I should be surprised by Janet’s choice for analysis. I think it is because she is the only student to move outside of her work / study/ health/ personal environment to focus on this issue. She has taken the merger, and considers the implications of a further merger with the third and remaining technikon campus. She uses the present merger between ML Sultan campus and Technikon Natal as a basis for analysis. She has encapsulated some of the major issues and presented the case in terms of advantages and disadvantages - which provides for a good basis for an argument, as she has taken perspectives from both a positive and negative view. She has also looked at potential consequences, and then, implications of the merger from both student and lecturer perspective. She has also taken both a micro and macro view - and her focus on the issues is realistic.

Janet mentions the environment in slightly different ways in other entries and describes the effect on her senses, for example, being near a pool of water calms her senses, and she buys a plant for her clinic. She has an aesthetic awareness and uses poetry to connect with her senses. She talks about the warmth of the sun on her face and the pleasurable (and downfall) effects of food in her life. I find her very open and responsive to her senses, and while she uses her intellect, she relates to the sensuous and the emotional components of her life.

I was struck by Janet's use of the phrase "busy taking time out" as it connected with me. When I contemplate a memory of Janet, she is always "busy". I conjure up an image and can see Janet as she sits in the curve of our circular seating arrangement in class. She is surrounded by bits and bobs and by her mere presence, calls for attention. She is very short and talks fairly constantly. I hear giggles and laughter from her corner. She has friends on either side of her and feels quite comfortable engaging in discussion with anyone. She is a natural leader and her friends appear to be quite protective of her. I almost feel that class is an outing for her, another occasion for social engagement. But she takes the class sessions seriously and engages her quicksilver mind to matters at hand. Words pop out of her mouth without her thinking, I think sometimes she seems, unwittingly, to offend some of her quieter, black colleagues who appear slower and even more quiet in her presence. She is quick to praise her colleagues and I think, sees herself, as fairly sensitive. But with Janet, I keep getting the feeling that 'there are places to go, things to do' and for those who keep up, there is a place on the train. 'Hop on board' I hear her calling, but the train isn't stopping for those who hesitate. Janet didn't just let life happen, she engaged with it and would engage with it even when it would be uncomfortable or demanding. Each of life's obstacles she seemed to take as a challenge and she was much challenged in the year of her studies. Her son became ill with a terminal disease and her husband was forced to take a job in Central Africa to help meet their financial needs.

Religion, faith, friends and family were important supports for Janet. She did not talk to her class about her personal trials, and I think many of her colleagues believed that Janet's life was perfect. Her social mask belied much and I think it was important to her to be seen as capable (the private self in Johari's window). She was not one for wallowing in self-pity, nor did she invite this.

"Symptoms usually begin between the ages of 5 and 15 but can, on rare occasions; appear as early as 18 months or as late as 30 years of age. The first symptom to appear is usually difficulty in walking, or gait ataxia. (This how Son's condition started) The ataxia gradually worsens and slowly spreads to the arms and then the trunk. Foot deformities such as clubfoot, flexion (involuntary bending) of the toes, hammer toes, or foot inversion (turning inward) may be early signs. Over time, muscles begin to weaken and waste away, especially in the feet, lower legs, and hands and deformities develop. Other symptoms include loss of tendon reflexes, especially in the knees and ankles. There is often a gradual loss of sensation in the extremities, which may spread to other parts of the body. Dysarthria (slowness and slurring of speech) develops, and the person is easily fatigued. Rapid, rhythmic, involuntary movements of the eyeball (nystagmus) is common. (Son has this) Most people with Friedreich's ataxia develop scoliosis (a curving of the spine to one side),(Son has mild scoliosis) which, if severe, may impair breathing..." (Janet, 15 August)

I think that the way Janet introduced her personal story by first describing the disease and the disease pattern, and then connecting the known symptoms to those her son was experiencing, without first introducing or contextualising her son and his disease, was all the more moving or disturbing, because of this approach. I had a sense of someone holding on tightly and that by describing the details of the condition; it would make the condition more understandable and finite, and therefore, something that could be dealt with. When I teach students about problem solving, I emphasise the need to define and reduce the problem into units that will allow them to then understand the problem more rationally. It seemed that Janet had gone for this approach, which in a sense, allowed her to protect herself from the horror of the reality. It is the distancing and the

emotional withdrawal that would allow this for Janet (at least, in the short term).

This entry had a profound effect on me. Normally when I read a student's entry, I think about it usually in the here and now and dash of a response, or check a fact with a colleague or the Internet or other reference material. This entry, however, caused me to do more than just pause. I had to absorb the blow and try and assimilate the meaning and effect of the writing, first on myself. I had to think about how I felt and then I started worrying about how I could respond in a manner that reflected my concern but would not cause Janet discomfort or further pain. I felt very similar to the way I feel at funerals - any words I have to say seem meaningless in the scale of the immensity of the pain. I stammer and my body reaches out to comfort and then I withdraw for I don't want the moment to be about me. There is such an extent of pain and I feel so helpless. I reflected for over a week and then e-mailed Janet. Up until this point, ours was a joshing relationship - a controllable one. How to retain the dynamics, respect and respond to Janet's revelation about her beloved son and keep Janet safe in terms of our relationship? I also wanted to retain the boundaries that defined our relationship. The response followed on the e-mail.

Maureen's response: You mention how your husband, mother and yourself feel and are dealing with Son's illness. You also note how important God and prayer is for all of you. What things comfort / support Son? How is he dealing with this process?

I see you intellectualizing his illness so that by understanding the process and progress, you at least know what to defend yourselves against.

I am no psychologist, but I do know that there are stages and emotions that are sometimes unbearably painful to deal with - I am really glad that you are on anti-depressants and I hope you are protecting yourself. Again, I urge you to think of a psychologist to allow you the space to express the depths of those emotions without feeling that you are letting anyone down. I think you have a remarkable gift and you are very blessed in the love you share with your family friends - and that they share with you.

Keep writing - keep talking and keep doing the things that make sense to you. I also urge you to give yourself permission to make mistakes. Your life is changing significantly and you need to take care.

It becomes clear that Janet's identities, in terms of the framework, are multiple and rich and clearly identified within her journal: Elements of all aspects of these – the philosophical, pragmatic, ethical, professional, South African, student, self, spiritual and family identity – are touched on to various degrees within her journal. She also moves beyond herself to a wider, more encompassing world view and just as clearly these are located and experienced within a psychological, physical, environmental and philosophical context.

11.5.3 Janet's self-evaluation of her reflective journal

Janet starts her diary in a light-hearted vein,

"Good morning class of 2003. One of your assignments is to write a diary." She acknowledges one of the issues that all students grapple with:

"I thought that I came to DIT to study occupational health, and suddenly I was confronted with this new task of having to write a diary. Write a diary...? I didn't even write a diary as a teenager! So at 50 years of age, and fast nearing the prime of life having to write down my thoughts and experiences was not going to be a breeze. How was this leopard going to change its spots?"

"I live on the fast track, eat fast food, drive a car fast and I like to make immediate communication. Diary writing was very challenging, and beyond my comfort zone... Did I say a new task? Let me correct myself - a new found, arduous task."

As with most students, after the immediate shock, she starts her reflective journey. As the months go by she finds challenging articles and issues and as she applies the Questioning Prompt to promote her critical thinking she finds that "diary writing became easier."

She notes in the early stages "I have cried many tears" and moves to empowerment:

"I have enjoyed the advantages of becoming a little more computer literate these last two years. This has meant I can now surf the net !!!!!!!."

She recognises the value of the process and makes the connections:

"I have accessed and benefited from information that I would never have had the inclination to, or the opportunity to realise. To my advantage, I have accessed the Mail and Guardian on-line and the Health Systems Trust and have used their articles knowing that they are a reputable and recommended source. Both these sources have serious issues to consider and provide plenty food for thought."

Journaling becomes more than problem solving on the personal front. Janet moves to developing her social awareness "There are an incredible amount of various very serious issues that have arisen with todays growing social problems".

Janet's tongue-in-cheek connection with Systems Theory is used to appreciate her learning:

"I have benefited from the reflective, critical thinking and analysis of the events that I have discussed in the diary entries. This has facilitated my professional growth and development by giving me the opportunity to integrate the theoretical knowledge and the practical. I have learned to implement these critical thinking techniques to assess, plan and evaluate situations in my work and home life. The more I reflect the more critical I become, and the more critical I am the more reflecting I have to do. Has this got something to do with INPUTS and THROUGHPUTS and then OUTPUTS?"

The appreciation of the 'messiness' and complexity and the issues presented daily justify the depth and effort of the journaling process, and that Janet has learned this is expressed in her naming of the processes she has engaged with in her journal:

"I live an incredibly busy life with a multitude of simple versus complex issues, happy versus sad issues, solitary times versus chaotic, resolvable versus those issues that cannot be

resolved ??? and to have the answers to every problem, every query, on every occasion and to every troubled soul is a daunting and draining task; it is on these issues that I have had to write about. I have had difficulties in putting it all into words. I have had to come to terms with contradictions and inconsistencies. I have had to interpret and evaluate arguments and beliefs. I have had to raise and pursue core questions, and solve out of the ordinary problems and deal with extraordinary situations. I have had plenty to write about."

Janet writes about the value of introspection:

"This self-examination of my thoughts, feelings, and behaviour has helped me recount key factors in specific experiences and has helped me to learn valuable lessons. Specifically how to better handle those exact circumstances differently".

Janet recognises the cathartic value of the process. "When writing a diary it can provide a person with emotional support." She notes its value transformative learning - "The purpose of the diary and the discussions around critical thinking and reflective practice was to aid in a critical education..." She validates my approach as empathetic-critiquer in positive affirmation, "It provides another source of encouragement and another person's perspective or re-evaluation of the occurrence that has been written about." She has used her journal to reflect soon after an event in order to analyse situations and develop solutions. "Prompt reviews of the learning situations, what is known, what is not yet known and what has been learned, ensures that incidents are well reflected upon and solutions more readily found or worked through."

Janet was one of the students who appreciated an open learning environment that seems to work better with mature students who value structuring their own learning, "It certainly helps to have a less structured learning environment that prompts students to explore what they think is important and worthy of discussion."

Janet looked beyond the paper-based journal to reflect on the social dimension derived from on-line sharing of entries:

"Posting diary entries provides a social learning environment where students can write about their own way of thinking, give reasons to support their way of thinking. It gives an opportunity and an awareness of opposing opinions and perhaps the weakness of their own way of thinking."

11.5.4. Janet's personal, professional and academic growth

Pat (critical reader): "The last diary – Janet - what to say? Started thinking her a little flip/glib and ended up bawling my eyes out. I really can say nothing of any use, except the world is made up of extraordinary people."

Mari Pete (critical reader): Student growth

"My first impression was that this student is that she is exceptionally well-organised – hers is the only diary with a detailed index page, followed by an introduction and a reflection section. When, towards the end of the diary, I became aware of the student's terrible hardship (during the journaling period her son is diagnosed with a terminal disease) it almost seems as if this very organized presentation of the document is a way of making sense of a crumbling world."

Growth

Early in the diary Janet is already operating at an advanced level of critical thinking (e.g. she starts off by analysing the "minimum wages" article thoroughly, from different angles). She is able to see her own weaknesses ("I have very high standards maybe to the point of obsessive..."), she displays confidence and initiative, and is comfortable with herself ("I have lost the need to look 'the part'").

As far as I can see, Janet's growth occurs in the areas of computer skills, language, and a deepening of her already advanced abilities in critical thinking..."

Sarah (Critical Reader)

"Janet demonstrates admirable self-awareness. She can take time to be with herself – 28/04 – "Anyhow I enjoyed my outing today as I had a few minutes to sit and be peaceful next to this little dam in the middle of a Nursery." Similarly, her faith provides an important support for her. When faced with her son's terminal disease Jane reflects on what "God's plan could possibly be for us and what the future holds." (15/08) and "we are praying and trusting for God to be with us in every area of our life – to touch Son physically and emotionally, and to help us to live positively and with hope."

Interestingly, when discussing abortion, Jane focuses on and analyses general attitudes, and then she brings in her own specific experience. Although she herself cancelled an abortion, she does not judge others for ending unwanted pregnancies. I find her attitude far more mature and accepting than Jenny's – another nurse whose diaries I read critically, who gets stuck in dogma. Even as a committed Christian, Janet does not judge others. "My role as a committed Christian is to help people get to a place of holistic healing irrespective of my own personal convictions. (18/05)

Janet also demonstrates a sharp political awareness beyond the scope of nursing, which shows an enquiring mind. E.g. 17/05 – discussion of the cartoon satirising Bush.

In her analysis of an article on retrenchment Janet puts a lot of thought into the implications of the process. She does not simplify the issues and shows an understanding of the complexity of the arguments. "The stress levels are running high at every level in the organisation, from management to sweeper."

11.5.5 Conclusion

I think that as I reviewed Janet's diary as a single entity, I became very aware of the range of areas and interests that Janet covered. Janet had not been afraid to tackle a multiplicity of issues and demonstrated her political literacy. She wrote about current political issues that affected her, in her personal and/or professional capacity directly, or indirectly. She has written about recipes and the values of certain foods. She wrote about her professional life as an Occupational Health nurse and

her relationships with clients and management. She discussed her involvement on one-to-one levels in the institution and she also took a more macro perspective of the place she worked in and the people she worked with, as well as her profession. She wrote about her personal life, her family and her friends and she worked through some fairly profound issues. She reflected on issues raised in the classroom. She reflected on her desires, interests, concerns - and her growth. I think that her range of interests and ability and inclination to read broadly, allowed her to bring a depth of understanding to her analysis. For myself, I certainly felt that Janet was engaging in a dialogue with me and this became important to me as well.

Janet 's technique was also very interesting. She quite frequently cut and pasted the original article so that the facts were as they appeared. Then, as she considered the issues in each section, she typed in her analysis in a different colour. She reflected on different perspectives; she looked for the pros and cons in the arguments and she contextualized the issues. She frequently made connections outside of the context and used her knowledge more broadly. An issue would sometimes spur Janet on to exploring and finding out more about the issue - than only focusing on the article at hand. She has moved very comfortably within Surbeck et al's (1991) process of reflective responses, identified within Figure 10.1 in Chapter 10.

Janet wrote far more entries than required and I remember in a tutorial, where we were discussing stress levels and Janet's need to be in control and 'on-top' of things, that she might want to consider reducing the number of entries - but she didn't. I think that writing became quite important to Janet and her evaluation reflects this. Her approach to writing also varied - she has been serious about certain issues and delved deep emotionally; she has written tongue-in-cheek and mocked both herself and institutions; she has used humour as a cover to analyse quite serious issues and the

result has been effective. She has written clinically, using evidence-based practice and the literature to support conclusions. Is there a consistent pattern? I think that no matter the approach, Janet's values surface - the values of excellence, caring for others and wanting to share in relationships with others. She was plucky (or truculent) and she didn't give up. She could be obsessive and she had frailties. Her emotions roller coasted at times but when she was down, she picked herself up and looked for the light. People were important to Janet - her family, her friends, her clients - and even the man-in-the-street. Janet was "involved in mankind" and chose to involve herself. She could no more avoid picking up those who had fallen on the wayside than she could ignore the exigencies of life. She had strong coping mechanisms and supports and I was constantly aware of the spiritual supports in her life. When I think about students, I often reflect on whether or not I would like them to care for my family if the need arose. Janet I would trust implicitly to do what is right and best.

I think that this was reflected in her own observation:

" If we live out of fear and our actions are determined by the potential negative outcomes of our actions, then I think that something in the human spirit has died. Indeed, I think at that point we have ceased to display the one quality that makes us different from every other species on earth - the ability to go beyond our needs and reach out and meet the needs of others, even at the expense of our own preservation."

Using a framework to 'see' Janet:

The voices of Janet? She clearly had her own constructed voice. She was passionate about her life and the elements comprising her life. She brought her years of experience (she was 50) that provided the context for the issues she considered and the manner in which she engaged with these issues. Although she recognised the strength of her stance on the issues and was clear about her moral 'ladder', she had the flexibility and openness to allow for other possibilities.

How does Janet's reflective journal allow me to place her within the Transformative Intellectual's frame of reference? When considering the models I have used to enable me to 'see' the student's personal identity, there is congruence between Janet's self-perception and mine. Janet was very aware of the context she lived and worked within and the different roles she played and she allowed for the scope and range of these differing elements. In no way was Janet a one-dimensional creature. She was very feminine in the world of men, she was a mother and a daughter, she was a wife, she was a student and was not loathe taking on the fun aspects that this role presented her with. She was a professional nurse and she was a friend. She was a citizen of this country. All of these roles presented Janet with responsibilities and challenges, which she accepted with verve.

Philosophically, Janet had a clear vision of her world and determined her own values. They both supported and advanced her, but she lived in the real world and was able to reconcile her values with the pragmatic reality of life's constraints, retaining and promoting a strong ethical stance.

In terms of van Aswegen's model (statements for the recipients of critical reflective practice in 2.4.4.3), there is clear evidence, both in terms of the student's self-evaluation as well as from the reflections, that Janet was a critical reflective practitioner. Jane (critical reader): "Janet's persona, her interest in and sharing with people, her ability to cope with a most distressing personal experience – plus her sense of humour, shows a well-rounded person.

Her professionalism is never in doubt and neither is her critical reflective practice. Her comment at the beginning on the value of this and of keeping a diary, is justified in the reading. She is an admirable woman."

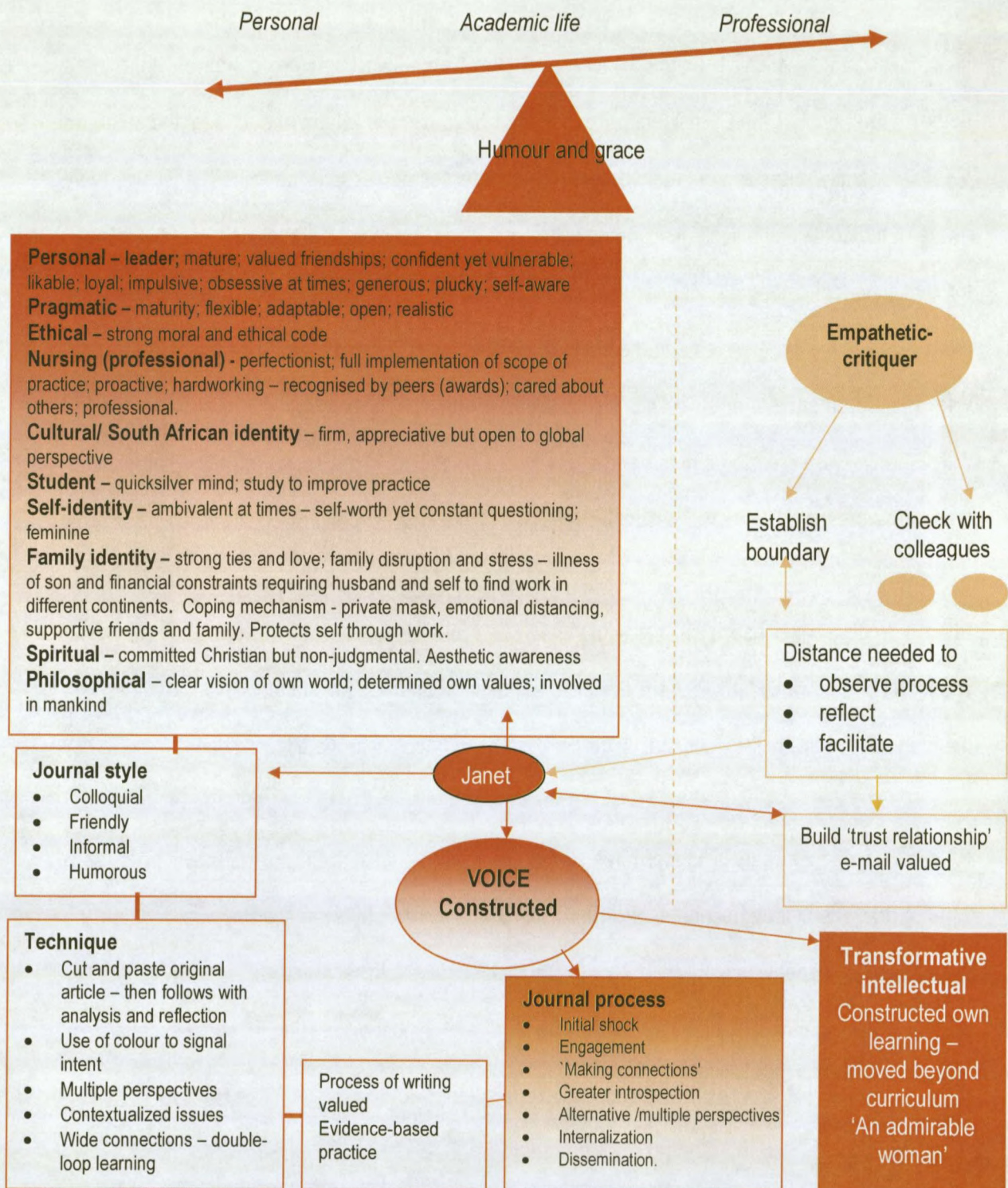


Figure 12.4 Janet's journaling experience in terms of the Theoretical Framework for Analysis of Reflective Journals as defined in Figure 10.1

Reeva's journal

11.6 REEVA

Disequilibrium versus the private self: Development of reasoning and writing skills, deepening of understanding of self and professional practice while searching for balance amidst the fears

11.6.1 Introduction

I have chosen to start my discussion of Reeve in the middle of her diary, early June, 2003 with a discussion of an incident which affected our relationship. Reeve was an attractive single woman. She was a second-year Primary Health Care nursing student in her late twenties, South African borne of Indian descent. She worked in a government-based comprehensive primary health care clinic in the Durban (eThekwinini) metropolitan area.

She exuded an air of quiet, almost arrogant confidence and I remember feeling somewhat intimidated by her. If I think about why I should feel this way, it was because she seemed aloof and did not appear to embrace either my teaching methods or the course structuring. She had just successfully completed her Primary Health Care (PHC) nursing course and her course facilitator was extremely competent. I felt that my discursive, non-structured style was not altogether satisfactory in her eyes. I had a strong impression of someone who had registered for the course in order to complete her requirements for her PHC degree, and both the management course and I were incidental, or even irrelevant to this process. She seemed to be holding judgement of us both in reserve and it was most disconcerting. Of course, this is merely a perception based on her manner and lack of enthusiastic acceptance. I don't mean that Reeve did not get involved - she did, but she appeared off-hand, and the sense of her boredom with the slowness of the process was patent. In fairness to the quicker students, remembering that first language speakers were in the minority, there was quite a lot of repetition and the pace of progress as well as the choice of material for discussion was very

dependent on the will of the majority of the students. It must not have been easy for those students who were used to a structured and rapidly-moving pace of delivery of lecturing or discussion, to be faced with discussions focusing on the work-based problems of students. Sometimes these same problems were raised again from different perspectives. The afternoon sessions were open-ended and not split into the traditional period format. The class itself was fairly large (19 students) and if a question was asked of all students in a round-table forum, so that each student was consulted, this process too, could slow down the session. I didn't do this often, and generally split the class into smaller discussion groups after general explanations and class discussion - but the few occasions could be frustrating. I remember asking the class in early June to evaluate their progress and their perception of the course. They discussed this in groups of three or four. Although the following isn't an excerpt of Reeva's diary, I included it because it was integral to my understanding and appreciation of Reeva and was the turning point in our relationship. It should be remembered that this programme was taught in an integrated manner, where I often triangulated information or concepts derived from other elements of the course (tasks, assignments, class discussions)) in order to appreciate (or allow the students to appreciate) the learning process as a fluid progression. Reeva's following excerpt is derived from a *task* response on assertiveness subsequent to this class incident (11 June, 2003) and underlies the explanation of where our relationship was, and to where it progressed.

11.6.2 The event

Reeva had completed an assertiveness quiz and a task on self-analysis and used this platform to deal with an incident that had occurred in class: After discussing their evaluation in small groups, Reeva responded but on behalf of what she felt was a reflection of the whole group's views and indicated that the pace was too slow and that discussions on issues were being repeated. This

immediately seemed to be perceived by a number of students to be an attack on (a) themselves in that some of the students assumed that she was belittling their intelligence as they had indicated that the pace and structure suited them. Most of these students were black African. Some, including myself, saw this as (b) a criticism of my teaching method, which in fact, is what she really meant, and which of course, could be fairly easily be dealt with. It was not a comfortable situation for Reeva and others, and all credit to her that she used her task to reflect on this issue:

"From the readings I have gathered that I need to build on being assertive without letting the situation get out of control or reaching crisis level. My actions are governed by needs and these needs have to be met in a more diplomatic manner without the feelings or rights of others being impinged on. I have recognized that anger and frustration are destructive elements and thus can hinder these needs being met... Enhancing my assertiveness skills can assist in the listener perceiving the intended message correctly. It is not comforting to realize that individuals feel threatened or intimidated by my attempts of voicing my feelings or thoughts. It is important for others to know what I want without feeling attacked thus giving my needs consideration."

This event was a major turning point for both of us in the relationship I think, and the easing into a trust-based 'accord'. It related to the way we both responded to each other in the text, and then in a subsequent casual conversation walking together on the way to the Web CT classroom. It also connects to the focus group discussion on student feelings of inferiority discussed in Chapter Seven, Sections 7.4.5.1 and 7.4.5.2. I included this excerpt as it touched on issues affecting Reeva, her identity and sense of self.

I think that it was important to Reeva that she both perceived herself and was perceived as someone who was competent, intelligent, independent and sensitive. Reeva appeared to have a great deal of pride. For Reeva, nursing was her chosen profession and being a nurse of excellence was central to

her inner core. She did not reveal her inadequacies lightly and so public written reflections touched me a great deal in that I do believe Reeva reflected on her position with intent and care, and the self-revelation and ensuing self-insight were acts of inner courage. The management of the 'event' also allowed me to move past my own assumptions about Reeva's independence and aloofness, and forget about how this intimidated me, and 'touch' Reeva, without trying to be the teacher I thought she might like me to be and so, not compromise my style. I just tried to be more sensitive to Reeva and more careful and mindful.

11.6.3 First impressions

My very first impression of Reeva at the beginning of the academic year was that she was young, attractive, somewhat reserved with a clear sense of where she was headed and she was ambitious. Her boyfriend, a doctor, was on his way to New Zealand, and was waiting for Reeva to complete her studies so that they could go together. Her capacity to function was stretched in her own place at work, as she was one of the few nurses who were skilled in clinical diagnosis and treatment. Much of her discussion in the tutorials revolved around communication and how to improve the functioning of her health service. She frequently felt frustrated by the 'system' and the perceived lack of competence of some of her fellow health care workers in managing the system. In addition to the workload presented by both her work context and this management course, she was also completing an onerous clinical component to upgrade her certificate in PHC to diploma status, as well as meeting the requirements for Research 1. "After those first few days of orientation to what's expected of me this year, I beg to differ what's worse: the volume of the work or the course content" (Reeva's first entry, 13th Feb). As can be seen, Reeva wasn't too thrilled about the course per se. She had registered for it in order to complete her degree. "At first I must admit that I was skeptical about writing the diary articles. This predominately emerged from the fact that I am not the person who can

put their thoughts and views to writing." (Reeva, self-evaluation). I could see then that I was going to have to do a lot of work in the motivational department. During the year, she was beset by health problems, which she kept private from the rest of her classmates, and probably only shared with me as a courtesy. Reeva was a very private person.

11.6.4 Self-definition

In class, I felt I had to proceed fairly cautiously as Reeva, while ostensibly calm and open, seemed 'prickly' and sensitive. I was worried that I would not connect easily with her. Reeva's journal, in fact, was the key to establishing an understanding about each other. It provided a few clear indicators about how Reeva saw herself and what she valued:

- She could and did connect lessons learned from one context to another.
- She noted that she has 'chosen' nursing as a profession - it was not just a job for her and was part of her definition of herself.
- She indicated that she would never have dreamed of journaling - but if it was a means to an end - she would do this.
- She was open to the concept and linked it to improving her documentation skills, something she learned to value.
- Another trait which defined her sense of self was endurance - she had overcome a setback before through endurance.

Reeva had a sense of humour - a key to opening one's self up, and it proved helpful in the academic year.

"Little did I imagine that I would also learn on diary keeping, something that sounds both weird and wonderful to me. The introductory lectures to diary keeping soon began to give me nightmares. Images of my lecturer looming over my bed, hovering with a pen in her hand

saying "Write! Write! Write!" drove me to search my memory and retrieve vital information" (Reeva, 13 Feb).

11.6.5 Journaling valued

It would seem that fear of the unknown, with the possible outcome of making mistakes and looking foolish, is the "stuff of nightmares" (even though the phrase was written to amuse), particularly in the light of my perception of Reeva as a proud woman. I do think that it was this pride that made her all the more vulnerable. I was quietly pleased that Reeva had embraced the concept of journaling as a means to reflection, and particularly like her understanding of the process as one of self-nurturing. "Fears are dispelled and the task of diary writing is well under hand. What better way to grow intellectually and spiritually than to nurture myself!" (Reeva, 13 Feb)

On reflection, I do see that journaling is a nurturing process. I don't know that I fully appreciated this notion prior to reading Reeva's journal. Van Aswegen (2002:54) writes "guided reflection can nurture sense of awareness and commitment...Guidance to critically reflect on practice enables practitioners to become more conscious of their existing qualities and skills and aids purpose and direction towards the goal of effective work." She warns, however, that the person guiding "should be committed to the same values and offer positive encouragement. Without commitment and encouragement the reflective practitioner may become increasingly stressed".

11.6.6 Reeva's fears

In the early stages (Reeva, 6 March) Reeva faced the confusion raised by ambivalence. She was not certain she had made the right choice in her life's path – and both choices were important to her – on the one hand, following the person she loved and on the other, completing her degree, an important

factor in terms of status, recognition as well as a basis for furthering her career and learning opportunities. She was also not clear whether the courses she was undertaking that year would offer her what she wanted. It was also a bit late for her to throw in the towel and back out. She reassured herself by stating that this was her course (taking ownership) and therefore also her responsibility for ensuring that her learning would (must) turn out well. A major part of her concern was her lack of time. She saw time as a precious commodity and I get a sense of her wanting to make the absolute most out of it.

"I have lost control in determining my path," writes Reeva (10 April). Again, the thoughts that concerned Reeva embraced the fear of the unknown. Reeva saw herself as strong, but with something very precious to her testing the very fabric of her being (boyfriend leaving, and although voicing his intent to return, Reeva was still unsure whether distance and time would make this a lie), she voiced her inner fear and recognised that she was not as strong as her outer-mask indicated. She returned to her coping strategies - endurance, determination and rationalization.

"It is in any relationship that compromise is required! I guess its time for me to step back and wait for what's to unfold in the future. It's never always that one can determine ones actions with absolute advantage. Some things stepped down for can be greatly rewarded especially if endured with patience!" (Reeva, 10 April).

In a journal entry (Reeva, 10 April), she used the evocative metaphor of a journey "pathway" - and then the light - and then the revelation. I think it is such an exciting way to experience learning - to start in the dark in some trepidation and doubt, and to move into the 'light'. For Reeva, fear of the unknown is scarier than an adventure.

11.6.7 Personal growth

I would like to return to the journal article cited by Reeva in an earlier entry by van Aswegen (2002) who states:

"Journal writing is an introspective tool individuals use for personal growth, in educational applications, and in group settings. It connects thought, feeling, and action - a synthesizing tool that brings critical reflection and action together. When used purposefully, it is more than a means to an end, more than recording what has happened, it becomes, according to Lukinsky (Mezirow, 1990:214), an "objectification of the inner search, and anchor from which to make further explorations."

A colleague of mine expressed her concern about students writing about personal issues, and although she recognised the value of this for personal growth, she was not at all certain that it was appropriate in the educational setting. I think that van Aswegen (2002) answers these doubts. I also believe that the more comfortable one is with oneself, the easier it becomes to move beyond the self to other regions and concerns. I do not see it as being possible to separate out the personal identity from the work identity from the student identity and other identities in a totally compartmentalised way and on a continuous basis. Each flows into the other to make the whole. It is for this reason that I think creating a 'space' for the personal, allows later for a healthier 'space' for the professional. Gilmartin (2002:1533) recognises that the exploration of self-awareness through reflective dialogue improves reflective practice, with particular mention of the interpersonal skill component. She notes that it is critical for nurses to become "critically aware of psychological assumptions, engage with feeling states and examine interactive patterns." Her qualitative study focuses on the consideration of how nurses engage with or resist the learning process. While I would need to be cautious about making connections between the reflective dialogue in Gilmartin's work which focused on the dialogue emanating from interpersonal tasks between peers in the classroom, and the reflective

dialogue between Reeva and myself in the form of journaling, I do think that the central premise – reflective dialogue improves reflective practice – holds true for both. I would also like to follow up with one of Gilmartin's (2002:1533) resulting proposals in terms of nursing education – that those educators working with an interpersonal skills component

“show greater sensitivity in the use of experiential learning theory, balancing the use of novel stimulation with the students' behavioural signals. Rogers (1993) suggested that teachers who were highly sensitive to their students and who were emotionally expressive, were likely to encourage exploration. Freire (1970), who empowered illiterate people in Brazil, showed radical insights on educational strategies which might be helpful in enabling student nurses with poorly developed interpersonal skills” such as small group work (Gilmartin, 2002:1540).

However, she does warn that group work that challenges defensive behaviours requires a great deal of sensitivity, flexibility and insight.

11.6.8 Life-changing experience

Reeva became ill, which seemed to have quite a profound effect on her. I knew that she had formed a close relationship with my colleague, who taught her in her PHC course the previous year, and was currently her research supervisor, and so, while I was prepared to be very open to Reeva, I was not unduly concerned about her well-being as she had appropriate supports. For me, it was an added bonus if and when she did share, probably because Reeva was such a private person and protected herself by this self-containment. She reminded me so much of a cat I have, who allows me to stroke her only once in a while. She lives in my home, uses its' facilities and makes herself at home - but keeps the family at a distance. She chooses when to be friendly and dictates our response. Reeva had to take some time off from class, but did not share the reason for this with her colleagues. I think it was politeness that prodded Reeva to explain to me why she was taking time off. I was very careful

with Reeva - open, but not inquisitive, and because of the structuring of the course, was also able to be flexible in terms of Reeva meeting her course requirements i.e. a more flexible timing schedule.

"So much has occurred in such a short space of time. This year seems to be rolling on fast! Somehow I feel its because I have been consistently occupied with work, studying and conducting a social life. Being physically and mentally occupied seems to make time move on fast as there is very little time to actually watch the clock. Meeting deadlines for the assignments and tasks simply takes me through to the next that needs to be done.

Since my recent illness, my boyfriend is no longer going to New Zealand. His unselfish decision to stay and support me has proved his worth to me. Yet again he has risen as my pillar of strength and this has added to me being dependent on him emotionally. Through all of this I have accepted that I am human and from your previous advice I am willing to open up to experiences so as to look at things from a different perspective. I have found that our lives play out by the experiences that mould and shape us as individuals. These experiences have made me stronger and wiser in the game of living. It is difficult to actually stick to plans that have been made of things that I would like to do. The reason being that since events are uncontrollable and unpredictable. Well at least I am certain that my studies are near completion and this is what I am presently striving for" (Reeva, Entry 10, 5 August).

This entry was very personal and indicated an opening up of Reeva's thoughts and her ability to share these thoughts. They were also quite revealing: The fact that Reeva's boyfriend was prepared to wait for Reeva had moved her profoundly. I had the sense that although she was sure of her feelings for him, she didn't quite trust his verbalised feelings for her. This statement of intent went a great deal forwards in opening Reeva to a sense of 'trust'. It seemed that Reeva was becoming more open to her inner feelings and used these to guide her to where she wanted to go in life. Of course she had goals but perhaps, for me, importantly, her boundaries had shifted and had become more open and flexible. Again, Reeva reflected on the concept of time and the immutability and inexorability of the concept.

Jane (critical reader) comments:

"Despite the pressure, what a mature perspective and how much critical reflection, together with inter-communication activities, have strengthened her, opened her to the fact of "Man Proposes, God Disposes". Her boyfriend's sacrifice and her illness has made her really realize her own mortality, and value life. Interesting to look back here at her changing perspective – how it is not the 'moment' that shapes our lives ultimately, but experience."

11.6.9 Development of critical thinking skills

While Reeva did use her journal for introspection, she also used it to improve on her critical thinking skills and she sought to do this by analysing various journal articles that interested her or were useful to her practice. Mari (critical reader) notes "In the beginning there are noticeable holes in her arguments, (Confidentiality and teenagers) but then, during the reflection process she hones her critical thinking skills and begins to argue from various angles (Entry 6)." I remember some of the first assignments and Reeva's entries, where she would argue issues. Initially, I was left with the impression of someone trying to be erudite and confounding many of the thoughts with cryptic and esoteric words and phrases in order, it seemed, to be seen to be clever. How to help Reeva develop a better style using a simpler form of phrasing without hurting her feelings was one of the issues I had to consider. In some of her earlier entries, she had some of the following difficulties and mitigating factors in her expression of critical thinking. As the arguments and attached articles are sometimes lengthy, it is advisable to read the related article, Reeva's critical reflection, my responses and my interpretations of the thought process in the complete analysed journal (see Raw data).

11.6.10 Themes

Reeva's reflections revolved around her nursing practice where she focused on her philosophy of nursing and the challenges facing the delivery of good nursing practice. She was very concerned about issues relating to power. Mari (critical reader) writes: "The following quote expresses beautifully Reeva's increasing awareness of her responsibility to help others become empowered:

"My role as a health educator/advisor increases daily in the view of empowering communities with the knowledge of current research and findings so that hope is enforced and despair is shunned."

These also connected with issues related to gender and to her self-identity. The moral and ethical components of health care delivery and her interrelationships with others led to her addressing resulting conflicts and the feelings emanating from these situations. As Reeva appeared to operate from the private self of Johari's window, most noteworthy were her efforts to open herself to uncomfortable self-scrutiny. In Entry 12, she explores the linkages between culture and spirituality. On the macro level, issues around politics, the South African context and HIV AIDS were issues discussed. From her student identity, issues around learning, the difficulties, challenges and achievements were addressed. Mari (critical reader) observes: "...Reeva is passionate (she uses lots of exclamation marks), but she uses intellectual and academic foundations to back up her arguments."

11.6.11 Lessons learned

I do think that there has been a development in Reeva's critical reflective writing ability over the period of the year to the point where the issues were not obfuscated by the words. I came to both like and admire Reeva during the year, and my teaching has been the better for the lessons she handed me. One of my real difficulties has been in the journal section where students have developed arguments or indicated where and how issues emanating from the article impact on their work. Because it forms part of their journal, the 'rules' of critiquing apply. In the reflective section, it is

relatively easy. However, there is a differentiation between critical thinking and reflection: Both are connected to each other, but I am concerned about the structuring of the journals where I have indicated that my job as empathetic-critiquer is not to judge. While I do judge, albeit below layers, carefully and indirectly, I don't know if I am doing the student any favours by not being more specific, particularly when it comes to reason and logic. Part of me believes that through this softer approach, students venture into realms that perhaps they would be far more cautious about had I formalised my critique - but I am not sure. Perhaps my answer lies in Reeve's journal? I had approached the analysis of Reeve's journal chronologically but recall becoming more aware as time progressed, that Reeve's ability to reason, or perhaps express her reasoning, had improved significantly by year's end.

11.6.12 Conclusion

Reeve was someone who tried to learn from life's lessons. I think that there had been a number of issues that forced her to revisit her priorities and values - her health and the closeness of her needed love relationship being some of these. She had been emotionally affected by her ill health, but she had been very sensible in her approach to minimising the damage and managing herself. She also valued the knowledge she had in facilitating this careful approach. "Now it's just a matter of time, waiting for biopsy results while holding onto the thought that I am in remission!" (Reeve, 8 July, 2003)

Maureen: And now obviously since I spoke with you this morning, all is well. Your entry 6 also resonates with me and connects with what you and are now saying. Will you continue with the stress reduction campaign – or hit the work overdrive button again?

I think that the question I asked was most apt - Reeve was a workaholic. This did seem to define who she was. She also liked to have control over her life, and so I was particularly impressed with her live-and-let-live acceptance of her required need to wait for the test results to determine her

diagnosis. In terms of her lesson as a patient - Reeva had gained a clearer understanding and appreciation of her 'sick role', which she believed will allow her to empathise better with her own patients.

(Reeva, 12 June) "...I do believe that religion affords us comfort in the unknown as prayer helps fill the voids with hope. Those that have hope have the courage to survive whereas those that don't might not. This is something I often think about especially during trying times. Pleasure cannot fully be rewarded without the expense of pain".

I see Reeva using the reflective cycle and returning again and again to issues that concern her – her spiritual growth, her physical fallibility, her strengths and ability to cope and the challenges life presents her with. Initially I had a sense of Reeva wanting to move forwards and the achievement seemed to lie in the developing of skills and gaining the certificates of proof. I had awareness of a softening in Reeva, possibly because of the challenges which have really knocked her reality and directed goals. I still have an impression of Reeva's innate confidence in her ability to overcome her 'challenges' and this is an empowering sensation, enfolding her in the warmth of 'good' feelings – "enjoyable". I recognise the Calvinistic principles in the cliché "*Pleasure cannot fully be rewarded without the expense of pain*" – it seems like something a parent would say to their child, to rationalise the experience.

(Reeva, 28 August, 2003): "I can feel that the year-end is drawing to a close as the pressure to complete tasks and assignments has been growing. It has not been easy and to complicate matters we have been given a new lecturer. I really feel for those girls within the group that were finding things difficult as it were. In order for me to have coped I have had to work around the clock using up whatever time I had available. Sticking to a work/study/social roster has helped me tremendously to make sure that I had things well balanced and that all aspects of

my life were taken care off. My inspiration has been my boyfriend who has urged me to stay focused in order to complete my studies”

Again, Reeva contemplates issues that matter to her - completing what she has started; reaping the results of hard work. Although Reeva had previously indirectly reflected on the need for balance (mostly in the form of practical approaches to coping), she now directly refers the need to have balance in her life - a very healthy approach. She again acknowledges the support - or rather, inspiration of her boyfriend. She also makes reference to the difficulty presented by having to contend with another lecturer (I had taken some time off for study leave). I don't know that I fully appreciated the amount of energy it requires to have another lecturer take over. I thought the transition would be smooth, but I see that renegotiating entry with another educator is more difficult than I anticipated, although this issue was raised in Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.6.3.

Reeva touched on a number of issues in the article (Entry 26 June) about the nursing profession and made the issue and views her own. She was concerned that there is a difference between reality and 'ideal' nursing practice. She maintained that if nurses were supported (through infrastructure, emotional and financial aids), there would not be such a gap between the real and the ideal world. She suggested that those who ought to know and were in a position of power did not appreciate the contradiction between real and ideal. They were the ones who needed to 'hear.' She was proud of her profession and I was aware of this throughout the year. At the same time, she noted the need to be seen as someone not tied down by society's expectations or confined within a clichéd role, "emotionally submissive", but rather expressed the need to be seen as a human being who is a nurse. She valued her profession and saw herself as a nurse "who would have made a difference by touching the life of someone or may have made someone feel better by the mere presence of

yourself." Respect was an important quality for Reeva, both in her respect for her clients, but also being respected herself. These are issues that the majority of students writing reflective journals, have noted. Reeva, as have other students, recognised the unreasonable demand being placed upon them, without the requisite remuneration or consideration. It is this lack of consideration, she noted, which drives nurses to emigrate. This ambivalent situation must have been a difficult one for Reeva - knowing she was needed, but disappointingly aware that she was not valued appropriately.

I included the following entry because Reeva refers to the workshop, an event that has been referred to by the various participants within this research study.

"Today was an exciting and interesting day for my group. The teamwork and effort that we all pooled together into running the workshop was outstanding and this was supported by the comments and the response that was received during the session.

The turnout from the guests invited was good and most of the lecturers showered us with support. Overall they were impressed and I feel proud of being part of this dynamic management group of 2003. This day saw the way in which we put our communication, organisational as well as interpersonal skills into effect as future managers..."

Mari (critical reader) observes: "Although Reeva expresses some frustrations with the process-oriented nature of the course, she finally rises to the challenge again at the end of her diary, where she becomes part of the group. Previously there was a sense of her being separate and trying to remain independent, now she extends what used to be an individual pride, to a collective one".

I found Reeva's use of the phrase 'future managers' very revealing. She started her programme to learn to be a Primary Health Care practitioner and was not that open to the management component - it was seen more as a course requirement than an 'empowering' programme. I was pleased that she was able to see herself in this light. This workshop was a wonderful collaborative effort and that it allowed students to identify their development in management in practical terms was exciting for us

all. Reeva just reminded me again of the need for a positive and supportive learning environment. I do think that if someone believes in you, it makes believing in yourself so much easier. Espeland and Shanta (2001:342) cite Glass who observes that empowerment means "...the raising of consciousness, the development of a strong positive self-esteem, and the political skills need(ed) to negotiate and change the healthcare system." Reeva's comment on evaluation at the end of this section demonstrates that she has moved beyond the need (although maybe not the desire) for good grades, to an appreciation of the concept of evaluation.

I don't think that I was sufficiently aware of Reeva's openness to change or to accepting the need to "strive(s) for betterment" (Reeva, 18 September, 2003). I think that I made assumptions about Reeva that were not entirely supported by her entries – and again, it is only as I read her entries in their totality that I become more aware of what Reeva was striving for - and that there were hidden vulnerabilities and needs and self-realizations that were masked by her external persona, which reflected a quiet, untouchable confidence.

"Two weeks to final exams, the home stretch begins! My preparation for the exams has begun physically and psychologically. I have agreed to give it my best in order to complete this year since I have worked so hard. The most difficult of tasks for me was learning to be critical and looking within one. I do feel the clarity in my thoughts and this has enabled me to gain better control over my thoughts and feelings. For all the hard work that I have put into the year and all the time I have sacrificed and dedicated towards my studies I do believe that the reward I am to reap at the end will give me a true sense of achievement!" (Reeva, 2 October, 2003)

Marie (critical reader) notes that Reeva "ends on a high note, in typical goal-oriented style: "The home stretch begins!" - still true to herself, yet having grown noticeably since the first diary entry."

I am left with a sense of awe. Reeva had worked hard and this was reflected in her work and her marks - and I salute her for this. She had been totally committed to her task and I admired her gumption and doggedness in following through this commitment. My greatest admiration is reserved for "The most difficult of tasks for me was learning to be critical and looking within one. I do feel the clarity in my thoughts and this has enabled me to gain better control over my thoughts and feelings" (Reeva, 2nd October, 2003). Initially, Reeva did not strike me as someone who would dig deep and look within herself, no easy task for anyone, particularly when this is being shared with someone she was not familiar with. I don't think that there is any doubt about Reeva's personal development this year. I have also noted a gradual and increasing shift in her critical thinking skills - less verbosity and more substance.

Reeva's Self-Evaluation Commentary:

Reeva, in her self-evaluation, has made the shift from registering for a course for degree requirements to an internalization of the notion of actually being a 'manager' and ironically, this shift has occurred through the reflective process:

"As future managers we need to possess the necessary skills used to analyse situations, information and experiences so as to act appropriately if the need arises within the practise. Critical thinking has given me the opportunity to analyse my thoughts, something I never did previously, as well as the opportunity to increase my knowledge and prepare myself on current issues occurring within the health sector. This knowledge became a pool of wealth for me as these current issues were used for general conversation both at work as well as socially... Insight is a powerful tool that all managers should possess. This not only improves the way a manager functions but also enhances his/her relations with others within their environment. "

Reeva has clearly moved beyond the micro nursing context and again, ironically, has completely embraced the reflective journaling process:

"Looking at current health issues and the impact it has on my present practise allowed me the opportunity to look at the changes that are occurring within the health sector. The Government's decision to provide Anti-retro viral treatment in the future using community based health centres in drastically going to change my organisation in the future and the way I will be functioning as a Primary Health Care nurse. What I have realised through the diary writing is that the only way to cope within the nursing profession is via ongoing education and update of knowledge. This is how nursing has managed to evolve into a strong dynamic recognisable profession that it is today."

Reeva's trusting of the process and valuing independence of choice and the Constructivist approach to learning is evident as she describes how journaling is fleshed out and embraced in the reflective tutorial: "This is where the diary comes at an advantage as it gave each person within the group an opportunity to focus freely on issues that concerned them without restraint compiling these thoughts into their own diaries."

Reeva has learned new skills and has learned to challenge what previously been seen as authoritative voices in newsprint:

"Drawing on conclusions and clarifying issues was difficult at first as it was taken for granted that whatever I read in the media was true because the media's purpose was to keep the public informed. Well I was wrong and the evaluation of the articles assisted me in discovering how facts are contorted by words so that the media could market what they perceived as news. On closer inspection of the articles and by the use of other resources, it became increasingly clear to see and read in-between the lines, especially when it came to the issue of the Governments delay in the provision of Anti-retro viral treatment. "

Reeva has made a complete turn-around from an original skeptical stance to embracement of the process:

"One of the strengths of keeping this diary is that it encourages the learner to broaden their horizons in the use of resources and reading material. There are no limits to the sources of information that each diary entry can spark off. The lecturer has assisted us on numerous occasions by posting up News Links using web sites as well as making additional readings available on Web-CT. For me this opened up my thoughts to various views on common issues raised within my writings. Various resources also gave me the ability to use the information to sift out the relevant from the irrelevant regarding the newspaper and the journals. Diary writing has proved for me that it can be challenging informative and a powerful educational tool that gives the learner the opportunity to look for information related to his/her interest. It is amazing how the ability of critically thinking was moulded by the use of the diary writing process for me."

Reeva focused on her personal choices and learning; her personal struggles. While she decried the political focus of interests of many South Africans in one of her first entries, it was most enlightening to see how frequently 'politics' consumed her thinking – the major source of her speculations concerned HIV AIDS debate (at least 7 articles). She also focused on nursing as a profession and other issues involved aspects touching on her practice. Interestingly, unlike many students, she never discussed her work context specifically or management issues in her work context, but rather focused on her discipline, Primary Health Care Nursing. As I reflect on the entries read, my analysis and then Reeva's final analysis, I don't believe that I would alter her evaluation. Her analysis is sound, supported by evidence and congruent with mine. This is a young woman with a voice of her own. She claims both ownership and responsibility for her ideas, beliefs and actions and has demonstrated keen insight, particularly with regards to herself.

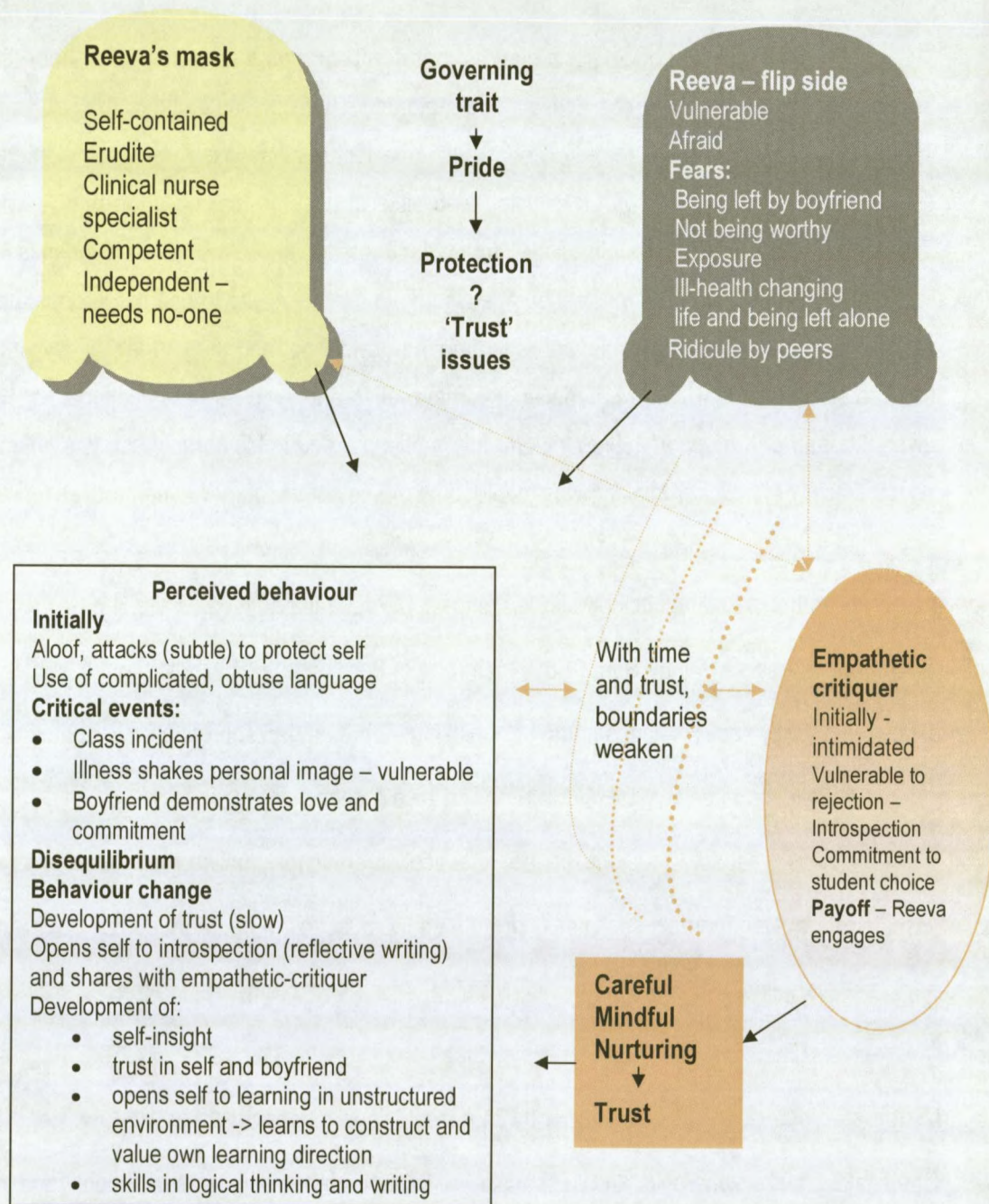


Figure 12.5 Reeva – an example of the importance of the 'trust' relationship

Xolisi's journal

11.8 XOLISI

Balance through choices based on a grounded value system

11.8.1 Introduction

Theoretically, the empathetic-critiquer's role is to ask question around process rather than content. Some research indicates therefore, that it is not necessary for the empathetic-critiquer to be an expert in the field (as explained in Chapter Three, Section 3.8.3 and Chapter Five, Section 5.4.1). I don't necessarily think that expertise is required, but certainly a working knowledge of the discipline and context is useful. This became clear as I engaged in feedback and then analysis of Xolisi's entries, that as the empathetic-critiquer, I had had to use my knowledge to appreciate and understand the cues (or short cuts) presented in the reflective writing. Xolisi has written about her experiences very briefly and succinctly. I became aware on reviewing her entries and my critique, that I had made assumptions and filled in the blanks - and fairly easily. The language, whilst not correct English, was sufficiently descriptive to allow me to fill in the blanks - partly because I am a nurse and can transpose myself in my imagination into scenarios with which I am familiar. I notice that I respond fairly similarly to other students reports or entries, where English is their second or third language and have become quite used to 'filling in the blanks.' On June 20, Xolisi titles her entry "... Love them enough to talk about sex... SABC advert for love life". It is a typical example of how we make connections without full explanations because of our exposure to the cultural context. I understand perfectly that 'Love them enough to talk about sex...' SABC advert for 'Love Life' is about the messages on sexual education we need to give our children to protect them from negative consequences - and that *Love Life* is a programme focused on sex education on our South African television channels.

Much of communication lies in the picking up of these cues and being aware of what is happening around one. In order to analyse Xolisi's reflections, I have had to find support for my analysis – hence the references to the literature in my initial analysis as seen in the complete journal analysis and with some examples as illustrated in Appendix 11.1. This process was necessary as the critical readers and perhaps other readers of this thesis, may not have the requisite working knowledge of both the time, place or professional practice of nursing as referred to by the participants, particularly remembering that the student participants were writing only for the empathetic-critiquer and themselves as part of their learning journey, and not as part of the research process. Although prior permission to use their work in the research had been given early in the academic year, realisation that their work had been included in the actual study only came later.

11.8.2 Xolisi's narrative

How to describe Xolisi's journey? I would summarise this as an expression of issues that have mattered to Xolisi and that have been able to convey the principles, philosophy and personal traits within Xolisi's self (these are further complemented in Chapter Eight, where Xolisi is one of the participants in the tutorials used in the study). These are conveyed through the many quotes she gives throughout, as she reveals her views and values:

"Those degrees...really do prove the intelligence and enthusiasm on ones part. But does one enjoy them without sharing and giving of that knowledge in order to help the needy and to promote other's quality of life?"

"In most instances a person's obstacles in reaching her goals is the person him/ herself by being scared of what will people say..."

"As a manager, empathise with other people...listen to what people are saying...gain a reputation for being supportive, ...be natural and humble."

"How comforting it is to know that there are still people out there who are prepared to speak the truth no matter at what cost to their dignity."

As Mari (critical reader) observes "Xolisi's diary is a tapestry of horror stories (rape, AIDS etc.) stitched together with thoughts and anecdotes of Ubuntu, humour and faith." Xolisi's work has provided reference points for what she did, and more importantly, how she did this. The people she worked with reflect the challenges she faced such as the possible perceived threat posed by the witch doctor:

"Hiv / AIDS is just an illness like all other illness that I can heal, but one must come to me when he has just been infected if he needs to be cured". This is what the local witch doctor inyanga told the people at an imbizo held in the local induna's house. The meeting was to address people on health issues and apart of awareness campaign on Hiv AIDS. So as an outreach team, we were there per invitation by the headman. I said to myself " We still have a long way to go" and the feeling I had towards this being was a mixed one of both fear and hatred. I focused on the first part of what is being called witch doctor, and wished that there can be a broom to whisk him away from that gathering. But then I remembered that this person is respected in his community so if we can win him to be on our side, he is the key figure who will help preaching the right information about HIV AIDS and stop misleading our people. So now the next step is to work on winning this man and all like him to be on the right side in fighting the AIDS problem. As Booyens (1995:144) puts it get our opponents on our side during time of any crisis."(23 February)

Challenges in this rural environment also came from the paternalistic and perceived stubborn attitudes of the older village men who refused her offered help:

"From the rural families point of view, AIDS is the most cause and still going for a long time, of deaths of parents in many families. Besides being ignorant, rural men are so stubborn. They do not attend meetings where health issues are discussed and when their poor wives come home with these suggestions they were told in the meetings like use of condoms, they, man, go berserk and not use them." (27 February)

I recognise Xolisi's frustration - not only is the type of help she could offer rejected, she also appears to disparage the type of help they traditionally do seek, as do they, hers. "When most men are sick,

they do not come to the clinic, where it would be possible to give them health education and counsel them, instead they go seek help from inyangas." Xolisi's reflections indicate her wide scope of practice and the community she held dear. She was part of that community and worked within a sometimes unbending system. Despite this, her approach to her work and to life was a positive one, filled with hope "Have faith in God and you will lift up your face without shame, you will stand firm and without fear and all who follow you will gain courage, have positive hope that the goals will be achieved" (8 September). She was not a complainer but nor did she play the passive victim role "Do not compromise your principles" (8 September). She approached life with vigour, and looked for lessons in life's journey "Remember the good also" (14 September). She seemed to find solace and sustenance in her spiritual beliefs, her family, her work and her community through apt quotations, which seemed to give her pause for reflection "The world steps aside for a man who knows where he is going" (2 August). What attracted me most to Xolisi is that she didn't express life as a struggle: it was a life full-led, which provided her with meaning and hope, and the key to her attitude lay in her balanced approach to all aspects of her life.

"It's time to practice Ubuntu. We nurses are a luck group of caregivers, because in addition to what we know naturally in caring for our people, more has been added through our studying and practising more expertise. So basically and academically, we can" (14 May).

I was aware of this 'balance' when Xolisi was a student in 2002. She travelled to class from afar (the Eastern Cape) and she attended about 50% to 60% of her classes. She worked at her own pace and while her handing in of her course requirement materials was not in the scheduled time, these were all completed and she passed all her courses of her nursing programme. She did not live up to my expectations of her ability as a student, but she chose her standard, and it was acceptable. More would probably have moved all the other components of her life out of kilter, out of balance – and that

was not what Xolisi espoused. To this end, I think that Xolisi's reflections are a true reflection of herself and are supported by the mature, balanced and pragmatic stance she took in both class discussions and tutorial sessions.

11.8.3 Student growth

Mari (critical reader) suggests, through examples, that Xolisi appears "steadfast, confident, balanced and mature" and that "Xolisi challenges and asks many questions from the start...The journal provides evidence of continuous critical and reflective thought".

However Sarah (critical reader) does not totally agree:

"Xolisi has, and has not, produced much evidence of growth. She is clear about her core professional values of care and good management, but to my mind she does not show much proof of critical thinking. Her diary entries tend to be brief and are too often unquestioning e.g. Entry no 8, 04 April 2002 where she argues the main reasons poverty and malnutrition have not been alleviated in South Africa is because of poor family planning and an increase in refugees from SADEC states. See Maureen's critique.

However, Xolisi is to be commended for her solid belief in the integrity of nurses and her commitment to helping "her people". I do not feel this developed because of the course she took at DIT though. Rather it feels to me that this is something that she has always held dear to her heart.

I salute her courage in the face of intractable patriarchal beliefs around HIV/AIDS in the rural areas. This to me is proof of critical thinking. Empowered by her faith in western medicine Xolisi is able to challenge traditional assumptions while realising that any change which she and her colleagues can bring about will be incremental and slow. You could argue however, as Maureen did, that her faith in

Western medicine is too unquestioning, and that she needs to learn to see the benefits of traditional African medicine too.

On the 30.6 X wrote "Managed care - A challenge for nurse managers". She did not elaborate on what she meant. To me this is proof that her critical thinking process has room for improvement. This topic was not analysed at all. Maureen says later that she must "not move automatically into my critical teacher role that assumes the worst (e.g. how to complete an assignment with minimum effort in the shortest space of time) - although I do believe that there is an element of this here." I would concur. I think Maureen is generous to give Xolisi the benefit of the doubt here.

Furthermore, Sarah (critical reader) states that Xolisi has "grown marginally in her critical thinking: Xolisi does not do much theoretical analysis in her journal. When she does, it is often simplistic. e.g. her diary entry of 4 April where she discusses Nelson Mandela's historic speech at the Rivonia trial. 'National and provisional budgets have burst along seems trying to meet the needs of ever growing population in this country the fact that there is no law preventing people from having so much children as they feel (13) and the lately in borders and controlling authorities in allowing refugees to enter(14) the country in huge numbers, contribute to the problem.' She does not back up her theories with convincing evidence. However it must be noted that she does link her later argument to personal experience - which is good. "Xolisi proves graphic examples of personal experiences to lend credence to argument." (Maureen)

Similarly, on the 11th July Xolisi picks up on the issue of poverty and malnutrition – "but doesn't have anything to say about the statement - hence the question on the implications of this statement." (Maureen)

Her journal is mostly anecdotal, relating to her work. She does not refer to her studies often. The one direct reference to her studies is when on 14.5 she says, "We nurses are a luck group of caregivers, because in addition to what we know naturally in caring for our people, more has been added through our studying and practising more expertise. So basically and academically, we can." This is an assertion of her belief in the enabling power of studying, although I find it quite vague. She does not say how the academic knowledge helps nurses. And she does not mention critical thinking, which makes me wonder if she actually understands the concept at all.

Obliquely Xolisi does mention self-reflexivity when she says on 12.6, "We can laugh as much as our small mistakes but always try to avoid (35) them happening over and over again. A wrong impression can lead to a wrong diagnose a wrong treatment and then a lot of trouble. So one need to audit well what one writes because only one will answer for them at some point."

A second direct reference to education occurs on 6.7 when she says, "Those degrees, diplomas and all the short courses one may have successfully studied for are ones to keep and they really do prove the intelligence and enthusiasm on ones part. But does one enjoy them (42) without sharing and giving of that knowledge in order to help the needy and to promote other's quality of life?" I like her generous approach here. She is saying qualifications are only meaningful if one uses them to help others. She is promoting applied knowledge, and being clear about her value system at the same time – which is commendable - education for education's sake is not enough, it must be of benefit to others too.

Xolisi was studying nursing management at the time when she kept this diary, but her references to management are not theoretical and do not reflect wider reading. They are quite uncritical and border

on stereotype. i.e. 15.7 - "We must accept people as they are and love them by being exemplary to them, it is then they will conform to how we would like them to behave as a group towards achieving a certain goal." She does not back up her statements with examples from her work. To me this reveals an unquestioning attitude. I think this is why Maureen asks Xolisi, "This works for you? How do you deal with obstacles?" However perhaps Xolisi's thoughts on management are practical rather than theoretical and as Maureen says, "I do believe that N has taken on board the concept of management and leadership and practices the values she espouses as being important for this mindset. When I reflect back on some of her entries, a number of them are addressed to her colleagues or subordinates, and Xolisi is the manager. For her, management is a state of mind."

Xolisi is also vague when she does refer to theory, (10.8) "There are 3 basic types of leadership styles and believe not no one can choose only one and adopt it. Depending on different situations and circumstances, we are all 3 in 1 sometimes." She does not specify what these three are.

11.8.4 Empathetic-critiquer's support for student learning (Sarah, critical reader)

"Yes, I do think that Maureen demonstrated sufficient support for Xolisi's growth process. Her comments to, and about, Xolisi reveal that she carefully read and considered her journal and thought hard about how to help her best realise her potential.

Maureen can name the weaknesses in Xolisi's approach but also praise the strengths – truly constructive criticism. 10.8 - "I sometimes feel frustrated at the paucity of the entry in terms of length and description, but I should also note that I am impressed at the clarity of impression received by the very short entry." Maureen deserves praise for the kindness with which she considers Xolisi's

writing. She does not jump to conclusions about the brevity of Xolisi's entries but rather finds something good to commend in them.

Her questions are not judgemental but do prod Xolisi in the right direction – towards substantiating her points and thinking more critically. e.g. 2.8 – “Maureen's comments: This works for you? How do you deal with obstacles?”

Maureen insists on seeing the best in her students. While she says that Xolisi did not grow as much as she would have liked in the year (“She did not live up to my expectations of her ability as a student, but she chose her standard, and it was acceptable.”), she can still express approval of her approach. “What attracts me most to Xolisi is that she doesn't express life as a struggle: it is a life full-led, which provides her with meaning and hope, and the key to her attitude is in her balanced approach to all aspects of her life.” My appraisal of Xolisi's growth in critical thinking coincides with Maureen's. I feel Xolisi grew professionally and personally, but not academically. However her own personal code of ethics shines through – “Xolisi's reflections indicate her wide scope of practice and the community she holds dear.”

11.8.5 Conclusion

There were a number of issues discussed in Xolisi's journal, which reflect both her interest and her learning needs. Initially, I chose Xolisi's journal as part of the sample as I initially perceived it to be a particularly weak example of the reflective journaling process (deviant or extreme sample). I knew that Xolisi's heart did not lie with her studies and that the distance factor (her home was in the eastern Cape), her workload and her family and community commitments would affect her motivation. She did in fact miss a number of class contact sessions and her work submissions were

not a true reflection of her intellect and her abilities. I believe I only saw her potential, and concur with Sarah (critical reader) that much of her reflective writing is clichéd and vague and at times it appeared quite naïve (although how much this is a result of her being a second-language English writer is not clear. I am very aware that both at home and at work, Xhosa was the medium of expression). Her journal, a hard cover A5 book, was illustrated with pictures cut and pasted from magazines, reminiscent of presentations of the younger schoolchild. These overt signs may be indicative of the lack of effort and true engagement with the journal as a mode for 'deep' learning.

Did Xolisi grow from this endeavour? She did not submit a self-evaluation form, so I do not have this as evidence to support how she would see her learning. I don't believe that she was truly committed to the formal learning process, but I do think that she had her own 'voice' and was quite comfortable with herself and her choices. At this stage of her life, she chose balance, rather than commitment. This superficial engagement with learning in the management course is a reminder that although students register for courses, the engagement with medium and the mode for learning and the motivation to learn varies.

I leave Jane (critical reader) with the last words as she provides an overview of her understanding of Xolisi through her journal and the tutorial:

"Xolisi appears a pragmatist, but with sufficient insight to reach beyond this definition. That she is firmly rooted in her tradition and circumstances, is clear, and status, lifestyle, and wealth are not that important to her. Perhaps the thirteen years as a policewoman as something to do with her attitude. She describes herself as shy but friendly and she likes people, and is quick to praise or acknowledge. Her empathy with people is shown in her acknowledgement that lying often needs a 'hug' (entry 25); and in the plight of the teenager: (entry 1) – where she doesn't condemn but seeks

to ensure the correct handling of this issue. This leads her to a critical reflection on her two daughters and her horror of sexual abuse (entries 1 and 2). The entry of 11 May shows her way of coping with the stress of her profession, and her thoughts are insightful – rare personal glimpse... 'Remember the God also' (entry 32), exposes how popularity is regarded more highly than professional standards and practice. Her sympathy for this doctor is patent. There is humour. An example is (entry 16) which lists odd comments on OPD cards. Kindness is evident in the diary, and sharing ideas and practices is important to her, and there is anger and sarcasm in (entry 37) on the Angels of Hope comment.

The issue of talking to children about sex (tying up with the incidents of sexual abuse reported as well as reflected in the Tutorial) – and the video viewed in the tutorial – is a sensitive area and her comment that 'we are making progress', shows an enormous cultural jump from traditional attitudes. Interesting as well, here, is the influence of traditional culture in her professed 'fear and hatred' of the witchdoctor, an issue that would have required much thought to plumb the depths of this. Her ability to associate seeming anomalies to positive effect, is due to her observation of the environment – here, in a billboard with a telling message: 'The world steps aside for a Man who knows where he is going.'

Perhaps her own words sum up Xolisi's attitude "If I pause to carry another's burden, I will become stronger."

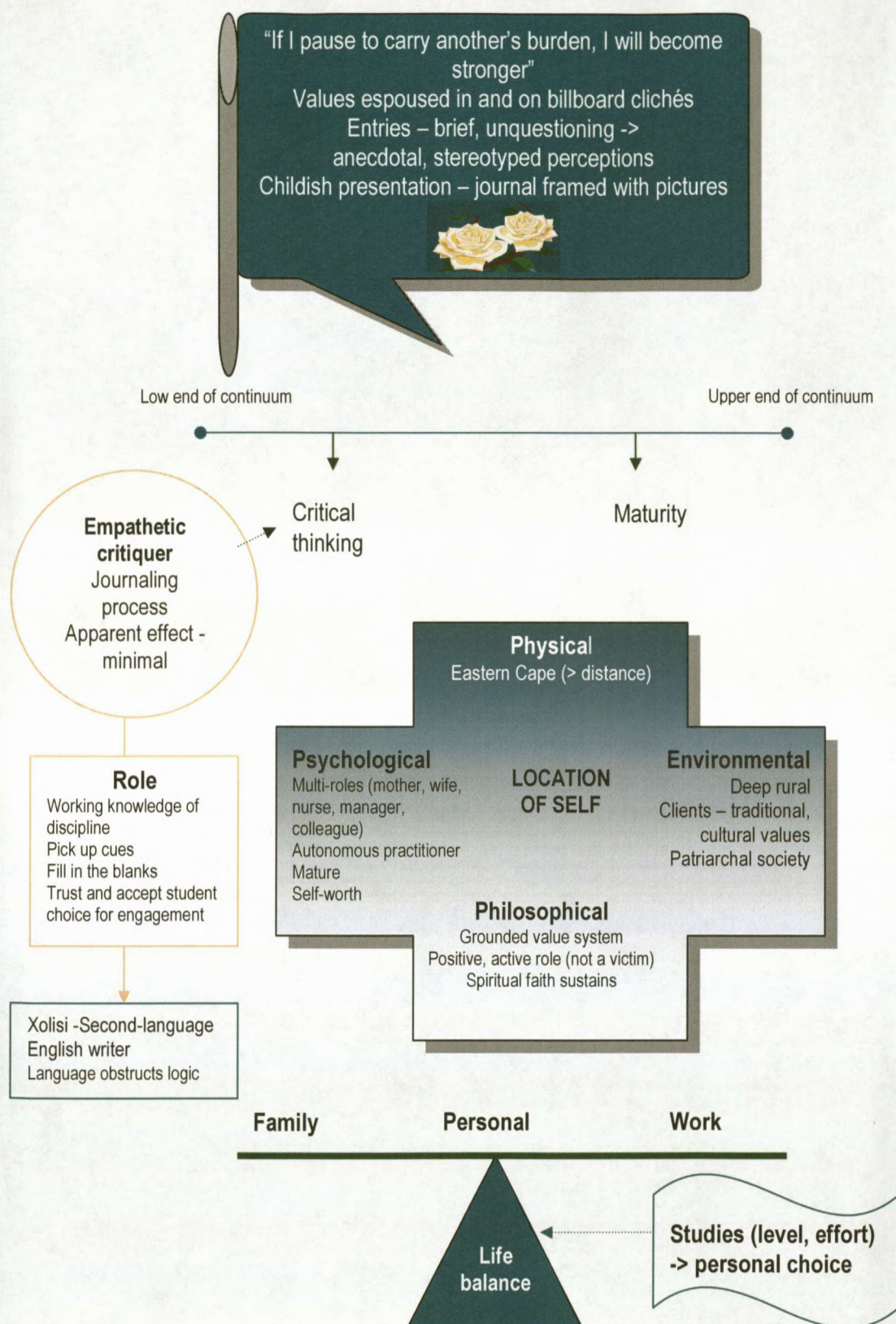


Figure 12.6 Xolisi, an example of an extreme or deviant 'case' sample – the 'weak' student

Lea's journal

11.9 LEA

An open heart, open mind and effervescent nature evincing a desire and commitment to learn, share and grow

11.9.1 Introduction

Lea was in her fifties, happily married and was an occupational health nurse. She had subcontracted to a big paper industry and divided her time between different branches of the company. I was struck in the early stages of the year by her earnestness. She had started studying in the latter part of her life and was eager and open to learning, "The children had grown and flown and a new position in occupational health demanded further education" (14/2). What a pleasure. I remember her very first assignment and was struck by her creativity - but also her propensity for engaging with material tangential to the assignment. This helped her to develop arguments in unconventional ways. It seemed as if Lea had been reading widely and as she read, she seemed to just want to share. She wrote pages and pages. I didn't quite know how to start to critique her work, but realised that I would have to help her focus on salient issues. Her response to my critique was somewhat overwhelming in that she didn't defend her position at all but rather accepted without question my comments and suggestions. In fact, she seemed eager to accept whatever I said. (Mari, critical reader) also questions Lea's abilities: "Although Lea takes on the challenge of engaging in dialogue with the lecturer, this is more of a social engagement, and she seldom rises to the challenge of disagreeing with the lecturer." Again I realised the power my position as 'the teacher' held. I inferred that because of her age that Lea had come from an 'old' traditional school where the 'teacher' was held in high esteem. I realised then how vulnerable she was and that I needed to focus on helping her correct these errors. She needed to develop a protective, stronger stance and value her own thinking - and also to develop a more skeptical stance and challenge mine. Also, it is easy to fall into a trap of self-indulgence when a student is so agreeable and likeable. As an educator, this makes my job so much

the more difficult, as I have to be more mindful of my role and alert to self-deception. Throughout the year, Lea journeyed from afar (a couple of hours traveling each way), had an incredibly busy work schedule, but was always on time, focused and eager to learn. She was also very responsive to her classmates and would make a point of complimenting others (appropriately) whenever the opportunity arose "Leigh's amazing introduction speech will be remembered always!" (18/9). She seemed almost naïve in her openness, but I think that this was because I was more familiar with the protective masks that people wear today. Many of us only trust when we have spent time getting to know and understand the other, but with Lea, seemingly the trust came first. I also cannot remember her ever making a single mean comment. I think Lea was just a genuinely nice person.

11.9.2 Personal events

Lea was faced with some difficult trials and tribulations during the year. I remember her phoning early one morning to tell me she could not make class. On enquiry, her fostered child had died and she had had to organise his funeral. She was devastated. This was entirely natural. It was only later that I discovered that her family had adopted a small black African girl who had later died from HIV AIDS. She shared her sorrow in class and on-line through the pictures and stories of the joy the child had brought to her and her family's life

"I try to write down thoughts in regard to the demise of a dear little girl who squealed when she saw you, who rushed to be picked up by big Bumper [Grandpa]. So high! Who loved butterflies and her dogs, the birds and her friend Keegan. Who ate her food very slowly and carefully because swallowing was difficult. Who asked for help when she knew she wouldn't make it up that flight of stairs, her little chest so damaged with TB and pneumonia. Another bout was just too much." (11 June)

As a nurse, she knew about the limited life span resulting from the disease, but this in no way

mitigated the emotional involvement or eased the pain. Perhaps as a result of her involvement, a number of entries (17/2, 17/3, 28/4, 24/5, and 11/6) were focused around the issue of HIV AIDS.

11.9.3 HIV AIDS

In her entry (21 February) Lea links her personal story of HIV AIDS to growing morbidity and mortality statistics. She does not make a link - but allows her reader to make the connection - which perhaps, is even more profound because no comment is made. The three sets of statistics, each just over a week apart, and the closeness in the time continuum linked to the horrific, and inexorable growth in numbers, linked to Lea's story make the disease and its impact so much more real to me.

"In the year 2001 Aids equaled all other deaths added together.

THE FACTS:

- 5000 people die of Aids in the world per week
- 600-700 die per day
- 150-180 die from Aids every day in KZN
- there are 1500-2000 new infections every day
- women are most at risk aged 15-40 years
- mostly girls 15-19 years old" (24 May)

The constant bombardment of the senses by statistics and stories and issues on this disease in the news media almost numb the senses and it becomes increasingly difficult to 'feel' the impact of the disease. It is much easier to intellectualize and remain distanced from the disease. Lea's story allows me to re-connect in a meaningful way.

Through her entry dated 28 April, Lea continues with the HIV AIDS discussion, using a similar approach to one she used previously. By using the growing immensity of the problem as depicted by the statistics (her graph interpreting the statistics, is a particularly powerful pictorial representation of the rapid and steep growth incline of the disease), she then links these statistics to a further reading,

which she then transcribes in her own words, indicating the depth of the problem. She picks up on an issue that has been concerning South Africans for the past few years, the ostrich mentality of politicians, and the refusal to directly acknowledge the problem or address it with effect. Her response is effective, by her use of the repetitive technique "We are not doing enough. We can do more. We are not ostriches," although she does not get down to practicalities. I became aware that I was not challenging Lea to see the issue within her own work context, or identify the implications for her own practice. I think I must have been carried away with her argument.

11.9.4 Variety and spice

I enjoyed Lea and the fact that her interests went beyond her immediate world or the world of nursing. Global issues and politics and ecological matters interested her.

"Are we going to drown in our own garbage?

Are we a throw-away nation?

As from the 9th of May, in stores nation-wide, consumers will no longer be supplied with plastic carrier bags free of charge." (5 May)

This relates to the double-loop learning discussed in Chapter Three, Section 3.10.1. She also used her journal to pick up on issues reflected in class. I was struck by Lea's creativity, both in her discussions and in the way she presented her journal. She inserted web-based graphics and diagrammes, as well as charts. She used colour to highlight issues or vary her style. She was probably one of the most widely read of the students in this class and referred to a variety of texts and readings. She included a poem and the style of her writing reflected a creative literary bent, not apparent with most students of that year. I have generally found working with mature students to be a pleasure. There is a mellowing and a sense of appreciation which isn't always apparent in younger learners. At this stage of Lea's life, she had numerous experiences which helped mould her

character. These connect with Erikson's stages of Development as described by Nash, Stoch and Harper (1992) in their explanation of the developmental tasks of middle age. Those that relate include - in terms of work and leisure - a gaining of new work satisfaction and increasing social activities. In terms of relating to the self, there is a focus on health maintenance, a redefinition of self-concept and identity and a promotion of the autonomy of own children and an expression of a sense of regeneration through guidance of the younger generation.

Reflection on my analysis: It is most disconcerting to find how much more there is to find and appreciate in students' entries while taking the time to analyse their reflections. I recognise how lightweight some of my own comments are, and cringe when I realise how much good work I might have overlooked, because I just haven't paid sufficient attention. I realise that this is difficult considering the constraints - such as time or the fact that I was not always able to view the students' entries in a 'holistic' context. But still...

11.9.5 More examples of Lea's choice of issues and her approach to journaling

- **Power disparities in the workplace**

Lea's first entry is titled "Maternity" and deals with issues around pregnant labourer's failure to take allotted maternity leave, mostly in response to pressure from the contractor, their 'boss'.

"It appears the worker is reluctant to take maternity leave because of financial constraints. She is given one month's unpaid or annual leave for the event and UIF (unemployment fund) pays her for the six weeks after the birth and this is usually a half of their usual wage. They are normally single parents with other children to financially care for supplying food, clothing and education for their families and cannot afford to go without full pay for this period. Very often the administrative staff working for the contractor or the worker themselves has not applied

timeously for UIF and the money is only received long after the worker is back at work (three months after the birth). " (Lea, 14 February)

One of Industry's responses to the tightening up of labour legislation in South Africa, through the Labour relations Act and the Equity Act has been to reduce their own responsibility in the morass of legislation governing employees and their rights by contracting out specific services. This is where there is a dilemma and a gap that Lea speaks of. Industries are responsible for the health of those to whom they contract out work - but it is indirect. They make recommendations (these are not absolutes) and set criteria, which to my mind let them off the hook because of the weakening of the connection between total responsibility and indirect responsibility. However, some companies take this responsibility seriously - and this is really what I was trying to find out through my questions. In this entry Lea has researched the problem and identified the legislation and requirements for the interpretation of the legislation. She did not let the contractors off the hook and indicated their area of responsibility. She had a dilemma with time (these work sites are dispersed over wide areas of many miles) and so attempted to identify a solution. She noted that she was not given sufficient time. This is one of the early indicators of the dissonance between her Human Resource Department, to whom she was directly accountable, and her own view of what her work entailed or required. It is also the key to an issue Lea was going to have to learn to deal with: Assertiveness as opposed to pleasing all. This and the issues of Lea's extensive traveling and need for better organisation became important elements which we spoke of during the year, through her journal, personal contact and the tutorials, both of which indirectly resulted from her underlying lack of assertiveness.

- **Factors influencing personal stress levels**

In an entry (13 April), Lea focuses on various sources of her stress "There has been a series of interesting mood swings this week." One of the difficulties Lea experienced is not uncommon

amongst nurses – and this relates to the appropriate valuing of the self. Through Lea's more focused understanding of her work context through the lens of her assignment of a situational analysis, she was able to see the enormous and inappropriate demands placed on her time and energy, without the appropriate recognition and reward. I think that she just took it for granted that such a big organisation such as "S" would be fair and that she was very lucky to have her job. I recollect spending time going through this assignment with her. A useful approach to a person with Lea's unassuming nature is to ask her to remove herself from the situation and imagine someone else responsible in this position. Would she expect the same treatment to be afforded to that person? Additionally, I think that I asked her to also cost in all the planning, preparatory and administrative work as well as the travelling time and energy and financial costs (indirect and direct). I think that by making the implicit, explicit, these figures allowed her to see her function in a new light, hence her comments "I found myself viewing my own situation quite differently. I started to put myself in the forefront instead of the companies I do work for. I suddenly started to view them as clients and not employers" (Lea, 13 April).

Lea was an occupational health student, and her programme was loaded somewhat differently to the other students in other programmes. This, her second year, was very heavy comparatively speaking.

"I think last week was just too much, 2 full days, 1000 kms later and all the flu vaccines are given! 2 full days and completed many medicals, spirometry, biopters and all! And this past week hasn't been much better what with pharmacology looming. One health & safety meeting lasted 3 hours this week, the guy likes the sound of his own voice!" (Lea, 13 April).

Lea's 'complaints', in this context, are reasonable. With someone less aware than Lea, I might discuss this with her other lecturers.

"Is this a norm amongst your students? Do they also have this turnaround mid-first term? The outcome has been one of a change of perspective, one of realisation to accept and act on the above. Half of me says that's quite okay, things will be fine and the other half says let me get back to my knitting and forget all about this career, it's so full of responsibilities and there's never a chance to have one's own social life, that maybe polishing the furniture would be more comfortable" (Lea, 13 April).

Lea was forced to confront who she was and where she wanted to go. She was feeling overwhelmed, I think, with the pace, and demands of both her job and her role as student. I also sensed that she didn't want to be seen as a complainer and she tempered her frustrations, which were couched in humour to deflect criticism of the self, by the self or me. She did this by her question "Is this a norm amongst your students?" and by concluding with the positive mood swing, almost as if to say, I'm OK. It is really nothing. The sun will shine tomorrow and all will be well. Lea didn't want to be seen in a negative light, hence her appeal to me through two notes of appreciation – 'thanks for listening. I'm just venting'. She did have a huge workload, and I have no doubt, that at an age when many people are comfortable with themselves and socialising with family and friends, this was not an option for Lea at that moment. She was also wondering about how she was being perceived and valued at work and what this was doing to her sense of self - not a good comfort zone to be in.

According to Stacciarini and Tróccoli (2004), occupational stress is affected by the work context, both specific situations and characteristics of the work environment, but it is also affected by individual characteristics and coping responses to the stress. Their Brazilian study on 461 nurses indicated that occupational stress is closely related to job satisfaction as well as the individual's physical and psychological state of health. Nurses who have a constructive thinking coping style fare better in managing stress. In light of these findings, I haven't worried unduly about Lea in that although she

was frustrated with the work load, she was constructively thinking her way through solutions. Her capacity to think creatively and flexibly, and express and reflect on her feelings denoted a positive outcome for her psychological well-being, which was also assisted by her numerous support systems.

11.9.6 Lea's thought processes and style of writing

- **Digression**

"I keep digressing", notes Lea. I can relate, and therefore realised the ability to focus in a singular way was very difficult for Lea. Her mind lighted on so many connecting issues and scenarios. It made for a complexity of thought, which lent to her creative spirit, and her ability to think laterally. It was just that much harder for her to focus. Fascinating though I find this process, this is one area that Lea needed to address – honing in on issues and being succinct. Lea herself in her evaluation writes "I can see a varied and although sometimes *jumbled* array of thoughts and ideas"

- **Coping strategies (time management and use of tables)**

Mari (critical reader) notes "Lea is aware of her limitations: "I watched one video on Time Management (my biggest stumbling block: can't say no to anyone!)" Time management is indeed a recurring theme, and the diary comprises of two extremes, namely feelings of being overwhelmed by work and reflections digressing from the topic..."

Lea (6 April) observed that tables made for easier reading. I noticed in her assignments and tasks that she used this tool to great effect. It seems to counterbalance her need to explain matters effusively and make sense of her work and need to priorities. I note in a self-memo (Data bite, 25

April) that there are elements of analysis within her entry. Lea was particularly good at establishing a context for her ideas and the process she used is movement from national, to global, back to national, then to local contexts. She had a penchant for statistics, I notice, and used them in a most creative way, so that they became memorable. I think it is the extremes of the examples that created this effect. Nonetheless, as I read, I kept waiting for more and wondering - how will this argument develop? Hence my question "And this leads you to?" Lea's response was satisfactory, albeit brief. This wasn't the first time I had asked a similar question. In retrospect, I wish I had made a more overt observation about this tendency - but perhaps the question was sufficient. Sarah (critical reader) however, recognises that change does occur "Lea displays an awareness of the fact that her time management skills improve during the course of journaling: "I have found that I have started to take longer in making decisions and also I try not to get too involved if I know I do not have the time to complete what I start.""

- **Development of an argument using the environment as a context**

Lea's interests reflect a basis for her discussion

"Also am passionate about animals, especially birds, and all environmental health issues, a great supporter of the Greenpeace-type enterprises and their heroes. We have spent many years on farms and now are settled in Richmond"(14/2)

In an entry dated 5 May, Lea presents a nicely seasoned argument, reflecting a position on the environment with the proposed introduction of legislation whereby " from the 9th of May, in stores nation-wide, consumers will no longer be supplied with plastic carrier bags free of charge". She introduced the concept without specifically identifying it (Lea is actually referring to litter control through pricing of previously free plastic bags) and suggests this is the next best move to "Nelson Mandela's release from Robbin Island!" Lea's juxtaposition of analogies is highly suggestive. There

would probably be universal agreement that Mandela's release was the most profound event that shaped South Africa's post-'94 democracy – and so the extreme analogies create a sense of curiosity in the reader. She then asks a couple of provocative questions “Are we going to drown in our own garbage? Are we a throw-away nation?” (Lea, 5 May). These are questions which lend themselves to an emphatic denial from the reader. She then moves on to factually describe the current situation that includes the solution, then the problem historically identified. She provides a legal framework for viewing the issue and then concludes with a statement on what to do and why. She binds her argument elegantly together. However, as empathetic-critiquer, I don't think I asked enough questions to promote broader critical thinking. Her perspectives were broad, but they only supported her argument, and not the opposite perspectives.

- **Connections in development of insight**

Lea (Entry 9 June) deals with two concepts that arose out of her readings for class (communication – specifically transactional analysis – and reflective thinking, and connects the two quite neatly.

“Mezirow's “action learning” which combines individual responsibility and reflection on personal experience and is ideally suited so Dr van Aswegen of Medunsa says to critical reflection in the workplace. When you start to question the social norms that govern our actions and look at what influences our decision making, it makes for interesting thought. I have found that I have started to take longer in making decisions and also I try not to get too involved if I know I do not have the time to complete what I start.”

Lea was quite perceptive in recognizing herself in this form of communication “Protective orientation which looks at saving other's faces. (I have always done this and so often landed in trouble!)” (Lea, 9 June). It reflects a recognizable trait. She really was a nice person. I liked her recognition of the lesson to be learned “In the new assertive “shell” one would obviously not join the one who was in

the dog-box but just offer help and keep out of trouble” and the acceptance of this - also the following-on reflection that explained how this worked in reality. This is quite a critical moment and a breakthrough. Instead of the ‘If only’ game, Lea has seized the gauntlet and dealt with her decision making needs. Impressive! Even more so when Lea accepts this responsibility - and she doesn’t do this in a heavy handed way, but rather through interpreting readings on reflection by Mezirow and van Aswegen. (I handed out reading on critical thinking and reflection and reflective practice at various stages during the year and sometimes discussed them, and sometimes not). Lea picks up on the alternative options for reflective journaling identified by van Aswegen - and these appeal to her creative spirit. On consideration of Lea’s responses to learning, I really think that she had grasped the essence of the concept of Constructivism. She seized the moment, connected with her learning needs and used a variety of resources to further her insights and learning. It was at moments like these that I feel vindicated in my use of this approach to teaching and learning. - How satisfying this feeling is!

- **Constructing own learning using the journal as an opportunity**

“A busy time lately... so I have sent this proposal as diary entry. There’s lots else I would like to write about including the Aids Convention in Durban this week. I would appreciate your comments, (which I view as valuable) on this proposal “(Lea, 5 August)

Lea has used this entry as a means of sorting her thoughts and as a reminder. This was the second occasion that Lea had used her journal (and me, as recipient) to deal with issues relating to her work, but that were not a requirement for her programme. Students in general did use their journals to discuss work issues, but these tended to revolve around the philosophical or ethical or work problems that required thought and were used as a means of clarifying thoughts. This was the first time that I had a student who used her diary (and me) to formally plan and organise her work for her

work setting. I don't think that I was particularly conscious of this at the time – just happy that Lea was making connections between theory and her workplace practice – and using whatever opportunity to do so.

I remember responding to this entry, with comments but also with a private discussion where I asked Lea to focus on the purpose and objectives of the report. We also looked at the person who would be receiving the report and what she wanted to get out of the report. There was a lot of work that needed to be done and we went through some of the principles of report writing. She had the basic preparatory materials and could answer the questions. We also focused on some of her weaknesses (too much material and discussion) and the linkages and key to interpreting the tables quickly and easily. Lea was trying to control the loquaciousness through tabling and so was able to effectively condense her thoughts. However, she had gone from one extreme to another, (loquacious to terse) and just needed help on moderating her approach.

11.9.7 Critical readers' comments on Lea's development and learning

Mari (critical reader)

"From the start Lea chooses to engage with the lecturer/researcher, by answering her questions. In previous diaries students largely left the questions unanswered (which does not necessarily imply that they didn't ponder on these questions). Lea even poses questions back: "I enjoy being creative. I don't know about you?"

Lea seems to share quite easily who she is and talks about her personal interests and family life. And her use of language is delightful: "He was telling all and sundry, visitors, other residents, professional staff, visiting doctors, padres, physiotherapists, anyone!!" and I feel this lady had guilt

feelings plus, plus and those feelings had been stirred up by all the agitators (the six a.m. callers and Spar whisperers). The Christmas poem is also warm, funny and endearing. Throughout her values are embedded implicitly in her positive comments about people and her appreciation of them.

Growth

(Sarah, critical reader) questions this growth. "On the 21.7 Maureen asks Lea, "What are the benefits to you in extending your working commitments?" L's response: Not much but someones' got to do the job before audits come and I have always been the helper in all situations." To me this sounds like a conflict of interests. Lea does the job because no-one else will, but is she growing personally here? When does professional achievement outweigh personal input? When is enough, in other words? Maureen has observed that Lea thrives on extreme hard work and meeting tough deadlines, but perhaps the challenge for Lea is to find new ways of doing the work without placing so much stress on herself? I do think her actions of delegating go a way towards remedying an overly heavy work load (See 10 August). This is evidence that she took Maureen's comments on her journal seriously and reflected on how she could change her behaviour. "Now I have put the foot down. I need time for admin and other activities which have taken a back seat." As she herself notes in her evaluation, "My thought processes also have shown a change toward a seriousness and correctness which wasn't always there, 'move over humour', and a noted slowing down (to contemplate consequences before acting), to keep with this change so I can apply this change to everyday work, all situations."

...The student has grown to some extent:

On the 17.3, Maureen writes, "While her approach and the scientific nature of her debate could possibly be questioned, this is her reflective journal, which is more forgiving because it is more flexible." I do not think this is evidence of academic growth.

Academically:-

On the 20/3 Maureen writes, "A strong opinion article, somewhat one sided - Lea's views and anti-American opinions are clear- on Lea's feelings about wars in general, and the US-Iraq war in particular." I agree with Maureen that Lea's passionate views sometimes blind her to seeing both sides of a situation, "I cannot argue with her position – merely focus on her passion that perhaps affects her ability to question the facts." Sometimes I get the sense that Lea is over pressured in terms of doing her job and being a student at once. I wonder if her cultivation of a very hectic job hasn't been at the expense of actually coming to grips with her studies?

One of the benefits of the triangulation process is being able to 'see' the student from different perspectives. While quite correctly critical reader (Sarah) did not see clear evidence of academic growth in the presented entries, this clearly was not the case in the overall student picture. Lea consistently demonstrated her academic soundness in other, more formal elements of the course and was in the top 10% of her class.

"Then the mood swings again and it's snot en trane as we prepare ourselves for the Pharmacology test ... I don't even know whether I've learnt for the right units, no time to phone, I'm still not orientated with the WEB ct although have sent a message and read all the content."

Therefore I would agree with Lea when she says of her own work, "The efforts focused on these diary entries waxed and waned but generally showed various interests, ecologically aware but not enough critical reflection shown re nursing or management." Considering that she was in this class to

learn more about the academic side of nursing and management, I do not think Lea grew dramatically in her academic capacity, not as much as she did personally and professionally."

I detect Lea's openness to change when she announces a "turnaround" after having done "situational analysis and the organizational structure" in lectures: "I found myself viewing my own situation quite differently. I started to put myself in the forefront instead of the companies I do work for. I suddenly started to view them as clients and not employers"

She also expresses self-awareness: "Protective orientation which looks at saving other's face (I have always done this and so often landed in trouble!") While inundated with an over-full schedule, Lea constantly recognizes the researcher's busy life too or thanks her for her support. Lea relies on humour and creativity in deepening her problem solving abilities. The journal is filled with creative analogies and comparisons: "It's not that I don't like work, it's just there's so much to do in so little time it's almost like you're facing Shane Warne at the crease and he's about to bowl another wicket-taking googlie."

During times of high stress, instead of simply not posting, she gives visual input (which is quicker and easier, but paint a thousand words) by posting pictures to depict her profession and life – another example of her creative approach to problem-solving. Her evaluation of her diary entries is a testimony to her development during this period: "The dairy keeping has provoked thoughts, helped understand problems, made me change my thought processes from ones of "couldn't possibly change" to ones of "that has to change and it might as well be today." And "I can concentrate a lot better and complete monumental tasks without "caving in" and "Questioning inter-departmental processes also comes with ease now and I have been responsible for changes."

Critical Reader (Jane) writes this of Lea:

"She displays a concern for fairness and exposing generalised attitudes is indicated from the outset, as is her positive attitude which is manifest in her refusing to vegetate into senility. She has a good sense of humour – a light touch... Her grasp of the value of new technology is proactive and she makes good use of the facilities. She is essentially non-judgemental, except in the case of the Iraq War, entry 5 where her cynicism is evident, as it is to a degree in entry 8 – but Future Shock and Darwin are excellent antidotes! It is ironical that this same technology is cause for action, entry 22. Her concern here again reflects her 'missionary zeal'. The telling comments of 'sick workers who no longer exist' and 'the increasing anonymity of people' are chilling.

Balance is an accepted way of life here, reflected in her Holistic encompassing of the entire environment from the great outdoors, through good practice, to caring for Nqobele. Chilling out is part and parcel of survival and in entry 7, the value of changing perspective, part of Critical reflective process, is a way of coping and includes extending her knowledge through other channels, such as those in entry 14.

Time Management – an aspect experienced in other diaries – spurs Lea on to be proactive and to re-organise, for efficient practice, not only her own domain but that of a friend. The concept of the Workshop was great: another pro-active initiative!

Lea's natural affinity with people and her unaffected sincerity, her readiness to praise – as reflected in her appreciation of the course of study and the challenge and development it has afforded her - to find what is good in a situation makes her an invaluable asset. The inter-relationship and connectedness of the group – her comments – affectionate and insightful show qualities that a Team leader should possess."

11.9.8 Conclusion

Lea is incredibly open, and her final evaluation of her diary reveals a great deal about Lea. I think that she has analysed her learning far better than I could.

When I first considered researching the area of critical reflective practice, I read a number of studies around nursing, and nursing education in this area. Quite a bit of the research focused on evaluation and tools to measure learning and some of these issues are discussed in Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.4. I found this concept really problematic - not the notion that learning per se could not be compared from one chronological stage to another - but the notion that I could implement a programme and measure the effects of this. It just seems so presumptive. There are too many variables to consider, which is why the qualitative approach to understanding the learning process (the triangulation method, using a variety of inputs, including perceptions of students and staff at different stages of the course development) seemed so much more appropriate. As Lea so correctly notes

"The critical thinking processes, introduced to us this year, have helped instill deeper meaning to thought, although I have always been one for looking at the other side of the picture and discovering the solution to the problem or the understandable reason/s for perceived incorrect behaviour."

Lea has made a number of insightful observations, but the ones that are most meaningful to me, as I have not had these articulated in quite this way before, are her thoughts on the freedoms that we as South Africans now share. Her connection of Nelson Mandela's release to "we have all been released to discover a new group of friends and professional partners free of prejudice and fear" is liberating and profound. While Lea thanks me on a number of occasions, I can take very little credit for her journey. She was given the space, and the opportunities and she opened herself to the process. I think that her evaluation of herself and the process indicate clearly that Lea has a constructed voice. Her thinking was flexible and she spoke in an impassioned and assertive way. She was intuitive and linked notions to rational and sophisticated thought. She saw her learning as a

process under construction, and, more importantly, translated this into her life style through action. I do think that one of the most difficult tasks one can undertake is to transform an attitude or an opinion into behaviour. It takes effort of will.

Lea had a clear sense of herself and was comfortable with her quirkiness. It disguised her sincerity, her sense of humility and her integrity. She didn't look for affirmation through grades and was probably one of the few students who understood the concept of learning for the process of gaining greater knowledge, rather than the recognition from others in the form of grades. Her value system was implicit through her diary entries - hard work, continuous striving to learn more, a valuing of relationships - her family, colleagues, clients and peers. Whilst there is a sense of idealism and optimism with which she views the world, she also has a healthy skepticism which allowed her to have a more pragmatic view of life. She knew where she came from and appreciated where she was - I think that this allowed her to have a positive view towards her future in this country. She was proud of being South African, and rejected the baggage that accompanied the pre-democracy years - prejudice and racism, and this clearly coloured her sense of being in this multi-cultural environment. Her work was very instrumental in defining how Lea saw herself, and was an important vehicle in her move towards self-actualisation.

- **Lea's Self-evaluation: Diary Entries for 2003**

Lea is unapologetic about her stance and demonstrates her unequivocal position on important issues affecting her as a citizen. Her value system is clear. This is not the position of someone who is going to leave the 'fixing' of problems to the ubiquitous 'other'

"I can and will openly discuss and criticise incorrect, undemocratic, snobbish or racist issues and behaviour with indifference but with vigour. I can and will support all groups in South Africa

and have an understanding for all the related problems and realise we are a developing nation, we can all help in change, we can all give support”.

It is easy to criticize but Lea looks to the positive, and this makes her enormously valuable as a role player and manager where she does need to be realistic and recognise 'what is'. But more than that, she has to move beyond feelings of helplessness and hopelessness engendered by the presentation of multiple problems to an action phase, which Lea does appear to do

“There has been a huge improvement since 1994 and this improvement escalates daily. We need a strong health and welfare structure to cope and strong role-players. The dairy keeping has provoked thoughts, helped understand problems, made me change my thought processes from ones of "couldn't possibly change" to ones of "that has to change and it might as well be today". This change in thought process often comes in handy when the thought process can be transferred to different situations and problem solving aspects and voila! solutions are found! I can concentrate a lot better and complete monumental tasks without "caving in". The critical thinking processes, introduced to us this year, have helped instil deeper meaning to thought, although I have always been one for looking at the other side of the picture and discovering the solution to the problem or the understandable reason/s for perceived incorrect behaviour. With that deeper meaning the best solutions are possible in most situations.”

Lea finds balance in journaling process and outlines the changes she sees in her learning process:

“Reading between the lines whether that is in a newspaper report, or a report on the news, one now is aware of the need for correct reporting, non-biased reporting, and although scepticism has always been very dominant in my life, it tends to be more balanced and healthy now. My thought processes also have shown a change toward a seriousness and correctness which wasn't always there, 'move over humour', and a noted slowing down [to contemplate consequences before acting], to keep with this change so I can apply this change to everyday work, all situations... I do now work in the interdisciplinary sectors of my business, and often raise those root questions without referring to others first and thereby find there is less backlog of work because of that. Questioning inter-departmental processes also comes with ease now and I have been responsible for changes.”

She now openly values inherent characteristics of herself:

"Comments on my entries have often included ones of being creative. I do like to be different, creativity and novel ideas, I think, is part and parcel of the character. My apologies if the entries have been long-winded, I try to condense a thousand thoughts".

I reread Lea's analysis of her experience in her self-evaluation after I had completed my initial coding and interpretation and found there to be a great deal of congruency between my analysis and her thoughts, which I find very healthy.

About midway through this research process, I came to understand the concept of 'guided reflection' and found it extremely enticing and exciting as a teaching strategy. I was also worried about the freedom I had given students to reflect, especially when a colleague of mine asked - what if they are not writing and learning about their practice? I do feel vindicated in that each journey is different, and the students have chosen their journeys - and in this way, they have 'owned' them. Who am I to determine what it is that each should learn along the way? If I believe in the process of adult education, I need trust it as well. So far, so good.

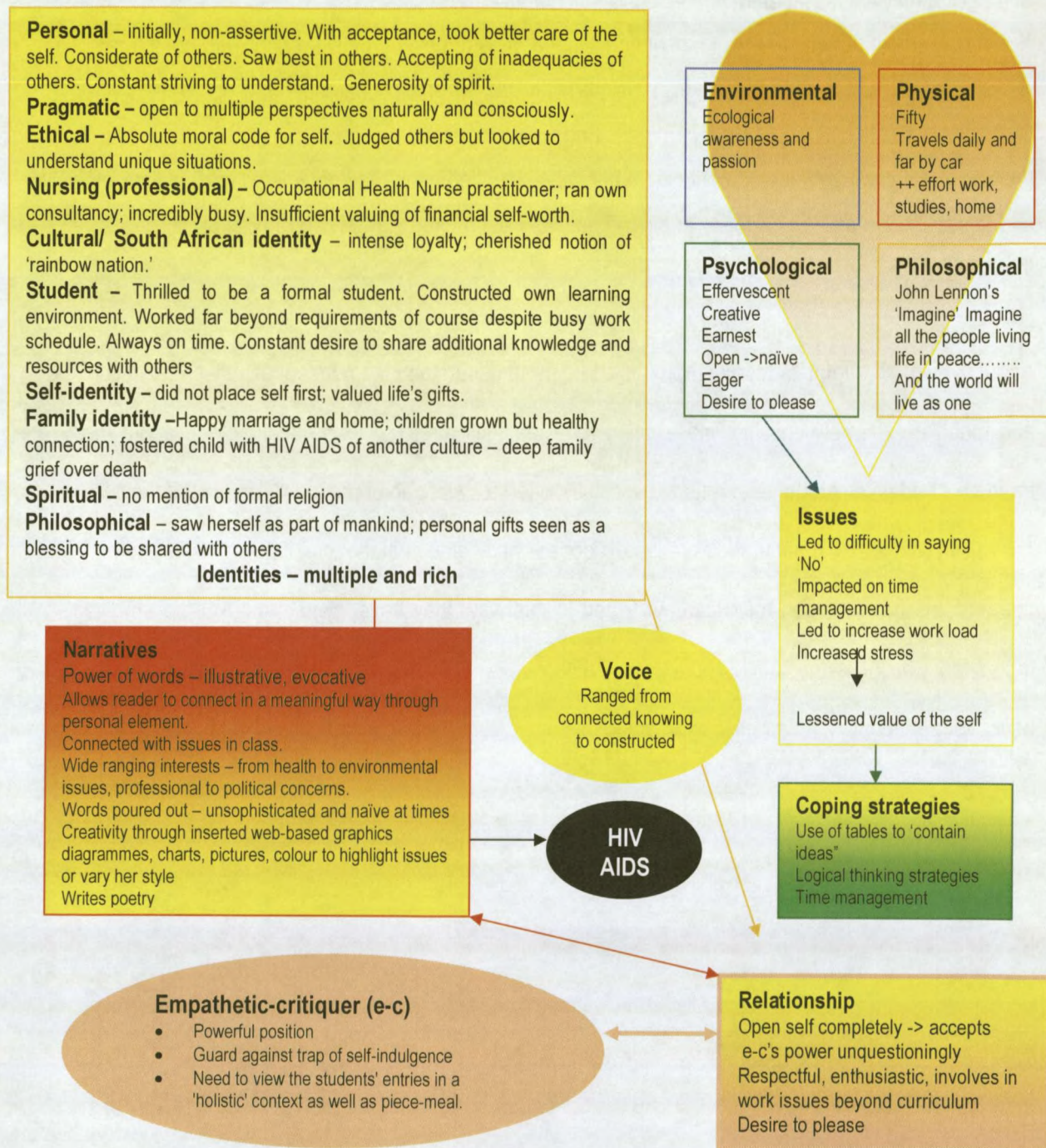


Figure 11.7 Lea's journaling experience in light of framework in Figure 10.1

Nandi's journal

11.10 Nandi

"Sound professional practice and parity in treatment of all stakeholders" (Jane, critical reader)

11.10.1 Introduction

On review of the analysis on Nandi, I realise that I have no specific demographic data on Nandi. Nandi was not part of my original 2002 research group and was just one of the 2003 students who had given written permission to include her in my research study. My decision to include her in the study was only determined after she had concluded her course. The sampling decision was based on the following criteria: Students from the 2003 group who were second-language English Primary Health Care students, who had provided written permission to be included in the study and who had completed reflective journals. These journals were placed in a small pile and the transcriber/typist was asked to choose one without reviewing the material. In this way, Nandi became part of the study.

In a text search of my reflexive journal, I found no mention of Nandi. My comments are based on memory, a picture of Nandi posted on Web CT and her journal. As I close my eyes, I can see the horse-shoe shape of the desk placements and Nandi sits at the far end of the crescent, between two of her friends, both almost as reticent as she. Nandi was probably one of the shyest students I have ever encountered. She was an attractive, softly spoken young Zulu woman in her early twenties, worked in a labour ward in a public hospital as a midwife, and was sedate in both manner and dress. She very seldom initiated discussion. In the first quarter of the year, she would literally hide behind her hands and her head would be down and eyes focused on the floor. She spoke with hesitation and was hugely uncomfortable with any form of attention. Confrontation as a form of conflict resolution was not part of her repertoire. The tutorial sessions were the most helpful experiences, for they

allowed me glimpses of students that went beyond the contact class sessions. After the first couple of tutorial sessions, I set Nandi a task. She was to initiate three conversations, however brief, every day. I also made it a point to recognise and praise Nandi whenever I could and would often tease her. By year's end, Nandi was still shy, but she self-participated in the discussions and maintained a fair amount of eye-contact. She was respected by her peers and she moved from being a junior staff member at work, to being a professional nurse (most of which was mind-set). I was delighted to see that on conclusion of her Primary Health Care programme, she had registered the following year for the remaining two subjects which would allow her to complete a programme in Nursing Management. The course co-ordinator had nothing but praise for her progress.

I have deliberately chosen *not* to follow up the pursuance of demographic data and instead allow Nandi's journal to speak for itself. I do this, for as I reflect upon the analysis of the remaining seven journals, I realise that it might seem as if I, as the facilitator, must have a more than usual knowledge of the student in order to understand that student and to support the critical reflective practice. In general, because classes were small (less than 20 students), this factor lent itself to my developing a more intimate knowledge of the students I worked with. The question is: does this educational process work when one also facilitates the learning of larger numbers of students and where, through lack of opportunity, one deals with only the academic input of the student? I contend that it does. Each student is an individual and expresses herself in a unique way and the reflective journal and the tutorials provide the opportunities to reflect this. However, although I try to connect in some way with all my students I am aware that my personality assists or gets in the way of this process. I can only try to be intuitive and mindful and consider the *Ethical posture: Perspective on ethical student/educator relationships* described in 10.2.3.

11.10.2 Subjectivity in analysis

In Chapter Ten, Section 10.1.2.2, I have expressed my concerns about the levels of expression and the rationale for using Duke et al.'s (2000) Reflective Evidence Rubric as a guide to *monitor* rather than as a specific tool to *measure* critical reflective writing. In considering my data bite memos with respect to Nandi's entries (e.g. February 12 and 13), my recognition that Nandi could have pursued her analysis in greater depth is to a large degree, subjective – especially taking into account the guiding norms for reflective writing (Table 6.5 in Chapter Six). I am also aware, as I reread Nandi's reflections that further or different questions beyond the original critique, come to mind. Again, this reflects the subjectivity in my thinking processes (and therefore, possibly, of the processes of other reader-respondents or empathetic-critiquers), which in turn, is affected by a number of different influencing factors, such as interest, knowledge, frame of mind/ mood etc. So, just as the situations that Nandi and other students deal with are "messy," so, I would suggest, are the solutions and the processes for decision making. A case in point is Nandi's journal entry (8 August, 2003) titled DISCIPLINE AGAINST ABDUCTED BABY IN UNIT where she discusses the abduction of a baby from her ward and focuses on the disciplining of the responsible nurse.

"A baby was admitted in nursery where he was looked after following delivery by caesarian section his mother was bedridden and could not come to breastfeed. The relatives came requesting to see the baby, they were told in the ward. Where the baby's mother was admitted to go to nursery because that was where the baby was. When they got there, they could not find the baby. They went to report in the ward where the mother was admitted. The in-charge then phoned the in-charge from the nursery to enquire but she was told that the baby was there doing well. The relatives left without seeing the baby and the following day they came requesting to take the baby home, it was then that they discovered that the baby was missing. When they first came and told that it was well the baby was already missing for two days.

The policy for discharging a baby from nursery is that the baby's mother comes with her chart and then identification is done by comparing the baby's and mother's particulars and the mother is made to sign that she has taken her baby. According to the nurse who signed the

baby out the woman came with the mother's chart in hospital attire, she checked the particulars in the mothers chart with that of the baby's and they matched and she made the woman signed for the baby and gave it to her. Unfortunately she could not recognize that she was handing the baby to the wrong woman because she hadn't seen her since the baby was admitted because the mother was bedridden when the baby came.

THE ISSUE

The unit in charge of the baby's ward is facing disciplinary committee. Why did she say that the baby was well whereas it was missing. It is said that she will be suspended. Though the nurse who handed the baby to an unknown woman is also said to be guilty not sure what charges are laid against her. It is still confusing how did the woman got hold of the baby's mother chart and even the hospital attire. But fortunately the baby was discovered after two weeks thanks it was not hurt. I feel sorry for the in charge because she is known as one of the responsible supervisor's."

In my initial analysis I wrote:

Many unanswered questions for me. A horrific situation made even more horrific for me because of the understated way in which it was written. Nandi writes about the situation in terms of the facts and the process but the emotion is missing. Nandi does not explore how this feels for the mother or family and just notes that she feels "sorry" for the nurse- in- charge because she is a 'good nurse'. For me, this is the stuff of nightmares - but even the positive result - the return of the baby, is written in an understated way. For Nandi, at least in this diary entry, it is the disciplining of the nurse that is the issue (hence the title) of the discussion and not the missing baby.

I am not sure if this is because of the South African context where, according to newspapers, horrific events happen daily. This occurrence is not so outside the norm that it is not perceived in gargantuan terms.

This is not the first time something like this has happened in South African hospitals. It does point to the awkward structure of the setting, a system where there are many patients – and high turnovers – and so difficulties in getting to ‘know’ clients – and very busy staff. It is interesting that Nandi does not point out any of these issues. She works within this context and doesn't seem to know it could/ should be different.

When I read about this scenario - it also becomes clear that this is a predominantly black African ward and that the staff and patients are predominantly black African. Within the ‘white’ culture, it is highly unlikely that the family would return home without insisting that they ‘see’ the baby first - and although the concept of Batho Pele is infiltrating all hospitals, where the rights of the patients are made obvious - it is hard to change the passivity of a whole generation within only a period of a generation (Maureen, databite analysis).

In accordance with the ethical norms of the research process of this study, I gave the typed journals back to all students (except Xolisi, who had left the country and whom I was unable to locate) for comment so that they could validate or refute or elaborate on the final document to be shared with the critical readers. These documents included the articles and reflections I had chosen for analysis, as well as scanned articles that the students had used as a basis for discussion. They also included my data bite analyses which were memos I had made interpreting the findings within the individual journals. Nandi was the only student who wished to make amendments or comments, and she did this in regard to the data bite analysis of article already noted:

“DIARIES

18 May 2004

Thank you for the summary of my analysed diaries. Having read them I do not have anything to criticise because they are analysed according to ones opinion and is not opposing.

I have realised that the analysis is about what you feel (own opinion). This was discovered when we discussed the diary of an abducted baby. From that diary I only focused on the people who were responsible for the abduction. But from our discussion It was clear to me that my focus did not go to the baby's family. It made me understand the comments that are made from other diaries because I did not broaden my mind.

I agree with most of the comments because when I wrote those diaries I used to concentrate on what had touch my mind at that time. Therefore from the analysis I was able to see that I only concentrate to the particular area of the scenario. The analysis help me to realize my shortfalls on critical thinking.

Thank you

Nandi"

On reading Nandi's comments, I reminded both Nandi and myself that the student had freedom of choice in terms of what she reflected upon, and that her reflection did not necessarily indicate a shortfall in critical thinking at all. She had just chosen to look at the issue from a specific perspective.

11.10.3 Nandi's Choice of reference material

Nandi chose to use newspaper articles and journal articles from the South African Nursing Journal 'Update' that is produced by and for members of DENOSA, the Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa for the journal section of her reflective journal. 'Update' is not a research journal, but covers issues of general interest to nurses. She had also taken a number of incidents that had occurred at work in relation to either her colleagues or herself, and commented on these. The articles are not scanned. Originally, I would read the article first and then the journal entry and then comment or question. For the purposes of this research, I have focused on the students' reflections, with the understanding that they have their base in and from the articles.

11.10.4 Student growth

(Critical Reader, Mari Pete) **“General comments**

This was a particularly heartwarming case to engage with, since Nandi comes across as vulnerable and inexperienced at first, and later on her growth is so evident, and so inspiring, springing from Nandi's personal experiences.

Growth

Although Nandi offers simplistic solutions to problems, she constantly engages and questions controversial issues. After exposure in lectures to assertiveness and power issues, I sense an “awakening”. Initially Nandi does not reveal her personal feelings or stance on issues. She rarely gives her own opinion or digs down to the root of a problem...” (Mari, Critical Reader)

In an early entry, Nandi discusses the consequences of “... poor record keeping and lack of patient identification in an incident when a patient was given the wrong blood and subsequently died. Her concern for patients again is manifest as is her professional commitment and in her awareness of correct procedure. The de-personalisation of patients and her problem solving skills in suggesting that they be known by their full names and not by their condition, is – apart from being professional procedure – concerned and compassionate.” (Jane, Critical Reader)

“The habit of not referring to patients by their proper names can result in poor care and if the patient is asked by relatives it is not easy to know because he is called by the bed number or his condition. If the patients have the same condition but maintained on the different medication you only know them by their conditions” (Nandi, 27 March)

Nandi's comments take me back about 25 years when the importance of Nandi's comments formed a key element in nursing care as I experienced it. At that time, we were moving from a medical based model (where the disease defined the patient) to a holistic model of care (also discussed in Chapter

1.4.6). It seems incredible that this lesson has not yet been learned. But seemingly it is so - and therefore Nandi's comments are all the more important. On review, my comments seem somewhat patronizing: I underwent my nursing training in far more ideal settings than nurses do today and was supported by adequate staff, equipment and infrastructure. Client turnover was far slower, allowing staff to get to know clients. Nurses today, in our current system, are frequently faced by unrelenting pressures, which, I suppose, can only be really appreciated in the comparative contexts (discussed further in 1.2.2 and 1.3.1).

Over the past decade, health care authorities have become increasingly concerned with the poor care that has followed resulting from poor staff attitudes, and embarked on a campaign called 'Batho Pele' - which, in essence, can be equated with quality care (see Chapter 1.1). The quality of patient care has been strongly connected to nurses' sense of professional identity. This has been severely compromised in the last decade. Nurses, as have all South Africans, have been undergoing a period of transformation and change, with the resultant disequilibrium that accompanies these processes. I have chosen to use Antjie Krog's (2003:127-129) interpretation of the phases of transformation elucidated in Chapter Seven, Section 7.4.5.8, as I could identify with these. Her interpretation is in the context of the political transformation that has taken place in South Africa since 1994, but which impacts on all phases of South African life.

Against this background, nurses are affected more practically by the transforming processes - changes in health policy resulting in greater and wider access to health care, but often without the accompanying resources and infrastructure needed to fulfill their professional obligations. In addition, the resources have been strained past breaking point by the inevitable impact of HIV AIDS. In light of the country's needs, the satisfaction of nurses with their profession has not seemed to feature high

on political agendas. Batho Pele has focused on patients' rights, but what of the nurses? Many nurses have felt, too little, too late.

11.10.5 Distancing from process of reflections

In the initial stages of her journaling, Nandi writes in the third person or about others and so distances herself from the processes of her practice. The article dated 24 April, titled 'ADVOCATE TOWARD A CRUEL ANAESTHETIST' is really the first time that Nandi has made a personal judgment, indicating her personal feelings. She has been very careful prior to this, to remove the problem so that she is not directly involved. The issue at hand was the unprofessional manner in which an anaesthetist managed an epidural, without first giving a local anaesthetic or without the appropriate supports. He was directly castigated by the nurse and reported to a higher authority.

"But the sister who confronted this doctor is a junior sister she did not wait to report him to his seniors but told him right away and she even explained to the doctor the things that doctor knew making him aware that even is she is not an anaesthetist, she knows what is giving epidural all about.

COMMENT:

I was pleased by the way this sister advocated for that patient because the next patients for procedure were done without any problem. I think the doctor realized that nurses love their patients and are their advocates."

(Jane, Critical Reader): "In reporting an incident experienced by a colleague, Nandi evidences skills in creating a vivid picture. The attitude of the anaesthetist was unprofessional and certainly unacceptable, in her eyes, as was his lack of concern. The feisty attitude of the junior sister in confronting the doctor, without reporting him, is admired by Nandi, and re-affirms her concept of what nursing is all about."

On a personal note, I haven't practiced as a midwife for over 23 years, and through Nandi (and the descriptions and analysis of other students) am taken back to these forms of nursing practices. I am reminded about what I know, and, in order to respond effectively to Nandi (and other students) I also have to search for and read about what I do not remember.

Nandi's judgment is still judicious and cautious. She does not condemn outright, nor does she provide recommendations or indicate in any obvious way, what right actions were taken. I think that Nandi is leaving this up to me, and that by describing the situation, and the process followed, she is making an assumption that I should be able to determine that her colleague acting correctly. This time, however, she has taken one step further and given a tentative judgment "I was pleased by the way..." (Nandi, 24 April).

I find Nandi's observations about the junior staff members, insightful - they are the "people who are always next to the patients it makes them become sensitive" (Nandi, 24 April). It is also quite an indictment on the senior staff members, who, theoretically, should have their fingers on the pulse of the workings of the unit, but who do not appear to do so. Again, she does not note this in an obvious way and leaves this up to me (or at least, I think she does. She gives me credit for understanding how the system should work).

11.10.6 Use of titles to introduce topics

The titles of her topics provide an indication of the key issues she wishes to speak of - and for me, this condensation of the broader incident to a summarised phrase, is a good indication of Nandi's ability to think critically (even though some of the titles were taken directly from journal articles).

These include:

Table 11.8 Nandi's topic titles

AIDS patients get new R1,6 million care ward	Some were simply titled: Clinical experience	Lets talk nurses
Caeserian section: An unpregnant woman	Swapping a suit for a uniform	Poor record keeping can damage patient care and your career
Let them eat garlic	Who is responsible for las offices	Advocate toward a cruel anaesthetist
Value for money	Neviropine refusal resulted in cheating a patient	Power abuse by senior sisters
Unfair treatment of personnel	Discipline against abducted bab in unit	Lack of communication
Delegation of an impossible subordinate	What the future holds for nurses	Assertiveness skills to calm a senior member
Critical thinking and management	Four hospital staff from HIV after becoming infected through needles	

11.10.7 A question of power

In an entry dated 5 June, the issue at hand is a direct instruction by the attending doctor to a nurse colleague to give needed medication Neviropene "as prophylactic treatment preventing mother to child transmission" to a patient, without the patient's knowledge as the patient had already withheld consent. The nurse colleague refused, indicating that the process was unethical and the giving of the treatment, the anaesthetist's responsibility.

This particular situation is problematic and revolves around disparities in power - lack of power for the patient; lack of power (comparatively, in relation to the doctor) of the nurse. The doctor's intention was well meant. There are gaps in this story as the patient hasn't indicated why she doesn't want the Neviropene and part of the counselling includes 'Informed consent or refusal' - it is not at all clear from this scenario how aware of consequences the patient is. While Nandi praises the nurse's action - the point of the matter is that the patient received the treatment, regardless of the nurse's verbal

intervention. The fact that *she* did not give the treatment in did not in any way mitigate her client-advocacy role - where she was clearly remiss. But here one needs to be aware of the disparity between the doctor and the junior sister in terms of power. This is a complicated situation where it is difficult for an outsider to be wholly aware of the potential consequences for those involved. It might be useful to consider the potential effects and Skillings (1992) cited in Freshwater (2000:482) "argues that nurses adopt the adaptive strategies of oppressed groups, directing their dissatisfaction inward towards each other, towards themselves and towards those less powerful than themselves (often the patients)." Freshwater (2000) notes that nurses function within an oppressive system, 'oppressive' because it is "patriarchal" and headed by doctors and others in authority. This often results in nurses lower down the power ranks engaging in aggressive behaviour towards each other.

One of the things that have been missing so far in Nandi's reflections is how nursing practice affects her and how she sees herself as responsible for addressing any of the anomalies. Her comments do include action statements, but so far, they have mostly been generalised and refer to the ubiquitous 'other.'

11.10.8 Personalising the experience

Mari (Critical Reader) "...Halfway through, she writes for the first time about "my experiences". (See Entry 12 - "Power abuse by senior members – my clinical experience".) Here Nandi gives personal examples for the first time (previous examples were based on others' experiences) and Nandi also comes alive in her logical critique of the situation."

We are almost midway through the year before Nandi begins to write about "my experiences" (12 June). I would suggest that it took a while to develop a sense of trust with me as the critiquer and

until her initial approaches have provided her with a sense of safety. I am enchanted by Nandi's approach to this incident. It is an issue on power. We actually discussed this incident in a tutorial session - and what Nandi does not mention here, is that the senior staff work in units (e.g. the nursery) where the off-duties and the work itself is more congenial and easier to cope with. During the tutorial session, Nandi noted that the more senior staff felt that it was their due to work in this more congenial environment in terms of their seniority and length of experience. However, their refusal to work in the more intensive labour wards was couched in different terms where they rationalised the process i.e. "it was said that because of the experience and exposure to the environment the junior professional nurses will not solve the problems that might arise." This is a slightly different scenario that Nandi presents - but with the same outcome.

"In my unit the allocation of duties is according to seniority that is the senior staff members are placed for supervision and writing of reports and attending to patients problem such as queries about their children's death notification and problems are sometimes forwarded to the attention of the unit manager if available at the time. The junior professional nurses are responsible for patient care and attending to doctors order. They are never allocated to do the senior professional nurse duty. I heard that it was said that because of the experience and exposure to the environment the junior professional nurses will not solve the problems that might arise."

The time comes when there is no senior staff member available, and the junior staff members (including Nandi herself) take over with minimal difficulty and fuss. Her solution is very tongue-in-cheek "Maybe next time things will not be easy as it was when the junior sisters are left on their own." The tutorial sessions clearly indicated the hierarchical structure in the hospital ward, where Nandi was in a junior position. Nandi does not question the seniority issue - but she does challenge the logic and the manipulation of the situation by the senior staff.

"It was then requested from the senior staff that we think it can be wise if we all rotate in doing the senior duties that is the senior sister allocated with a junior sister so that the latter person

can gain experience towards such duties. But up to this far the request has not yet been attended to.”

The fact that Nandi even thinks about the challenge is quite a step forwards for her – and I am charmed that her reference to the assertiveness class and reading is also used to validate and support her response!

“After reading about assertiveness it came into my mind how would it be if the junior nurses told the unit in charge that they are willing to do the work but after being exposed to the environment because the reason for not allocating junior sisters was the lack of experience. “

Nandi, however, isn't just being cute – they did work in the situation and did not hijack the senior staff – which is both right, and commendable, in my book. (Jane, critical reader) “**A far cry from Ms Young! The hierarchical structure is necessary? How then does a senior sister keep in touch with the realities of the workplace – it seems a lack of planning? The Junior staff were able to manage and rightfully credited - when the senior staff were away. Seemingly, they adapted well, which Nandi reflects, with some pride. The attitude of the senior staff to rotation suggests an 'holier than thou' approach – which is reflected in Nandi's last paragraph – on assertiveness – which seems to have empowered her: she's 'taking a risk'. Rotation seems a logical solution to this issue – and a way of creating greater harmony. Nandi's tone implies that there is discord.**”

11.10.9 Taking a stand

(Critical reader, Mari) “After this Nandi begins to take a stronger stand (Diary entry 13 – Unfair treatment of personnel), backing up her position with research support ('I support Booyens, 1996:48 where he states that “uniformity of policies prevents conflict and promotes fairness”)’.

11.10.10 Disempowerment to empower?

(Critical reader, Mari) Diary entry 15 – "lack of communication" Nandi undergoes an intensely disempowering experience, when her unit is moved overnight without her knowledge, and she returns in the morning, finding she has no place to belong to, having to fill in for nurses in other wards. "I felt angry, frustrated and annoyed..." After considering calling in sick, and resigning, she analyses and processes the incident: "After I came to terms with the situation on my own, because no one ever bothered to apologise...I realize how important it is to discuss and communicate with subordinates and that the manager as a change agent should prepare staff members so that they could go through all the stages of i.e. giving support and encouragement until refreezing has occurred."

Nandi has tended to write fairly unemotionally throughout her diary. This is the first time that she has used very emotive and highly descriptive words and phrases like "I blinked several times to ensure that I was not dreaming", "We remained standing as if we were electrocuted", "angry, frustrated and annoyed" (28 August). Through Nandi's eyes, I recognise that Salvador Dali nightmare and I am fairly sure that I would not have responded in such a calm way. Her senses are pummeled, she and her colleague have been displaced without so much as a bye-your-leave, and it was not as though there had been no opportunity to warn Nandi as she had been present at the Ward hand -over the night before.

Nandi's greatest emotion is reserved for the feeling of not being needed or recognised, which is further exacerbated by now having to work as a night relief as "I suffered threatened self interest as I had no unit to work in" (28 August). Nandi recognises what has happened and also is looking introspectively within herself and analysing her responses and the effect (and potential effect) of the

displacement. It is a measure of her character that she chooses to use this as a learning experience and responds to it as such rather than disintegrate or follow some of her initial inclinations - i.e. phone in sick (after first experience); resign (after second experience of rejection - no 'own' unit to work in). She also, as I note in my response to her, integrates the theory learned in Change Management, to her own situation.

"MY COMMENT

I think there was lost of communication somewhere seen that the staff at the lower level was not informed either verbally or through the memorandum. There was no follow up to ensure that the message or instructions received to all affected by it because neither staff members in both shift were aware about change that was going to take place. I think I was in a state of resistance to change because I suffered threatened self interest as I had no unit to work in. Also psychologically resistance as I understood the reason for change but emotionally I could not. May be it was the way the change was introduced. Then I concluded that my managers did not realize that even planned change can result to different emotional react and not to mention if unfreezing phase was not introduced" (Nandi, 28 August).

This was a shocking experience but one that resulted in a huge forward movement in terms of reflective writing and self-growth.

(Critical Reader, Mari) "Nandi's assertiveness develops in leaps and bounds after this: First she deals effectively with an uncooperative, moody messenger whom nobody wants to instruct: "From that day I just go to her with a serious mood and look her straight and tell her, the task...but that incident opened my eyes and taught me to stand on my own...and that a person needs to be firm and consistent to subordinates. I realized that the messenger has no problem the problem is with us, her supervisor."

"Maureen: Well done Nandi

You are not asking her to do anything else but her job. It is amazing the power some people have over others part of being a professional person means assuming proper use of power – and I like your choice of words – “firm and consistent”

This is a big step forward for Nandi and a big part of her maturing. I like her recognition of the understanding displayed by the doctor, and his refusal to allow Nandi to kow-tow to the situation. He expected the situation to be dealt with and the message be sent. Failure on Nandi's part could have been embarrassing – particularly in terms of the hierarchical structure where the messenger is way down the totem pole. Nandi is also recognising that being nominated a manager does not necessarily make a good leader. Nandi demonstrates insight into the situation, but more importantly, into her own fears. Her introspection and resolution allows her to move on to actions that are appropriate. The power disparities inherent in this system indicate that position does not necessarily coincide with power. There is a differentiation between conferred power and assumed power, something Nandi is aware of.

11.10.11 The great debate

(Nandi: Entry 17, no date). What the future holds for the nurses.

The issue of migration of nurses is a recurrent one (Smetherham and Laurence, 2004) and a major issue in South Africa for the past few years. It is an issue that has been discussed in nearly every student journal, as has the issue of HIV AIDS (Ehlers, 2004). Although in an oblique fashion, Nandi does indicate what it is that she wants - recognition, respect and support from the health authorities. She sees the overt message - Doctors count, but nurses don't. Nurses are expendable. It is a harsh reality to deal with and as Nandi says: "If you can not remove the source of stress the solution is to move away from the source."

There is no doubt that the conditions of service are difficult for nurses in South Africa, and this is further exacerbated by the helplessness nurses feel in attempting to manage the AIDS pandemic, which has changed the face of health care in South Africa. Nurses battle to work in difficult conditions, where their own health is placed at constant risk as well, and having little recognition for their endeavors, places further stress on their loyalties.

Nandi's concerns are real and her argument is that someone who has walked in a nurse's shoes, will appreciate a nurse's perspective. Nandi has spent much of this course trying to appreciate other perspectives, and this possibly might be why she considers this a reasonable suggestion. It is simplistic, but I can't quarrel with her logic.

11.10.12 Moving forwards

(Critical reader, Mari) "From this point onwards Nandi starts using phrases such as "I like the idea that..." A sterling example of Nandi's development is when she challenges authority when she insists repeatedly and calmly that a senior follows the correct procedures, namely putting a new patient to bed before dealing with the red tape (Entry 18 – Assertiveness skills to calm a senior member). Nandi proceeds to reflect on the incident, realizing that she acted without thinking through the issues beforehand.

She is suggesting a standard policy (which is useful in promoting conformity of behaviour and supporting conformity of behaviour). The issue is of assertiveness and has been threaded through Nandi's diary entries and she has described a number of situations where this has been warranted. She has explored the effect of her positions on herself and on others, and has come to the realization that these skills do work for her. Nandi is still in a fairly junior position where the concept of policies as a tool for controlling behaviour is seen as the answer. But it is not the only solution, and she will

need to hone her interpersonal skills – which she is doing. I think the fact that the senior nurse did as she was asked, and calmly, is indicative that Nandi handled the situation fairly well. I have become aware of Nandi's sensitivity to others and her non-aggressive approach. For her, harmonious relationships between her colleagues and others she works with are important.

11.10.13 Personal connections

(Critical reader, Mari) "The first explicit comment on Nandi's personal life appears towards the end of the diary (Entry 19 – Critical thinking and management) when she says learning about critical thinking had made her social and work lives easily manageable."

11.10.14 Nandi's growth

Sarah (Critical Reader) comments on Nandi's growth "...Academically:- Nandi has shown evidence of growth in her critical thinking to some extent. Her theoretical arguments are quite simplistic. E.g. 12/02 – "But my concern is that why is not this amount used in trying to find the cure rather than spending it to the terminally ill who are already towards the end of their life." Nandi does not realise that there is already a large amount of money being spent on research towards a cure for AIDS, and that money set aside for palliative care is also important. She focuses on the practical and the concrete rather than the abstract and the intellectual.

A number of her anecdotes relate to nursing in general rather than how the practice affects her and as Maureen so aptly puts it, "how she sees herself as responsible for addressing any of the anomalies."

She does however pick up evidence of problem-solving thinking: "She took this statement as a problem solving approach where she needed to find facts without blaming anyone," (18/02) and expresses curiosity, "I also wish to know if that step did bring changes and solution to the pre-existing problem."

10/04 – asks thought provoking questions – "I asked the doctor who was doing VCT "How reliable was the rapid test kit" he was using." 24/04 – summarises an incident neatly, evidence of her ability to think critically. "I was pleased by the way this sister advocated for that patient because the next patients for procedure were done without any problem."

Ditto for the 29 April when she writes: "A person must carefully think what is it that he want the union do for him."

More evidence of challenging behaviour is to be found in the 12/06 diary entry. Quotes reputable sources to substantiate her arguments – "(Booyes, 1996:48)." 28/08 – brings in an awareness of theories of change management to help her deal with a big change in her professional life. "Then I concluded that my managers did not realise that even planned change can result to different emotional react and not to mention if unfreezing phases was not introduced."

Nandi herself is very positive about the benefits of the academic course for her. 21/10 – "Learning about critical thinking in management course has been of great benefit to me. It made my social and work lives easily manageable. It is a tool that everybody needs to have especially the managers."

11.10.15 Critiquer support (Sarah, critical reader)

"Yes, the critiquer has demonstrated support of student growth in critical reflective thinking through her critique. She asks pertinent questions designed to promote critical thinking. For instance, she observes that Nandi's responses tend to be general rather than specific. Thus, in diary entry 12/02 – she tries to bring Nandi's awareness to the personal, "What if it was one of your family members? What about a balance?"

She is encouraging and positive, "Very good start Nandi!" However she also asks Nandi to apply lessons learned personally at a general level. See 13/02 – "What are the implications of this situation and your reflection for your own nursing practice?"

Maureen's questions demonstrate an understanding of midwifery that means she is on a level with Nandi – 6/03 "What do you know about false pregnancies? Why was the woman bleeding? Why hadn't the woman attended AN clinic? How did the woman cope afterwards – what kind of support would she have needed?"

However, as Maureen herself notes, sometimes the issues she notices in Nandi's writing she does not challenge her on – i.e. 27 March, "Perhaps if she had addressed this, it would have added to a more appropriate analysis of the problem, allowing for a more creative solution. I see that I have not challenged her on this either."

I think Maureen is more critical of Nandi's thinking in her notes to herself than she is to Nandi. This might be tactful and supportive, but sometimes constructive criticism and prompting can be a great help. On the 7/08 Maureen writes "A horrific situation made even more horrific for me because of the understated way in which it was written. Nandi writes about the situation in terms of the facts and the process but the emotion is missing." But to Nandi she only asks, "Is there a better or safer method of

organisation that could be used? Had this happened before? What is the lesson learned for you?"

She should perhaps have asked Nandi how she felt about the abduction?

She does give credit where credit is due though. "I am very proud of you – this was a very good reflexive process – and you integrated your theory on your own situation. Well done!" (28/08). Very encouraging and supportive, "I look forward to following your progress in future – and will always be interested in what you are doing." (9/10)"

11.10.16 Themes As identified by Sarah (critical reader):

"Empathy"

Nandi shows empathy towards another nurse – 13/02 – "I think everything happen so fast that she though how she can save the baby's life but unfortunately for her she cut the baby's scalp." Maureen shows empathy for Nandi – 28/08 – "What a shock for you, Nandi!"

Constructive criticism

12/02 – Maureen tries to get Nandi thinking in a multilogical way, "Nandi – your questions are valid – but perhaps you might take into account the fact that this is a club donating funding."

Authenticity

Both Nandi and Maureen bring in their own emotions to their work situations. Nandi, in particular learns to be emotionally more expressive, "I felt angry, frustrated and annoyed, because nothing was said to us when we left in the morning." (28/8)

Positive Reinforcement

Maureen encourages Nandi in her journey towards critical thinking. Very encouraging and supportive, "I look forward to following your progress in future – and will always be interested in what you are doing." (9/10)

Critical Thinking

Nandi's: 21/10 – "The ability to analyse issues and form judgement, find solution and evaluate conclusions are learnt by using critical and reflexive thinking. This skill covers almost all what a manager should possess. These include conflict management, problem solving, assertiveness and motivation to name but a few... Since I started learning about it and writing my diaries I easily came to understanding of some behaviours and situation. I have reflected this in some of my diaries."

Maureen's: I found Maureen's writing on the process of transformation fascinating (27/03) and wondered how it would be if she shared that (perhaps more simply phrased) with Nandi – to help Nandi come to terms with the rapid transformation of the SA health system to a Batho Pelo model?

11.10.17 Nandi's Self-Evaluation

"21 OCTOBER 2003

DIARY ENTRY 19

CRITICAL THINKING AND MANAGEMENT

Learning about critical thinking in management course has been of great benefit to me. It made my social and work lives easily manageable. It is a tool that everybody needs to have especially the managers.

After learning about this skill I tried to use and it helped in improving my personal relationship with others because I have the understanding of their performances and behaviour. The skill

helped me in providing more productive ways of organizing my work and personal life effectively.

I have no doubt that a manager with this skill can unconsciously be an effective motivator to staff or subordinates. The ability to analyse issues and form judgement, find solution and evaluate conclusions are learnt by using critical and reflective thinking. This skill covers almost all what a manager should possess. These include conflict management, problem solving, assertiveness and motivation to name but a few.

Since I started learning about it and writing my diaries I easily came to understanding of some behaviours and situation. I have reflected this in some of my diaries."

11.10.18 Conclusion

Nandi has encapsulated the purpose of her diary and how she has structured her diary entries. It has been heartening as Nandi's facilitator, to see how she has taken knowledge gained and skills developed in class, and both consciously (and as she notes) unconsciously used in her practice setting. She has gained in confidence and developed an awareness of her own strength and power and used the reflective process increasingly as an introspective tool for self-understanding. As a facilitator, I recognise the changes that have occurred during this learning process and as a researcher, (albeit a very subjective one, strongly bound to the subject as her teacher), I have tried to interpret Nandi's learning process. My subjectivity is both hindering (in that I have biases and can be blinded by these biases) but it also allows me to engage deeply with the process and express my understanding in ways that might not be possible had I not been part of this process. I have tried to use a variety of data to support or refute my interpretation, and I think it is only appropriate to include the student's 'voice' as an authentic interpreter of the data as well. I see this entry as a valuable contribution to my interpretations.

To answer the question: Has Nandi grown in her personal, academic and professional capacity?

I don't think that there are dramatic changes, but Nandi has grown. Her 'voice' becomes stronger and she has become more self-assured. The issues that concern her are relevant and she has moved out of the passive role to taking a more directive stand, in both her learning and her work - and has integrated both.

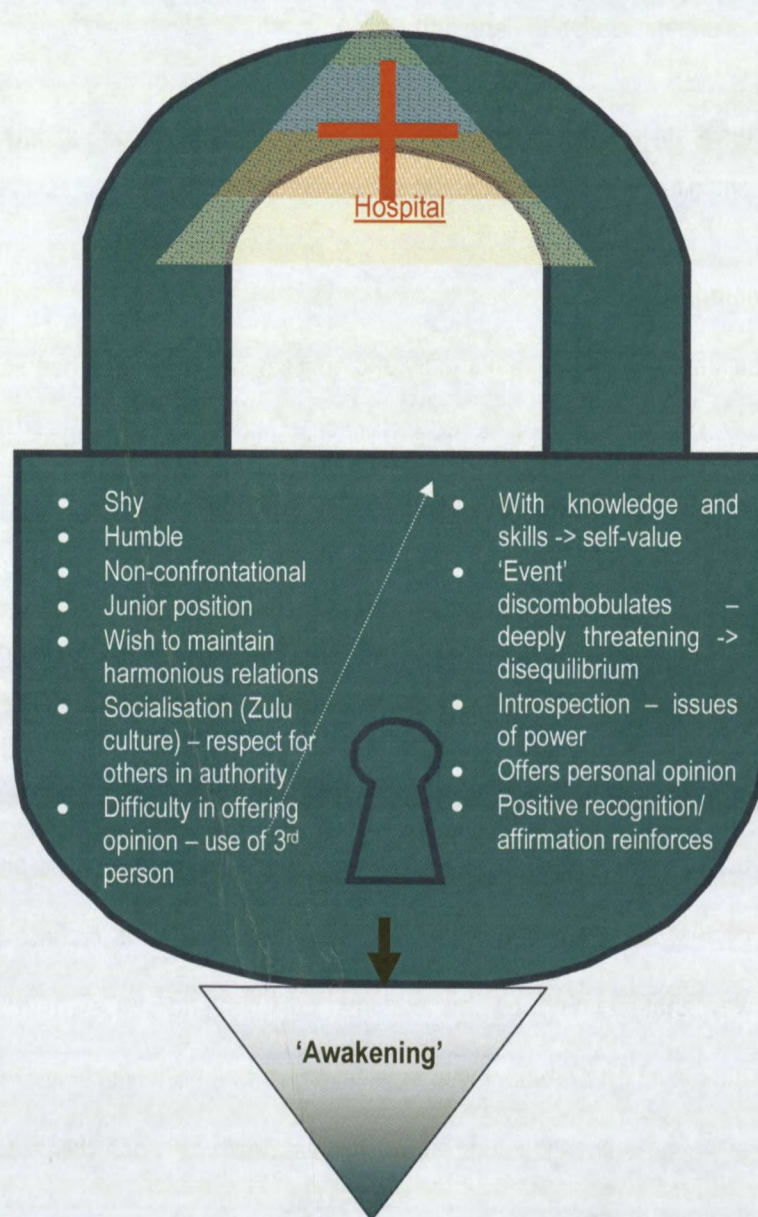


Figure 11.8 Unlocking Nandi's 'voice'

11.11 CONCLUDING REMARKS

11.11.1 Lessons learned

Surbeck et al. (1991) described the processes involved in journaling in Chapter Ten, Section 10.1.2.3 (reaction, elaboration and contemplation), and in general, these reflect similar processes experienced by these eight students. Perhaps because of their profession (nursing, reflecting the kind of scenarios where life-death issues are a daily aspect of a nurse's practice), perhaps because of the ethical and moral foundation of their profession, perhaps because of their stage of development (these students were not neophytes) or perhaps because of the guidance (critiquing, question prompt, criteria for journaling, group support, class discussions) or perhaps because of an amalgam of these factors, most of these students either moved into the contemplative stage or continued within this phase, unlike the teaching students in Surbeck et al.'s (1991) study.

I would suggest that the focal question posed to the students: "How does this reflection relate to your nursing practice?" was instrumental in moving the student beyond the descriptive phase. I would also suggest that including a section on news articles and journal articles not only gave students permission to move beyond the particular but in fact encouraged more global considerations of issues beyond the immediacy of their personal practice, supporting the double-loop learning explained in Chapter Four, Section 4.6.4.2.1. All students addressed the HIV AIDS issue from multiple perspectives and most of the students addressed issues affecting their profession e.g. migration of nurses or the various acts impacting on practice e.g. the Pharmacy Act. A number of students moved beyond their professional interests to discuss other issues, for example, poverty alleviation or environmental or political concerns, reflecting issues current of the time. It was also clear that, in general, students developed their reflective skills to consideration of alternative perspectives, to try and arrive at more balanced perspectives.

Additionally, although I did not choose to include very much on students' use of journal article analysis in the final presentation (although this is available in the raw data analysis on CD-rom), this component was extremely useful as it ensured that students were in fact connecting theory to practice. They had to do this in a personal way relating to their own specific practice as again, they had to answer the question 'How do your reflections or your analysis of this article apply to your nursing practice?' Through this component, as well as in their personal reflections, both the interests, needs and specific discipline within nursing are explored. It is very easy to tell which student is specializing in which discipline, even if they are discussing management related issues, as they are integrating all components within their journal. It is also the area where it is easier to identify and support critical thinking, as it is familiar to both student and myself as it fits more easily with academic 'norms'.

The issues discussed by the eight journaling students reflected congruence in that they can be demarcated into personal, professional and discipline related areas. In general, students chose to reflect on issues that (a) interested them and (b) concerned them. For example, issues around power - be it related to gender, hierarchical structures, client advocacy or personal rights - were common. It was notable, that those students with more world experience (and had probably more authority and power over their own actions e.g. Carol, Lea, Xolisi, Jena and Janet) tended to grapple with issues related to power over others, whereas the younger students (Nandi, Liseko and Reeve) had less control over external power systems, and tried to develop understanding and a way of coping in situations where their control was limited.

The eight student journals were written by students from three different race groups and six different ethnic groups. In most of the journals, the cultural backgrounds, gender, age and professional

experience of these students was reflected to a lesser or greater degree. For someone like myself, from a different cultural background to the majority of my students, these journals allow me an insight and understanding of these areas that would be difficult to access in normal classroom contact or academic assignments. This in turn allows me opportunities to understand and respect student practice which is not necessarily in line with theoretical standards and so learn to appreciate where practice can drive theory, rather than arbitrarily dismiss this as not 'fitting' in with normal practice.

Generally speaking, it is fairly easy to identify that most of the students underwent their reflective journey as categorized and explained by Glaze, (2002) in Figure 10.1. Although these categories are listed in Chapter Seven, in section 7.3 the essence of similar journeys is expressed by the students. It is clear to see in nearly all the journals that students are shocked at the initial stages and experience difficulties in their struggle to come to grips with both the writing and the demands of the process. One might also note that as empathetic-critiquer, I was gentlest and most supportive in these early stages. I felt very much like a mother teaching her child to ride his first bicycle "You can do it, you can do it. You are wonderful. You have the ability..." As the students moved into an acceptance mode and started making connections, the questioning became more probing although the motivation and support were there. In those early stages, I made sure that we used classroom and tutorial time to share entries and further discussion. I did ask permission from individual students to comment on a specific entry. If it was refused, I moved on gracefully, however, I was careful in those early stages not to bring to class entries that were highly personal or had the potential for embarrassment. In this way, I would recognise work that students were doing in their journals through formal acknowledgement in class. I reminded students about the questioning prompt and at intermittent stages within the course, I included further readings on critical reflective thinking and journaling. After the first term, I would then start encouraging students to start sharing entries on the

web. By this time, they had settled down and generally, were comfortable with each other. Both writing and typing skills started to improve, and in general, there was a shift in the fluidity and ease of expression that did increase as the journaling process proceeded. Obviously, this was more notable with some students than with others – and a good example is Reeva's writing. The type of writing modes seen in most of the journals included the descriptive, cathartic and reflective modes as described in Chapter Three, Section 3.14.4.3. Students such as Carol openly recognised when they were in the cathartic mode. In general, the descriptive modes were seen more frequently in the early stages of journaling and then usually, as an introduction of context for further entries. From these eight journals, it is clear that there were multiple reasons for writing entries, and each of Auerbach's (1999) categories see reflection to some degree or other in each of the journals

- writing to express the self and make meaning out of the experience;
- writing for affirmation – here the student writes to develop approaches such as the narrative, expression of factual matters and to persuade – and try to conform to the genre of reflective writing or the more formal style required in the journal article analysis;
- writing for social change, where important social issues are explored to try and bring about a change and improvement in lifestyle.

In Chapter Seven, section 7.3.6 reflects the value students placed on reflective journaling, and as the facilitator of this process, I would support their perceptions. Additionally, however, I have seen the reflective journal as a place where it was possible to 'see' the character of the student and to identify her moral and ethical stance. Reflective tutorials, to a degree, also allowed this perspective, but had this been a 'normal' classroom with usual activities for assessment (e.g. tests and assignments), this would not have been so easy to determine. Because the journal was process driven, the reader can

observe the thoughts and feelings (and to a degree, the behaviour) of students over a long term, and so it becomes difficult to 'hide' behind an assignment, where academic criteria frequently drive the process.

It should be remembered that these students worked in diverse health care settings in locations both near and far. An added advantage to the reflective journal from an educator's perspective was that, through the lens of the journal, I was able to 'visit' the student's place of practice and 'see' how they worked. The reflective journal allowed an in-depth understanding of both the student and her practice.

The self-evaluation process was particularly effective, as it was within this process that the student identified the kind of thinking and learning that had taken place over the academic year, and had to both place a value on this process, as well as a justification for the value. This issue is addressed in Chapter Seven, Section 7.3.6.

From a constructivist perspective, the student has determined the what, where, when and how in the thinking and writing process, as can be seen from the very individual journals which have been presented.

As Jane (critical reader) so succinctly observes **"This is a shallow appreciation of women of considerable worth and capability."**

8 Student journals

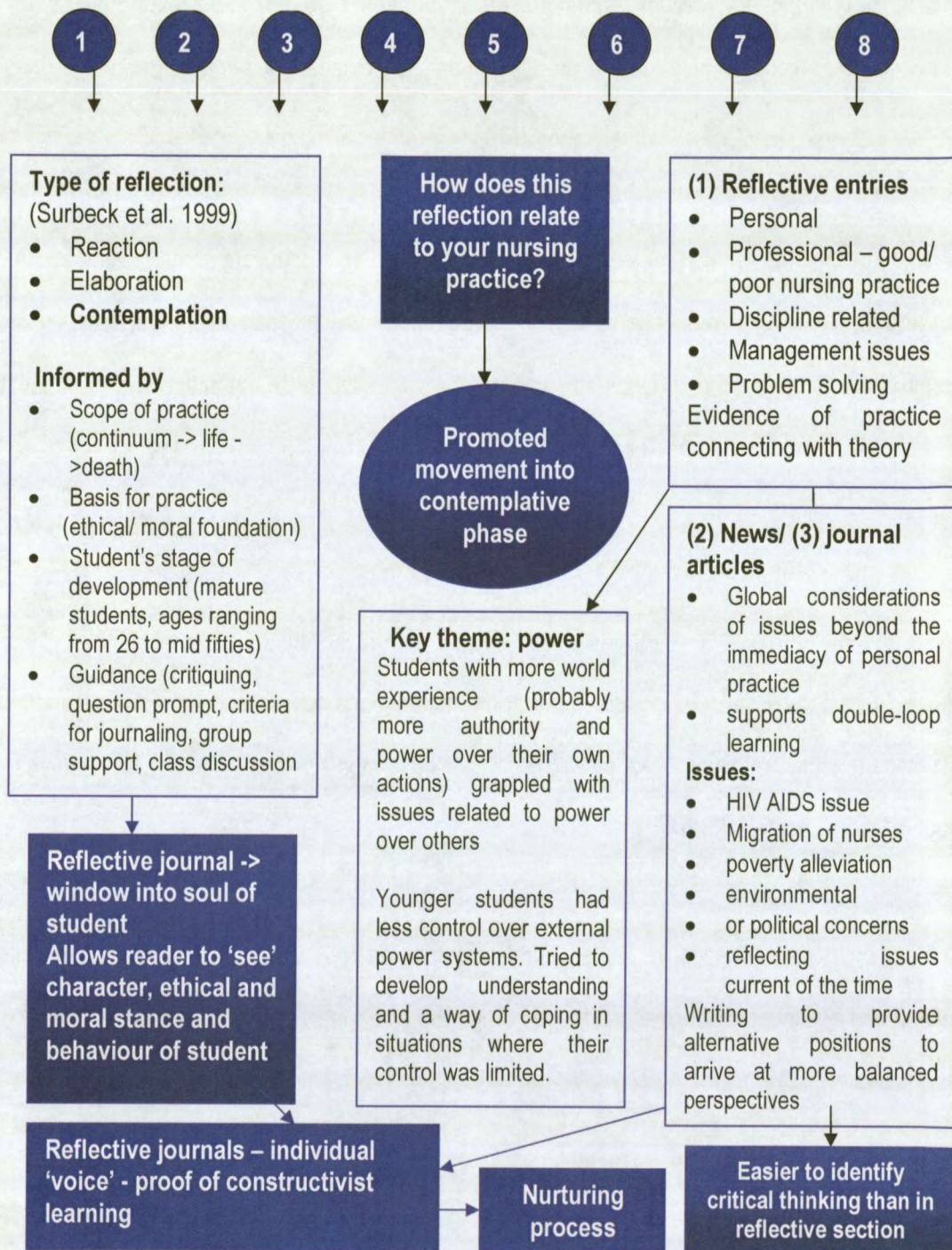


Figure 11.10 Some lessons learned from text of 8 students' reflective journals

11.11.2 Overview of the process (critical readers)

This chapter has comprised a composite of different 'voices' and so it seems only appropriate to conclude this section with a general overview of the process by Mari (critical reader).

11.11.2.1

Mari Pete "General Comments

It is an honour to have been part of the journeys of these students and their lecturer. It has left me feeling humble to have learnt how caregivers who do nursing management work under the most challenging circumstances, develop coping strategies – often through hope, spirituality, humour and creativity. These are some of the themes that run through these diaries. Hope, because in the midst of despair and even horror in some cases (I was shocked to tears by many of the anecdotes) these nurses display compassion, courage and generosity of spirit on a daily basis. To be a witness to the courage and growth of these students, and to read the intimate thoughts and feelings expressed in their diaries, is a privilege.

Lecturer/ Researcher support of student growth process

On the point of interaction, the researcher's *questions* posed to students often remained unanswered in most journals, but student Lea in diary 7 chooses to engage and student Reeva in diary 8 also reflects explicitly on input given by the researcher. Even though there is largely not a sense of dialogue present in the journals, given the fact that all students grew in some respect, the constant questions are likely to have directed this growth process.

The researcher analysed all learners' *reflections* in great depth, and from various angles.

Throughout the researcher gave credit to students' point of view and demonstrated an understanding of their individual backgrounds (cultural, personal and professional) and she showed an awareness of their strengths and limitations. The researcher is also aware of her own cultural bias: "I recognise that most of my viewing and reading is based on western material that doesn't hold the appeal or relevance for many of my students, and so am more selective and cautious about this inclusion."

There are also many instances where the researcher indicated her own growth, by being open to learn from her students: "On reflection it (journaling) is a nurturing process. I don't know that I appreciated this notion before."

Van Aswegen says: "Without commitment and encouragement the reflective practitioner may become increasingly stressed." I was deeply moved by the lecturer/researcher's compassion for each student, her gentle prodding and immovable support. It is clear throughout that it is this safe space which enabled students to open up, share and grow. It is through the balance between critique and support that she builds a foundation for her own and her students' reflective practice (see diaries for specific examples.) It was particularly moving to see Student Nandi in Diary 6 gradually opened up and sharing some of her learning curve in assertiveness with the researcher.

I found the researcher's reflection (from Diary 5, Liseko, quoted below) particularly insightful and I think it speaks for itself about her focus on empowering her students, yet doing this in a sensitive way:

"I sense Liseko's feelings of powerlessness. I am always concerned about directing a course of action for students, unless they specifically ask my advice. I prefer to look at potential implications and try to elicit possible options, but I am also aware that many of the situations within which these nurses work, is fraught with potential difficulties, or masked by hidden agendas not easily apparent to myself. Most of the decisions I make for myself are based on a context, affected by my awareness of the nuances and complexities of the situation and those involved. Much as I try to deliberately empathise with the student and the scenario, I am also aware that it is the student who will have to live with the consequences of her actions. There are situations where I am willing to risk much, but that does not mean that the student will have similar feelings or values, or that I should think less of the student as a result of this. I can only try to understand and facilitate a realization of potential behaviour consequences. I can see by my questions that I was concerned about Liseko's dilemma hence my proposal to discuss this with her Nursing Association (DENOSA) and with her peers. I find it very hard not to jump up and down and 'do' something when I read this story. It only makes me all the more determined to focus on empowering students and constantly honing in on and challenging their (and my) moral values."

In conclusion to this section, my answer would be yes, for each of the students the researcher demonstrated *"support of student growth in critical reflective thinking through her critique and provided evidence as a transformative education in terms of Van Aswegen's (1998) concept of the educator as an agent of transformative learning through the promotion of critical reflective thinking."*

I have given specific examples in each of the diaries.

In some diaries the researcher engaged to a lesser degree with the students than in others, but through the in-depth reflections the researcher displayed sensitivity and self-critique, making it clear that she is holding back for specific reasons (e.g. diary 3 Student Jena – the student would not have coped with a further debate on abortions, and diary 4 student Janet – the researcher is aware of professional boundaries when the student goes through the trauma of her son's illness.)

Limitations

I wish to express an awareness of the following factors which limit my ability to comment:

The diaries are not assignments, and can therefore not be assessed in the same way.

Students' reflections were influenced by their choice of topic, their mood and the time they had available to fit in the diary entries amongst their commitments to work, families and studies.

Students also had the freedom to choose to which degree they wanted to pursue an issue, and not unpacking a problem in detail does not necessarily mean that a student is not capable of doing so.

The researcher chose a selection of entries for my perusal from each student's diary, and not having been part of the full scope, and the bigger picture of other interactions (class discussions and assignments) my comments of their development are obviously limited to that selection.

As mentioned before, the researcher analysed learner *reflections* in great depth, and from various angles, in a way that is only possible for someone with specialist knowledge, who is intimately

connected to her students. The researcher was able to fill in gaps in my knowledge through her face-to-face interactions with students.

While recognizing that my perspective adds to the richness of this qualitative study, to comment on whether a particular student was unpacking a problem in the "right" way without knowledge of the issues and politics of the nursing environment was not always possible. I fully echo the researcher's reflection on her own role in Diary 6 (Nandi): "My subjectivity is both hindering (in that I have biases and can be blinded by these biases) but it also allows me to engage deeply with the process and express my understanding in ways that might not be possible had I not been part of this process." After having been through this process I can see clearly that this is indeed the case.

It was initially more difficult for me to find evidence of growth in critical, creative thinking for those students whose first language is not English, since written language ability is so closely tied up with the ability to reason in writing. Diaries 5 (Liseko) and 6 (Nandi) were particularly difficult in this respect. Perhaps my surface knowledge of issues made it more difficult to understand what students meant, since I was lacking the context which the researcher has. Much of the context was explained, though, by the researcher, which helped a lot, and as I continued to immerse myself in these diaries, it became easier.

In doing this analysis I was extremely aware of steering clear from making surface "judgements" of students' abilities or characters, yet, not having the skills of a psychologist, I am unsure of whether I have managed in this respect. I am also concerned that, as an outsider, I am likely to make superficial comments on the lives and development of compassionate caregivers who work under the most difficult circumstances.

Method followed to look at growth

Initial approach

As requested, I first read the student entries without reading the researcher's reflections, after which I tabled examples of characteristics of a critical, reflective thinker, pertaining to student growth. This initial process was to "get a handle" on critical reflective thinking processes specifically in terms of

Van Aswegen's definition. Then I read the researcher's reflections, and tabled examples for the second question pertaining to the lecturer/researcher's facilitation of the growth process. I then re-read the diaries holistically, to write down further observations and overall comments.

Later approach

In some cases reading the journal entries without the researcher's reflections did not work at all, as it resulted in a fragmented picture. I therefore began to draw on the researcher's comments from the start, to develop an understanding of the scenarios and arguments.

There were a few reasons for this. In some cases the researcher provided the context and background information which allowed me to understand cryptic reflections that did not make sense on their own. This was particularly useful where students' language abilities made it difficult to follow their arguments. Articles that students commented on were not always included, which made it more difficult to understand arguments and assess students' critical thinking skills without referring to the researcher's contextual information.

Growth

As I understood it, my role was to find evidence of student growth in a specific context, namely as defined by Van Aswegen. To "get a handle" on this, to be able to "correlate" the diaries' content with Van Aswegen, I have chosen largely to respond with quotes from the diaries. It is very difficult to write generally in response to very specific guidelines, i.e. growth in general is not what the researcher is looking for, but rather growth in terms of Van Aswegen's model. I felt overall that the quotes, as I plotted them next to the Van Aswegen model, speak for themselves.

Therefore the tables offer specific examples that correlate with Van Aswegen's definition. I found it difficult not to raise growth in a broader sense – the introductory paragraphs before the table comment on growth in more general terms.

As I went along it became increasingly difficult to separate out, and comment separately on, growth in personal, academic and professional areas. Since the students are mostly in management positions, and they study Nursing Management, it is often difficult to make this distinction. Not many

of them revealed their personal lives or commented separately on their personal, academic and professional identities. In the journal reflections, these aspects were often woven together closely and difficult to separate out. Many spoke implicitly of their values, by the kinds of issues they chose to raise in their diaries. I feel one can assume that growth in one area will impact on the other.

The pattern that seems to have emerged

1) Processing

For all students the diaries seem to have provided a space for **processing** their hectic (I can find no other word for it) lives, and the constant crises within which they have to take on a leadership role. A place for prioritising and making sense of juggling their various roles as parents, professionals, students, and human beings.

2) Display of critical thinking skills

It seems that, in some cases, the diaries were an opportunity to make evident the student's **ability to reflect critically**. In these cases it was easy to find examples of qualities of a critical, reflective thinker, but more difficult to prove that these skills were developed during the time of journaling.

3) Cementing existing values and principles

In other cases it seems that the diaries facilitated a process of **cementing of ideas and principles** (Swiss student).

4) Change

And in some cases **significant change and growth** was evident *during* the period of journaling (Diary 6, Nandi).

5) A continuum

Having said the above, as I go through the diaries again, I am realising it is as if the students enter this process on different positions of a continuum or sliding scale, in terms of their critical thinking skills. Some enter bewildered, wide-eyed and inexperienced (diary 5, Liseko & 6, Nandi) and grow more obviously, while others enter with more life experience, and grow in other areas perhaps not so obvious at first sight (diary 4, Janet).

Section C: Would I consider this framework appropriate for analysing the student's reflective journal?

Considering the student growth overall in this process, my answer is yes, the framework seems appropriate, provided that the person who journeys with the students is closely connected to them, and that there is a strong sense of trust, as modeled by the researcher in this journaling process.

The researcher's method is underpinned by a multi-faceted theoretical base (see Van Aswegen's definitions; critiquer questioning techniques on various levels; analysis of identities). She has clearly steered clear from a technocratic approach and the methods followed are focused on holistic development and student emancipation.

Timing of interactions:

How difficult was it to reply to students timeously, before they wrote their next entry, and was it important to send back questions and responses before they proceeded to their next entry? What influence did this have on the process?

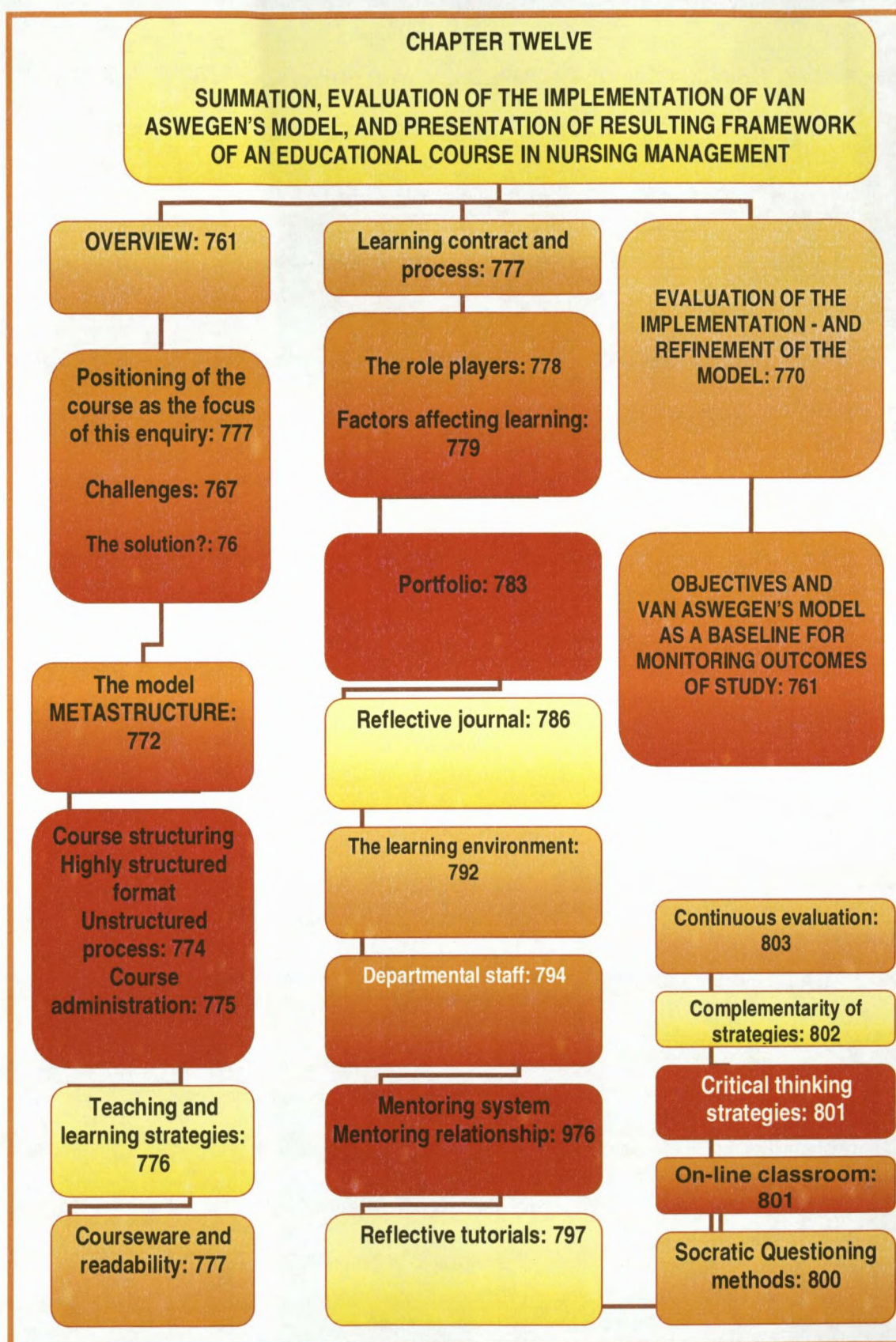
Format:

It was sometimes difficult to follow the conversations due to the format of the journals. (I assume these were email based). There seemed to be missing pieces – the flow and logic was sometimes interrupted so that one had difficulty in following the dialogue. A one-on-one threaded discussion tool (not a group tool such as the Web CT discussion tool) might have been an aid in this respect.

This is only a minor and practical comment. The researcher's work being such a dense and thorough analysis, on a deep, theoretical level it is difficult to point out any gaps" (Marie, critical reader.)

11.11.3 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to monitor the personal, professional and academic growth and development of eight students through their reflective journals. This growth and development through critical reflective practice is underscored by the study objectives 1, 2 and 4 in Chapter Four, Section 4.11 and I would suggest that these have been satisfactorily addressed. More than this though: The value of these narratives is that they represent the everyday lives as witnessed by these nurses and allow their nursing practice to be made visible. It enables the reader to view the issues current at a point in time and also uncovers the vulnerability of nurses as practitioners and health care managers practicing with care or making mistakes, thereby allowing opportunities to value or improve on practice. If used appropriately, these narratives can inform social policy or organisational change. They allow all students to have a 'voice' and as educator, they allow me to focus on managing diversity through understanding. But more than this, these narratives can renew pride and hope in nursing as a profession.



CHAPTER TWELVE

SUMMATION, EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF VAN ASWEGEN'S MODEL, AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTING FRAMEWORK OF AN EDUCATIONAL COURSE IN NURSING MANAGEMENT

12.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to draw together the components of the study in order to formulate a comprehensive overview of a model of critical reflective practice that has been interpreted through a course and to evaluate whether or not this interpretation is successful, and whether this model has in fact supported critical reflective practice. The main findings from the chapters dealing with data analysis will be summarised in the light of this intention. Van Aswegen's model will then be considered for adaptation, adoption or refinement in terms of these findings.

12.1.1 The final argument

Perhaps some of the central arguments of this thesis can be found in response to the following questions:

- **What are the key principles that support self-directed and adult learning and what are the key arguments against them as supported in the research literature?**

It would seem from Chapter 3, Section 3.2 that adult learners should be self-directed as adults learn when they are motivated and when learning meets their needs and interests. Learning is more effective when it is life-centred rather than content oriented. Readiness to learn is influenced by the need to know or accomplish something. Adults prefer to learn by doing and to have an experience-base that serves as a resource for their learning. Additionally, they are motivated by

self-esteem needs, the need for recognition and self-actualization, and by the desire for a better quality of life. It would be foolish, however, to assume that because adults display these characteristics, that it automatically follows that they would prefer their learning to be self-directed. In a study undertaken by Sadler-Smith, Allinson and Hayes (2006) on 127 personnel practitioners at the UK's Institute of Personnel and Development (IPD), respondents preferred traditional and work based methods of learning over self-directed methods.

Candy (1987: 172) in Sadler-Smith et al. (2006:241) however, made the following observations:

- “1. the preference for dependent methods may not be innate but is learned in an educational system which fosters ‘teaching’ and ‘learned helplessness’;
2. any disinclination towards self-direction may be a temporary state of affairs in which intolerance may be ameliorated by education and the acquisition of particular types of ‘study skills’;
3. ‘some people are simply more independent than others, and this is a function of intelligence, personality *or some other innate quality or characteristic*’ (emphasis added)”.

Therefore, suggest Sadler-Smith et al. (2006:241), the preferences for the different ways of learning may vary “as a function of the innate characteristic of cognitive style”. In other words, different people prefer different styles, despite the commonality of characteristics linked to being an adult learner. This is not surprising considering that adult learners are a heterogeneous group. Wang and Sarbo (2004) suggest that these considerations can be overcome by educators taking into account the complexities, variability and differences presented by the learners and by focusing

on an understanding of their own personal philosophy of education, which, they suggest, should be situational and adapted according to the learners' needs, style, motivation and experience.

Mezirow (1997a) in Moore (2005:82) believes that ideally, for adult learners to thrive, they need to be given full access to information. Learning should be freely chosen and they should be provided with fair opportunities to engage in the different roles required in discourse. Critical reflective thinking should be encouraged and that learners themselves need to be empathic and open to the opinions of others. Additionally, they should be open to listening and "to search for common ground of a synthesis of different points of view, and willing to make a tentative best judgement to guide action".

◦ **How do these critical arguments impact upon an understanding of the van Aswegen model?**

To subscribe to the van Aswegen model, one would need to be a self-directed, adult learner. This requires commitment and high levels of motivation on the part of both the learner and the facilitator. This could be potentially difficult, given similar student demographics and characteristics as described in Section 1.7, Chapter One. With the result, a major portion of the facilitator's role would then need to focus on providing motivation, role modeling and support to enable students to engage in a potentially difficult, but ultimately deeply satisfying educational experience.

Van Aswegen's model is essentially idealistic and 'pure', contrasting starkly with the harsh and often ugly realities that pervade the average South African nurse's working world. Some nurses do not have the infrastructural, social or emotional supports needed to easily cross the ideal/pragmatic divide partitioning the perfect from the real world of practice. As van Aswegen (1998) notes, the steps

towards transformatory learning may prove dangerous and require personal courage. Dialectical thinking may offer too many ambiguities and contradictions, alternative truths and different world views (Merriam, 2004). So unless these students are supported, the path taken could easily deviate and prove to be destructive as the effort required might be perceived as being too much, and the venture into the unfamiliar, too daunting. Too many good nurses are lost to the 'burn-out' factor and to the slide into careless and seemingly unconcerned behaviour that epitomises the 'lost' or poor practitioner and unless carefully guided, may well avoid taking on the challenge towards deep learning. The choice of using this model is not an easy one as it is complex and demanding and does not provide simple formulae for application. It requires an environment conducive to learning, committed learners and educators, as well as time and space in which to develop the types of activities which promote reflective practice. It requires unfailing enthusiasm, continuous self-reflection and courage. This ultimately does place a strain on the resources of the institution, the department, the facilitator and even the learner. As can be seen, it is not for the faint of heart, nor is it the educational panacea for all learners or educators particularly when there are a number of 'easier' models available. But in terms of an integrated 'holistic' approach to a learning course where 'deep' learning is valued, it is the obvious choice.

- **What are the key critical arguments that arise from the data to support the use of van Aswegen's model?**

Clearly, introspection through the various mediums opens students to possibilities. The most exciting of these is the idea of valuing the self through self-acknowledgement and the realisation of the ability to participate in the determination of one's own life direction. The constructivist approach to learning opens up the possibilities of the value of self-directed learning, where learning can take place at the

students' own pace and time. The exciting concepts of creativity and flexibility encourages students to seize opportunities to learn in their own work environment, and often inspires students to move beyond the requirements of the curriculum, and so take ownership of their own learning. Moore (2006:89) describes an interview with the president of Brown University, Ruth Simmons in 2001. Fittingly, she recognized that the goal of the university was not just to get a job but rather "that education is about transforming your soul".

- **Are there a set of principles that can be synthesized and summarised from the key findings from the study?**

A study such as this must provide a structure and sets of principles to serve as a way forward for others who wish to tread the same path. In order not to be repetitive, principles identified in the study have been cross-referenced where necessary in the theoretical constructs depicted throughout section 12.5.

12.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study focused specifically on thinking and learning, factors which ultimately were central to the study. At this final stage of the study, it is worth revisiting the objectives of the research and summarizing where these have been addressed.

The objectives of the study were to:

- 1. Trace the development of critical reflective thought within a context of a learning course of an educational programme.**

- This development did take place. It is clearly evident in my reflexive journal, where I have pondered and debated the learning processes of the students over a two-and a half year period. One of my final entries reflects on this change:

Reflexive journal: 12 September 2003

I have definitely noted a change in the journal responses and students' ability to complete other tasks (particularly amongst the black African students) this year -2003. It could be that as a group, they function better and at a higher level.

It could be the improvement in the orientation; the change in times (08h15-12h00 on Thursdays with tuts organised in the afternoon of the same day opposed to Friday afternoon classes - 14h00-17h00 with tuts on separate days); it could be the better organisation and return of course material and journals (there is a one week turnover, as opposed to a two or three week delay in response); it could be the regular Web CT class from 12h00 - 13h00 on class contact days, with students actively engaging in writing on-line journals and responding to each other.

In many ways, these 'open' entries seem to shape, to a degree, the responses from others in the class, by sparking ideas or by offering an opportunity to acknowledge each other in a safe way. Students, who might not normally speak to others in the class, now had a forum to do so. The power of change is visibly removed from me as 'facilitator' or 'teacher'. Initially, I would ask a few questions or make some comments - but I have stayed out of these discussions almost completely after the first month or so - although I read them all. Initially, students would write about incidents they themselves had been involved in, where they or their families were personally affected. A number tended to be quite negative and the responses were mainly sympathetic and indicated that other students identified with the author's problem or pain.

The responses started to change with students offering advice or moving into the Socratic questioning mode. Two or three times, students have written about incidents, where they themselves have not featured in a positive light, and one or two students have taken it upon themselves to question their motives or actions or censure the behaviour. Some students have handed in some very good work in their tasks or have come across readings or issues that have interested me, and I have suggested that they might wish to share these with the group - and they have. We had an external lecturer who was exceptionally motivational and a number of the students wrote enthusiastically about his ability and value. I was able to share this with him and pass on some of these comments - as well as to the HOD. We had an on-line test and some students used the open classroom to express their apprehension or displeasure at this unfamiliar testing method.

These journal entries have now taken on a life of their own, which preclude my involvement - For me, this has been a means of empowering students but at the same time, I see that this has not taken away my power, but rather shifted me into another place, where I find myself at a parallel level rather than a vertical level to the students.

It could be the active support received from the departmental staff in promoting the journals as a means of critical reflective writing.

It could be that I am more comfortable with the process and this confidence might be rubbing off on the students. I am not sure. It could be one or all of these things.

What I am sure of, is that students' effort and involvement is much better.

- This development is observed and noted through student responses to a questionnaire in Chapter Six, Sections 6.5.2, 6.5.6, 6.5.7, 6.5.11, 6.5.14, 6.5.15.
- It is particularly evident in Chapter Seven, Section 7.3.6 which focuses on reflective journaling, and is valuable because the students themselves have identified *how* they have used this mode as a means of critical, reflective thinking.
- It is evidenced in linkages to other courses indicating that this process is fluid and not compartmentalised as noted in Chapter Eight, Section 8.3.1.1. In this same chapter, Section 8.3.1.5 resultant student growth is identified.
- It is recognised and considered by the staff in the department in Chapter Nine, Section 9.4.8.
- Also supporting this objective are the responses from the moderator's reports in Chapter Six, Section 6.3.

2. Analyze the development of the student's critical reflective thought in the light of van Aswegen's (1998) model in order to refine and adapt the model.

This includes the evidence acknowledged under Objective One above and summarised in Figures 12.1 to 12.22 and Table 7.8. The initial questionnaire was to establish a baseline and included demographic information as well as an identification of the students' perception of their learning styles and needs. It dealt with Objectives 1 and 2.

3. Identify enabling and inhibiting factors within a department of a higher education institution that would support or limit the use of such a model for the development of critical reflective practice.

- This was discussed as a prelude to the study in Chapter One, Section 1.4. In Chapter Five, Sections 5.4.2.1 to 5.4.2.16 describe these factors, and in Chapter Six, 6.2.1 to 6.2.12 reflects the students' perceptions of these factors.
 - In Chapter Seven, the whole of Sections 7.1. and 7.2 focus on the structuring of the journal and the critiquing process and includes the strategies that scaffold this learning process. Sections 7.3.6.17, 7.2.6.2 and 7.2.6.7 relate the students' perceptions of this scaffolding and some of the difficulties attached to lack of perceived support in 7.2.6.3. In Section 7.4.5, a focus group of second- language English speakers deliberate on their learning and the issues impacting on their learning. They discuss these factors mainly in terms of their reflective tutorial sessions, but also to some extent, in the light of their journals and class contact sessions.
 - In Chapter Eight, Section 8.1.3 describes the supportive structuring of reflective tutorials and Section 7.2.6.7 indicates the students' perception of the factors perceived to support or hinder critical reflective thinking
 - These factors supporting or limiting critical reflective thinking are evidenced in Chapter Nine, Sections 9.4.5, 9.4.6, 9.4.7, 9.4.7.2, and 9.4.9 through the interviews with staff members on their perceptions.
- 4. Monitor the process involved in reflective thinking evidenced from learning journals; reflective tutorial groups and staff reflections and whether reflective thought has an effect on the resulting perceived attitudes and behaviours of post-basic nursing students related to health care practice.**

- In Chapter Six, the moderator's reports (Section 6.3) link in with student questionnaires on course process, as well as with staff and reflexive journal input on course structure and process. Section 6.5.14 focuses on the effect of the reflections and tasks in terms of health care practices.
- Evidence of students' attitudes and values – the 'meat' of the thinking and perceptions of student learning - in the issues chosen for reflection. Chapter Seven in Section 7.3.6 clearly spells this out as does Chapter Eleven in each of the eight students' journals.
- In Chapter Eight, Figure 8.5: focuses on perceived factors within the student promoting reflection; perceived resultant positive attitudes and behaviours and perceived affects of the behaviour - (in the light of van Aswegen's model).
- In Chapter Nine, Table 9.5 identifies staff perceptions of the attitudes of students resulting from the critical reflective approach to teaching and learning.
- In Chapter Eleven, the self-evaluations of seven of the students reflect their perceptions of their attitudes towards their practice, and the analysis of each of the eight journals identifies the respective attitudes of each of the students.

The study objectives will be illustrated in the models following this section resulting in further models that augment van Aswegen's model. Each of the course components will be considered individually, highlighting key issues identified in the findings or my personal observations. To try and maintain flow and cohesiveness, each figure will be introduced with an explanation of how and where it connects within the course in the form of a brief narrative highlighting key issues and/or findings, some of which have been repeated from previous chapters and so noted in the numbering of the figures. Where appropriate, aspects of van Aswegen's model will be represented within the

graphical illustrations of the models. The same process will apply to the outlined research objectives represented as follows:



12.3 OVERVIEW

South African nurses are faced by a number of challenges seldom confronted by nurses in health systems in the better resourced western world (Industrial Health Research and the S.A. Municipal Union, 2005). As already noted in Chapter One, Section 1.7, the challenges faced in the Nursing Management IV course were:

- Limited contact sessions with students - 32 contact days over the academic year,
- Limited studying time for students due to work, family and community commitments,
- Distance and learning experience factors as students were dispersed across a wide variety of health services, practicing in different nursing disciplines and had different learning experiences. Although these averaged 6 years at tertiary level, this learning had taken place within a college-of-nursing context, where teaching historically focused on training and more traditional dependent learning strategies (Radebe, 2001).

These factors needed to be considered when supporting the student learning shift from dependence to independence; and the shift to a constructivist learning paradigm as opposed to the more traditional forms of teaching so as to encourage transformatory learning. The challenge was to offer a course that was meaningful to students, incorporating their current practice by promoting a continuous means of engaging in learning where the workplace is seen as their primary learning

setting and where classroom contact is used to facilitate this process. This was a study of such a course.

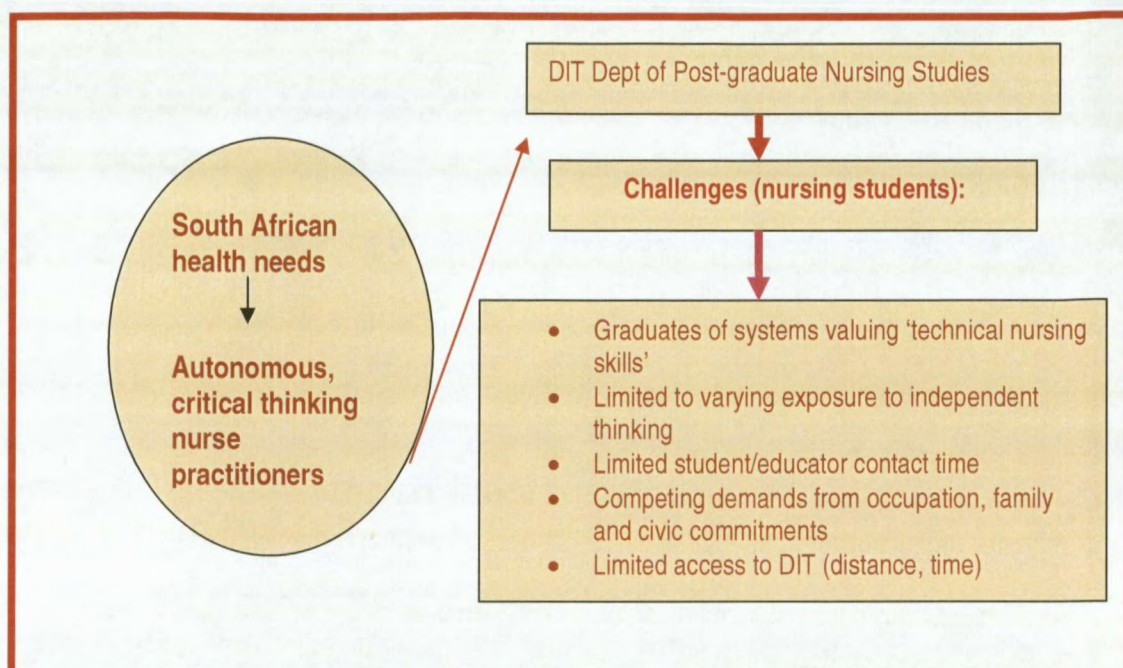


Figure 12.1 Challenges aligned with health service needs

To offer perspective, the following organogram illustrates the positioning of the course in question:

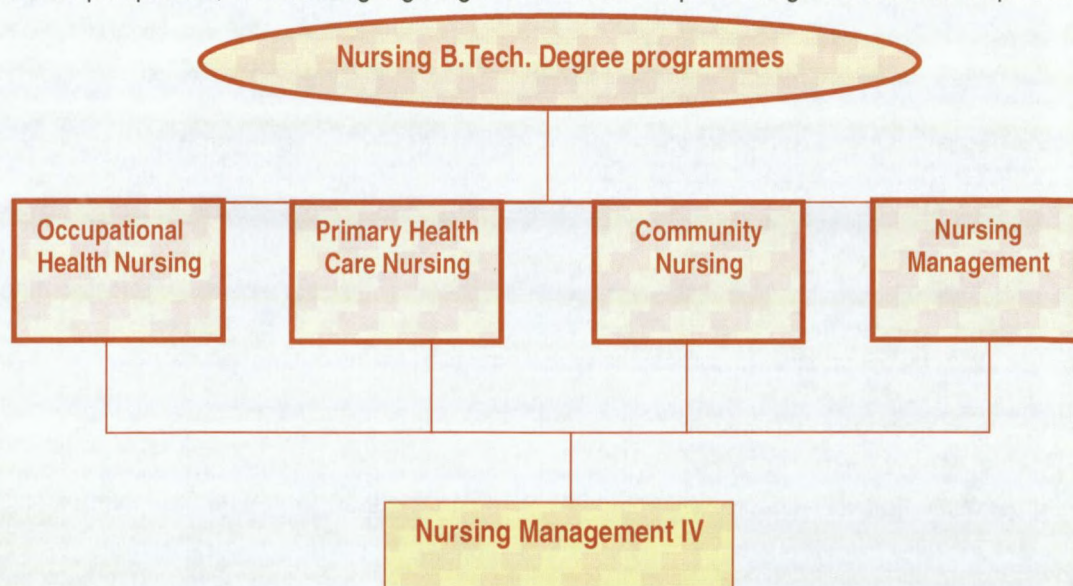
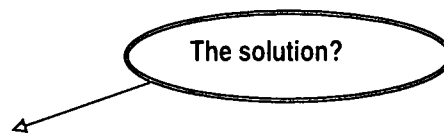


Figure 12.2 Positioning of the course as the focus of this enquiry

The model



Van Aswegen's (1998) broad, conceptual model of critical reflective practice framed the research project (Figure 2.1 repeated below). The research project however, comprised the detailed design and implementation of a nursing management course that would facilitate transformatory learning. Utilisation of the model required openness to this approach to learning and students already to be working in the 'real' world so that the learning programme would meet their workplace learning practice needs. The intention of the model was to promote students' ability to think and learn critically and reflectively, drawing on different environments. The teaching and learning approach was multilayered and integrated. It focused on process, student-centred learning with a conceptualised, thematic approach to management activities and functioned within the students' workplace. This reality-based learning was enhanced by a variety of critical reflective learning strategies. The facilitator-learner relationship was built on negotiation and mutual respect and key teaching techniques were informed by adult learning principles and by a constructivist approach to teaching.

This model is again presented to remind the reader that this was the model used as a basis to flesh out not just a component of critical reflective practice, but an entire course, which is why this is such a lengthy thesis. The model is an idealistic one, and what this study presents is a realistic interpretation of this model, as illustrated in the following figures.

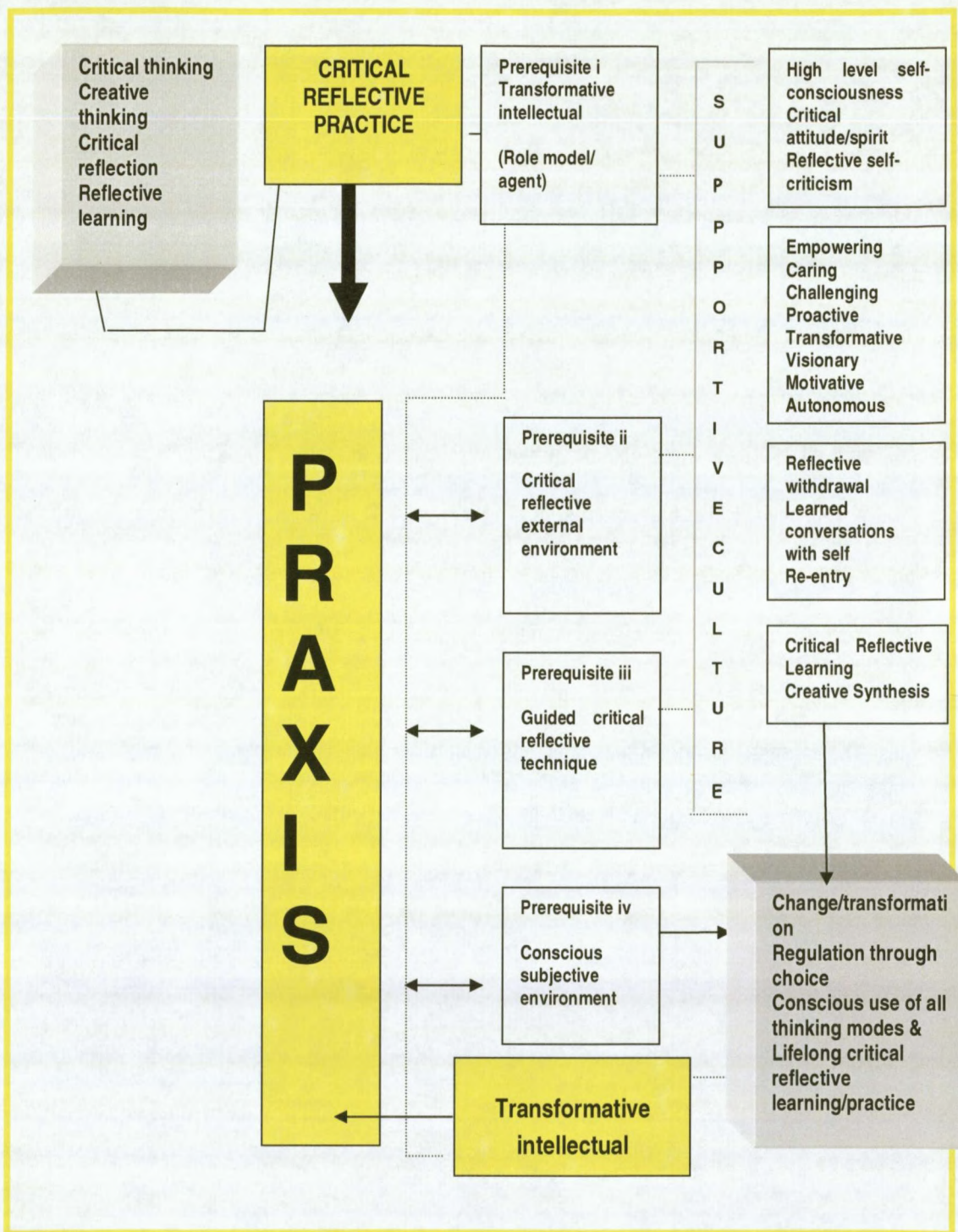


Figure 2.1: Van Aswegen's Model for facilitation of critical reflective practice and peer review of the constructed model (van Aswegen, 1998).

12.4 EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION - AND REFINEMENT OF THE MODEL

As an acid test for the implementation evaluation of the model, van Aswegen's concluding statements (below) can be used as a means of evaluating the use of the model. These have been used as a yardstick of measurement for monitoring the use of the model.

"The central focus of the model is a **transformative intellectual** (prerequisite 1), who within a **critical reflective external environment** (prerequisite 11) enables conscious use of **guided critical reflective techniques** (prerequisite 111), thus stimulating a conscious subjective internal environment (prerequisite 1V) in learners/ practitioners. The effect of the interaction between the four prerequisites in **critical reflective learning and creative synthesis**, resulting in **change/ transformation** which enables fulfilment of the main purpose of the model, namely **lifelong critical reflective learning and practice (praxis)** – and a **transformative intellectual (critical reflective practitioner)** who takes responsibility for empowerment of others to become critical reflective and creative practitioners" (van Aswegen, 1998:392-393)

So in my research, I looked for the:

(1) Traits within students (in their reflective journals) that would denote the **transformative intellectual**. In critical reflective practice, the concepts are comprised within the following categories: critical thinking; creative thinking; critical reflection and reflective learning. The traits of such a critical reflective practitioner are mainly identified within the reflective tutorials and reflective journals and are dealt with in Objective One.

(2) **Critical reflective external environment:** This includes a description of factors affecting the student's learning environments – from macro to micro level from both the educational and the learner's perspective e.g. educational (Dept of Education; SANC; DIT; Dept of Post-graduate Nursing; B.Tech: Nursing programme; Nursing Management IV course) and learner's perspective (personal context; occupational context; home context; nursing context). The data sources for this component have included: reflexive/ reflective journals; focus group discussion; reflective tutorial discussions; reports, questionnaires; mid-year and course evaluations. This component also required a description of the learning course, its structure and approach in terms of both the students' and my perceptions. Objective Three relates to this component.

(3) **Guided critical reflective techniques:** This includes descriptions and comments through the techniques used for portfolios, reflective journals; mentors; Web CT; reflective tutorials; learning and teaching approaches. Data sources included my reflexive journal; students' reflective journal evaluations; questionnaires; mid-year and course evaluations; moderator comments and critiquing comments. These focused on guided reflection (critical thinking; creative thinking; critical reflection and reflective learning) and the factors facilitating/ limiting this process e.g. the learning methodology; mentorship; portfolios – journal, tasks, assignments; reflective tutorials; class discussions; workbooks; Web CT and work-based learning.

(4) **Lifelong critical reflective learning and practice (praxis):** The evidence of change is demonstrated in the students' reflective journals, reflective tutorial discussions, tasks, assignments and questionnaire responses and is supported by the analysis and the critical readers' independent comments.

(5) Transformative intellectual (critical reflective practitioner role model/agent): In my role as the educator, I would be viewed as the main change agent through my reflexive journal, the analysis of the critical readers (peer review) and students' perceptions of change through their responses to questionnaires, reflective tutorial discussions and reflective journal entries. However, other staff members in the department have an impact on the teaching and learning process and this is evidenced through staff interviews.

Would I adapt or refine van Aswegen's model as a result of my findings?

This is a broad conceptual model or framework underpinning a philosophy for critical reflective practice. Because of its philosophical nature, it is idealist. It supports 'ideal' practice. In reality, life is far more pragmatic and grounded in practical concerns. So, just as this model offers an 'ideal', in the same way educators teach for the same standard, but keep in mind the harsh reality of practice. So, in answer to the question, I believe that the model is appropriate and don't propose that it be adapted or refined in the sense of 'correctness'. What I am doing is offering additional descriptions and explanations in the form of the following models. These are presented in light of what worked for me as an educator.

12.5 METASTRUCTURE

Figure 12.3 provides a synopsis of the Nursing Management IV course approach. I have presented it the way I approached the course, so that it unfolds in a logical, sequential progression. This does not mean that all courses should be developed in the same way – it was personal logic and choice.

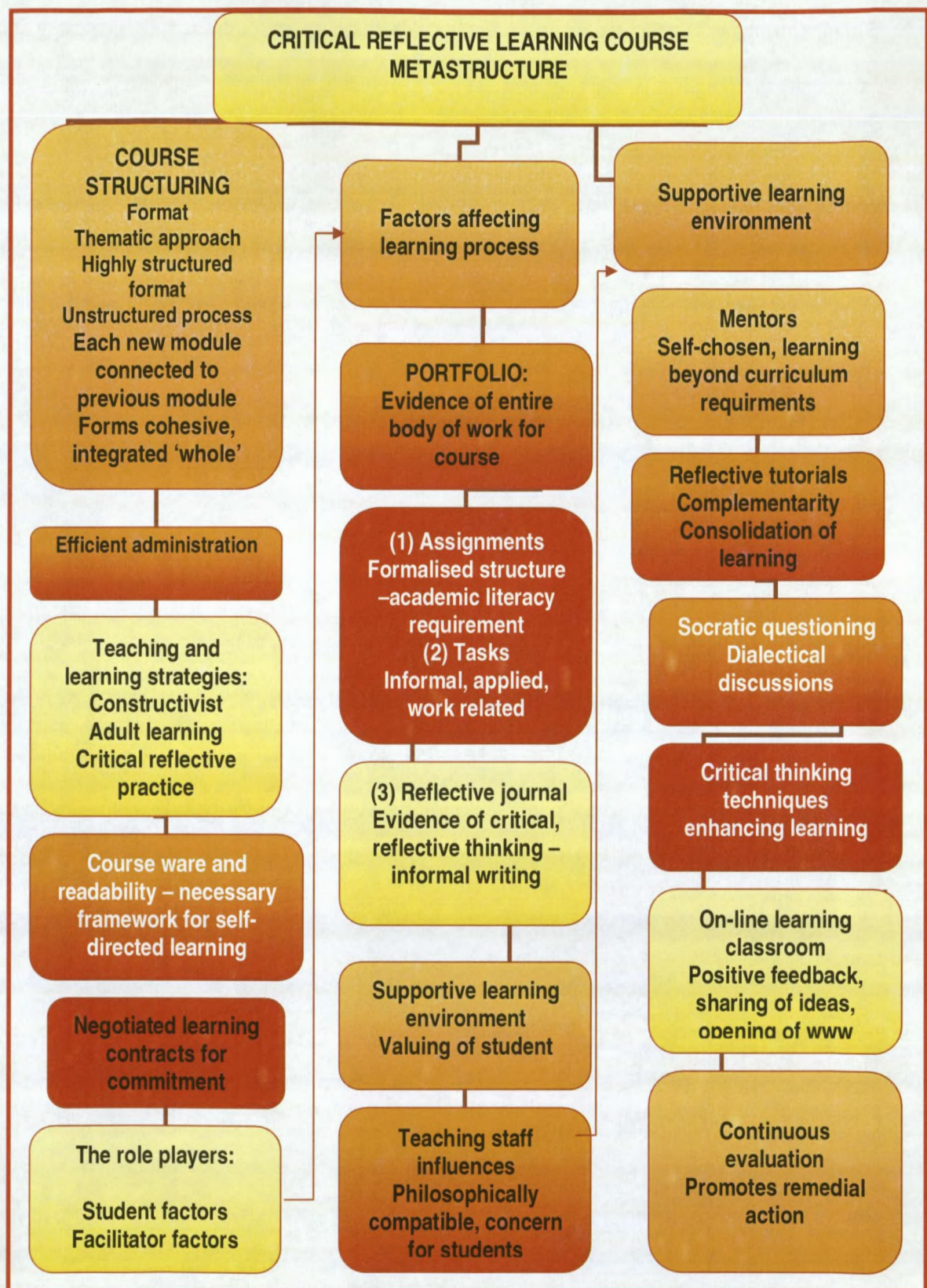


Figure 12.3. Synopsis of Management IV course approach (based on Figure 5.4 Meta structure of Management IV course)

12.5.1 Course structuring

A thematic approach to the course was used, based on a situational analysis of the students' work environment. The primary (work based) and secondary (classroom) learning settings form the context for the format of the course that progresses sequentially using an integrated approach. The development of this structuring took place well in advance of the academic year and required planning, organisation and setting up of administrative systems and is illustrated in Figure 12.4.

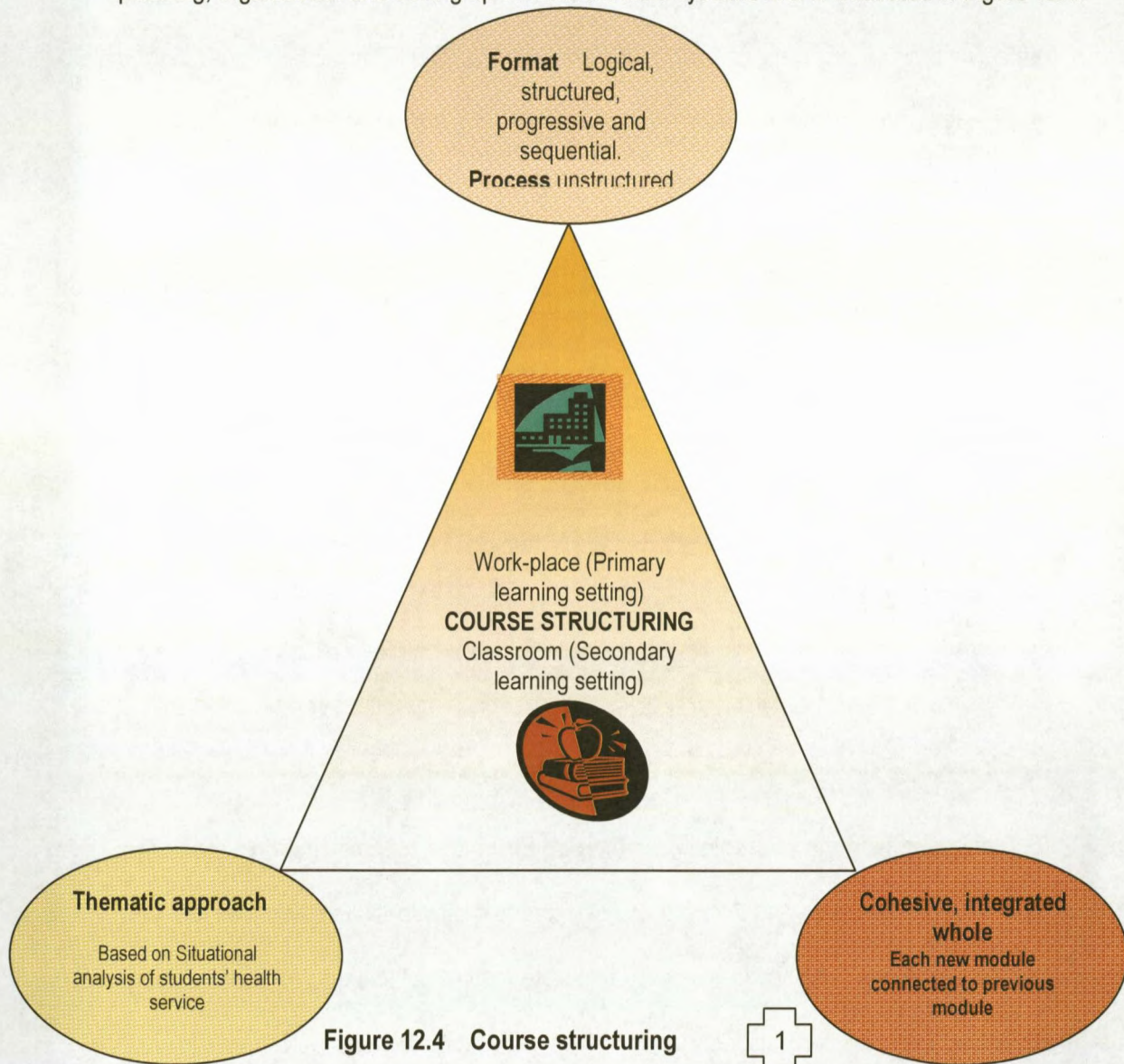


Figure 12.4 Course structuring

12.5.2 Course administration

Planning for any learning course requires consideration of the course structuring, administration and the intended teaching and learning strategies.

Well organised administration of the course as described in Table 12.1 is vital to the smooth running of the process and is essential in that there are many components to the course. For example, critical to the process is regular and relatively immediate feedback to students. If students did not perceive this to take place smoothly and efficiently, it affected their own motivation in engaging in the learning process. The purpose was to ensure that the students view their progress on a continuous basis.

Table 12.1 Course administration

- Negotiation with students on structuring, organisation, content, timing, evaluation
- Checks and balances – (Facilitator: CHED; peer review, personal judgement, moderators) (Student: democratic group decisions)
- Transparent – Course information and marks available to students, colleagues, moderators
- Efficient communication – students' personal files containing marked and critiqued work brought to each contact session; personal time for review; contact availability through e-mail; phone, fax, Web CT and personal contact
- Efficient administration – Contained student information and marks – spreadsheets; departmental and institutional
- Student information – collated and available (spreadsheets). Student photos and contact details available to peers – Web CT
- Continuous evaluation strategies and controls – assignment criteria, assessment strategies – available and explained in Study Guide

12.5.3 Teaching and learning strategies providing opportunities to construct own learning

The main focus of the teaching and learning process was to motivate students to construct and determine their own learning experiences in ways that were meaningful to them. As seen in Figure 12.5, these were based on theoretical frameworks, which had specific intended outcomes and

were also planned well in advance of the academic year by building them into the learning materials.

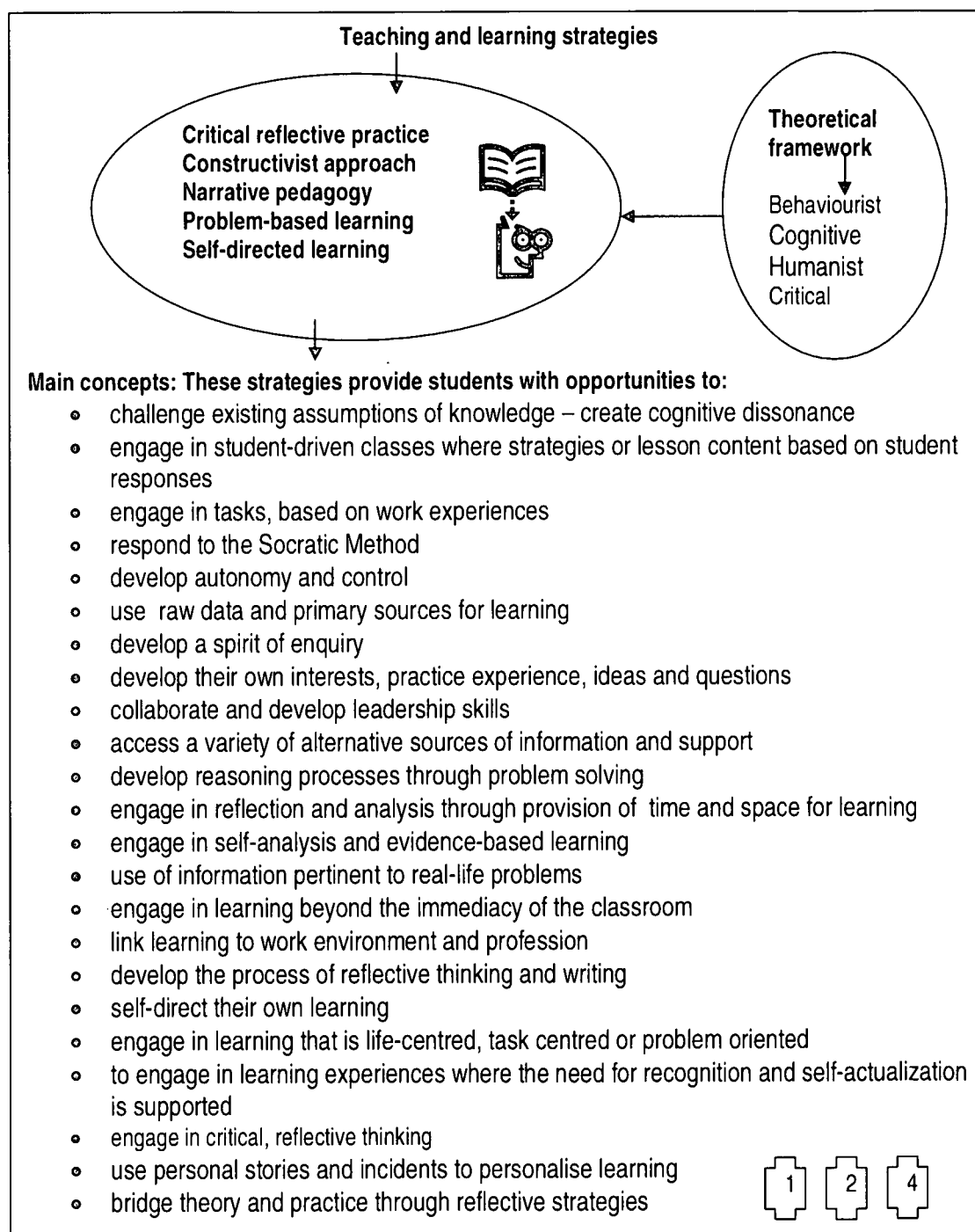


Figure 12.5. Teaching and learning strategies providing opportunities to 'construct' own learning

12.5.4 Courseware and readability

Course-ware materials were planned for well in advance of the academic year and provided text sequentially in stages from the start to finish of the course in the form of workbooks and study guide in text format, as well as on a CD-Rom and within the web based classroom. Planning and developing the materials took into consideration specific principles outlined in Figure 12.6.

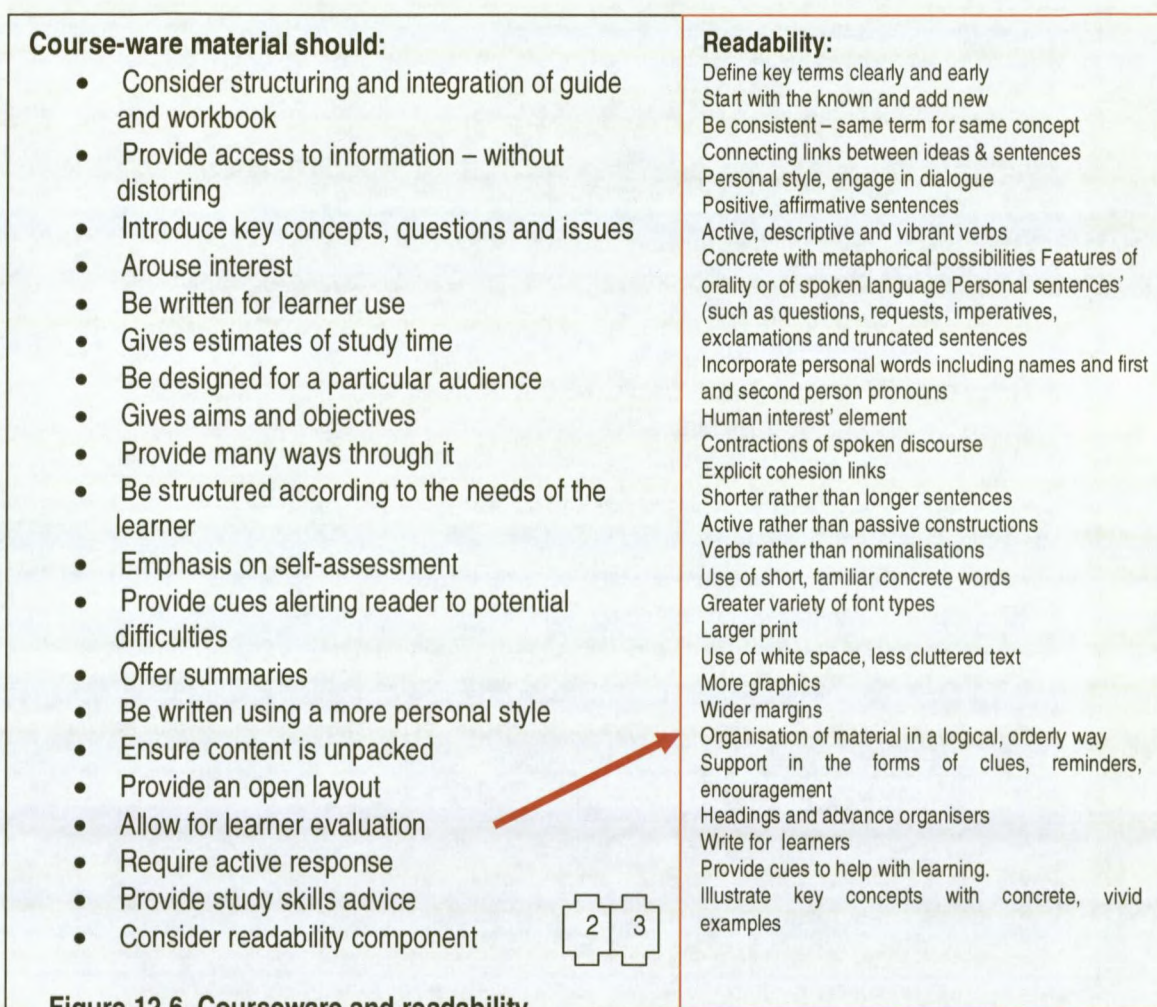


Figure 12.6. Courseware and readability

12.5.5 Learning contract defined

Learning theories are interwoven throughout all aspects of the course, with the intention of engaging and motivating student learning. An early form of committed engagement is the

negotiated learning contract (Figure 12.7) which forms both the anchor and springboard for the student/facilitator relationship.

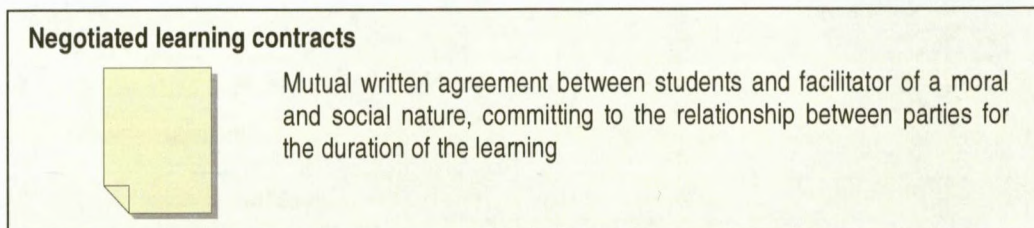
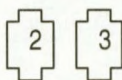


Figure 12.7. Learning contract defined

12.5.5.1 Learning contract process

As with any contract, this process needs to be negotiated. Figure 12.8 indicates the process involved.

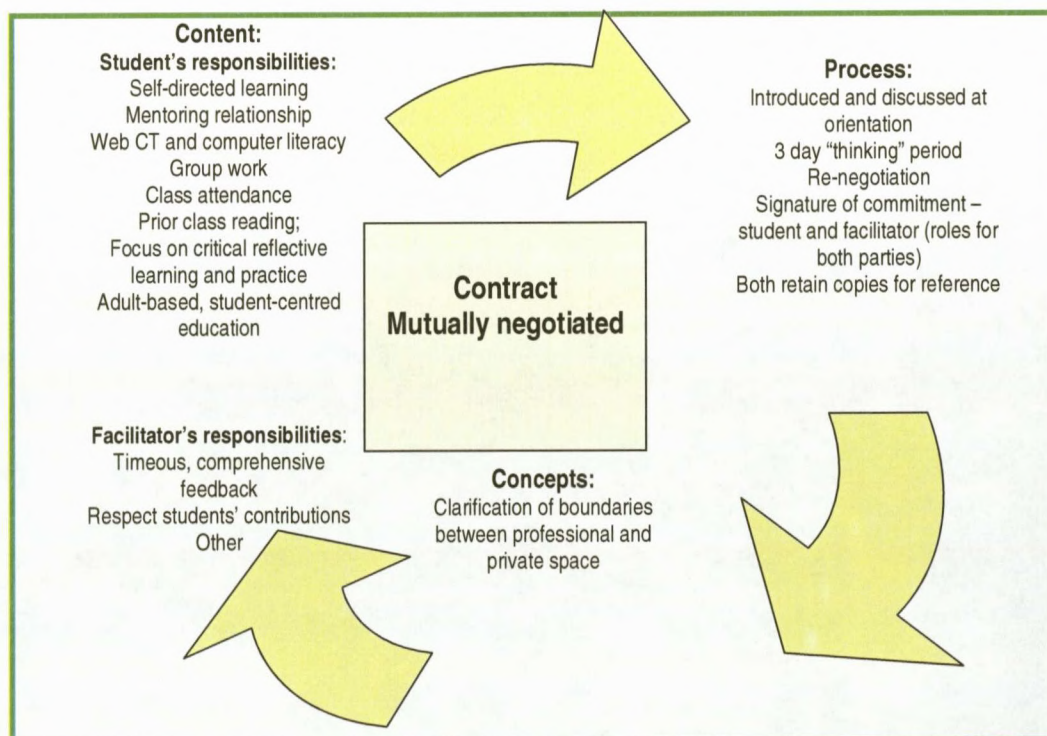


Figure 12.8 Negotiated learning contract process

12.5.5.2 The role players

Both the students and the facilitator, as demonstrated in Figure 12.9, form integral parts of the van Aswegen model (as follows) are:

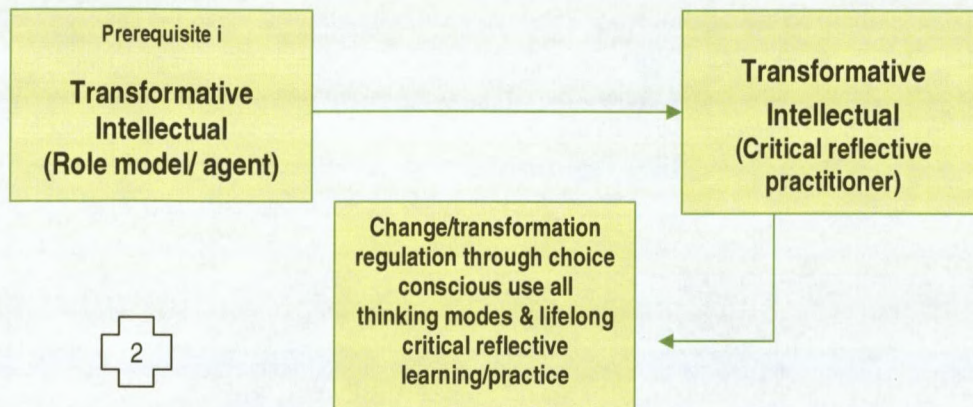


Figure 12.9 The role players

12.4.6 Van Aswegen's Supportive Culture

The following figure 12.10 represents van Aswegen's supportive culture and relates to and cuts across Figures 12.11 (a to d).

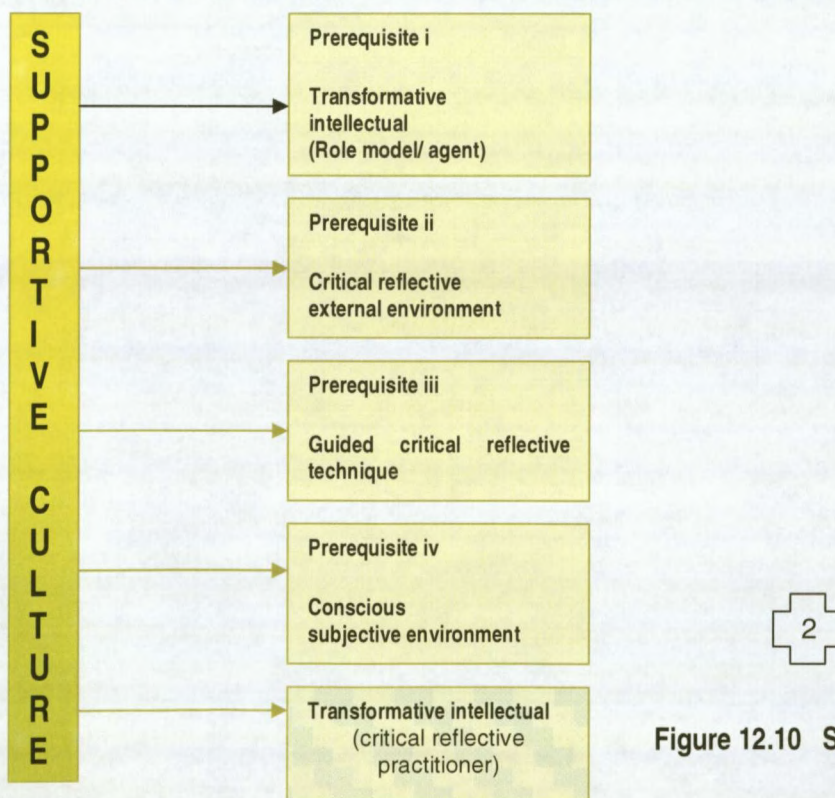


Figure 12.10 Supportive culture

12.5.6. Factors considered by students, staff and facilitator to affect the learning process within a course focusing on critical reflective practice, using the Constructivist approach

The aim of this study was to use van Aswegen's model to support critical reflective practice. Figures 12.11 (a-d) are a synopsis of those factors seen by involved parties to affect this learning process. While Figure 12.11 (a) shows the interlinking of components, they are in no particular order.

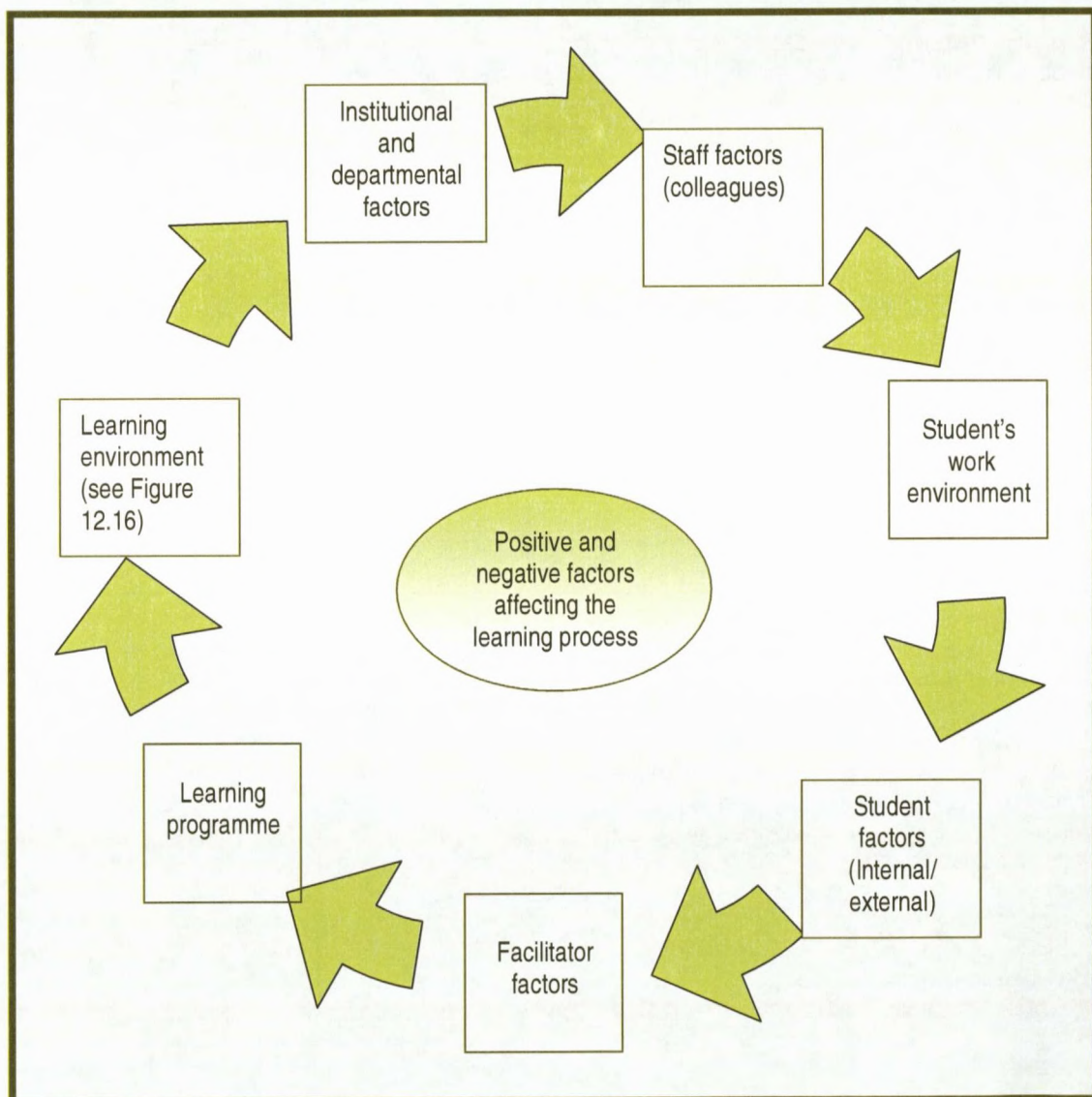


Figure 12.11 (a) Factors affecting learning process



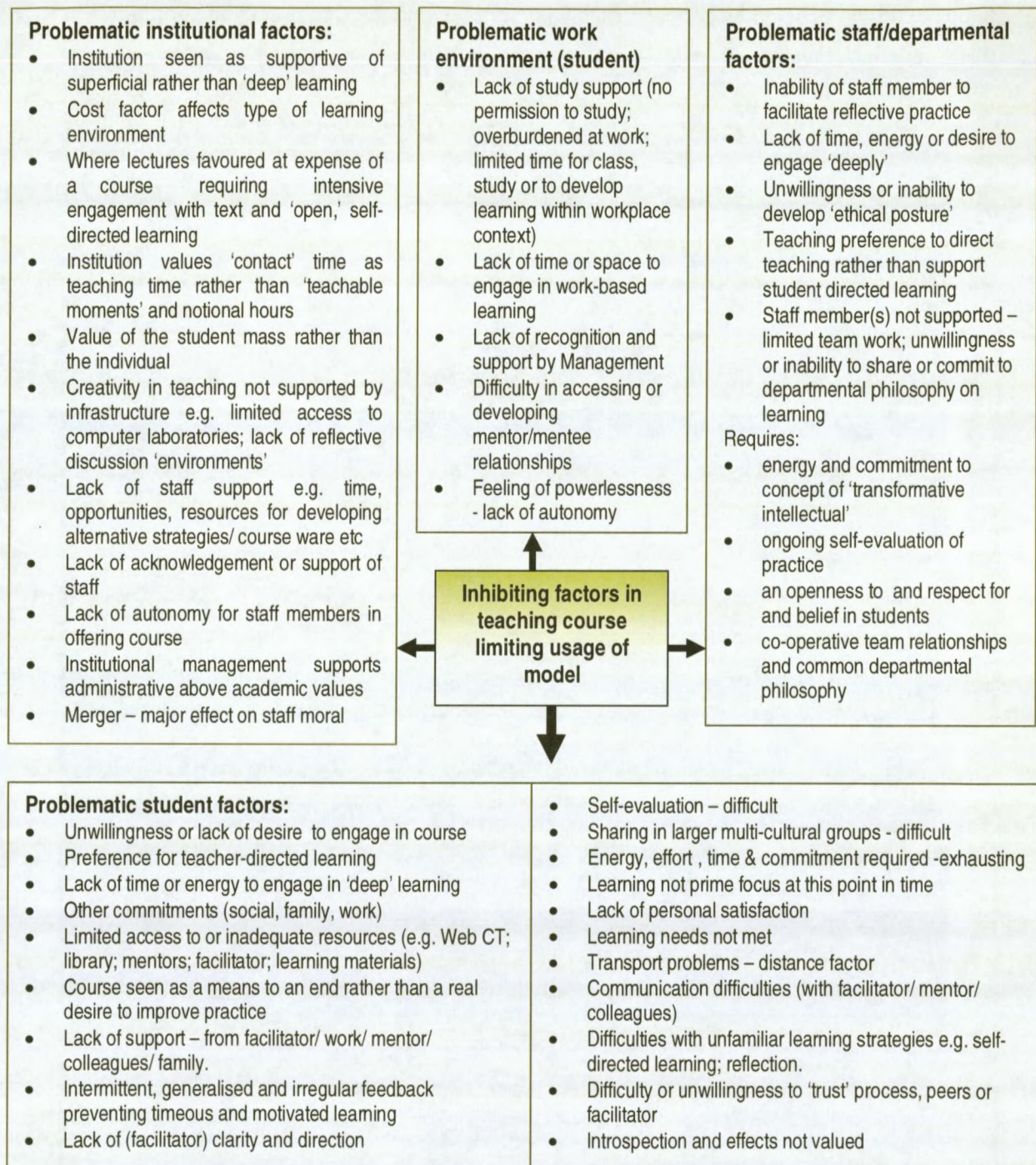


Figure 12.11(b) Inhibiting factors limiting use of model of critical reflective practice as seen in the form of the Nursing Management IV course

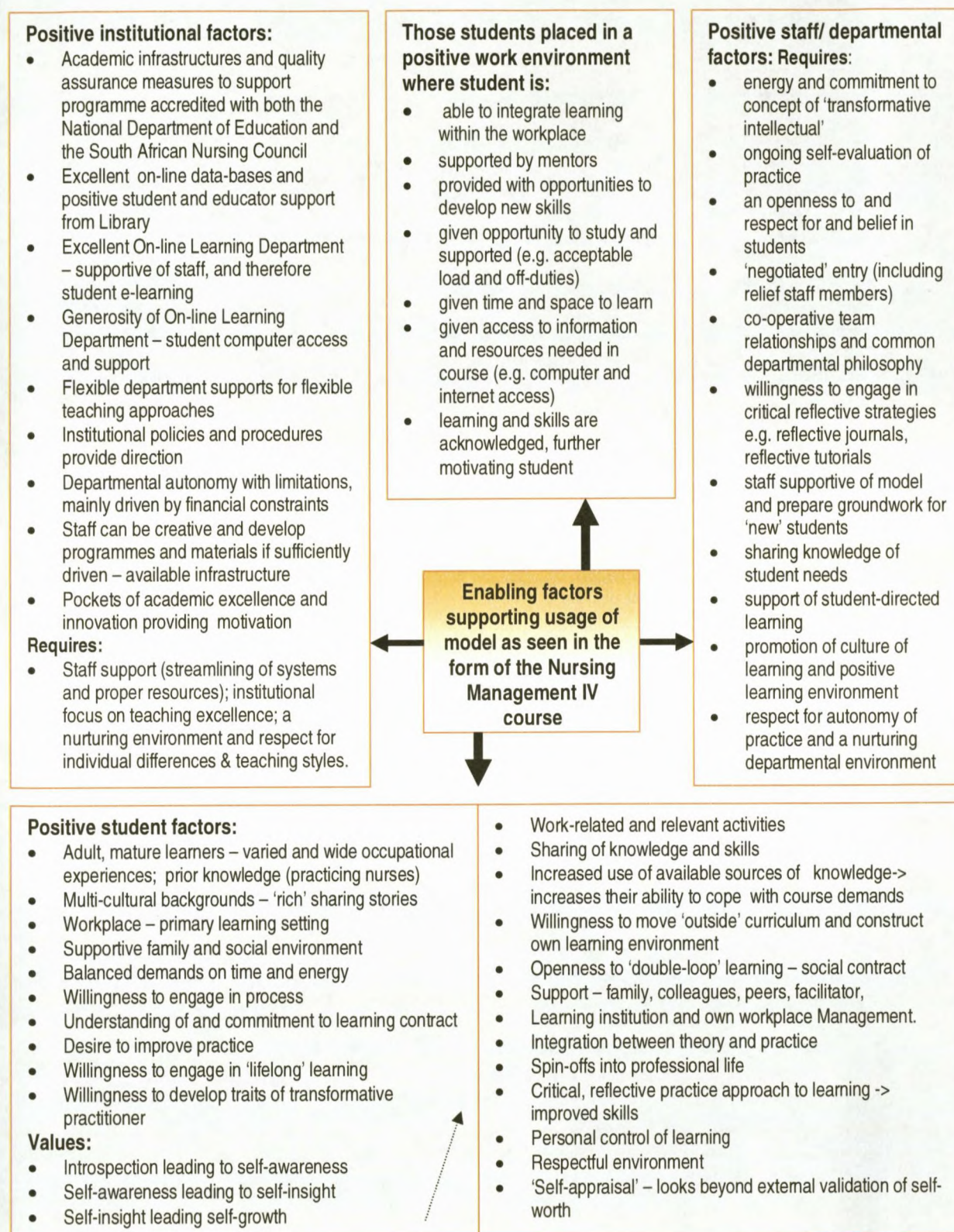


Figure 12.11(c) Enabling factors promoting usage of model for critical reflective practice as seen in the form of the Nursing Management IV course

Facilitated approach to course

- Marketing of course and learning/ teaching approach to staff and students
- Consider meta- framework as well as operational issues
- Philosophy of van Aswegen's model used to drive approach to promoting critical reflective practice
- Educational approach –Adult based learning/ Constructivist approach

Valued:

- Critical theory – transformational emancipatory learning
- Students' right to self-directed learning
- Shift in balance of power and control in learning
- Resulting relationships and shared knowledge
- Positive student attitudes and staff support
- Integrative learning

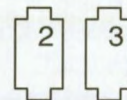
Resulted in support of principles:

- Integration of theory and practice (praxis)
- Shared responsibility in success of learning
- Facilitation of independent thinking and practice
- Students' right to self-regulate

Concerns:

- Energy and effort and time required – exhausting
- Does not suit all students/ all educators
- Requires commitment and support from students, staff members and institution

Figure 12.11 (d) Factors considered by facilitator to affect the learning process within a course focusing on critical reflective practice, using the constructivist approach.



12.5.7 Students' portfolio comprising key evidence of their learning

Portfolios, as depicted in Figure 12.12, are collections of student's work demonstrating the effort and achievement of that work. Brought together as an integrated 'whole', they provide a holistic overview of the student's performance (Panitz, 2000). The institution required evidence that was

outcomes based and the portfolio comprised a variety of such evidence indicating both the integrative and holistic approach to learning.

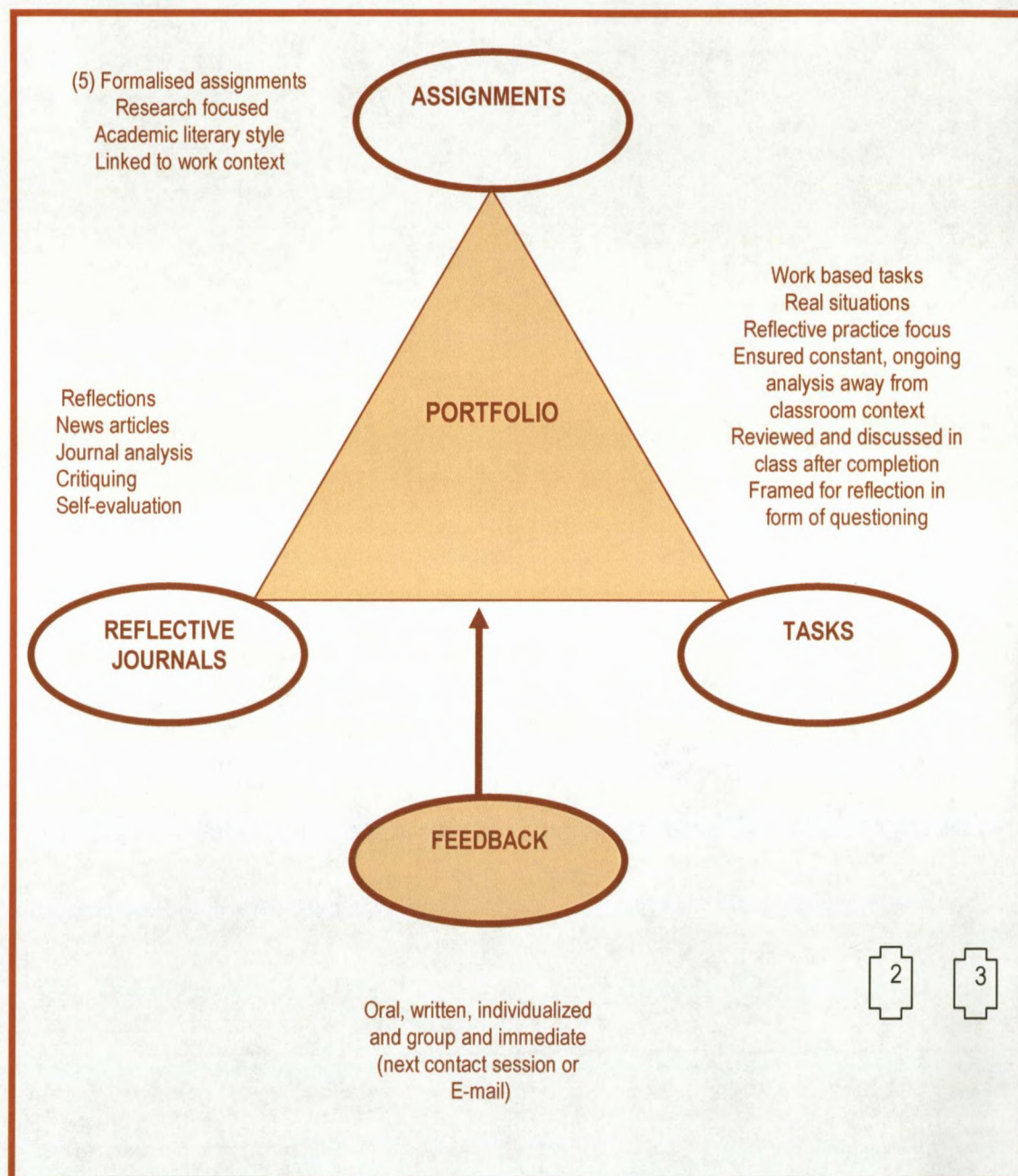


Figure 12.12 Students' portfolio comprising key evidence of their learning

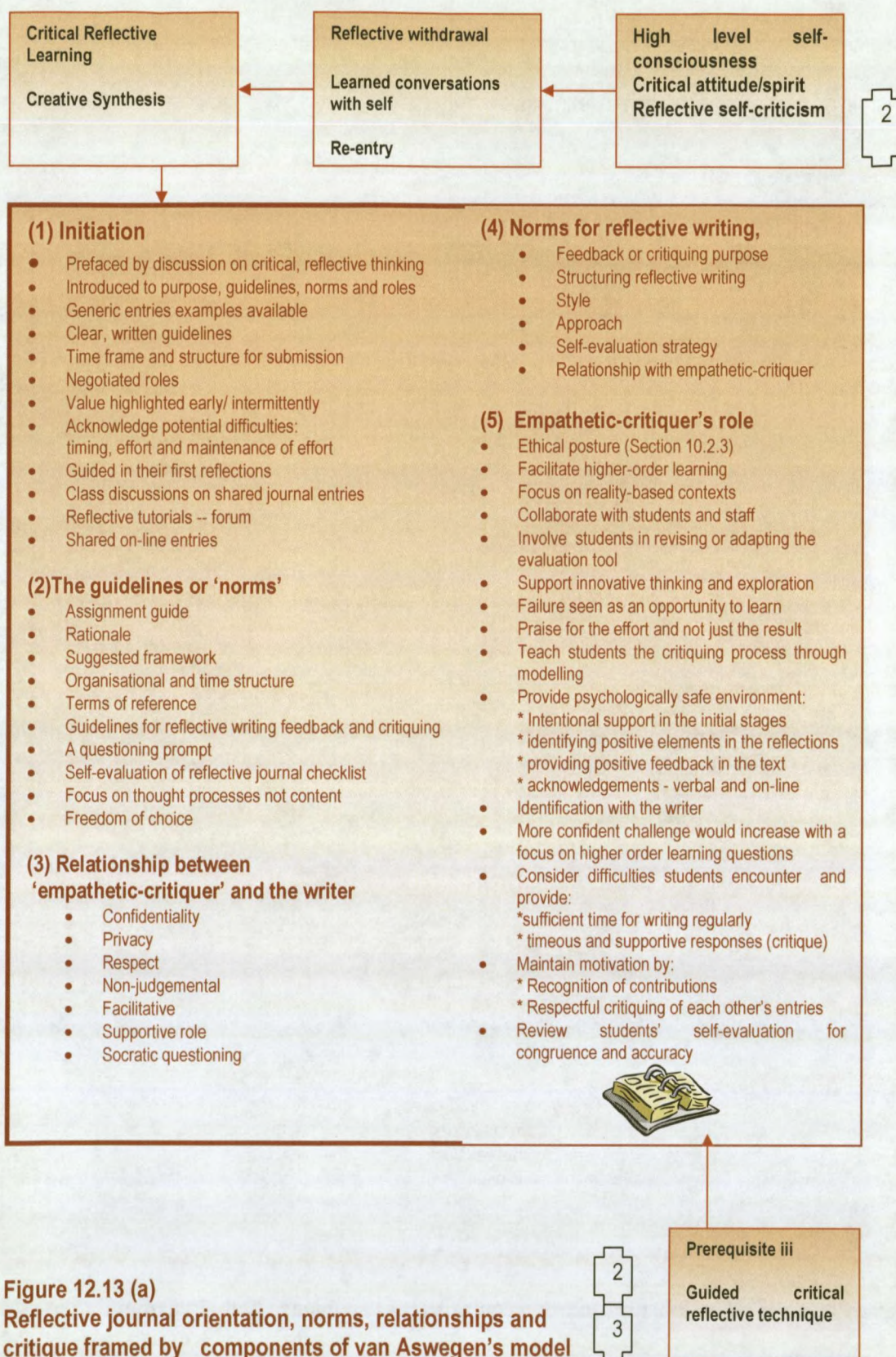


Figure 12.13 (a)
Reflective journal orientation, norms, relationships and critique framed by components of van Aswegen's model

12.5.8 Reflective journal orientation, norms, relationships and critique framed by components of van Aswegen's model

A key component of the portfolio was the reflective journal, initiated as proposed within van Aswegen's model. Figure 12.13(a) and the following figure and table (Figure 12.13(b) and Table 7.8 from Chapter Seven focusing on the structuring, organisation, critiquing and evaluation are based on the findings of this study, my reflexive journal and the literature. This figure focuses on the relationship between the empathetic-critiquer and writer, the guidelines for journaling and how this process can be initiated.

12.5.8.1 Framing the journaling experience

Figure 12.13(b) explains the actual journal experience and includes its structuring, organisation, characterization, purpose, orientation and administration. Given this framework, an educator could expect to see the purpose of critical reflective journaling fulfilled.

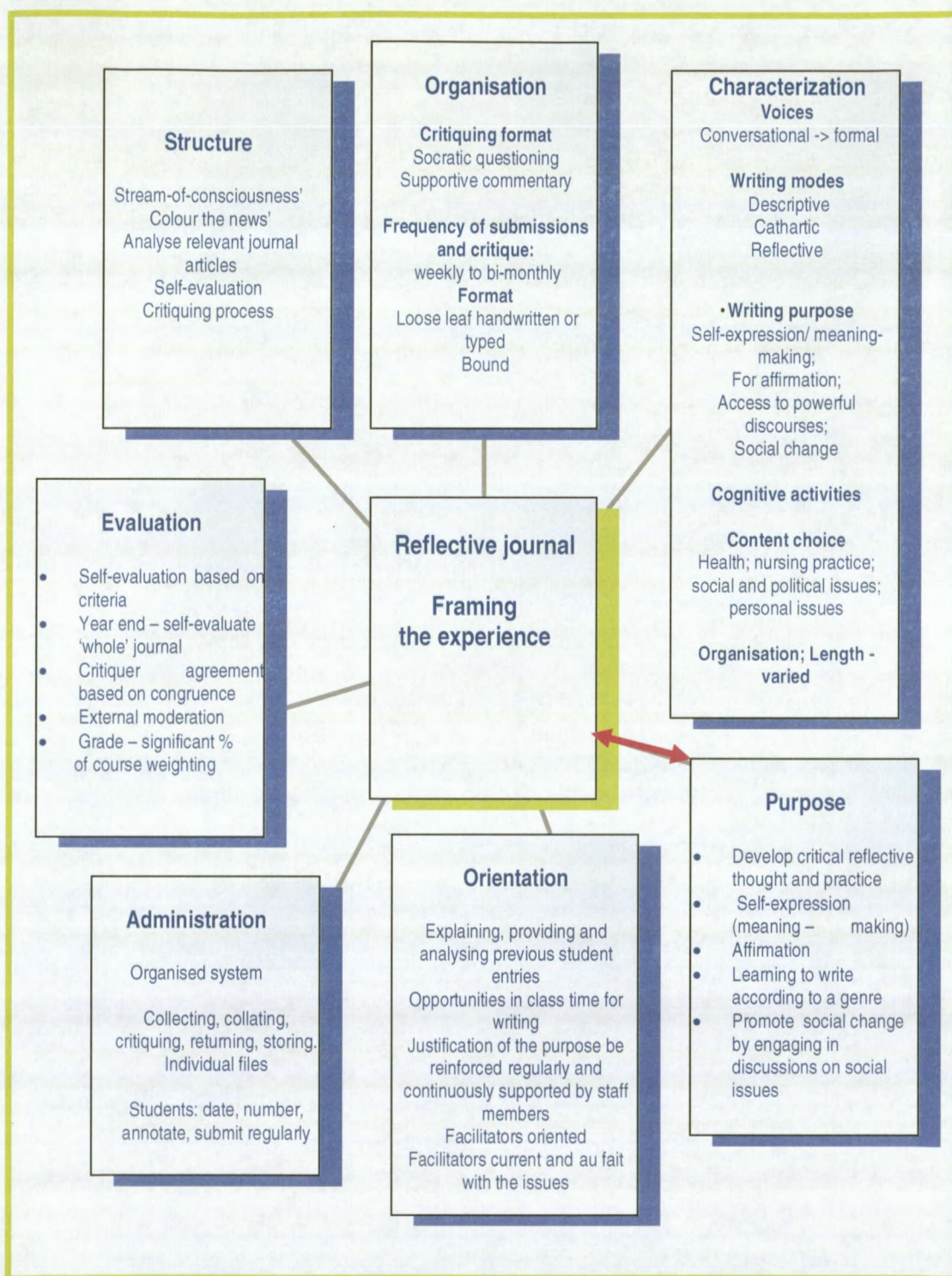
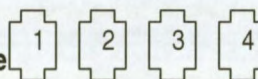


Figure 12.13 (b) Framing the journaling experience



12.5.8.2 Themes relating to students' perceptions of the value or limitations of journaling

In Chapter Seven, Section 7.3.6, students discussed the value and limitations of the journaling experience. Table 7.8 outlines the themes that emerged.



Table 7.8: Themes relating to students' perceptions of the value or limitations of journaling

Journaling as a tool for learning Type of learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affective • Developmental (includes cognitive) Effects of learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development • Cognitive development Development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical thinking skills • Reflective skills Questioning of own practice Problem identification and problem solving Reading Reflective writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affective development Catharsis Value Clarification Self-valuing Personal growth and development Confidence building Difficulties associated with the processes of journaling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence • Language • Initial engagement • Time consuming • Level and extent of effort and involvement required • Work overload • Lack of insight 	Use of journaling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making connections through news text and journals: • Increased awareness of contextual 'space' • Connecting with self and 'other' • Active engagement with issues • Reference sources • Personal travelogues, personal reminders Sustaining the process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of stories • Supportive feedback
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12.5.8.3 Framework for viewing and valuing reflective journals as a means of supporting critical reflective writing

The narratives of eight student journals were analysed in terms of my theoretical framework (Figure 10.1) in Chapter Ten. As a result of the analysis, Figure 12.13(c) was developed. Given the parameters established in Figures 12.13 (a and b) this new framework should provide a means of viewing and interpreting students' reflective journals.

12.5.8.4 Revelation through reflective journals

The text of the eight student journals was analysed in terms of my theoretical framework (Figure 10.1) in Chapter Ten, and Figure 12.13(d) represents some of the findings in light of this framework.

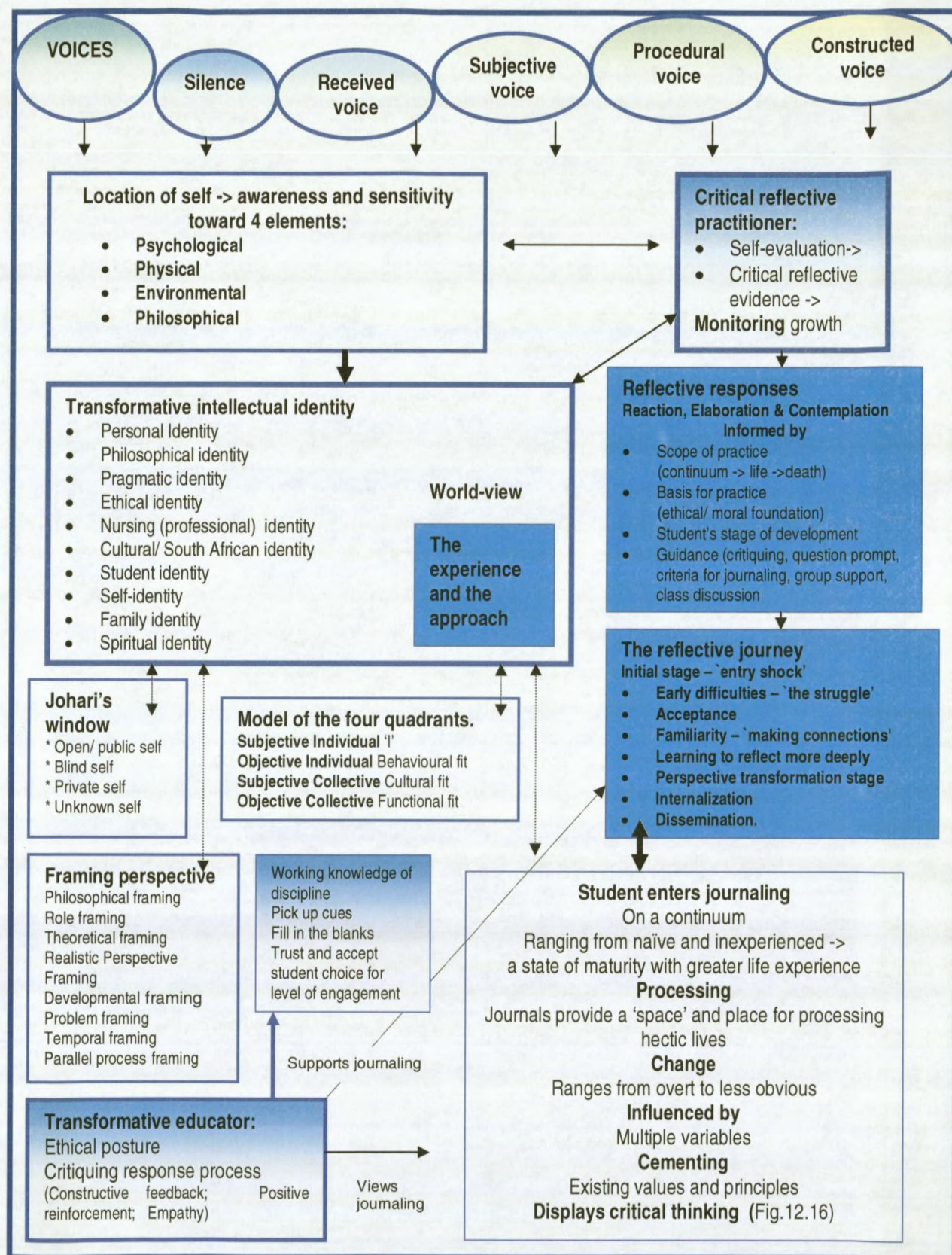


Figure 12.13 (c) Framework for viewing and valuing reflective journals as a means of supporting critical reflective writing

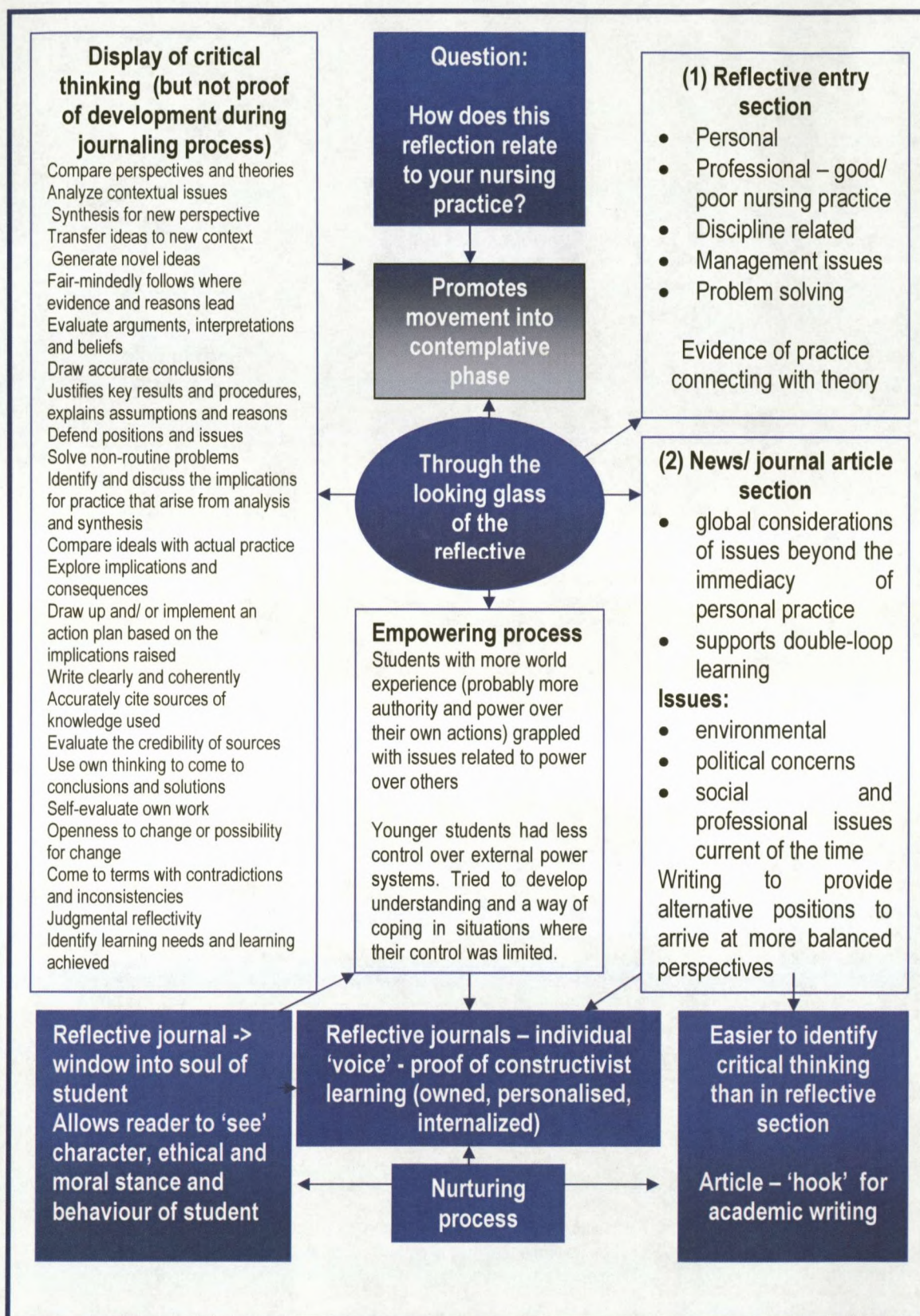
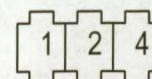


Figure 12. 13 (d) Revelation through reflective journals



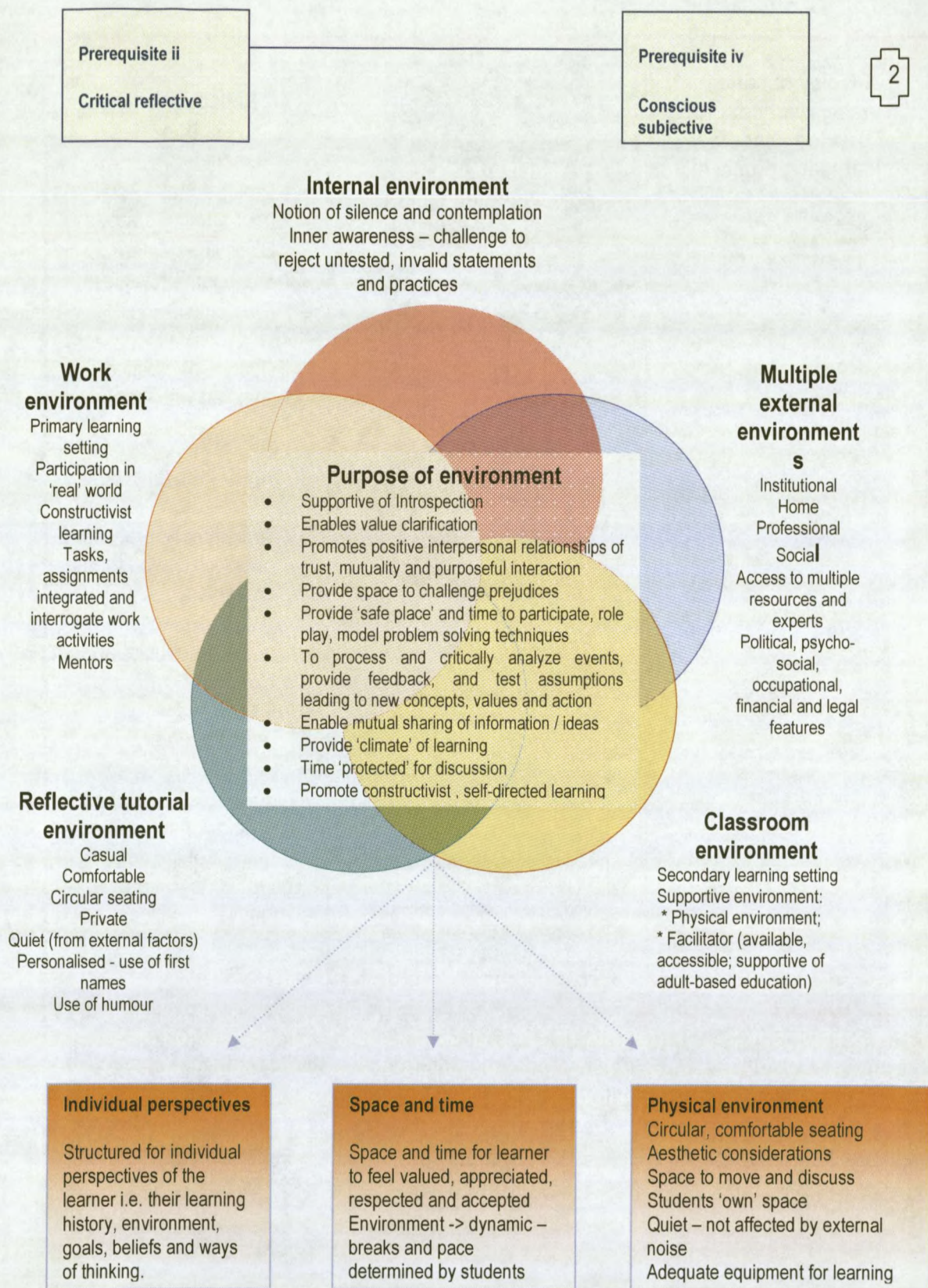


Figure 12.14 (a) The learning environment

12.5.9 Learning environment

In Chapter Six, Section 6.5.13 and Chapter Seven, Section 7.4.5 students clearly indicated that factors in multiple environments affected their learning. Figures 12.14(a to c) focus on what is required in order to establish the type of environment conducive for the learning required within this course. A supportive learning environment is a prerequisite of the model of critical reflective practice.

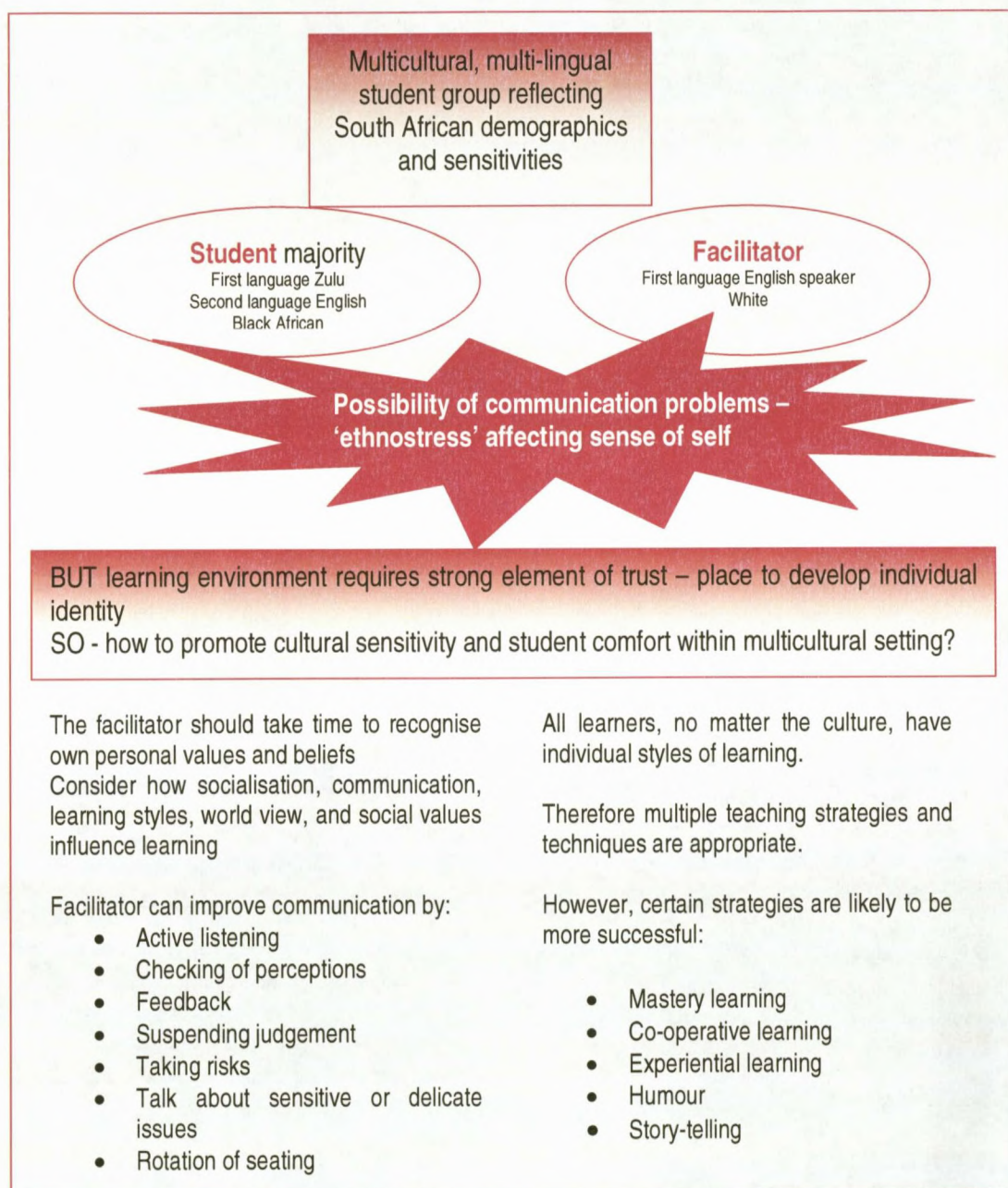


Figure 12.15 (b) Multicultural considerations



Facilitator support for second language English learners by:

- promoting easy access to learning
- constantly reflecting and questioning own understanding of learning process
- entering world of students and their reflections through journals and tutorials
- consider difficulties in conceptualization because of word paucity rather than lack of understanding
- simplifying theory by application to their world
- being open to possibilities
- appreciating that perceptions of understanding and valuing of learning differs
- appreciating different frames of reference (e.g. cultural, educational or experiential)
- believing the best in and of students
- focusing feedback on the positive and constructive
- being emotionally available and accessible to students
- creating a consistent and logical context and approach to their learning
- using appropriate readings and rewriting the complex in simple terminology
- providing scaffolding but motivate to deeper thinking

**Education is more than knowledge acquisition.
It is the formation of identity and
consciousness**

Most of the second-language
learners -> black African.

Therefore, how to support
expression of the 'African voice'?

**Difficulties experienced by second
language English students:**

- difficulty in true expression
- results in the inability to express the self freely
- cannot express deep feelings well
- results in lack of confidence
- writing is not an African tradition
- feelings of disempowerment
- result of prior socialization
- exacerbated by being part of a mixed cultural group with first language English speakers fluent and therefore more articulate

**Practical tips for making English more
accessible**

- Provide space and time for speech
- Slow down pace
- Small, familiar groups - forum for safety in expression
- Use students' own experience and background in the discussions so that theory and practice are directly relevant.
- Frequent, regular critiquing of journals
- Concrete supports of the newspaper and the journal article more tangible and easier to respond to
- Affirm students' self-worth wherever possible
- Provide constructive expectations and framework within which to function

Figure 12.15 (c) Provision of an environment to support second language English speakers and to support the African 'voice'



12.5.10 Teaching staff influences and perspectives

12.5.10.1 Philosophies of education and main teaching approaches of staff members

Although the course in Nursing Management IV is a specific subject, it cannot be considered totally in isolation. As seen in Figure 9.1 from Chapter Nine, both students and the facilitator are influenced by departmental and institutional factors and the teaching staff members, because of the close relationships, also influence teaching and learning practice.

12.5.10.2 Staff members' view of the learning process

In general, students registered for Nursing Management IV in their second year of their learning programme. This meant that they would have been exposed to the teaching practices in other courses within the department both prior to and concurrent with this subject. In Chapter Six, Sections 6.1.2, 6.1.10, 6.1.11, 6.1.12 and Figure 6.3., it is clear from the findings that students were strongly influenced by previous experiences with educators. As the educator within this course, I too was influenced by my peers and the tone set within the department. In line with this understanding, it is appropriate to identify how my colleagues viewed the learning process as in Chapter Nine.

12.5.10.3 The environmental factors perceived by staff members to support or limit teaching and learning

In Chapter One, Sections 1.4 to 1.6, I have contextualised my appreciation of institutional and departmental factors influencing teaching and learning. Figure 9.4 in Chapter Nine outlines those factors perceived by my colleagues to support or limit teaching and learning and shares elements of congruence with my own perceptions.

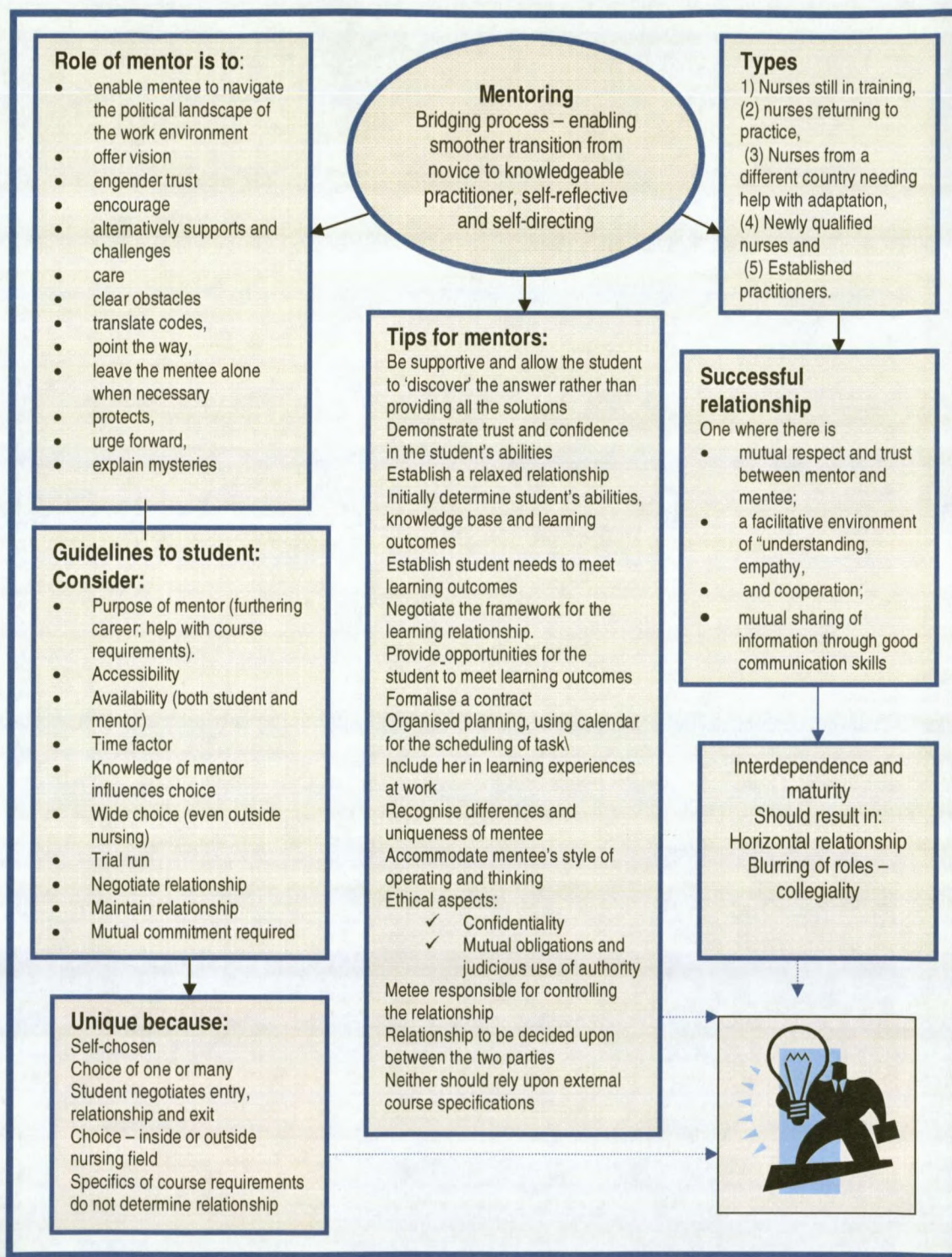
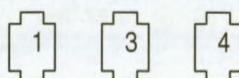


Figure 12.16 (a) Mentoring system



12.5.11 Mentoring system

One of the scaffolding support systems put in place for and by the students was a mentoring system seen in Figure 12.16(a). Findings in Chapter Six, Section 6.2.10 and the literature informed the development of this system in terms of perceived role of the mentor, guidelines for the student and mentor, the types of mentors for specific groups of students and the uniqueness of the process in this course.

12.5.11.1 Mentoring relationship process

Mentoring was one of the supportive strategies in the course to support critical reflective learning. The strategy of negotiation alone is one that demands maturity, foresight and communication skills. The process for the development of a successful mentor/mentee relationship is informed by the findings in Section 6.2.10.2 and the literature and depicted in Figure 12.16(b).

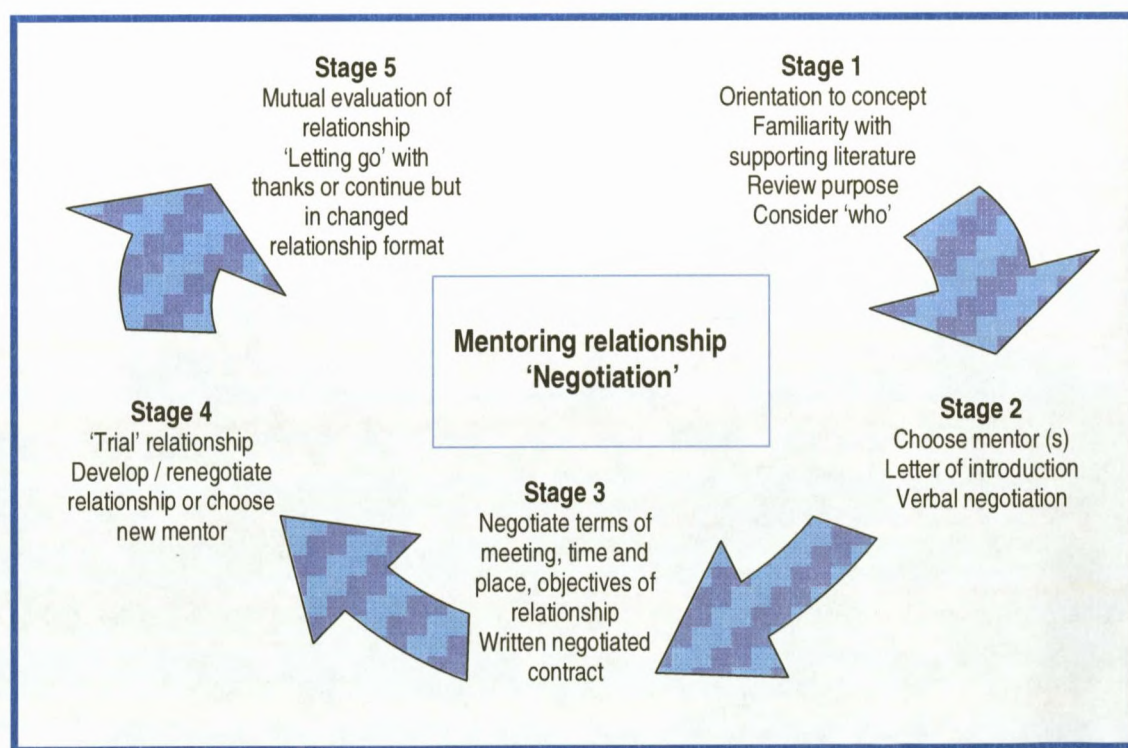


Figure 12.16(b) Mentoring relationship process



12.5.12 Reflective tutorials

Another collaborative strategy is the reflective tutorials system and Figures 8.1 to 8.6 in Chapter Eight illustrate the theory emanating from this strategy.

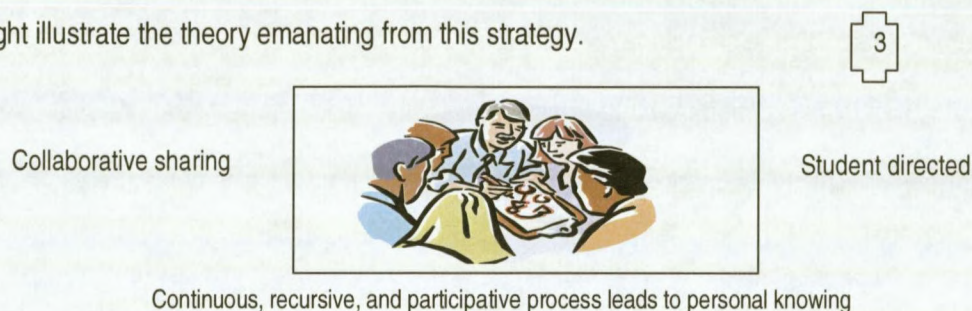
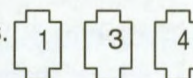


Figure 12.17 Reflective tutorials

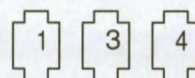
12.5.12.1 Barriers perceived to limit reflection

The reflective tutorial is a scaffolding system that supports integrated learning. Chapter Eight, Section 8.3 provides the analysis of the reflective tutorials which, together with the literature and my own observations, informs the text for Figures 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5 and 12.18. and 12.19. Figure 8.2 considers the barriers perceived to limit reflection in the reflective tutorials.



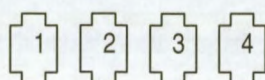
12.5.12.2 Perceived internal barriers to reflection

These barriers (Figure 8.3) may affect the student both in the written reflective journal and/or the reflective tutorial.



12.5.12.3 Factors perceived to support reflective tutorials

These factors are identified in terms of the student herself, the facilitator, factors external to the student in her environment both within and without the institution, environmental factors, group factors and those within the actual reflective process. These are illustrated in Figure 8.4 in Chapter Eight.



12.5.12.6 The reflective tutorial process

There are definite stages I have observed taking place within the tutorial process and is evidenced in

Chapter Eight, Figure 8.6, as repeated as follows:



Figure 8.6(b): The reflective tutorial process

12.5.12.4 Student factors promoting reflection affecting attitudes and behaviour

Figure 8.5 is a reflection of my perceptions as the course facilitator of the factors that appear to promote reflection, resulting in certain perceived behaviours which appear to culminate in certain effects. It is also based on the literature and the findings in Chapter Eight, Section 8.3.1.7

4

12.5.12.5 The reflective tutorial: Setting the scene

Figure 12.18 outlines the planning for and orientation of students to the reflective tutorial process

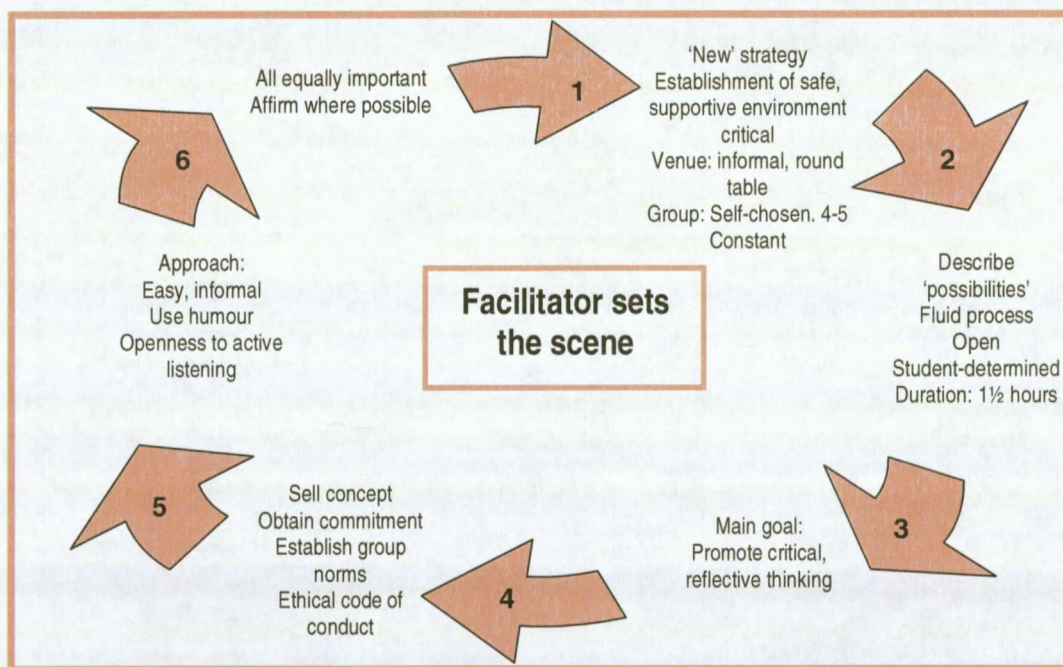


Figure 12.18 Planning for reflective tutorials

3

12.5.14 Critical thinking strategies and methods supported within van Aswegen's model

Figure 12.20 lists the strategies used within the Nursing Management IV course based on van Aswegen's model to support critical thinking

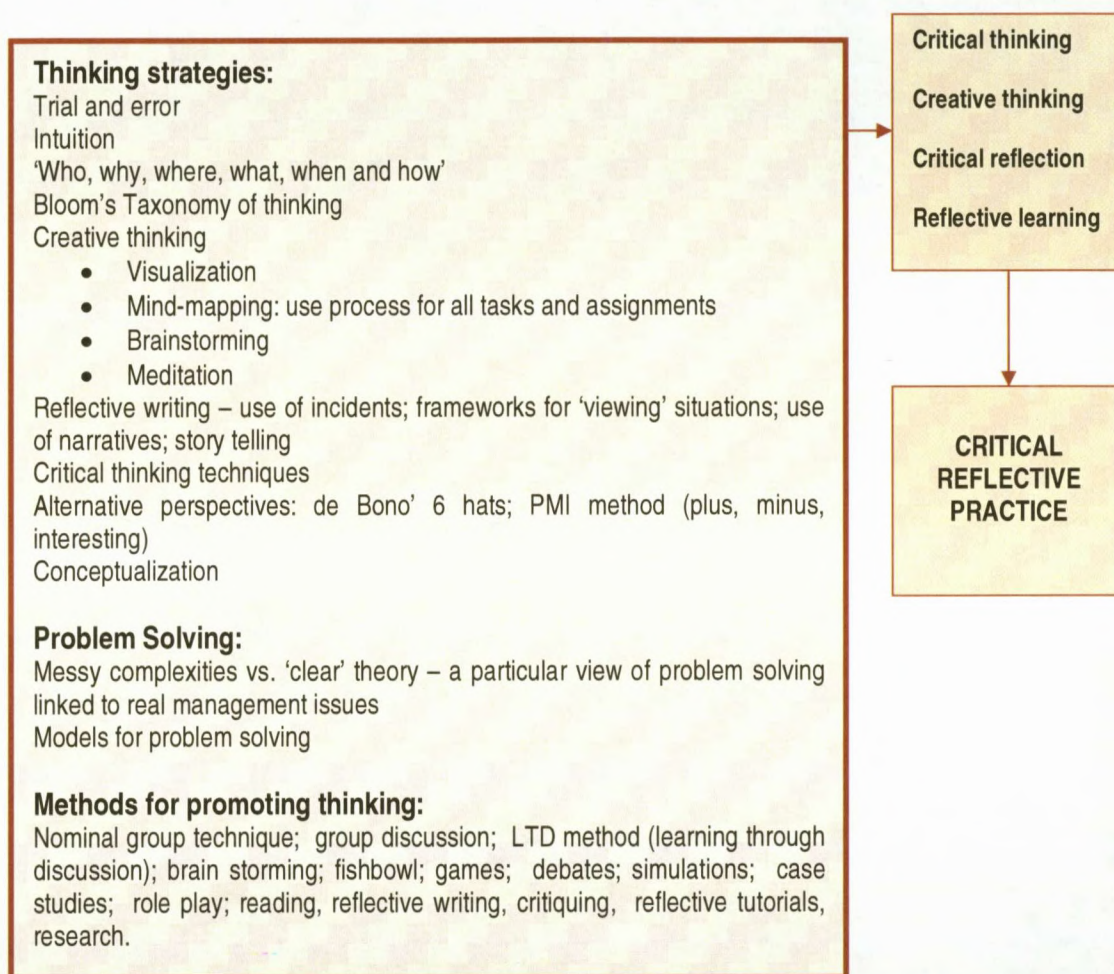



Figure 12.20 Critical thinking strategies and methods supported within van Aswegen's model

12.5.15 On-line learning classroom (Web CT) as a vehicle for learning

Section 6.7.11.6 and Figure 6.1.1 in Chapter Six outlines the use, value and difficulties in using an on-line classroom as a vehicle for learning.

12.5.13 Socratic Questioning method

This technique is used in both the reflective tutorial and the reflective journal and Figure 12.18 defines the process and gives examples of how and when to use it.



Socratic questioning

The focus of Socratic questioning is to provide students with more questions to allow themselves to find a path to understanding

Call on students who do not answer regularly
Call on others to summarise the thinking
Use 'buzz groups' of 2 to 3 students
Feedback to larger group
Summarise the thinking
Challenge ideas
Label type of thinking
Consider Paul's (1990) model for Socratic Questioning:

- Origins
- Support
- Conflict with other thoughts
- Implications and consequences

Tips for Socratic questioning

1. Consider purpose
2. Plan logical series of questions
3. Focus discussion.
4. Promote full participation
5. Personalise question.
6. Respond non-judgementally
7. Use questions that probe; promote controversy; create cognitive dissonance
8. Use questions that promote higher order learning
9. Use open rather than closed questions
10. Use questions to focus on key issues
11. Check for student understanding.
12. Value use of pauses and 'space' for thinking.

Figure 12.19 Socratic Questioning method



12.5.16 Provision of an example to demonstrate complementarity of strategies

Figure 12.22 provides an example of how one idea can be addressed through the complementarity of strategies to promote integrated, deeper learning

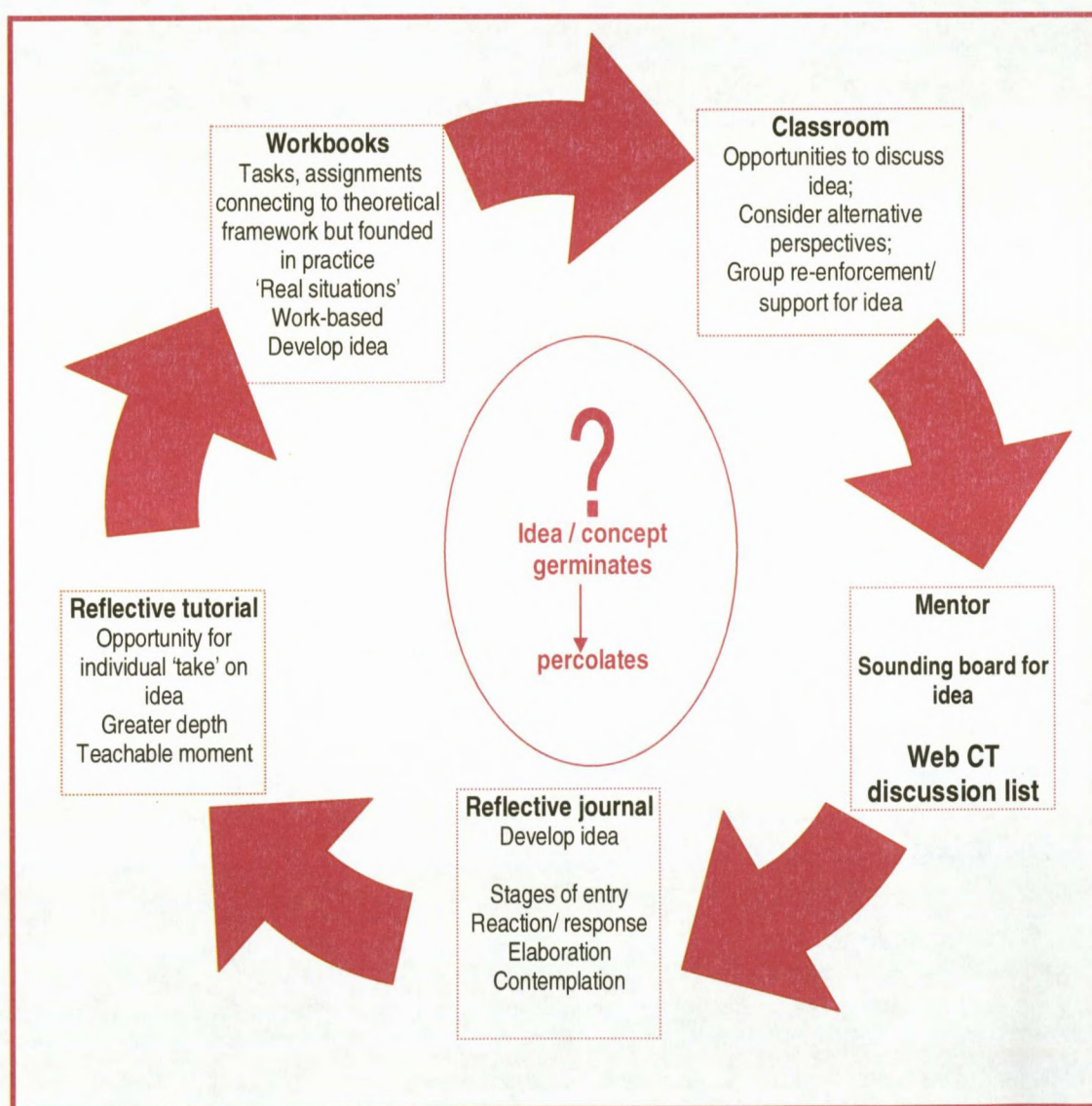


Figure 12.21. Provision of an example to demonstrate complementarity of strategies


<p>Continuous evaluation is</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuous; • formative (but includes diagnostic and summative assessment); • student-centred; • negotiated; • based on identified criteria; • focus is on higher-order thinking skills; • informs the learning process; and • provides student progress information. <p>Purpose: to validate outcomes and promote continuous, 'deep' learning through constant feedback and improvement</p> <p>Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to provide multiple opportunities for gathering evidence • to accommodate different learner needs and abilities e.g. self-paced learning • to provide opportunities to 'stage' learning improvement e.g. assignments e.g. can be <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) discussed or • (b) reviewed beforehand; • (c) returned with or • (d) without required changes for improvement 	<p>Strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Varied to provide a wider range of evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tests, • assignments, • projects, • workshops, • tasks, • reflective journal 2. Linked to work-based situations -> portfolio 3. Written and oral <p>Environment: Non-threatening</p> <p>Assessors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-evaluation; • peer evaluation; • educator/facilitator evaluation; • student invited external evaluators; • panel evaluation; • mixed approach. <p>Negotiation: Facilitator with students re timing, approach and criteria</p> <p>Checks and balances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External and internal examiners and moderators; • Transparent process; • Process and weighting of marks; • Documented in study guide; • Complete documented evidence available in department for four years.
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Figure 12.22. Continuous evaluation



12.5.17 Continuous evaluation

The value of learning needs to be demonstrated. The process of continuous evaluation is employed in this learning course and included in Figure 12.23 is the purpose, rationale and strategies used for continuous evaluation. Also included is consideration of the evaluation environment, the assessors, the concept of negotiation as well as that of checks and balances.

12.5.18 Core principles

Recommendations for future offering of Nursing Management IV (identified in 6.2.13)

Maintain the following practices:

1. Involve students in determining their learning needs and in the shaping of the programme. Try to accommodate for individual preferences and needs. Provide students with the results of previous student evaluations of the programme in enabling them to determine their own learning needs.
2. Appreciate that students come from a broader social context and strongly consider an individualised approach.
3. Ensure an appropriate and extensive orientation to the learning and teaching approach and intended outcomes (Oehlkers and Gibson, 2001).
4. Develop, with the students, the criteria for the ongoing tasks. Ensure relevance to working situations by consultation with students, and adapt accordingly. Let practice drive theoretical needs and ensure regular opportunities for sharing, discussing and debating relevant reality-based issues.
5. Should other lecturers be involved in the teaching of the programme, ensure an appropriate orientation to the principles of the Constructivist approach to the teaching of the programme. Orient staff to the process of critical reflective practice and the required ethical stance to promote 'mindfulness' of students. Reinforce consistency of approach and evaluation in the presence of the lecturer(s) and students to promote the continuity of the approach and avoid any ambiguities.
6. Reinforce the principles inherent in the critical reflective approach; the Constructivist approach to learning; adult education and the mentoring system on a regular basis. Support student ownership of own learning needs and maintain an open, supportive and motivational learning and teaching environment.

7. Maintain the tutorial system in its current form, explaining and emphasising the value within the learning system. Support the group process as a means of facilitating learning. Oehlkers et al. (2001) find that peer support increases in value when the facilitator is not available. Therefore, promote supportive group processes such as collaborative projects and e-mail or discussion list exchanges.
8. Highlight and reinforce the mentoring approach and reflective journals as a routine item in class contact activities.
9. Recognise and support, where possible, individual learning needs. Recognise, support and reward student effort. Provide feedback regularly and as quickly as possible (Oehlkers et al., 2001).
10. Endeavour to be culturally sensitive and involve students in this effort. Recognise language differences and the need to accommodate the difficulties resulting from these differences e.g. within small groups or on an individual basis.
11. Ensure that prior reading and preparation drives the contact sessions. Ensure that students can differentiate between required readings and 'enrichment' readings.
12. Provide and support 'enrichment' activities e.g. on-line learning, group work, the mentoring relationship, outside speakers, flexible and creative experiential learning activities. Challenge students on both a group and individual basis, to maximise their use of the learning opportunities.
13. With students, set high, but realistic standards, and support and recognise the meeting of these standards. Provide incentives, such as recognition in class or on-line.
14. Be open to students and to change and maintain own up-to-date knowledge base. Variety in teaching methods and evaluation is key.
15. Enrich the course by inviting experts from the field or education to 'share' with students.
16. Continue to liaise with course co-ordinators for marketing, consistency and support purposes.

12.6 CONCLUSION

I cannot conclude this thesis without mention of my own transformation and learning. For a number of years prior to this study, I had managed the department of nursing at DIT. As the department grew in size, my contact with students and programmes developed into a greater administrative role, and I was more often than not, a guest lecturer in the different programmes. As staff members became increasingly concerned with the challenges faced by the department as set out in Figure 12.1, I responded by asking if I could introduce the reflective journal, and this was accepted in one or two of the programmes. The intense satisfaction derived from the interaction with students and their thoughts and the almost forgotten challenge of academia, resulted in my resignation from the management post to embrace a project that would be meaningful to the students, the department and myself.

I started a journey that in a sense paralleled that of the students within my study. As they reflected on their personal and professional lives and developed an increasing awareness of their 'voices', I too, discovered through my reflexive journal, and my relationships with students and my supervisors, my own academic 'voice' and the chance to value its power. I started out full of doubts about my ability to present an authoritative and traditional thesis, without losing the essence or authentic voice of the students. Qualitative research was an unknown quantity but as both the project and my understanding of the research process grew, so did my appreciation. Ostensibly, this thesis has been written for the purpose of obtaining a doctorate. But also I hoped to find a way to perhaps share and connect with other like-minded educators as Elsie van Aswegen and other similarly generous educators did with me. Essentially, however it has been to explore, with licence, my practice as an educator in an effort to become a 'critical reflective practitioner'.

I have not been disappointed.

"I am a teacher at heart, and there are moments in the classroom when I can hardly hold the joy. When my students and I discover uncharted territory to explore, when the pathway out of a thicket opens up before us, when our experience is illumined by the lightning-life of the mind -- then teaching is the finest work I know...

...Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one's inwardness, for better or worse. As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together. The entanglements I experience in the classroom are often no more or less than the convolutions of my inner life. Viewed from this angle, teaching holds a mirror to the soul. If I am willing to look in that mirror, and not run from what I see, I have a chance to gain self-knowledge -- and knowing myself is as crucial to good teaching as knowing my students and my subject.

In fact, knowing my students and my subject depends heavily on self-knowledge. When I do not know myself, I cannot know who my students are. I will see them through a glass darkly, in the shadows of my unexamined life -- and when I cannot see them clearly I cannot teach them well. When I do not know myself, I cannot know my subject -- not at the deepest levels of embodied, personal meaning. I will know it only abstractly, from a distance, a congeries of concepts as far removed from the world as I am from personal truth "(Palmer, 1998:1-2).

Appendices

Nursing Management 1V: Questionnaire

I would like to know a little about you as this will help me obtain a better understanding of who you are, where you come from and what your needs and your experiences are in terms of learning. To help you get started, you might want to use these headings as a basis for your discussion. Please feel free to add anything you feel might be helpful for me to know in order to understand and help you. Feel free to use this as an introduction to your diary and as one of your reflections.

1. Demographic details:

- 1.1 Name
- 1.2 Age
- 1.3 Educational background [*e.g. where did you go to school; type of school[s]; where did you study for your profession (nursing college/ Technikon etc); did you study either formally or informally for anything else?*]
- 1.4 Qualifications and year and place [*e.g. diploma in general nursing. 1999. Addington; certificate in brick building, 2000. Pinetown, Dept. of Manpower*]
- 1.5 Work experience [*the experiences that have helped you become the nurse practitioner you are. These might include informal work experiences*]
- 1.6 Current work situation [*where are you working and what are you doing?*]
- 1.7 Work role [*the position and responsibilities you hold; the authority or power you wield, either formal or informal*]
- 1.8 Family membership [*roles, numbers and power structures. For example, who is your family? How many are in the family? What position do they take in the family e.g. who is the dad/mom/sibling/son? Who is the boss?*]
- 1.9 Role in the family [*What is your role in your family? Are you the nurturer or care-giver; are you the parent? Are you the chief cook and bottle washer? You might wish to write about the nuclear family structure and/or the extended family structure*]
- 1.10 Community/civic commitments [*what do you do when you are not working or being with your family? Do you belong to any groups?*]

2. Personal characteristics

The kind of person you perceive yourself to be, the life experiences you have been exposed to, your personal philosophy of life all impacts on how you see yourself as a person and as a nurse.

- 2.1 How would you describe yourself?
- 2.2 What would you like me to know about you?

3. Learning history or experiences

The kind of learning experiences you have been exposed to, both positive and negative, affect the way in which you approach learning in your education programme.

- 3.1 What prior positive teaching have you experienced [*i.e. can you think of a teacher or teachers/facilitators who have inspired you to learn, and how did they teach you or help you learn? You might want to consider how your learning environment was organized or structured that made learning easier or more interesting.*]
- 3.2 If you have had a poor learning experience, why do you think it was negative?
- 3.3 Teaching methods
- 3.3.1 What methods are you familiar with? [tick appropriate box below either 'yes' or 'no']

3.3.2 What is your preferred method of being taught? Rate each of the listed methods from 1-5 [1=most preferred; 5 = least preferred. 0=don't know method]

Teaching method you are familiar with	Yes	No	Rating of preference from 1-5
1. Lecture			
2. Prac or laboratory work			
3. Tutorials			
4. Projects			
5. Case study			
6. Problem solving group work			
7. Simulations and games			
8. Buzz groups			
9. Brainstorming			
10. Controlled discussions			
11. Fishbowl			
12. Free group discussions			
13. Questions			
14. Role play			
15. Seminar			
16. Debate			
17. Workshop			

4. Perception of the purpose of and for learning

If you perceive learning as a means to an end i.e. a bar on you epaulettes or as a means to promotion [both of which are perfectly reasonable outcomes] or whether you see learning as a way of life and a means of personal satisfaction [also reasonable] or whether you see it as a means of satisfying your needs for further development in the nursing profession, this could effect the way in which you approach the learning process. You could, of course, see the purpose of learning as a means of improving your status or allowing you greater and better access to preferred jobs. You may have other reasons not mentioned. You may have one reason or many reasons. The importance you give to each reason may also vary.

5.1 Why have you registered for **this** learning programme?

5.2 What do you think your purpose for learning is this year?

5.2 Do you think that you want to learn exactly what is required in order to achieve this qualification

☐ yes

or

☐ no

5.3 Do you think you have other learning needs? Explain.

6. Expectations of the course

The way you are likely to approach a learning programme is fairly dependent on what you expect to get out of the programme and how you expect that programme to be offered. Your motivation for learning is often influenced by your expectations.

6.1 What are your expectations of the course in Nursing Management 1V?

7. Learning style

Scenario A. Miss A. has given a class on Tuberculosis and its management. Students are seated in rows facing the screen and Ms A. stands next to the overhead projector. She has clearly structured her lecture, giving the purpose of the topic and provides appropriate explanations, definitions, examples, descriptions and comments. She is a good speaker, enthusiastic and dynamic in her presentation. She uses humour and drama to attract and keep her students' attention. She uses the overhead projector and transparencies to explain the content of her talk and at the end of the lecture, she provides her students with notes that will enhance and add to her lecture. It is also at this time that she asks if any of the students have questions. It would seem that they have all understood. She tells them that it would be a VERY good idea to learn the material she has supplied as the exams are coming up. At this stage, she summaries the key issues and ends her class. Ms A's class like her very much and enjoy her classes. She makes them feel safe.

Scenario B. Ms B. sits in a circle with her students and asks for their reflections on their clinical visit to the local primary health care centre. Students are quite enthusiastic about their visit and appear to have a need to express their concern at the number of TB patients who also have HIV/ AIDS. Ms B. briefly places these problems within the South African context and wonders aloud what nurse practitioners [the students] could do to alleviate the situation? She, however, indicates that she is not certain of the statistics and while she knows TB is problematic, she wonders, in fact, if it is under control? Perhaps, she asks, the students might like to enlighten her on the current health status of our citizens, as regards TB? Also, why did they think there was a link between HIV AIDS and TB? Was there any evidence to support this? Ms B.'s students are used to working in groups and she suggests that they break up into these groups to decide how to go about the problem solving process, but more importantly, what it is that they really wish to know. Once each group has decided on the problem question and explained how they intend solving the problem, Ms B. either challenges the validity of the problem question and the approach, for review, or indicates her approval. She provides direction on time and feedback. The students have access to internet and a fairly good health resources in the institution's library. They are provided with a time allocation to find and process the information and to report back to the class.

7. The above present two different scenarios for learning.

- 7.1 Which scenario provides for easy learning [A] or [B]
- 7.2 When do you think [A] learning style would be appropriate
- 7.3 When do you think [B] learning style would be appropriate?
- 7.4 Which provides for more difficult learning [A] or [B]
- 7.5 What are the benefits of this style of learning, do you think?

8. What factors do you perceive to affect your learning:

- 8.1 Positively
- 8.2 Negatively

9. Prioritization of nursing interests as they affect your understanding of the nursing profession in South Africa.

The scope of nursing management is extremely broad. While you will be given the theoretical underpinnings of nursing management in your programme, there may be a number of issues/problems/challenges that you would like to discuss or focus on in order to allow you to practice more effectively in the health care environment.

- 9.1 What issues concern/interest you in health care/nursing?

10. Perception of concepts:

- 10.1 What do you understand to be the meaning of the following educational concepts? [Don't worry if you don't have all the answers. I just want to get a 'feel' for what your understanding is]

critical thinking	Mentorship	experiential learning
reflective practice	adult education	learning contract
problem based learning	community based education	outcomes based education?

Note: I have omitted the original spacing and lines for student responses



D U R B A N
INSTITUTE *of*
TECHNOLOGY

Report
Midyear evaluation: Management IV



Classroom Task:

Working in groups of two or three:

Write a one-page report in response to my request for feedback on the Management IV course, with particular focus on critical thinking, reflective learning strategies and the mentoring process.

The purpose of the report is to:

- ➔ evaluate your ability to think clearly and concisely and be able to translate this into an appropriate form of written communication.
- ➔ enable me to undertake a mid-programme review in order to establish the status of the programme from your, the student's, perspective,
- ➔ allow you the opportunity to reflect upon your learning within a group context.
- ➔ provide you with an opportunity of constructively analysing the course and the reflective diary to enable adjustments to be made, if necessary.

Remember to support your arguments and provide alternative solutions.

Make feasible recommendations.

Remember to note those aspects of the course that work effectively for you as well as those that need adjusting.

Read the report out aloud to ensure for accuracy and clarity.

Final Questionnaire**Management 1V students 2002**

This questionnaire should take you about a half of an hour to complete. It should complete my inquiries into student learning using a critical reflective learning methodology. Thank you for your participation.

Q1. Describe the **thinking** processes you used in this management course

Q2a. What knowledge did this critical reflective thinking approach to the course demand?

Q2b. What skills did this course demand?

Q4. What influenced your learning and performance in this management component?

Q5 Consider the learning that has taken place as a result of your engagement in the management component of your programme. Did you use some of the following thinking processes in this management programme? Tick relevant box

5.1 Application of theory to practice [To put to use known information/principles from one thing to another (parallel)]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.2 Identifying cause-effect relationships [Cause= a reason or motive
Effect = the result or outcome. To recognize and explain the relationship between the motive and result]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.3 Classifying or categorising [To arrange by a system or principle from the broadest to the narrowest; to put things together that have the same feature(s) (grouping, sorting, categorizing)]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.4 Comparing and contrasting [To show similarities and differences; to determine how two things are alike and/or different]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.5 Evaluating [To make a judgment based on a set of criteria and/or standards]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.6 Inferring [To arrive at a logical decision by making assumptions; to read between the lines; to conclude by reasoning from a premise based on data (deduction); to extend information or understanding beyond what is explicitly stated]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.7 Observing [To regard with attention; to methodically view or note facts or occurrences]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.8 Predicting [To state what one believes will happen (based on data)]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.9 **Prioritising** [To give precedence in time and/or importance to a belief, event, idea (preceding from something else)]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.10 **Sequencing** [To follow one thing after another; to order in succession (grouping, ordering)]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.11 **Summarising** [To briefly report the main points]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.12 **Synthesising** [To create something *new* from the parts]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.13 **Interpret** [explain, deduce]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.14 **Analyse alternative viewpoints** [see perspectives other than your own]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.15 **Draw conclusions** [to make an assumption or deduction from all the information available]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

5.16 **Make realistic recommendations** [to make a suggestion or proposal based on evidence and available resources]

Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

Q6. Do you use these thinking processes more than, less than or the same as before you entered this course? Tick relevant box.

Thinking process	More than before	Less than before	Same as before	Not Applicable
Application				
Identifying cause-effect				
Classifying or categorising				
Comparing and contrasting				
Evaluating				
Inferring				
Observing				
Predicting				

Sequencing				
Prioritising				
Summarising				
Synthesising				
Interpret				
Analyse alternative viewpoints				
Draw conclusions				
Make realistic recommendations				

Q7 Did you use the following sources of knowledge more than, less than or the same as before you entered the course? Tick relevant box.

Knowledge sources	More than before	Less than before	Same as before	Not applicable
Internet				
Mentors				
Text books				
Journals				
Newspapers				
Fellow students				
Colleagues				
Friends				
Experts				
Community resources				
Facilitator				
Library				
Other				

Other: Explain

Q8 Did you have to have knowledge of the following in order to successfully cope with this course: [tick the correct box]

Knowledge of:	Yes	No
Group dynamics		
Basic computer usage		
Problem-solving steps		
Information retrieval		
Community resources		
Functioning of your health service		
The SA health system		
The rules of discussion and debate		
Assignment writing		
Developing a written argument or discussion		
Other		

Other: Explain.

Q8 Did you have to have skills in the following in order to successfully cope with this course: [tick the correct box]

Skills	Yes	No
Research skills		
Communication skills		
Time management skills		
Organisational skills		
Self-motivational skills		
Team work		
Critical thinking and reasoning skills		
Ability to reflect		

Active listening skills		
Interpersonal skills		
Computer literacy skills		
Motivational skills		
Other		

Other: Explain.

Q9. Have these skills improved or not as a result of your involvement in this course, do you think? Tick relevant box.

Skills	Improved this year	Not improved this year
Research skills		
Communication skills		
Time management skills		
Organisational skills		
Self-motivational skills		
Team work		
Critical thinking and reasoning skills		
Ability to reflect		
Active listening skills		
Interpersonal skills		
Computer literacy skills		
Motivational skills		
Other		

Other: Explain.

Q10. What did you value or appreciate the most in terms of the management component?

Q11. Which of the following factors affected your learning in either a positive or negative way? [Tick box]

Factors	Positive factor	Negative factor	Not applicable
Time [to learn]			
Personal factors e.g. problems or positive happenings at home or work			
Tutorial sessions			
Discussions in class			
Learning environment in class			
Learning environment in tutorials			
Learning environment at DIT			
Learning environment at home			
Support from peers			
Support from facilitator			
Support from colleagues			
Support from family			
Readiness to learn			
Amount of work			
Applicability / relevance of tasks and assignments			
Diary			
Past experience			
Questioning approach by facilitator in tutorials, diary, tasks, classes			
Use of multi-modal system e.g. workbooks/cdrom/internet/facilitator/videos/outside speakers/web ct			
Use of Web CT [e-mail; discussion			

list; posting of messages/readings; calendar]			
Self-directed learning			
Self-paced learning			
Consultation on tasks, assignments with others outside class e.g. mentor/ colleagues/ peers			
Integration of tasks, assignments, tutorials, diary to own work environment			

If you wish to comment further:

Q12. What effect have the reflections in your diary and tasks had on your attitudes and behaviour in your health care practice, do you think?

Q 13. Were you able to explore and analyse your feelings during this course [e.g. through your diary or through tutorials etc]?

Yes ____ No ____

Q 14. Were you able to do any self-evaluation as a result of your reflections?

Yes ____ No ____

Q 15. Do you feel more empowered as a result of your learning experiences this year?

Yes ____ No ____

Q 16 Do you feel you have grown personally as a result of your learning experiences this year?

Yes ____ No ____

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Feel free to contact me about the findings of this research.
Maureen

Note: I have omitted the original spacing and lines for student responses

DEPARTMENT OF POST-GRADUATE NURSING STUDIES
COURSE EVALUATION NURSING MANAGEMENT IV (2002)

KINDLY COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE AS OBJECTIVELY AS POSSIBLE BY MARKING THE SELECTED ANSWERS WITH A TICK () OR BY GIVING A WRITTEN ANSWER WHERE REQUIRED [if you copy and paste this, you may e-mail it to your course facilitator. Alternatively, a hard copy is available from the department]

DURATION OF THE COURSE

The course is found to be: (too short) (adequate) (too long)

THEORY

The theory was considered to be: (too detailed) (adequate) (too simple)

THE APPROACH

The approach to learning was considered to be: (relevant) (acceptable) (irrelevant)

WEB CT

The integration of computer based learning was: (useful) (not applicable) (not helpful)

Sections considered:

most interesting

least interesting

superfluous

Aspects which should be: expanded
 included

Specify why:

READINGS

Were the readings provided

(useful) (appropriate) (adequate) (inadequate) ?

Specify why:

OUTSIDE SPEAKERS

Would you recommend including outside speakers again next year? YES NO

Were there any outside speakers you would NOT recommend for next year? YES NO

If yes, please specify:

Please indicate what other outside speakers you feel would have been beneficial and why :

ASSIGNMENTS

Were there any assignments that you did NOT consider useful? YES NO

If yes, please justify:

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Completing your tasks within your/ or a specified work environment enabled you to integrate theory and practice True/ False

Aspects that could be: expanded

Aspects that should be: included

COURSE FACILITATION

Facilitation was generally of what standard?

(High) (Medium) (Low)

If 'medium' or 'low' please qualify:

Did the facilitation style influence your appreciation of a subject? YES NO

If YES, how and why:

Area(s) of especially high quality of presentations:

Would you have preferred more self study? YES NO

FACILITIES

Please comment on the following facilities:

Classroom Audio-visual aids Parking

Seating Library Toilets

BENEFIT FROM THE COURSE

Please indicate whether you have benefited from the course by circling the appropriate comment:

(Personally) (Professionally) (As a practical nurse)

(Theoretically) (Not at all)

Would you recommend this course to a colleague? YES NO

If NO, please specify why:

Are there any changes you have not already mentioned, that you personally would recommend be made to the programme?

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM

Note: I have omitted the original spacing and lines for student responses

Evaluation of selected aspects of Management IV course:**Web CT:**

Here you might want to consider the various aspects and indicate how useful/ not useful they were and why:

1. E-mail
2. Diary entries to be shared with colleagues
3. Feedback and dialogue with colleagues about the entries
4. Additional readings
5. Discussion list
6. News articles
7. Fun section
8. Use as an administrative tool
9. Focused entry into the internet by the provision of URL sites
10. Data sources e.g. Journal for Advanced Nursing etc
11. Calendar
12. Access to the nursing management programme through the web
13. Other uses for the Web CT site
14. How functional did you find this resource in terms of accessibility, availability, user friendliness, facilitator support?
15. Taking into account your own limitations e.g. your own work, study and social schedule as well as the limited infrastructure of the technikon, how could the use of this resource be optimised?
16. What advice would you give to me in setting up this resource for next year?
17. What advice should I pass on to next year's students?
18. What have you gained from using Web CT or the –e-mail system?
19. What skills do you now have that you didn't have prior to use of Web CT?
20. What skills have you improved upon since engaging in the Web CT classroom?

Mentoring Process

Discuss the value and limitations of your experience of the mentoring process this year. Explain what I did to make this an effective experience and what I should have done to make it a better experience.

Teaching and Learning Strategy:

I chose to use the Constructivist educational approach, learner contract, reflective journals, mentoring, tutorials, prior reading, completion of workplace related tasks prior to discussion, assignments, enrichment activities [e.g. Web CT], invited expert guest speakers and continuous evaluation as a means of supporting your learning. I need to know what you felt about this approach and whether or not these were appropriate for your personal learning and why.

Workbooks

I chose to use workbooks and study guide instead of set text books for this course. I need to know how useful/ un-useful they were. The following are some of the principles of course-ware development and writing. Tick the box that you feel most represents the use or non-use of the principle of presentation in your workbooks:

Principle of structuring and layout of workbooks and guide	yes	no	sometime	N/A
Accessibility of information – without distorting				
Introduction to key concepts, questions and issues				
Engage with material in meaningful way. Learning includes “content knowledge acquisition, cognitive development and the ability to engage critically with the subject matter”				
Write to promote effective learning by engagement with the text.				
Arouses interest				
Written for learner use				
Usually gives estimates of study time				
Designed for a particular audience				
Usually gives aims and objectives				
May be many ways through it				
Structured according to the needs of the learner				
Major emphasis on self-assessment				
Alert to potential difficulties				
Often offers summaries				
More personal style				
Content unpacked				
More open layout				
Learner evaluation should be conducted				
Requires active response				
Often provides study skills advice				
Readability considered important				

The following are the general rules for reader friendly writing. Consider your workbooks and guide in terms words or phrases that are:

Reader friendly word or phrases	Yes	No	Sometimes	N/A
Simple				
Short				
Familiar rather than esoteric [high sounding]				
Concrete with metaphorical possibilities rather than abstract				
Verbs that are active, descriptive and vibrant				
Short sentences				
Positive, affirmative sentences				
Personal style, engaging in dialogue with reader				
Provide connecting links between ideas and sentences				
Consistent – same term for same concept				
Start with the known and add new information				
Define key terms clearly and early in material				
Illustrate key concepts with concrete, vivid examples				
Use headings and advance organisers. ..These are initial statements which express new concepts to be learned in familiar terms.				
Write for your learners. Know who they are.				
“Provide support in the forms of clues, reminders, encouragement or even the breaking down of a problem into				

steps, thereby allowing for practice in a structured process of learning."				
Provide cues to help with learning.				
Organisation of material in a logical, orderly way and omission of needless, ambiguous words				
Other:				

Orientation to critical reflective thinking:

1. Were you given sufficient support for this process?

Yes	No
-----	----

2. Was the orientation to your reflective diary adequate?

Yes	No
-----	----

Note: I have omitted the original spacing and lines for student responses

Research Title: The integration and development of van Aswegen's (1998) model of critical thinking, within a nursing programme, to promote critical reflective practice

Questionnaire: Critiquing of your diary

Instructions for completion

1. Please use the spaces after each question to fill out your answer.
2. Where there are boxes, please tick the one you feel is most appropriate.

1. What are your expectations from the person critiquing your diary?
2. What is your understanding of the rules for critiquing established and explained by your facilitator when orienting you to diary writing?
3. Is the critiquer meeting these rules?
4. If not, in what way and why not? Yes No
5. Are you meeting these rules?
6. If no, specifically why not?
7. When you write in your diary, to whom are you writing?
8. 8.1 Do you write using different 'voices' at different times – for example, you use different styles when you write a report or an assignment or a letter or a reminder to yourself just as you would use a different style to speak to your friends or family or boss or do a presentation. So, do you write using different styles for the different sections in your diary? Yes No
9. 8.2 If yes, tick the correct box in the following table

Diary section	Informal Style [write as you think and feel] OR	Formal style[structured, check for grammar, spelling, comprehension and correct information]	Frequency Always/often/ sometimes/ never [tick correct box]
Reflection			Always/often/ sometimes/ never
News			Always/often/ sometimes/ never
Journal			Always/often/ sometimes/ never

Other

9. Has the critiquer helped you with your diary?

 Yes

 No

10. If yes, how?

11. Has the critiquing process hindered you in any way?

 Yes

 No

12. Explain?

13 Do you respond to the critiquing comments:

- 13.1 In your thoughts ?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

13.2 In a written response in another diary entry ?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

13.3 In discussion with others e.g. colleagues, family or friends?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

13.4 By action e.g. changing your behaviour or your practice?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

13.5 Other

14 Do you respond in different ways to comments, i.e. a specific type of response to a certain type of comment?

15 Is your critiquer judgemental in comments?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

16 Is the way in which your critiquer responds to your diary entries helpful?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

17 Explain

18 Do the comments help you to think more critically?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

In what way?

19a Do the comments help you to reflect?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

19b In what way?

20 Do you feel that you can write freely, without worry about being criticised?

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

Explain why

21 Does it make a difference that the comments are written in blue or black pen or pencil rather than in red ink?

Yes

No

Explain

22 What advice would you give to the critiquer to enable the critiquing process to be more effective?

23 Would you write your diary the same way if you did not have someone critiquing your diary?

Yes

No

Explain:

- 22 Would you complete the diary entries at the same time if you did not have someone critiquing your diary?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Explain:

- 23 Do you consider the list of questions for critical reflective thinking when you do your diary entries?

Suggested questions to encourage critical, reflective thinking about thinking

- What did you think about this?
- What assumptions were you making at this point?
- Did you challenge the assumption of ____ ?
- Were you sceptical about the validity of this diagnosis/decision/conclusion?
- Which explanation is best supported by the data?
- What other interventions could have been used?
- Was intuition involved in making this decision/ or coming to this conclusion?
- Did you reflect on the feasibility of ____ ?
- How did you arrive at this conclusion?
- How did you evaluate your thinking processes re: ____ ?
- How did you evaluate your analysis of the data?
- How many other interventions/diagnoses/ outcomes might have been considered in making your decision?
- What decisions would you make to manage this situation differently?
- What would the results look like?
- Did you trust your judgement?
- Did you consider other alternatives?
- What conclusions did you reach after examining your own critical, reflective thinking?

Source: Van Aswegen, 2002:54

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

- 24 If not, why not?
- 25 How do the question influence the way you do your diary entries?
- 26 Do you consider your diary evaluation rubric when you do your diary entries?

Diary evaluation rubric.

Do you:

- Use your own thinking to come to conclusions and solutions?
- Defend positions and issues?
- Consider a wide variety of points of view?
- Analyse concepts, theories and explanations?
- Clarify issues and conclusions?
- Evaluate the credibility of sources?
- Raise and pursue root questions?
- Solve non-routine problems?
- Transfer ideas to new contexts?
- Make interdisciplinary connections?
- Evaluate arguments, interpretations and beliefs?
- Generate novel ideas?
- Question and discuss each others views?
- Compare perspectives and theories
- Compare ideals with actual practice
- Examine assumptions
- Distinguish relevant from irrelevant facts
- Come to terms with contradictions and inconsistencies
- Explore implications and consequences

Source: van Aswegen [1998:138] citing Paul [1990] in Critical Reflective Practice: Conceptual Exploration and Model Construction. Thesis. UNISA

Diary requirements: Have you done the following?
Written 3 entries per month [28 in total] ?
Reflected upon relevant professional issues?
Indicated the relevance of each article [newspaper/ journal] for your practice?
Changed some aspect of your practice as a result of your reflections?
Used journal / newspaper articles that lent themselves to the topic 'Health Issues and Nursing in South Africa?'
Determined what is fact, fiction or opinion in the newspaper articles?
Referenced correctly?
Analysed your journal articles in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recency of events i.e. current issues • discussions, comments and recommendations that are feasible, reasonable, well thought out, relevant, creative and that fall within the constraints of the present health system?
Used your list of analytical questions to help you with the above?
Presented your diary in a neat and legible format?
<i>Write a one to two page commentary on your evaluation and also include the strengths and limitations of keeping this diary</i>

always	often	sometimes	never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

- 27 If not, why not?
- 28 How does the rubric influence your diary entries?
- 29 Is your diary evaluation rubric appropriate as an evaluation tool?

Yes	No
-----	----

- 30 If yes, in what way?
- 31 If no, what would you change?
- 32 If yes, in what way?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Maureen

Note: I have omitted the original spacing and lines for student responses

**STUDENTS: DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY NURSING
DURBAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

**REQUEST FOR YOUR PERMISSION FOR YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN RESEARCH MONITORING THE
DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING AND REFLECTIVE LEARNING**

As you are by now aware, I, Maureen Harris, have been focusing on critical thinking and reflective learning as a specific educational approach to your studies. Your learning diary, the critical thinking exercises and the discussions emanating from the reflections in your diary using your personal experiences and thoughts, are the tools being used for this approach. The purpose of this approach is to develop 'emancipatory' thinking and to empower you, the learner.

As with any process, it is important to evaluate this technique. You need to know that what you are doing is worthwhile and will result in the above. I am undertaking a qualitative research study in order to do precisely this. This will form the basis for a doctoral study, the results of which should help in future educational planning for the department. The diary, as a tool, has been an assignment in the department in the past two years and as a result of my impressions of its value as a learning strategy, I have decided to investigate it further, and hence, the research.

I would like your permission to include you in the study. What this will mean is that I will include your diaries, tasks, tutorials and class discussion in the study. I would also like to question you at some stage with regards to this process. This should probably take about 30 minutes of your time.

I will ensure that confidentiality is maintained in that I will not use your name in identification of the material. As the diaries are part of your learning programme, the people who might be reviewing the materials are those both within and outside of the department who would normally review/ critique your work. These might include moderators, SERTEC, the SANC. They and other people in the department will possibly see the names on your diaries. Others who would now also view this work and the recordings of the teaching sessions will be those involved in my research e.g. supervisors and transcriber. Where possible, your name will be removed from the documents to which the transcriber has access. The final document however, will not show names and analysis/ findings will be presented in a way that is not possible to identify the participants.

You are at liberty to participate/ or not participate in this project. Please remember that your diaries are self-evaluated so your mark is **NOT** dependent on whether you participate or not.

This is a qualitative research project which means that I only need a relatively small sample of respondents i.e. I won't be able to include everyone, anyway. Therefore I would much prefer that group to include people who wished to participate in the project. Should you agree to participate, you are also at liberty to withdraw at any stage.

I intend giving / and obtaining feedback throughout the year, either individually or in class and the results of the study will be available to the department and to you, in the department, on completion of the study. The principles of confidentiality will be respected in this regard as well.

Please feel free to consult with me regarding any reservations you might have or if you require further clarification. Should you agree to participate, please sign the attached Informed Consent Form.

Thank you for your participation

Maureen Harris
Department of Community Nursing
Tel: 031 2042032
DURBAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

DURBAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT:

The integration and development of van Aswegen's model of critical thinking, within a nursing programme, to promote critical reflective practice

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: Dr L Grainger 031 2042036

NAME OF CO-SUPERVISOR: Dr S. Wickham 0834178675

PARTICIPANTS FULL NAME:

PARTICIPANT'S ALLOCATED NUMBER:

PLEASE CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE ANSWER

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. Have you read the research information sheet? | Yes/No |
| 2. Have you had an opportunity to ask questions regarding the study? | Yes/No |
| 3. Have you received satisfactory answers to your questions? | Yes/No |
| 4. Have you had an opportunity to discuss this study? | Yes/No |
| 5. Have you received enough information about this study? | Yes/No |
| 6. Who have you spoken to? | |
| 7. Do you understand the implications of the study? | Yes/No |
| 8. Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study? | Yes/No |
| a) at any time, and | |
| b) without having to give reason for withdrawing | |
| 9. Do you agree to voluntarily participate in the study? | Yes/No |

If you have answered "No" to any of the above, please obtain the information before signing.

I, hereby give consent to participate in the abovementioned research project.

PARTICIPANT'S NAME SIGNATURE

WITNESS'S NAME SIGNATURE

RESEARCHER'S NAME Maureen Harris SIGNATURE

DATE

**STAFF MEMBERS
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY NURSING
REQUEST FOR YOUR PERMISSION FOR YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN RESEARCH
EVALUATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING AND REFLECTIVE LEARNING**

I have been focusing on critical thinking and reflective learning as a specific educational approach to students' studies.

I would like your permission to include you in the study. What this will mean is that I will include your perceptions on educational issues. I would like to interview you at some stage with regards to this process. This should probably take about 30 - 45 minutes of your time.

I will ensure that confidentiality is maintained in that I will not use your name in identification of the material. The final document will not reveal names.

You are at liberty to participate/ or not participate in this project. Should you agree to participate, you are also at liberty to withdraw at any stage.

I intend giving / and obtaining feedback and the results of the study will be available to you in the department, on completion of the study. The principles of confidentiality will be respected in this regard as well.

Please feel free to consult with me regarding any reservations you might have or if you require further clarification.

Thank you for your participation.
Maureen

Reflexive Journal Entry: 7 August, 2001

THOUGHTS FOR THE FUTURE

I am seriously thinking that I use this year as a pilot year, reflect on mistakes made or insights gained, and use these to firm up on a more structured approach next year.

Reflexive Journal Entry: 6 December 2002

Work from students is coming in dribs and drabs. I am putting Time Management into the orientation for next year and giving out calendars to students so that they can plot their year. I will make them complete this along with their contract. I have structured their study guide in such a way that they won't be able to help but be organised. I am determined!...

What have I learned and what will I change for next year?

I made a quick review of the students' evaluation comments and clearly arising from these comments was one major issues and two less frequently mentioned issues:

The diary was time consuming and purely because of the limited time available to students, the need to complete the number of entries required became an overwhelming factor and burden in a number of students' lives.

A number of students found it very difficult to understand or appreciate the requirements for diary entries and the reflective process took quite a while to appreciate.

The approach to the Management programme, philosophically and practically, was not easily appreciated or understood, especially in the initial stages and a number of students took a long time to come to terms with the approach.

Time constraints:

The tasks have been reduced to 12 tasks for credit and I have also included 4 additional tasks for extra credit, should students wish to pursue this option (I will be interested to see if there are any takers).

The assignments remain the same except that one on auditing has been removed as quality assurance will form the research theme for 2003. Two assignments have been updated with additional material and a marking rubric.

The rubric for workshop evaluation has now been developed and will be reviewed for appropriateness, once the students have decided on the workshop topic.

The diary assignment has been shortened: I have simplified the requirements. There are now three sections, a reflective section, which remains the same; the newspaper section has been slightly changed. Instead of underlining fact, fiction or opinion, students are required to highlight key issues in the reading and then comment in terms of application to nursing practice. The journal article section remains unchanged.

The difference really lies in the number of entries: The students will be required to make one entry per week from any of the three options above - 30 entries required in total. This halves the present requirement.

(An aside: Judith (staff member) decided that her students would start a diary in their first year and continue into their second year. This is quite a breakthrough for me. It was unsought and the request came from her).

Understanding of the process.

Orientation:

The second year students have been told to come in for a three day orientation programme, and this should then allow me sufficient time to:

- get to know the students
- students from the different programmes will get to know each others
- Judith and U (the two co-ordinators of the second year programme) will also get to meet and know the students
- Orientate the students to the programme
- Orientate the students to the process
- Have an intensive work period at the beginning of the year which should afford me the opportunity to set the tone. Off-hand, the material to be included in the orientation period (check at work)

- * Web ct (three afternoons)
- * Ice breakers
- * Group work
- * Approach to programme
- * Explanation of study guide
- * Study contract
- * Critical thinking and reflective practice
- * Mentoring
- * Time management
- * Orientation to library
- * Assignment writing

I will also invite some external speakers (nurse managers from the different disciplines to discuss their role and function; and one or two students from 2002 to discuss their experiences and reinforce certain concepts)

Theoretically, I should also have Web CT set up for next year as well as the CD ROMs. I absolutely didn't have any time at the end of this year. I only managed to restructure the study guide, the readings and the tasks. At least these have been sent off for duplicating and will be ready. I will just have to work like crazy at the beginning of the year and try and get the CD's and the web site ready on time. There is at least two weeks work needed to complete this.

Understanding of the process: Restructuring

For me, a huge lesson lies in organisation. The better organised the work, the lesson planning and the implementation of the process, the better the programme functions. A far cry from 'the seat of my pants' style although, I still respond intuitively but a structured framework prevents many problems. So, what to improve?

Course materials:

The workbooks and readings were all reviewed, as were the tasks and assignments. Nothing has been photocopied, and readings have all been scanned and adapted, with the necessary acknowledgements and copy write permission is in process.

Many of the adaptations have included additional insertion of appropriate pictures/ cartoons to identify or separate sections; the removal of unnecessary information and the inclusion of additional information or instructions. I have included a number of group exercises for class work in the readings which should make lesson planning much easier. (I spoke to U. and suggested that we meet on a weekly basis a few days before the actual class contact session to review the lesson plan. I have also made quite a few notes on the lesson plans that were incorporated this year and can use them again next year but these are negotiable and will depend on the discussion with the two co-ordinators. My intention is to again ask about the prayer/song before class and then use 15 minutes for administration purposes e.g. returning of work; difficulties with work; acknowledgement of students' inputs etc.

This is quite an important element in the programme). The font is the same throughout the workbooks in order to provide consistency. Pictorial references highlight tasks (e.g. a task man for individual tasks and group tasks by a circle of hands) Tasks are all framed by borders so that they are easy to recognise. All assignments have clearly structured and reviewed criteria (I have given these out to course co-ordinators during the year for comment/review should they wish. No response, so I assumed that all was well. I know they are busy and this was really more of a courtesy action than as a result of a real need). This has resulted in 5 ring bound A5 workbooks and an A4 size study guide. Each workbook has an index where the tasks and assignments are clearly noted and page numbers have all been inserted for easy reference. Each book has a different colour cover and picture (this helps with identification) and they will be handed out one at a time, so as not to overwhelm students. I have decided not to have set textbooks but rather, recommended texts. The information in the workbooks is comprehensive and I will again post readings on Web CT.

Study guide:

This remains essentially the same except I have tried to remove anything that was non-essential e.g. additional readings; bump on experiential learning (they get this from their course co-ordinators) etc. I restructured the programme so that essentially, it is divided into three sections:

- The introductory section and framework
- The generic processes
- Management functions

Timetable:

I structured it to include the topic; page numbering; class contact dates; task no., page reference no. and due dates, as well as the readings and page references to be read before class contact.

Assignments / tasks and weighting of marks:

These were shaded in to emphasise the importance. I created a table including the title of the assignment, the page number and the due date. This same approach was used for tasks and only the required tasks were shaded in. Those for extra credit or the evaluations (mid-year and final) were not shaded in.

A table was then made for the weighting of:

- Tasks
- Assignments
- Diary
- Tests
- Summative evaluation

I then gave copies to the course co-ordinators for comment and to check and confirm dates and programme content, as well as assignments and tasks. Lucky for me, there are some sharp eyes out there and so obvious clashes are avoided. This also means, in effect, that they have sanctioned the course content and approach, which is also helpful.

Times:

The timing of the course is much better, I think. Thursdays from 08h00-12h00 and Web CT has been built into the programme and allowances made from 12h00-13h00. Tutorials have already been structured for Thursday afternoons (two sessions). Each student will attend 6 one and a half hour tutorials during the year, starting early on in the year. These will alternate with research on other Thursday afternoons. Ideally, the tutorial group membership should also be the same for the research groups. Identification and bonding will be helpful for peer support. I do not have influence in this regard and can only make the suggestion.

This organisation should address both student and lecturer concerns. There were of course, a number of positive comments which I will look at later. The one issue that I need to think about now is the self-paced learning approach. I mentioned this as an administrative difficulty to students and a number of students have indicated that they found this support incredibly helpful. It allowed them to deal with other work/domestic issues without the guilt of having to hand work in at specified times.

On the other hand, there were students who indicated that deadlines and a tougher approach would have kept them motivated. Oh, that everyone was the same!

What I will do is firstly, spend time on Time Management in orientation and get students to draft a time schedule. I will then provide students with a year planner and get them to write in due dates for readings, tasks and assignments for the Management course and then to put in due dates for any other subject they are registered for. In addition, I will ask them to pencil in priority requirements from work or home. Once this has been done, they will then need to review the year planner for the feasibility. Only after this has been done, will I ask them to sign the contract. (This past year students signed contracts but did not appear to understand the binding nature of the contract, even though this had been explained. I will make available a reading on contracts and spend time discussing the ethics of the signing process.)

There are penalties for late submissions (2% per day). I think that I must stick to this but allow students the option of revising their submission times once a term. I think that this is fair but will negotiate this with the students. The important issue here is not to take on a strict parental role and lecture the students about wrongdoing. The mark allocation/ removal should be a sufficient deterrent. (How this pains me. I am the world's worst nag and lecturer, as my children can attest. To keep my mouth closed and not belabour a point tests me to extreme limits!)

The next thing I will do is organise a communication link. I spent far too much time phoning student or having them phoned (re reminders or change of plan). Sarah mentioned that Judith used SMS's on cell phones. I will see if my children can help me understand this process and it should work out cheaper in the long run. I tried to rely on Web CT, but with the limited access for our students, this was not a reliable option. So the system will be SMS's; e-mail; fax or phone. I must make sure that there is a response or will assume that the message did not get through.

The other system is to make the students responsible for contacting each other and use a chain link. Much will depend on access to communication. I think I will pick up on the 'buddy system' again.

The non-punitive positive reinforcement system definitely paid off. Student completed the work or redid tasks/assignments without complaint - a highly unusual state of affairs.

The tutorial system provided further discussion and reflections on many of the reflections dealt with in diaries and had many positive effects - catharsis, reflection, problem solving, support, affirmation, acknowledgement etc.

Off-hand, another factor noted was when I introduce a new concept, it needs to be reinforced. For example, I taught students about mind mapping in one class, and didn't return to this concept until the class test. Big mistake. I think that I will require students to hand in mind maps with all their assignments and ask other lecturers to use this process in some of their classes. This same principle must apply with other new concepts. I did do this with problem solving and with de Bono's 6 hats approach although I didn't consciously call the process by name, but rather questioned students in terms of alternative perspectives. We spent quite a bit of time on that this year.

Another perceived problem is the returning of students' work. As a result of the continuous evaluation approach, we are required to keep the students' work in the department. What to do? They can take it home with them during the year, and do, but what a mission to get it returned. I shouldn't complain because it all does come back in the end but my blood pressure levels are very unstable at the uncertainty of the process. Losing tasks/ assignments is always a worry, especially if others are marking the work. Perhaps stapling the work together when it is handed in and using the new improved cover sheet with listed signature? Yes, that might work. As per usual, I will remind the students that the onus is on them to make a copy of their work and assume that I might lose the original, although I will make every effort not to do so. Web CT should help in this regard if students upload their work, a copy can be kept on the web.

Web CT

If all goes well (and I have fairly solid reasons for believing it will not!), students will use Web CT more effectively and more regularly. The initial few weeks will be used to explore and practice using Web CT and the range it offers but thereafter, I will take up Jena's (a student) suggestion, and get students to share reflections with each other on the web.

I will get them to use the hour to write and post a reflection and respond to a class member's reflection on a rotational basis i.e. use an alphabetical listing. This will be a bi-monthly requirement. Those students who e-mail their diary entries/tasks/assignments to me will have a typed response to their work. I will make individual files for students on my computer and charge them the standard rate for paper if they can't get it printed elsewhere.

I have sold the concept of the extra hour for Web CT in that the students can also use this facility for their research. I will have to be very structured in the beginning (I do have a number of worksheets and useful sites) to get the process in motion. The limited usage this past year has indicated that this process should be moved forewords and be enhanced.

My concern about Web CT is the computer access. I have arranged with On-line learning Dept and with the Marketing dept to use their computers (I thought if I had an alternative plan that I should be fairly OK). Hah! News from both is precarious. The merger has caused huge ructions and people and departments are shifting all over the place. I shall just have to wait until the beginning of term to see what is in place.

NB Staff relationships!!!!

Reflexive Journal entry: 2 September, 2003 - letter to Sharman

I really wanted to speak to you about the parameters in the research. I have definitely noted a change in the diary responses and students' ability to complete other tasks (particularly amongst the black students) this year -2003. It could be that as a group, they function better and at a higher level. It could be the improvement in the orientation; the change in times (08h15-12h00 on Thursdays with tutorials organised in the afternoon of the same day opposed to Friday afternoon classes - 14h00-17h00 with tutorials on separate days); it could be the better organisation and return of course material and diaries (there is a one week turnover, as opposed to a two or three week delay in response); it could be the regular Web CT class from 12h00 - 13h00 on class contact days, with students actively engaging in writing on-line diaries and responding to each other. In many ways, these 'open' entries seem to shape, to a degree, the responses from others in the class, by sparking ideas or by offering an opportunity to acknowledge each other in a safe way. Students, who might not normally speak to others in the class, now had a forum to do so. The power of change is visibly removed from me as 'facilitator' or 'teacher'. Initially, I would ask a few questions or make some comments - but I have stayed out of these discussions almost completely after the first month or so - although I read them all. Initially, students would write about incidents they themselves had been involved in, where they or their families were personally affected. A number tended to be quite negative and the responses were mainly sympathetic and indicated that other students identified with the author's problem or pain. The responses started to change with students offering advice or moving into the Socratic questioning mode. Two or three times, students have written about incidents, where they themselves have not featured in a positive light, and one or two students have taken it upon themselves to question their motives or actions or censure the behaviour.

Some students have handed in some very good work in their tasks or have come across readings or issues that have interested me, and I have suggested that they might wish to share these with the group - and they have. We had an external lecturer who was exceptionally motivational and a number of the students wrote enthusiastically about his ability and value. I was able to share this with him and pass on some of these comments - as well as to the HOD. We had an on-line test and some students used the open classroom to express their apprehension or displeasure at this unfamiliar testing method. These diary entries have now taken on a life of their own, which preclude my involvement - For me, this has been a means of empowering students but at the same time, I see that this has not taken away my power, but rather shifted me into another place, where I find myself at a parallel level rather than a vertical level to the students. It could be the active support received from the departmental staff in promoting the diaries as a means of critical reflective writing. It could be that I am more comfortable with the process and this confidence might be rubbing off on the students. I am not sure. It could be one or all of these things.

What I am sure of, is that students' effort and involvement is much better...

Appendix 7: Categorization of data generated from questionnaire on the scaffolding provided for journaling

1. Students' perceptions regarding role, function and responsibility of the critiquer. Critiquer : (N=31) responses				
Provides guidance (f=6)	Promotes growth through learning (f=2)	Directs thinking (f=9)	Correctly interprets student's intent – and provides opportunity for student to clarify (f=1)	Provides explanation (f=1)
Provides verbal feedback (f=3)	Criticises constructively (f=4)	Provides written feedback(f=2)	Attitude – open-minded; fair, non-judgmental (f=10)	Responds timeously (f=1)
2. Students' understanding of the rules for critiquing established and explained by facilitator on orientation to journal writing				
Critiquer will appreciate the entry in its entirety before responding (f=1)	Critiquer will maintain confidentiality and allow for 'free' uncensored reflective writing (f=7)		Journal writing is a process of building trust with the critiquer (f=6)	
Entries will reflect the 'real world' of the student (f=10)	Student takes on the responsibility of thinking critically and reflectively (f=4) at all levels, regularly (f=2)		Focus will be on the process of critical reflective thinking and not content (f=2)	
Process is to promote learning f=7)	Issues of interest to the student (f=1)		Non-critical techniques used (f=5)	
3. Students' belief as to whether the critiquer was fulfilling the requirements of the critiquing role (N=20) responses				
Yes (n=16). No (n=8). Reason: Lack of feedback from critiquer (n=3); one (n=1) student hadn't handed in on time so couldn't comment; (n=5) felt that the feedback was critical in nature, and therefore went against the rules agreed upon.				
4. Responsibility of student in critiquing process (N=20) responses				
(n=21) felt they had met the requirements, (n=5) did not (those who did not felt that they had not met all the requirements all of the time – rather that it was a new experience and therefore learning was a process of experimentation)				
5. Recipient of the student's journal entries (N=20) responses				
Critiquer (n=12); Critiquer and student (n=6); Student (n=4) and General audience (n=6)				
6.The different 'voices' of the student				
(n=22) wrote using different styles; (n=3) used the same style throughout. All wrote the reflective section using an informal voice and (n=9) used a formal voice consistently for the news and journal section. Remainder (n=14) varied between the use of formal and informal voice.				
7. Critiquer perceived as a hindrance in the journaling process (N=20) responses				
(n=11) yes; (n=16) no. Rationale for negative perception:				
Not met with critiquer –lacked guidance (n=6)	Failure to appreciate relevance of written reflective process (n=1)		Misunderstanding or lack of appreciation of critiquer's comments/ communication (n=1)	
Feeling of self-consciousness (n=1)	Perceived failure of critiquer to appreciate the value or 'truth' of student's reflections (n=1)			
8. Perceived critiquer support in journaling (N=27) responses				
(n=17) yes but (n=23) demonstrated how critiquer supported them (combining of responses of 2 questions dealing with issue). (n=10) no				
9. Manner of student response (N=26) responses				
In your thoughts? Always (n=11) Often (n=5) Sometimes (n=8) Never (n=2)	In a written response in another journal entry? Always (n=1) Sometimes (n=10) Never (n=14)	In discussion with others e.g. colleagues, family or friends? Always (n=6) Often (n=8) Sometimes (n=8) Never (n=3)	By action e.g. changing your behaviour or practice? Often (n=4) Sometimes (n=6)	
10. Influence of critiquer in terms of manner of entry (N=27) responses				
Would you write your journal the same way if you did not have someone critiquing your journal? Yes (n= 11); No (n= 16)				
(N=21) respondents provided a rationale:				
▪ YES				
Critiquer provides focus/ added perspective (n=1);		Enables identification of relevant arguments and interpretation of evidence (n=2)		
Critiquer provides the motivation to write/ learn (n=5);		Critiquer needed for guidance (n=5)		
Presence of critiquer promotes objectivity (n=1);		The reflection is valid without the critiquer's comments (n=4)		
Yes – because the student has no experience of the critiquing process and therefore wouldn't know how it might be changed.				
▪ NO				
Critique is not valued (n=2) because of perception of criticism				
11. Type of responses: (N=20) responses		12. Perceived attitude of critiquer is judgemental (N=21) responses		
Dependent on comment (n=10)		Always (n=12) Often (n=3) Sometimes (n=3) Never (n=3)		
Dependent on mood or time of day (n=2) or interest in subject (n=1)		Because:		
Not dependent on comment – write what thinks (n=5)		Recognition that reflection is a developmental process and that the critique is the facilitative part of the process (n=9)		
No response – write as she pleases (n=2)		Guidelines indicated students right to reflect without judgement (n=5)		
		Critiquer seen in a facilitative/ 'friendship' mode – not critical or judgemental (n=3)		
		No need for journal (n=1)		
		No need for comment (n=1)		
		Perception of critiquer in critical role (n=3)		
		Questioning the authority /value of the 'faceless' critiquer (n=2)		

<p>14. Approach of critiquer perceived to: Enable critical thinking (N=26) responses</p> <p>Always (n=9); Often (n=7); Sometimes (n=7); Never (n=3)</p> <p>15. By promoting: Broader/alternative perspectives (different thinking) (n=6) Deeper thinking (n=3) Self-questioning (n=2) Focused and in-depth reading (n=2) Re-analysing/ revisiting problem/ rethinking situation (n=6) Focus on feelings (n=2) Different approaches to reasoning in follow-up entries (n=2)</p> <p>Because the critiquer was not physically available to respond to student, did not learn (n=2). One (n=1) student felt that because the critiquer had not taught the students, she did not have the authority or expertise to comment. There was a strong feeling that 'knowing' the students and proving her knowledge of the subject matter was relevant. Having to take the word of other staff members was insufficient.</p>	<p>18. Influence of the colour of the critiquer's responses (N=27) responses</p> <p>Does it make a difference that the comments are written in blue or black pen or pencil rather than in red ink? No (n=21) Yes (n=6) Comments rather than colouring is seen as important (n=23). Only (n=3) respondents perceived the negative connotation of the red pen. Three (n=3) respondents saw the red pen as positive Red indicates formal (n=1) or for marking (n=1); reminds student of schooldays (n=1); means shouting and rudeness' (n=1); enables student to differentiate clearly between own writing and critiquers (n=2)</p> <p>19. Influence of critiquer in terms of timing of entry (N=27) responses</p> <p>Would you complete the journal entries at the same time if you did not have someone critiquing your journal? Yes (n= 5); No (n= 22) No – the critique delays response as student requires time to reflect on the response (n=4) Early response connected to entry motivates as incident remains fresh (n=1) No – the exercise is pleasurable and the response from the critiquer provides further impetus to respond soon (n= 3) The critiquer provides the impetus/pressure to perform (n=9) The student sees her responsibility as an adult learner in this situation and does not require impetus to respond (n=3) (n=4) students felt that the number of entries was too much and so would not respond timeously or at all.</p>
<p>16. Enable reflective thinking Always (n=9) Often (N=6) Sometimes (n=6) Never (n=5) (N=26) responses</p> <p>17. By: Promote understanding and acceptance (f=2) Self-analyse and change of behaviour (f=4) Depends on the importance of the issue under reflection (f=2) Appreciate value and legitimacy of alternative perspectives (f=4) Enable full description of situation to promote analysis (f=2) Promote learning, further reading/ research (f=4) The questioning format evokes response (f=3) Critiquing sometimes promotes a discussion with friends/ family (f=1) No feedback (f=1) Some understanding of critique (f=1) Need to discuss critique with critiquer – needs to be available in class (f=2) Anger (f=1) Perceives critique as a disparagement of own opinion – disempowering (f=1)</p>	<p>20. Influence of prompt questions Do you consider the list of questions for critical reflective thinking when you do your journal entries? Always (n=4) Often (n=5) Sometimes (n=4) Never (n=13) (N=20) responses</p> <p>Since understanding the value of the journal (f=1) Selected aspects relevant to situation (f=1) No - Insufficient skills in critical thinking and ignore some (f=1) No – insufficient time (f=1) Easier to write reflectively without considering the guide (f=4) Yes - It provides a standard (n=3) a guide (n=3) a motivator (n=1) promotes broader critical thinking (n=8) promotes problem solving (f= 2) Enables further analysis (f=2)</p> <p>21. Use of journal evaluation rubric influences reflective writing (N=21) responses Always (n=2) Often (n=3) Sometimes (n=15) Never (n=1)</p> <p>22. Do you consider your journal evaluation rubric when you do your journal entries? (N=10) responses Reflective writing is a process requiring practice – becomes manageable over time (n=2) Does not value reflective writing assignment therefore does not use rubric (n=2) Time consuming process (n=5) – requires too much effort (n=5)</p>
<p>25. Suggested changes to critiquing process What advice would you give to the critiquer to enable the critiquing process to be more effective? (N=19) responses: (n=7) indicated positively that the process was working well for them Give guidance (n=1) Provide positive feedback before suggestions (n=1) Verbal feedback (n=3) Early feedback (n=1) Constructive feedback (n=3) Research prior to feedback – consider culture and race as student issues (n=1) 'Avoid bias, be self and genuine' (n=2)</p>	<p>23. How does the rubric influence your journal entries? (N=20) responses Act as a guide/directive to good critical thinking (n=16) Influences choice of material (n=1) Limited influence (n=1)</p> <p>24. Appropriateness of evaluation rubric as an evaluation tool (N=20) responses Is your journal evaluation rubric appropriate as an evaluation tool? Yes (n=20)</p>

f= frequency of responses and not respondents; n = number of participants' responses (N=31). Not all students answered all questions.

For your Diary

TECHNIKON NATAL
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY NURSING

'I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read on the train. Oscar Wild, *The Importance of Being Ernest*.

An important part of your learning process will lie in your ability to reflect on and analyze the situations, information and the nursing experiences in your specified field to which you will be exposed. You are expected to systematically keep a diary for the major portion of this year. The diary will allow for the recording of events or issues fairly soon after they have occurred. You will be expected to record, describe, theorize, explain, and puzzle over relatively immediate experiences. This diary form, if kept systematically, will allow both you and your lecturer to gain insight into and understanding of processes, sequences and time order of events that occur in your field of nursing. The purpose is to reflect on both personal and professional issues you have found stimulating, challenging, troublesome or puzzling as well as a record of learning and professional development. It is important that you are aware of issues of confidentiality so be selective about what you write and how you present it. Avoid using names and addresses.



SECTION ONE

In this section, you are asked to consider some of the following aspects of your current clinical experience in your specified field of nursing, either in your working context or experiential learning. You are free to choose what you would like to write about and how you would like to write about it.

If you have difficulty starting, you **might** want to consider using **aspects** of the following framework to guide your thinking and the relating of your clinical experiences:



Overview of environment e.g.

You could consider some of the following aspects of your experiential learning:

philosophy of care;	achievement of specific learning outcomes	organization of care patterns of care
environmental influences on care	multi disciplinary aspects of care	a typical days experience



Care in action e.g.

You might wish to comment on specific instances of care you have observed regarding one or more of the following:

client needs [psychological, social, spiritual and cultural]	health promotion	communication skill
nursing activities and their rationale	involvement of client, family and significant others	



Analysis of care

Consider the care that you gave or helped give to a client or group of clients. Can include:

description of care	rationale for care	personal reflection on quality and delivery of care
	research underpinning care	strategies for improving care

At the end of your entry include a short paragraph that indicates the relevance of your reflection for your practice. Highlight this in green.

Should you at a later stage change some aspect of your practice as a result of this reflection, add another paragraph and highlight this in pink

Additional notes on miscellaneous thoughts and ideas not already captured.

The diary is more than a straightforward account of what has occurred. You are encouraged to relate the experience and then attempt to interpret the experience by drawing upon appropriate knowledge (e.g. research, psychology, sociology, concepts of health etc).

Your studies: You should use this section to reflect upon your programme and your studies, for example, the assignments you are engaged with. Your actual assignments usually have a framework or a structure and criteria to which you will need to adhere. The diary will allow you discuss your thoughts and feelings whilst you are engaged in this process. If you use this opportunity to write down the difficulties [or joys] you are encountering, this making of the problem explicit will allow you to reflect upon the alternative methods of managing your problems. It will also allow me the opportunity of understanding your thought processes.

At the end of your entry include a short paragraph that indicates the relevance of your reflection for your practice. Highlight this in green.

Should you at a later stage change some aspect of your practice as a result of this reflection, add another paragraph and highlight this in pink

SECTION TWO:

Journal articles:

Include in your diary journal articles that lend themselves to the topic "Health Issues and Nursing in South Africa in the year 2001".

You are expected to analyze the article and comment in the light of the topic. You are expected to make suggestions where relevant, taking into account the constraints of the present system.

Criteria you are expected to consider are:

- the recency of events i.e. current issues
- legibility and neatness of the structure of your presentation
- the analysis, comments and recommendations that are feasible, reasonable, well thought out, relevant, creative and that fall within the constraints of the present health system. Please use your list of attached questions to help you with the above.

SECTION 3:

Read the newspaper in colour:

Determine what is fact, fiction or opinion. Read an article and paste it in your diary. Ensure that it is correctly

referenced [Title of newspaper, author – if available; page number and date].

Highlight or underline: Facts in blue; Fiction in green and Opinion in red

At the end of your entry include a short paragraph that indicates the relevance of the article for your practice.

Highlight this in green.

Should you at a later stage change some aspect of your practice as a result of this reflection, add another paragraph and highlight this in pink

Assignment Requirements

You are expected to make a minimum of three entries per week.

One entry per week from Section One [Reflective thought: 36]

One entry per month from Section Two [Journals: 8]

Two entries per month from Sections Three [Newspaper articles: 16]

Time frame:

Your entries start in February and the hand-in date is 11 October.

Monthly submissions:

You are expected to hand in your diary submissions in a labelled plastic folder on the last lecture day of each month [although you might want to hand in your entries weekly]. You should add these to your other submitted entries stored in your personal hard-cover file once these have been critiqued.

Format for diary entries:

1. Hardcover file – narrow
2. Title page: include your name; programme, date; lecturer's name: M. Harris; title of assignment: Diary
3. Index: include week no. [should be 28]; dates e.g. Feb 6, 14, 21, 28; topic title and note if newspaper article, reflective thought or journal article. As each month's entries are added to the file, you will make the necessary adjustments to the index.
4. Self-evaluation – this will only be included by September 1, after you have completed your diary.
5. 8 plastic folders [one for each month] containing monthly entries.

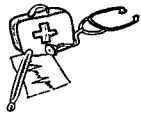
Total number of entries: 60

Evaluation: This assignment will be self-evaluated in terms of the criteria i.e. give yourself a mark. You will be expected to write a commentary on your evaluation and also include the strengths and limitations of keeping this diary. The assignment will be moderated to ensure that your evaluation demonstrates insight and an understanding of critical thinking and reflective learning.

Help:

This journal is intended as a means of enabling you to think more critically. It should enhance your ability to:

- analyse issues and form judgements
- find solutions and evaluate conclusions
- research and negotiate
- anticipate actions of others



You are invited to discuss your journal and problems and issues related to your journey with me. We will also use opportunities in class for discussion. This should be an exciting venture where you should be able to reflect upon your own personal growth. Do not struggle on your own – ask for help if you need it.

Critiquer-Questions and responses and accompanying examples

The following table provides an outline of the type of written dialogue (in the form of questions and comments) I had engaged in with the students and corresponding examples exemplifying the process. A simplified version of this table was introduced in Chapter Six in Table 6.5 Critiquing Options.

A. Critiquer-Questioning to promote different levels of thinking (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation)	Examples from Students' Reflective Journals
Rhetorical questions - Rhetorical questions are not real questions because the questioner usually knows the answer. Teachers often use these questions to discover what students know about particular topics, but these questions do not foster inquiry nor do they involve students in their own educational endeavours. Rhetorical questions are best used to simply stimulate thought with no answer expected.	I said I had noticed in our discussions that both A and C appeared to be more concerned about learning and sharing than in withholding and abusing power. (10a 7 Aug, 2001; <i>Reflexive Journal</i>) "You seem more concerned about learning and sharing than in withholding and abusing power?"
Deductive Questions - questioning from the general to the specific. David Ausubel's (1968) research on deductive reasoning (inferring details from generalizations or the "big picture") led him to suggest teachers introduce a topic on a general basis then slowly focus on details, linking new information with known information. Ausubel(1968) recommended: 1) Present an advanced organizer (something already known) under which the new information may be "filed", 2) Present the new material in context, and 3) Strengthen the cognitive organization of the new material relating to the old. Ask questions like: "If this is true about A, B, and C, what might we conclude about D?" or "Knowing the cause(s) in these cases, what would you guess about the cause(s) in this case?" Wakefield (1998)	15 April 2002 <i>Xolisi's Journal</i> Maureen's comments: Do you really think so? How important is trust in a relationship? What happens when this element is eroded? The fact that both are your friends, how has your professional position in terms of having to pass on the results, affected this relationship? Is it possible to be HIV positive, without the blood transfusion, sexual contact, (was there any other way that unknowing contact could have been made?) What does this mean?
Socratic questioning: Probe assumptions questions- Many questions can center around the concept of assumptions. The student may be asked for clarification, verification, explanation, or reliability of the assumption. Students may also be asked to identify another assumption which might apply to the particular case. What are you assuming? What is Karen assuming? What could we assume instead? You seem to be assuming _____. Do I understand you correctly? You seem to be assuming _____. How do you justify this as your position? All of your reasoning is dependent on the fact that _____. Why have you based your reasoning on _____ rather than _____? You seem to be assuming _____. How do you justify taking that for granted? Is that always the case? Why do you think the assumption holds here? Why would someone make that assumption? (Paul, 1993 in TRA)	Carol 6 March 2002 What does invasion of privacy mean to you? Who, specifically, in the company, did you and your General Manager apologies to? Were the specific employees aware of the breach in confidentiality or, only top management? What are the implications for this, do you think? In terms of the first question, do your new procedures fully address this issue, do you think? Carol 5 September What are the results of your interactions with Dr P? Do you get the results you want? Do you think that because 'you have always worked towards the best interest of the company' that this allows you to override his values or beliefs? How can you anticipate and manage his way of 'always being in a hurry', do you think?
Questions probing belief/value system for justification	Carol 13 March Do you believe that as a woman, you can have everything - the job, the relationship, and the children? Why and how? How do/can you separate out the different elements of your life - working, relationships, learning, and children? Is it possible? What is the effect? What is it that you want for yourself?
Questions for divergent thinking- necessitate more wide-ranging, longer responses with higher level thought processing for example 'Why is rap music so popular with teenagers?'	Carol 19 September I have a challenge for you: try wearing ear plugs for an 8 hour work day and describe how you feel. Consider what it must be like to wear these appliances every working day for that period of time and then ask

	<p>yourself the question 'How can non-compliance with health and safety issues be overcome?'</p> <p>Have you considered the BASNEF model of behaviour? What motivates people to change? What aspects of change behaviour would you incorporate into your health education model, if you were promoting the use of hearing aids?</p> <p>Do you think that understanding the stage of development of the individual might affect his utilization of protective equipment?</p>
<p>Questions for convergent thinking - often have short answers which "encourage similar student responses" and require low level thought processing, for example "Can you ski? ---- "Yes, I can", "No, I can't".</p>	<p>Xolisi 14 September</p> <p>Xolisi: In our managing people do we only look and magnify their bad sides only or do we give lives to remember the good also about them?</p> <p>Maureen's comments: So should we make judgements? How hard it must be to be perfect.</p>
<p>Anticipatory problem solving questions - these are questions that assume that the problem can be solved, and often the questioner has a particular plan of action in mind.</p>	<p>Toko's journal 15/05/2003</p> <p>(Toko was discussing an issue around unethical and corrupt behaviour of her manager)</p> <p>Have you considered discussing this with DENOSA? (This is the Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa)</p> <p>Is there any way that you can take this forward on your informal level? Perhaps we should discuss this in class?</p>
<p>Inference questions - These questions ask students to go beyond the immediately available information. To push beyond the factual in this way is to ask students to find clues, examine them, and discuss what inferences are justified. Inference questions demand that students fill in missing information. Wolfe</p>	<p>Carol's journal 11 April</p> <p>Why do you think that women seem to value special days such as birthday, anniversaries more than men? Is this an assumption on my part or is there some truth in the question? Does this mean they don't care ... or?</p> <p>How did you respond to his forgetfulness?</p> <p>Is behaviour indicative of the value placed on the emotion e.g. if someone regularly doesn't remember, does this mean they don't care?</p>
<p>Inductive Questions - specific to general</p> <p>Taba (1966) suggested inductive reasoning (arranging information according to inherent classes or principles) comprises the fundamental building blocks of higher thinking involve. Students should be led to infer the organization and significance of the information they are handling. To see this process in action, give students numerous pieces of information and suggest they meaningfully organize it. Strong students know how to organize and value information. Ask your students: "What is most important?", "What is least important?", and "Should you bother learning this? Why?"</p> <p>Wakefield (1998)</p>	<p>Janet's Journal 20 March 2003</p> <p>Question: if in fact, CEO had been doing so well, why would the mother company make such a radical change? Do you think that the philosophies might not be synchronous - e.g. this CEO worked hard on morale, keeping staff happy, was involved in community outreach programmes - but perhaps did not reach the output target required? All companies are profit driven and perhaps his bottom line is not their bottom line?</p>
<p>Socratic questioning: Purpose/explanation</p> <p>The building up of questions in order to arrive at an explanation or understanding of an issue</p>	<p>Reflexive Journal '11a 2001 Entry 11 August 13'</p> <p>At this stage, I asked two questions: One - what was the race group of the patient and Two- why was this question relevant?</p> <p>A number of students chimed in and said that if she were black or coloured, she would be unlikely to ask questions as this passivity on receiving care, generally speaking, was a cultural norm. On the other hand, Indians and whites were far more assertive and non-accepting of treatment without explanations.</p>
<p>Evaluative questions - Evaluative thinking questions are those which deal with matters of judgement, value, and choice. They are characterized by their judgemental quality. Thought processes involved while asking and answering these questions are <i>valuing, judging, defending, or justifying choices</i></p>	<p>Carol 28 March</p> <p>Maureen's response:</p> <p>In retrospect, what could you have done to prevent this from happening? Or was it important that this happen as part of the learning process?</p>
<p>Structure/ how to question - question that will enable to student to structure how to go about the process to find an answer</p>	<p>Carol 2 July</p> <p>What can you do to bring them closer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø What are you doing in Richards Bay to help fill in the gap? Ø Have you made friends to bring on home? Ø What if you tackled this side of life (social side) as rigorously as you do work or studies?
<p>Questions about the question - the student might be asked to identify the question, the main point, or the issue at hand. In addition, the student might be asked to break the question into single concepts rather than multiple concepts or determine whether some type of evaluation needs to take place. The student or discussion group may also be asked to identify why this question is important.</p> <p>Is this the same issue as?</p> <p>Does this question ask us to evaluate something?</p> <p>Is this question easy or hard to answer? Why?</p> <p>What was the point of this question? .</p>	<p>Carol 11 July</p> <p>Does it help to reflect on what you did/ do in terms of learning these behaviours? Why/why not? Does it help to reflect on what you did/ do in terms of learning these behaviours? Why/why not?</p>

<p>Why do you think I asked this question/ - What does...mean? How does...apply to everyday life?</p>	
<p>Interpretation questions - Interpretive questions propose that they understand the consequences of information or ideas. Asks for deeper probing. Wolfe</p>	<p>Carol: 25 September Interesting that you have recognized the 'self-esteem' aspect of the problem. I sometimes wonder who people make the choice for - for themselves or their children. Did you know that this concept features quite significantly throughout your journal? Why, do you think? How do you think it affects your practice? (although you have commented indirectly and directly on this in your journal).</p> <p>How much recognition do you get in and for your work? Is it a built in feature? What do you do to elicit recognition? You mention that human beings need recognition. Is this a norm in our profession or in life in general? Why?</p>
<p>Questions for reflective thinking - When teachers ask reflective questions, they are insisting that students ask themselves: "How do I know I know?"; "What does this leave me not knowing?"; "What things do I assume rather than examine?" Such questions may leave a class silent, because they take mulling over. Nonetheless, they eventually lead to important talk about basic assumptions.</p>	<p>Xolisi's journal: 15 July What about the leader? So does the behaviour of the group depend upon the exemplary behaviour of the leader? Xolisi's journal: 3 July It takes courage for you to express these views. I have a question. If you yourself were HIV positive, is there any way you could confidently inject a client in your health care setting? What would be the purpose of revealing your status?</p>
<p>Probe reasoning/evidence questions- This category of probing questions asks for additional examples, evidence which has been discovered, reasons for making statements, adequacy for the reasons, process which lead student to this belief, or anything which would change the student's mind on this issue. What would be an example? Why do you say that? Why do you think that is right? What led you in that belief? How does that apply to this case? What would convince you otherwise? How could we go about finding out if that is true? By what reasoning did you come to that conclusion? Who is in a position to know if that is the case? But is that good evidence to believe that? Why do you say that? What led you to that belief? How does that apply to this case? What would change your mind? But, is that good evidence for that belief? Is there a reason to doubt that evidence? Who is in a position to know that is true? What would you say to someone who said that ____? Can someone else give evidence to support that view? By what reasoning did you come to that conclusion? How could we find out if that is true?</p>	<p>Reeva 20 February, 2003</p> <p>Maureen: does the research indicate this? (Do you remember our discussion at the beginning of the year re which professional group had the most impact on the health status of communities in SA?)</p> <p>Carol's journal: 13 April I was going to ask you how you cope with such a workload but you have answered in terms of the positive attitude. What, in addition to cultivating a positive frame of mind, have you done this year to manage?</p> <p>Janet's journal: 18 February 2002 Maureen's response: Does pre-counselling include the eventuality that you write of? Should it? Is there any other possible explanation of the infection (other than the obvious - another partner)? J. No blood transfusions or any possibilities existed. Maureen - that she could recall?</p>
<p>Open questions - Questions which involve complex thinking require much explanation and detail in their answers and probably time to think and reflect. These questions are often called open or fat questions . They are often used to build up information, to allow for more personal responses and to generate further discussions and questioning. Questions which do not require any definite answer are often used as introductory questions at the beginning of a session. Their purpose may be to set the scene for the content that is to follow by steering the thinking of the students in certain specific directions. Open-ended or divergent questions promote open-mindedness and invite many answers or possibilities. They can stimulate the exploration of concepts and ideas and facilitate creative and critical thinking processes. Emphasis is on the individual. These are the kinds of questions that challenge students and their thinking. Open questions are generally contestable in that they leave us with more to think about and may not bring complete satisfaction. A good question is one that enhances and extends learning so it is important to know about the different kinds and where they fit in the learning environment. A good question should breed more questions</p>	<p>Janet's journal: 21 April, 2002</p> <p>Question: You have been part of a merger. Has this had any impact on you? Are there any lessons you can take from this process that could help you with Change Management?</p>

and the desire to find answers. Good questions need to take the learner beyond the recall of basic information and challenge. Painter (1996)	
Questions to enthuse Questions that could make the reader feel good about themselves, and perhaps engage them in further sharing	Carol's journal: 18 February, 2002 MAUREEN'S COMMENTS: Ø Good for you! Ø Is this something you should share with us? Janet's journal: 26 July Janet, I know you are a member of your Occupational health society. Is this a possible issue the group needs to review? Have you considered writing a paper for the Occupational health journal re this issue? What are other members in the society experiencing? (Are you on the list server - so that you can get a quick idea of general perceptions?) What is your Company doing re this issue? What do you think they ought to be doing? What can you do?
Transfer questions - transfer questions provoke a kind of breadth of thinking, asking students to take their knowledge to new places	Carol: 18 February If race were not an issue in this country, do you think people would still behave in prejudiced ways? Is it possible to use race as a general explanation for poor behaviour and overlook other prejudices?
Questions for recalling procedure	Carol: 5 April What did you say to her in response? Why?
Questions about knowledge - exhibits previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts and answers Questions: What is ... ? How is ... ? Where is ... ? When did _____ happen? How did _____ happen? How would you explain ... ? Why did ... ? How would you describe ... ? When did ... ? Can you recall ... ? How would you show ... ? Can you select ... ? Who were the main ... ? Can you list three ... ? Which one ... ? Who was ... ?	Janet: 28 April I am just wondering about our role as nurses. Our practice has extended to such a degree that many of our nurses are 'doctoring' and not nursing. Is there a difference? Do we have the skills and knowledge to make the decisions you are discussing? Is this a concern - or should it be?
Questions about comprehension - demonstrating understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions and stating main ideas. Key words: compare, contrast, demonstrate, interpret, explain, extend, illustrate, infer, outline, relate, rephrase, translate, summarize, show, classify Questions: How would you classify the type of ... ? How would you compare ... ? contrast ... ? Will you state or interpret in your own words ... ? How would you rephrase the meaning ... ? What facts or ideas show ... ? What is the main idea of ... ? Which statements support ... ? Can you explain what is happening ... what is meant ... ? What can you say about ... ? Which is the best answer ... ? How would you summarize ... ?	Jenny: 29 August What are the alternatives in the light of what is acceptable to people? Perhaps you would be right if this were the rational. I would question this as the major reason, however Jenny: 23 March Maureen's Comments/questions Good point. What would happen if repeated injections of benzyl penicillin ? There is a system (cheap) of conserving water and using soap in areas with limited access to water. Do you know it (Marijke has a reading if you want one).
Questions to promote action / Questions about application - solving problems by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in a different way. Key words: apply, build, choose, construct, develop, interview, make use of, organize, experiment with, plan, select, solve, utilize, model, identify Questions: How would you use ... ? What examples can you find to ... ? How would you solve _____ using what you have learned ... ? How would you organize _____ to show ... ? How would you show your understanding of ... ? What approach would you use to ... ? How would you apply what you learned to develop ... ? What other way would you plan to ... ? What would result if ... ? Can you make use of the facts to ... ? What elements would you choose to change ... ? What facts would you select to show ... ? What questions would you ask in an interview with ... ?	Carol's journal: 8 February Dear Carol In some ways, it is really hard for me to respond appropriately now to entries read so many months later and also because many of your issues have been discussed in tutorials. But I will do my best. It is quite obvious that you have taken on a huge challenge and for me, the challenge is: how to keep both you and your family safe while meeting your other demands. Can you accept a different standard of performance from yourself in either area? What do you anticipate will happen if you continue at the rate that you do? What have you noticed about your lifestyle when trying to analyze your time?

<p>Questions about analysis - examining and breaking information into parts by identifying motives or causes; making inferences and finding evidence to support generalizations.</p> <p>Key words: analyze, categorize, classify, compare, contrast, discover, dissect, divide, examine, inspect, simplify, survey, take part in, test for, distinguish, list, distinction, theme, relationships, function, motive, inference, assumption, conclusion</p> <p>Questions: What are the parts or features of ... ? How is _____ related to ... ? Why do you think ... ? What is the theme ... ? What motive is there ... ? Can you list the parts ... ? What inference can you make ... ? What conclusions can you draw ... ? How would you classify ... ? How would you categorize ... ? Can you identify the difference parts ... ? What evidence can you find ... ? What is the relationship between ... ? Can you make a distinction between ... ? What is the function of ... ? What ideas justify ...</p>	<p>11 April: Carol</p> <p>Why do you think that women seem to value special days such as birthday, anniversaries more than men? Is this an assumption on my part or is there some truth in the question? Does this mean they don't care ... or?</p> <p>How did you respond to his forgetfulness?</p> <p>Is behaviour indicative of the value placed on the emotion e.g. if someone regularly doesn't remember, does this mean they don't care?</p>
<p>Questions about evaluation - presenting and defending opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas or quality of work based on a set of criteria.</p> <p>Key Words: award, choose, conclude, criticize, decide, defend, determine, dispute, evaluate, judge, justify, measure, compare, mark, rate, recommend, rule on, select, agree, interpret, explain, appraise, prioritize, opinion, support, importance, criteria, prove, disprove, assess, influence, perceive, value, estimate, influence, deduct</p> <p>Questions: Do you agree with the actions ... ? with the outcomes ... ? What is your opinion of ... ? How would you prove ... ? disprove ... ? Can you assess the value or importance of ... ? Would it be better if ... ? Why did they (the character) choose ... ? What would you recommend ... ? How would you rate the ... ? What would you cite to defend the actions ... ? How would you evaluate ... ? How could you determine ... ? What choice would you have made ... ? What would you select ... ? How would you prioritize ... ? What judgment would you make about ... ? Based on what you know, how would you explain ... ? What information would you use to support the view ... ? How would you justify ... ? What data was used to make the conclusion ... ? Why was it better that ... ? How would you prioritize the facts ... ? How would you compare the ideas ... ? people ... ?</p>	<p>Carol's journal: 28 March, 2002</p> <p>Maureen's response:</p> <p>In retrospect, what could you have done to prevent this from happening? Or was it important that this happen as part of the learning process?</p>
<p>Probe implications/ consequences questions - The student might be asked to describe and discuss the implication of what is being done or said, the effect which would result, the alternatives which might be feasible, or the cause-and-effect of an action.</p> <p>What are you implying by that? When you say _____ are you implying _____? But if that happened, what else would also happen as a result? Why? How can we find out? What does this question assume? Would _____ ask this question differently? How could someone settle this question? Can we break this question down at all? Is this question clear? Do we understand it?</p>	<p>Janet's journal: 13 February, 2003</p> <p>What would happen if the government did not impose this legislation? What would happen if the government did not impose this legislation?</p> <p>Janet's journal: 13 February, 2003</p> <p>An interesting article - following close on the heels of the basic minimum wage packages of domestic workers.</p> <p>Can you see any connection to what is happening in industry today? I took a walk around SA Breweries - and the staff complement was noticeable by their absence. What has been the impact of mechanization or the increase thereof - on the economy/ on the worker, do you think?</p>

<p>Is this question easy or hard to answer? Why?</p> <p>Does this question ask us to evaluate something? What?</p> <p>Do we all agree that this is the question?</p> <p>To answer this question, what other questions must we answer first?</p> <p>I'm not sure I understand how you are interpreting this question. Is this the same as _____?</p> <p>How would _____ state the issue?</p> <p>Why is this issue important?</p>	<p>What would happen if the government did not impose this legislation?</p> <p>What is the status of agricultural workers and their families, currently?</p> <p>What are the implications of this article - and your thoughts - for your own nursing practice, do you think?</p> <p>Carol: 14 February, 2002</p> <p>How does this perception help you as a nurse practitioner? Do you manage the contact differently with this thought in mind? What do you do to protect yourself as a nurse? Is it sufficient? You have children of your own and many children follow in their parents' footsteps and want to do what mom or dad does at work - does the risk attached to your job affect what you would want for your children?</p>
<p>Closed questions - Many questions we ask in the classroom require only a simple yes/no answer or a brief response. These are usually classified as closed or skinny questions. These questions do not require complex thought to reach the answer. They are usually used to recall information, assess prior knowledge or knowledge gained after teaching. What really produces closure is neither the question nor the answer but the environment in which questions are considered. If the environment encourages the formation of questions as an important activity in its own right, and if it encourages students to use a variety of strategies regarding questions and activities as a step to further inquiry, then even closed questions may be open. Painter 1996</p>	<p>Reeva: 20 February, 2003</p> <p>Maureen: do you think that this is only peculiar to SA?</p>
<p>Questions to empower through insight development</p>	<p>Carol: 23 February</p> <p>This issue of group preparedness and team work plagues you for most of the year. How about picking up on some readings about how to improve or work effectively in a team or talking to an expert in this area?</p> <p>What else could you do to learn how to get a group motivated and working together? Could this help you in your work situation in any way?</p>
<p>Questioning about hypothesis -Typically, questions about what can be predicted and tested are thought of as belonging to sciences and other "hard" pursuits. But, in fact, predictive thinking matters in all domains.</p> <p>Skilled teachers probe for predictions as a way of making students actively aware of their expectations</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 27 February, 2003</p> <p>What would you say to Debbi Raphiti's advice "Ensure that your managers support you at all times. Open your mouth and talk?"</p> <p>How much responsibility do we as nurses bear in maintaining the status quo? (In other words, continuing to operate as we do?)</p> <p>If no-one objects to a situation, what reason is there for managers to change the situation?</p> <p>What type of pressure could we bring to get managers to change the work environment so that it is conducive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * to nurses' health and * to patients health?
<p>Probe for Clarification questions - Questions of clarification are basically asking for verification, additional information, or clarification of one point or main idea. The student would be expected to provide the information, expound on an opinion, rephrase the content, or explain why he/she made that particular statement.</p> <p>What do you mean by...</p> <p>What is your main point?</p> <p>How does _____ relate to _____?</p> <p>Could you put that another way?</p> <p>What do you think is the main issue here?</p> <p>Is your basic point _____ or _____?</p> <p>How does this relate to our discussion/problem/issue?</p> <p>What do you think John meant by his remark? What did you take John to mean?</p> <p>Thembi, summarize in your own words what Siphiso has said. Siphiso, is that what you meant?</p>	<p>12a June Reflexive journal entry (Questions to students introducing themselves in their journal)</p> <p>Tell me about yourself. Who are you? Where do you come from? Tell me about a day/ week in your life/ work life. Tell me about your family. Tell me about your programme, how it meets/ doesn't meet your needs. Tell me about how you learned in the past and if there is difference in how you are being taught now? What are the difficulties/ values you are experiencing?</p> <p>Janet's journal : 27 March, 2003</p> <p>And so what are you trying to say here - you are doing her a favour and therefore she needs to be loyal?</p>
<p>Probe perspectives/viewpoints questions - The student might be asked whether there are alternatives to this viewpoint or perspective, how might other groups or people respond, what argument a person might use who disagrees with this viewpoint, or a comparison of similarities and differences between viewpoints.</p> <p>What would someone who disagrees say?</p> <p>What is an alternative?</p> <p>How are Tobile's and Eric's ideas alike? Different?</p> <p>What are you implying by that?</p> <p>When you say _____, are you implying _____?</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 12 February, 2003</p> <p>What if it was one of your family?</p> <p>Xolisi's journal: 28 June</p> <p>If you were the minister of Health of SA, what would be your reasons for delaying treatment?</p> <p>Janet's journal: 27 March, 2003</p> <p>Here you have someone who has an 'in-charge' position? How do you</p>

<p>But, if that happened, what else would happen as a result? Why? What effect would that have?</p> <p>Would that necessarily happen or only possibly/probably happen?</p> <p>If _____ and _____ are the case, then what might also be true?</p> <p>If we say that _____ is ethical, how about _____?</p>	<p>get someone like this to 'buy into' your concept for the need to change? For 5 years, her notion of hygiene has been OK - but no longer - how can you get her to accept this 'new notion'? What could you have appealed to?</p> <p>Do you in fact, think you were wrong? What will be the outcome and what will be the cost?</p>
<p>Procedural questions - relate to classroom, lesson and student control processes such as "Who is absent today?"</p>	<p>Usually asked in tutorials or contact classroom sessions</p>
<p>Questions to promote synthesis - compiling information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions.</p> <p>What changes would you make to solve . . . ?</p> <p>How would you improve . . . ?</p> <p>What would happen if . . . ?</p> <p>Can you elaborate on the reason . . . ?</p> <p>Can you propose an alternative . . . ?</p> <p>Can you invent . . . ?</p> <p>How would you adapt _____ to create a different . . . ?</p> <p>How could you change (modify) the plot (plan) . . . ?</p> <p>What could be done to minimize (maximize) . . . ?</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 6 March</p> <p>What was her menstrual history? What was her state of mind? Is there not a policy on ultrasound's pr</p> <p>Wow So many questions about this. What do you know about false pregnancies?</p> <p>Why was the woman bleeding?</p> <p>Why hadn't the woman attended AN clinic?</p> <p>How did the woman cope afterwards? What kind of support would she have needed?</p> <p>Was there negligence on anyone's part here?</p>
<p>Socratic arc of questioning - But simply posing a variety of questions hardly creates a climate for inquiry. At least as important is the way in which teachers respond to the answers their questions provoke. Thus, recent research (Sacker and Sadker, 1985) suggests that too often students' replies meet with little more than a passing "uh-huh" Such responses can stop inquiry dead in its tracks. In place of such dead-end situations, skilled teachers give an exchange of questions a life-course. Across a long arc of questions and answers, they pursue an investigation in which simple factual inquiries give way to increasingly interpretive questions until new insights emerge. For an observer, there is an impression of a kind of mutually constructed improvisation unfolding (Mehan 1978, 1979). In this improvisation, teachers keep questions alive through long stretches of time, coming back to them days, even weeks, after they have first been asked. Creating a climate of enquiry: across an arc of "questions and answers, they pursue and investigation in which simple factual inquiry gives way to increasingly interpretive questions until new insights emerge" . It is almost as if the questions posed form a kind of catwalk of realizable possibilities along which a student can move toward new insights (Luria 1976, Vygotsky 1978, Wertsch, 1978). Wolf (1987:4)</p>	<p>In general, students did not directly answer my questions in their journal. However, many either returned to the issues and discussed these further in tutorials or in later entries.</p> <p>Lea: 17 March</p> <p>? Maureen: very cute - but in fact, what kind of influence do hormones' play in our behaviour?</p> <p>Lea's response: Huge, but some don't have "human" control. I really need to become cerebral.</p> <p>Lea: 6 April</p> <p>Maureen: What are the implications for your practice?</p> <p>Maureen: Is cholera an issue on the work front?</p> <p>Lea's response: No but in KZN employees travel to other areas so must know signs and symptoms.</p> <p>Maureen: Where would you make this table available and why?</p> <p>Lea's response: traveling teams.</p> <p>Maureen: Why is a table so useful?</p> <p>Lea's response: So easy to read and evaluate quickly.</p> <p>Lea: 25 April</p> <p>Maureen: and this leads you to ...?</p> <p>Lea's response: If these are amazing and time is critical, then what can we expect to see in the next decade especially in genetics and DNA research!</p>
<p>CRITIQUER-RESPONSES TO STUDENT ENTRY</p>	<p>EXAMPLE FROM JOURNALS</p>
<p>Acknowledging individual worth.</p> <p>Individualising responses in a way that recognises the uniqueness of the student, allows the student to understand that they are valued,</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 28 August</p> <p>What a shock for you, Nandi</p> <p>Have you thought of making an appointment with management to express your concerns? I am very proud of you this was a very good reflective process and you integrated your theory on your own situation. Well done!</p>
<p>Recognising the student's personal circumstances/dilemma</p> <p>This follows on from the previous concept, and reminds both the critiquer and the student, that the critiquer is aware of the personal events or influences shaping the student's learning</p>	<p>Reeva's journal: 8 May, 2003</p> <p>I am fairly sure I have responded to this as I remember reading and thinking about it.</p> <p>A question, Reeva. Your first paragraph indicates a sense of despair and a feeling that life just takes over, with or without your control. Does this mean one should not have goals?</p> <p>Your second paragraph is much more hopeful, and personally, I can see the change in you. Would you have accepted 'your humanness' at the beginning of the year and seen it as the strength through which you now view your life? Have your values changed in any way?</p>
<p>Drawing analogies/ creating metaphors</p> <p>Gordon and Pose (1971) suggested metaphorical thinking stretches the mind and forces the learner to think critically. Analogies and metaphors require the learner to enter the land of synthesis and evaluation. Critical thinking in these creative terms may be the ultimate information-processing skill. Forced metaphors or analogies are particularly effective in instigating higher level thinking. A "forced" metaphor requires a learner to associate two ideas that are not</p>	<p>Janet's journal: 14 September 2003</p> <p>I suppose most things can be rationalized - but the question is - do we always want to?</p> <p>I am a great Walt Whitman fan and when he suggests we consider a blade of grass or the essence of a mouse - and then query whether or not there is a god.</p>

commonly linked. For example: "How are schools like gardens?", "Personally devise and explain democracy in the context of a metaphor.", or "What do math equations and language sentences have in common?" (Wakefield, 1998).	
Identification of relevant elements I have observed that for my students, one of the most difficult aspects of critical thinking, was the ability to focus on key, relevant issues. In many previous instances, students had been told by others in authority was relevant. I wanted them to learn to identify this for themselves and recognise the choices they were making and why.	Carol's journal: 10 April An interesting perspective. It made me think about getting older and wondering if fear of consequences was the reason for staying the same. Do you think that our value system changes as we age? Interesting choice of word "fall" why do you think you used that specific word?
Honesty/ authenticity Much of how the student/ critiquer relationship will develop, will depend upon the honesty of the relationship and the ability of the critiquer to provide 'reality checks' in an acceptable manner	Carol's journal: 4th September In a number of schools the teachers anticipate these sorts of reactions and put in a number of measures to try and lighten the playing fields, as it were e.g. cake and suckers for everyone at school etc, etc. There comes a time though, that children learn that life just 'aint fair' and that's the truth. How we choose to respond to those types of situations determines our own sensibilities. Your criteria for life's choices seem to me to be a reasonable one.
Providing information I saw my role as extending the student, and part of this requires a sharing of information. I chose to do this by engaging deeply in the reflections, and if I could offer anything further by means of additional sources or literature, I did.	Reeva's journal: 13 February You might be interested to know that the framework of this programme is based on the model of critical reflective practice developed by Elsie van Aswegen. She will be pleased to know that it had an effect on you. I note with interest your motivational message to the class - marks for nothing. Well, the intent is good, but believe me, you will have earned your mark - even if it isn't in the accepted traditional format. Tell me your thoughts when you have completed your programme.
Structuring the thinking process My function in these journals is to support critical reflective thinking. Ways I tried to achieve this was through trying to challenge and help students structure their thinking processes. Sometimes, this took the form of Socratic questioning and other times, through making connections.	Reeva's journal: June 2003 I am trying to disassociate myself from an event for which I was originally responsible - and so ask you to move into a hypothetical mode. Imagine a similar situation in your clinic where you are on the receiving end - what would make it easier for you to respond so that the issue is dealt with and your persona remains intact? Theoretically, the situation in class should not have evoked an emotive response, for, as you correctly note, your opinion was asked for. Why do you think it did? Could or would you change your management of this situation. If yes, how and why? If no, why not?
Providing direction Whilst much of my input was through questioning, it was sometimes also helpful to point the student in a specific direction, particularly if I was concerned about some of the decision making or interpretation of events.	Reeva's journal: June 2003 Maureen: There is a difference between being dependent on someone (this implies that they make the decisions without necessarily consulting or working with you) and independence - which means that you are in control of the situation and yourself. It doesn't mean that you assume all the responsibility and do all the work. Responsible delegation is just one of the techniques to do this.
Promoting reflective thinking	Reeva's journal: 10 April, 2003 While you mention that you have no control over your own path, perhaps the 6 months might give you space to view who you are without the support of a contact relationship. You might surprise yourself - and who knows what else might be in store for you if you open yourself up to experiences? While you mention that you have no control over your own path, perhaps the 6 months might give you space to view who you are without the support of a contact relationship. You might surprise yourself - and who knows what else might be in store for you if you open yourself up to experiences?
Reinforcing specific concepts	Well done Nandi (4 September) You are not asking her to do anything else but her job. It is amazing the power some people have over others part of being a professional person means assuming proper use of power and I like your choice of words firm and consistent.
Positive reinforcement by praising the student	Nandi's journal: 28 August I am very proud of you. This was a very good reflective process and you integrated your theory on your own situation. Well done! Nandi, you have provided a good description and supporting argument. Well done. Don't you think you should share this?
Accurate observations	Carol's journal:

	<p>What other kind of stress breakers have you built into your life style?</p> <p>Ø Stress is a theme in your entries. What should this mean to you, do you think?</p>
<p>Drawing analogies-creating metaposition - Gordon and Pose (1971) in Wakefield (1998) suggested metaphorical thinking stretches the mind and forces the learner to think critically. Analogies and metaphors require the learner to enter the land of synthesis and evaluation. Critical thinking in these creative terms may be the ultimate information-processing skill. Forced metaphors or analogies are particularly effective in instigating higher level thinking. A "forced" metaphor requires a learner to associate two ideas that are not commonly linked. For example: "How are schools like gardens?", "Personally devise and explain democracy in the context of a metaphor.", or "What do math equations and language sentences have in common?"</p> <p>Wakefield, (1998).</p>	<p>Janets' journal: 14 September, 2003</p> <p>I suppose most things can be rationalized - but the question is - do we always want to?</p> <p>I am a great Walt Whitman fan and when he suggests we consider a blade of grass or the essence of a mouse - and then query whether or not there is a god.</p>
<p>Acknowledging student's contribution</p>	<p>Jena's journal: 28 May, 2002</p> <p>Dear Jena</p> <p>Well your reflection provoked a lot of thought on my part. I thought about myself as a teacher/facilitator and my efforts to be non-judgmental - but is this possible? I make judgements all the time and in fact, judgements are essential element in critical thinking. Perhaps if I use the word objectively - this holds more truly to what I am trying to achieve.</p> <p>Your stories are wonderful illustrations about choices in judgement - and, importantly, you provide reasons for your decisions. It is only when you have access to reasons that you can then weigh these - and come to a decision - a judgement. When new information arises, your decisions are then re-evaluated on this light - and another judgement is made.</p> <p>I know I am not asking a question and that I am making a statement that you can disregard, as you choose.</p>
<p>Recognition of/planning for next stage</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 12 February</p> <p>It is nice that you have summarized but it is not necessary. If you just highlight the key points this will save you some time, This is good article to start your entries off.</p>
<p>Promoting critical thinking</p>	<p>Reflexive journal: 'Taentry2 June 2001</p> <p>I went through one of her reflective thought entries. It dealt with professional practice and ethics and her analysis was both apt and thought provoking. I asked a number of questions relating to the relevancy of ethics in today's context and specifically regarding the situations nurses found themselves in today. I asked if we could afford to be ethical considering the reality of the complexity of some situations. Her response dealt with 'how can we not?' I am very interested in situational morality and would love to have debated this longer. It was good to give positive feedback. I also recommended some readings and a theorist on moral development, Kohlberg.</p>
<p>Identifying with the student</p>	<p>Xolisi journal: 31 May</p> <p>I echo your sentiments. When I read about the work that you do, and your sense of nursing, I feel the same pride.</p>
<p>Supporting the student by: *encouragement</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 21 October</p> <p>I look forward to following your progress in future- and will always be interested in what you are doing.</p>
<p>Linking to previous discussion/entry</p>	<p>Carol's journal: 25 June</p> <p>Sounds like a good plan. We have talked about this in tuts.</p>
<p>Demonstrating awareness of own weakness/lack of knowledge</p>	<p>Toko Topic 6</p> <p>A dilemma indeed. I didn't know how to solve your problem, perhaps we should take this to class?</p> <p>I do know that in life, situations are never simple- and you are going to need to resolve your dilemma between</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What is right and wrong (your own morality) -Loyalty -and intimidation. It is of course easier when there are proper systems in place.
<p>Focusing/highlighting key issues</p> <p>Whilst as critiquer, I took my cue from the students' entries and followed up with related questions, I too, had an agenda and issues</p>	<p>Carol's journal: 30 April</p> <p>How do we as nurses, form alliances of mutual respect with other health professionals? What should/ could we do? How do we as</p>

that I was concerned with, one being the nursing profession. Where appropriate, I would highlight these issues through questioning or comments.	nurses, form alliances of mutual respect with other health professionals? What should/ could we do?
Criticizing It was difficult to draw the line between supporting, directing and disagreeing and criticizing, especially as my role as empathetic-critiquer had clearly delineated the non-judgmental aspect of my function. Nonetheless, there were occasions when I could not let the student believe that her perspective was not flawed. Generally, the questioning method was an indirect way of dealing with this, but sometimes, I found that I had to be more direct. I believe it is in the way one phrases the criticism that makes it acceptable or not – considering the limits of my own delineated role.	Nandi's journal: February 12 MAUREENS COMMENTS: Nandi, your questions are valid but perhaps you might take into account the fact that this is a club donating funding. The other issues you mention, quite correctly, should be dealt with and so perhaps you might be interested to see an additional form of funding been made available to St Mary's (see Web CT latest health link bulletin).
Recognising processes - restating or reframing to enable student/self to recognise what is happening	Jena's journal: 14 March, 2002 Regarding the checking at the Supermarket. The logic here however is: if you want to compare the costs of 'chicken casserole' tinned vs. cooked, the process may well be comparative. If however, you took the price of a banana - home grown to the grocery store - it may well be cheaper. Theoretically it should also be cheaper to take a small portion of the family's dinner and puree it - than cook separately. In certain situations, growing own vegetables might also prove more expensive (depending on what you are costing). Reeva's Journal: June 2003 Maureen: here you are assuming that everyone is (1) close minded and (2) considered all the alternatives and consequences and/ or (3) has exactly the same motivation or (4) that everyone gives the same amount of thought and care to their actions.
Requesting information Students needed to be aware that although ostensibly the journal was written for themselves, they did have a reader (s). If I requested specific information, it meant that there were gaps in the entry and that the information proffered was not self-evident.	Carol: 26 August What kind of a referral letter did she write, do you know? Is there anything else she should have done to ensure that she received feedback? Sometimes, liaison by the OHN with the concerned hospital does pay off in the long term. Do you think that personalizing a situation (i.e. making personal contact) will have a positive effect? You seem to do this all the time in your work why should the results be any different for the OHN? Even if, as you note, nursing is just a job why should there not be an appropriate procedure for feedback? If someone works at a supermarket, they do not have a calling; nonetheless, they are still required to do a good job. Why should this be different in nursing?
Reminding These types of comments served more than one purpose: They enabled the students to see that my engagement with their journals was deep – I remembered – but also, it was a way of connecting themes, which is part of the recurrent, reflective process.	Jena's journal: 23 February How empowered are nurses to change processes? (I am really thinking about your second entry here). Carol's journal: 23 August Carol These tutorials have had different meanings for different people. I spelled out my intentions in my own journal entries and the difficult part is that the formula is not and has not been the same for everyone. Much of the process has depended on the individual needs of the students. In a sense, you have missed out on some of the process in that I am only getting to critique your journal entries now. However, as I recognize many of the issues, these have been discussed and debated in the tutorials. I should mention that I am grateful that you have come along with me on this journey and committed to a process that was not always overt or spelled out. You have done this with courage and shared your innermost thoughts and concerns generously and with style. You might like to go back to your reading in Book 1, pages 13-15 on critical reflective thinking and review what you are doing in light of this reading.
Connecting to prior learning	Carol's journal: 20 August As a manager, where do you draw the line? Is there a line? What would have happened if you had asked the company to buy you a computer or at least, found a way to make it tax deductible, as the work you would be doing on the computer will indirectly benefit the company? (If I remember correctly, we did discuss this, didn't we?)
Demonstrating awareness of own feelings/emotions	Xolisi's journal: 31 May I echo your sentiments. When I read about the work that you do, and your sense of nursing, I feel the same pride.
Summarizing	Jena's journal: 17 February

	This was a very interesting response to a potential power-play situation (i.e. routed through the Matron) I get a strong sense of your being someone very comfortable with yourself - and not needing to be "boss".
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Table 8.1: Evidence of linkages to other courses

Boniswe, Bisa, Jabu 25/7/2002	Xolisi, Jena, Row Rea 2/8/2002	Carol, Lisi, Rea 14/6/2002	Carol, Lisi 23/8/2002
	<p>Linkage to class on HIV AIDS counselling; sexuality education; research.</p> <p>Maureen: "I think you all went to the (class) on Aids counseling."</p> <p>Rowan: "Yes"</p> <p>Linkage to previous year's class on circumcision and the difficulties of sexuality education (Jeff – a previous graduate assistant involved in circumcision management in a rural area was referenced.</p>	<p>Linkage with other courses (research and occupational health)</p> <p><u>Personal Observation:</u></p> <p>Students had learning difficulties related to literature review in another programme, Research 1. As facilitator, I indicated that had found articles that would be helpful, but would be sharing this with the class as a whole.</p> <p>Maureen: "Last time we met, we talked about how to analyse a journal, and I have written stuff up and I will give it to you when we get into class."</p>	<p>Linkage with other courses (research and occupational health)</p> <p>Carol discussed an issue she had been dealing with in her journal relating to her course in research and her difficulties in working with her research group: "I just felt that a lot of the girls missed the point of what a literature review really was, and I felt like I did most of the work... and didn't get enough input from anybody else ..although two people's work, I did use...I didn't think it was fair that I would have to sit till 2 or 3 in the morning this whole week redoing that... it offends me when I have to be honest or (confrontational) .."</p> <p>Maureen: It takes quite a lot of courage (to confront) doesn't it?"</p> <p>This discussion was followed up by my pointing out that although Carol appeared to have done most of the work, she had in fact benefited the most. So, learning can even be stimulated, as Eisen (2001:40) notes "by unwanted outcomes such as dissatisfaction with peer interactions". Also, Ironside (2004) notes that this 'pointing out' or giving name to embedded knowledge within the narrative account is an alternative to providing content without "hiding from view" practices of thinking.</p>
<p>Research topics for 2002 had focused on management issues, particularly with respect to quality assurance. Referred to in the discussion, and one of the aspects initiated the discussion</p>			<p>Xolisi, Musa, Zinzi 8/10/2002</p>

Table 8.2: Evidence of linkages between theory and practice

<i>Carol, Lisi, Ria 14/6/2002</i>	<i>Boniswe, Bisa, Jabu 25/7/2002</i>	<i>Xolisi, Jena, Rowan, Rea 2/8/2002</i>	<i>Carol, Lisi 23/8/2002</i>
<p>Team work: Lisi looked at the difficulty of this in her occupational health setting and Carol offered some examples of how to revisit this. Rea identified systems rather than individuals supporting the team approach (she worked in a metropolitan health service).</p> <p>All asked me to post readings on Web CT. The Management IV course focused on themes generated from the students' situational analysis, so Lisi, supported by Carol suggested "strategic planning." (She was trying to make sense of her own work environment). Carol: "There is quite a bit of notes that Maureen has posted on strategic planning." Maureen: "I can post sites that you can explore on the internet. Are you able to do that at work?"</p> <p>A previous session discussed the issue of contract workers. Both as OHN's needed to have a clear understanding of the implications in terms of their own practice. They had been asked to find evidence to support their contentions. One had asked their programme co-ordinator and another, the company doctor. Both cited the legislation.</p>	<p><u>Personal Observation:</u></p> <p>We had used the situational analysis as a basis for analyzing the students' work practice. They had identified these problems and concerns in their assignments and tasks, and had used the theory to become more structured in the way that they 'saw' their workplace.</p> <p>Communication and teamwork or lack thereof had also been connected to the theory through the same process, and what the students were doing was trying to find a way to either accept or cope with the barriers presented in their place of work.</p>	<p>The practice in sexuality education related to themselves as individuals and as mothers. The community perspective. The students related the concept of HIV AIDS and what they were seeing in their world of practice.</p> <p>The linkage with what nursing is as a profession, and the reality with which it is practiced. The concept of empowerment was debated.</p>	<p>Linking theory and practice</p> <p>Lisi: "However, when one is in a working situation then one starts to learn"</p>
Discussion of use of protocols; statistics and community involvement.			<i>Xolisi, Musa, Zinzi 8/10/02</i>

Table 8.3: Evidence of connections

Boniswe, Bisa, Jabu 25/7/2002	Xolisi, Jena, Rowan, Rea 2/8/2002	Carol, Lisi 14/6/2002	Carol, Lisi, Ria 23/8/2002
<p>Tutorial, journal, previous discussion</p> <p>All these incidents had been written about in their journal entries, although from different perspectives. (Difficult work environment; changes in environment engendering fears; inter-collegial power struggles; frustration at lack of teamwork, support, recognition of safety factors; meaning of nursing, ubuntu). The discussion allowed us to break down some of the elements and also get to grips with some of the feelings that had ensued. I was particularly worried about the 'them' and 'us' relationships that had developed and which were extremely unhealthy in the nursing context (them being senior colleagues, management, but even more worrying, clients). We explored these relationships and the concept of the profession in the light of these relationships fairly frequently in the tutorials. This group of students met regularly for their reflective tutorials and never missed a session. The above themes were ongoing and addressed in both journals and reflective tutorials.</p>	<p>Tutorial, journal, previous discussion</p> <p>(Focus on the two students whose diaries have been analysed – Jena and Xolisi)</p> <p><u>Jena</u> - abortions; the nursing profession; sexuality education; empowerment of nurses; HIV AIDS; her desire to see health issues from the South African context; the lifestyle context of the community within which she works and her appreciation thereof; her view of herself and her identity as this impacts on her practice</p> <p><u>Xolisi</u> – her concern for her children; her contextualizing of her community and the community experience; the intransigence of the more traditional members of her community; the male domination. Circumcision; nurses leaving the country. The meaning of nursing as a profession.</p> <p><u>Evidence of connections between previous tutorial or class discussions (the circular process of reflection) and the current discussion.</u></p> <p>Nurses emigrating for improved salaries; professionalism; abortion issues; HIV AIDS; empowerment of nurses; organisation of workload – linked to problem solving and situational analysis.</p>	<p>Facilitator connection: I reviewed previous reflective tutorial discussion.</p> <p><u>Journal:</u> Carol has addressed most of the issues and discussed them in her journal: time; work overload, learning difficulties; communication; domestic stress. In Table 8.7, the students discuss 'dreams'.</p> <p>Maureen: "In Management (IV) we have talked about a vision...and a philosophy and I just want to bring you back to 'Why have a vision...I would also like to link it to reality, because what you are saying makes a lot of sense"</p>	<p>Connection to journal: (Carol: has addressed most of the issues discussed in her journal)</p> <p>Connection to class work. Connection to previous discussions: follow-up issue on discipline related material indirectly addressed</p> <p>Students recognised occurrence of learning: Evidence of self-directed learning: investing in learning tool (Carol: own computer)</p> <p>Evidence of influencing factors in learning: We discussed 'Ubuntu' and Carol noted that this had been asked in a question in an exam in a previous course. "That was the first time I had heard the word".</p> <p><u>Themes:</u></p> <p>Time; Work overload; Factors negatively impacting on learning</p> <p>Factors impacting on decision to continue with learning ; available options; value of process; prior learning; learning motivation; learning difficulties; supports; OH society; reflective tutorials; nursing profession.</p>
<p>Tutorial, journal, previous discussion: All these issues had been written about in some form or another by each of the group members: Conditions of service for SA nurses; Inadequate remuneration; nurses immigrating; work overload; power imbalances; actions taken to address power issues</p>			<p><u>Xolisi, Musa, Zinzi</u> 8/10/2002</p>

APPENDIX 8.4

Table 8.4: Evidence of the circular process of reflection within the current discussion

<i>Carol, Lisi, Ria</i> 14/6/2002	Boniswe, Bisa, Jabu 25/7/2002	<i>Xolisi, Jena, Rowan, Rea</i> 2/8/2002	<i>Carol, Lisi</i> 23/8/2002
Theme of support addressed from different angles – help with organisation; support from team, occupational health society, within the tutorial group. Maureen: "Maybe you would like to talk about setting up structures that make you feel safe?... In a sense, you have asked a question, a profound question that speaks to what your life is about." Lisi reflects on questions she has asked herself "What am I living for and what can I do? What can I achieve? And also to recognise that there are good things which I am doing." She continues talking, reflecting on the difficulties she has encountered and then revisits the earlier questions and reflects on "what good things I have done. That made me feel good about myself and stop complaining and say, I should have done that. I should have done that...at least there are things that I have done that maybe other people could not achieve in life. It gives me the courage to keep on going." Lisi's ability to recognise her strength within and express this within the group is a positive factor, and indicative of her maturity. Carol focuses on the time theme, related to stress and personality	Personal Observation: All three members of the group were working in the same place and so there was congruence in their perceptions, although their feelings differed depending on their status (differentiation between the junior and more senior nurses). The circular questioning approach supported returning to the issues. The fact that these issues had been spoken about in different forums (journal, tutorial, tasks and assignments) and that they were still being spoken about, clearly indicated that there was still much working through of the processes that had occurred, and probably still needed to take place	Earlier, Jena had left a class on sexual education, which had offended her. She preferred to check in with the course coordinator, rather than return to the person who had offered the class. Jena: "No, I will check and sit together with her and look it through with her, I don't want to attend another one". (Comment: clear indication of Jena taking control over how she wishes to learn) Students used much of this session to ventilate feelings and defuse anger resulting from inability to express feelings during a previous class (lecturer was a visitor from the US and students too well mannered – although Jenna had walked out of class). Discussed sexuality from different angles – self, family and own children, society in general. While I did not feel that learning had taken place on an 'instrumental' level, it did open 'space' for reconsideration at later stage. Critical reflective thinking is not problem solving. Brookefield (1987) in Simpson and Courtney (2002) explains that critical thinkers appreciate that critical thinking is a process, and because it is not static, it generally does not bring finality or a conclusion to the interrogation.	Lisi and Carol both struggled with workload, affecting their ability to complete their study requirements (See Table 8.5) Circular discussion on the many issues that have and could improve or allow them to progress. Self-identification of management strategies and discussion of other alternatives. Reflection of the relevance of 'practical application' of concepts imbedded in course and readiness to learn, as needed in current work situation. Recognition of value of how reflective tutorials working.
The problem issue of current nursing practice was discussed from a number of different perspectives in terms of what was, what could be done and what had been done. Even when theoretically, the discussion was over, Zinzi returned again to the issue to pick up on another perspective. Multiple perspective views are a clear indication of critical reflective thinking (Simpson and Courtney, 2001).			<i>Xolisi, Musa, Zinzi</i> 8/10/2002

Table 8. 6: Identifying the issues chosen for reflection:

<p>Carol, Lisi, Ria 14/6/2002</p> <p>Recap of previous tutorial (This is included as it may have initiated some of the ensuing discussion):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Difficulties with learning in another programme (repeat and journal) ✓ Being overwhelmed by amount of work required in course. (repeat and journal) ✓ Journal issues (C) home and moving "I have a beautiful house..." Lisi looks beyond the "material" things. Talking to her family, she notes "Right now, we are going to look to education... It won't help me to dream, I need to go to school..." (repeat and journal) ✓ Difficulties with work and challenges faced. (repeat and journal) ✓ Challenges with completing course because of numerous demands (repeat and journal) <p>Current tutorial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lisi rethinking her position on leaving, particularly when she deconstructs the workload. Offered tangible help on revisioning work situation so that she is better able to conceptualise organization and structure. Theme: work overload (repeat and journal) • Organisation and structuring of work and thinking: Addressing theme of overload (repeat and journal). Maureen: "They are actually quite small things. They just require – what?". Lisi: "You just (need to) look at them one by one (instead of) looking at it the whole thing as a big big one complicated thing...once it is complicated in your mind, it will definitely look like it" • Setting of personal goals, connecting with management concepts of organizational vision and mission (connect to class work and practice) Ria: "You have got to dream big." Maureen: Reminding Ria about a previous statement "But you don't believe in dreams?".... Lisi: "...You need to aim high, so if you fall, you fall at a medium level. (laughter). "... But it is very important to dream realistically – achievable dreams and plans. You should know yourself and the resources that are available to you and so your dream should be within that." • Lisi – self-identity - appreciation of herself and allowing and accepting of her goals to be reality based (repeat – self-identity). "I am trying to accept whatever comes into my life. Once you don't accept, you become frustrated.... Not that I am sitting back. I need to go at a normal pace, otherwise I will die." • Time theme – C more time for self: reality check on what she would do with this (repeat and journal) • time, linking into her personality type (her drive, her need to achieve) – issues she deals with in her journal (repeat and journal) • Lisi – Self-identity and theme of racial prejudice and the effect on her functioning. How writing her thoughts down in her journal allows her to distance herself and obtain perspective, rather than pursue her initial reaction of aggressive behaviour. Linked to concept of communication and class readings (connect to class work) • Question of identity and nursing and whether the work environment supports self-esteem and confidence building – both Lisi and C suggested that the occupational health group and nurses were different because of the isolation within which they worked – good reasoning process. (repeat) • Team work and the effects of working within the different groups in the different health care settings (again, one of the themes that occurs both in the questionnaires and in the journals is that of working with colleagues and other members of the health team) • Theme – communication (recurrent in diaries and questionnaires) 	<p>Boniswe, Bisa, Jabu 25/7/2002</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of previous tutorial: Feelings resulting from frustrations with working within their work environment (This is included as it may have initiated some of the ensuing discussion) • Changes occurring in their work environment: Resulting from an externally directed situational analysis. Fears, concerns and frustrations resulting from the process. • Recognition of possibilities of the end result. • Recognition of purpose of diaries • Use of tutorials: explore intra-personal dynamics; opportunity to ventilate; opportunity to think "you keep throwing things back to me and making me think. Afterwards you find that some of these things that you are
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not aware but during the discussion you are motivating my thinking so that I think"; motivation to continue by sharing concerns with others "also to see when someone else has the same problem which gives me the strength and the courage"

- Negotiation with students regarding the taping of the reflective tutorials
- Fear of working with abusive patients; frustration with lack of management support for nurses' safety
- Failure to feel part of the institution; difficulty in identifying
- Frustration with lack of boundaries and colleagues/management overstepping boundaries with little respect for the students – called "kids"
- Frustration at the lack of teamwork
- Frustration at the lack of recognition given by the authorities to the work that the poly-clinic offers
- Feelings of stress because of the work situation, a feeling that has been verbalized by other health care professionals, and frustrations at not being heeded.
- Perception of unfair criticism, which was seen to be racially biased.

Xolisi, Jena, Rowan, Rea 2/8/2002

- Sexual education, the need, value and appropriateness (or inappropriateness of the approach)
- Self-determination of learning needs (Jena)
- Abortion issues; HIV AIDS; circumcision
- Cultural or community factors impacting of the way nurses educate
- The nursing profession
- Factors affecting nurse immigration
- Evaluation of current trends in nursing practice
- The nursing profession and what it means to be a nurse

Carol, Lisi, Ria 23/8/2002

- Lack of time (repeat and journal)
- Work overload – issue raised and discussed twice in discussion on different occasions – effects – creates more pressure and load build up; possibility of non-completion (repeat and journal)
- Factors negatively impacting on learning – adaptations to new job, new home, new geographical area; family issues – feeling of life being a "mess" (repeat and journal)
- Factors impacting on decision to continue with learning programmes – effort/ cost (travel/ course payment) and a sense that "these things will pass" – balanced against need and learning gained (repeat and journal)
- Consideration of available options to flexibly address learning concerns
- Valuing the learning process (repeat and journal)
- Recognition of prior learning
- Motivation to learn based on work needs rather than formal recognition as both in management situations (Lisi did not complete the course and in fact, neither she nor Carol had a need for formal recognition – Lisi indicated that she had completed Nursing Dynamics- the Dept recognizes this for both research and management for registration with SANC; and Carol had completed studies through UNISA, which also is recognized and accepted by the department); recognition of the connection to the work environment; understanding the material.
- Effects of learning – change in behaviour; linkage of theory and practice; readiness and motivation to learn dependent on work based needs. Despite the pressures, course seen as valuable because of it's approach and it's practical application to students' own practice
- Difficulty with the learning process – test – consideration of purpose and approach
- Supports: peer/ facilitators/ colleagues (through society). Organisation of course – workbooks and guides
- Communication issues: peers
- Use of reflective tutorials: explore intra-personal dynamics; opportunity to ventilate; opportunity to think "you keep throwing things back to me and making me think. Afterwards you find that some of these things that you are not aware but during the discussion you are motivating my thinking so that I think"; motivation to continue by sharing concerns with others "also to see when someone else has the same problem which gives me the strength and the courage"

- Value of tutorial: relieving burden on shoulder; relating to facilitator in a way that allows for addressing of many issues, including the personal;
- Professional society- recognition that this provided: support; a means of continuing further education; a means of networking; a means of quality assurance; a forum for marketing work product (C and laboratory services). Did this through contact meetings and on-line communication.
- Meaning of nursing to students: concept of Ubuntu (humanness and caring). Lisi: "I follow the way of the culture, nursing a South African person... of caring, the thing is Ubuntu". I understand them". Also included: nurturing and empowerment of clients. Importance of concepts such as ethics. Concern about the apparent changes in practice where some of these concepts not so valued. Discussion about factors influencing professional development: socialization, learning; family; religion; belief systems. Carol: "Upbringing plays quite an important role. Sometimes you become like your parents or sometimes you become quite the opposite, because you don't want to be like that... My father... he is very knowledgeable..., is very passive... and people take advantage of him, and I will never let that happen to me... I fight for service, I fight for quality." Lisi continues with the issue of assertiveness: I say "No, with a smile, which is fair".
- Connection between personal and professional identity

Xolisi, Musa, Zinzi 8/10/2002

Conditions of service for SA nurses

Inadequate remuneration

Consideration of immigrating overseas – discussion of differences between England and Saudi Arabia

Factors influencing or preventing immigration

Case Study (Z and her clinic situation): Problems in being able to practice appropriately – affected by:

- Work overload
- Difficulties with working with the community and counselors as part of the district health system – power imbalances
- Inflexible and unhelpful management – feeling of powerlessness

Table 8. 8: Process involved in the tutorial

Carol, Lisi, Rea 14/6/2002
<p>Initiated discussion with a recap of key issues from previous tutorial.</p> <p>Discussion open for input</p> <p>Picked up on previous themes that seemed problematic. Jane (critical reader) comments: General themes, evident in other diaries and in other Tutorials, again focus on the conditions under which nursing practitioners work, through the pressure of time and overload. Carol wishes that she had more time for herself and family, though her striving for excellence makes this sometimes difficult. The Facilitator points this out in her questioning: "How old are you?" and the challenge implicit in "If you are 33 now and haven't yet made time for yourself, when do you think this will happen?"</p> <p>Discussion flowed from students' responses – no clear direction – but engaged in themes in journal/ work and related to self-identity and profession.</p> <p>Questioning approach "Is the end result as important as the process, or does the process not count?"</p> <p>Providing space and time to talk</p> <p>Active listening and respond to comments</p> <p>Using personal stories to illustrate a point "I have this friend of mine.."</p> <p>Use of humour to prod</p> <p>Restating "It is quite obvious when listening to the both of you that education is a priority..."</p> <p>Recapping /Summarising/ paraphrasing/ supporting/ challenging/ reminding/linking to comments made earlier/ connecting to work done in class/</p>
Boniswa, Bisa, Jabu 25/7/2002
<p><u>Process:</u></p> <p>My approach is very tentative. It took me quite a long time to establish a relationship with this group, particularly the younger two students. They were very used to a hierarchical system of power and it took a while for them to accept (or appear to accept) a shift in parity in our power relations. Most of our tutorial sessions were very similar to this one, and I was aware of constantly trying to get them to shift positions in order to make their lives (and I think the lives of their patients) more tenable. Language was definitely a problem. The first part of the transcript clearly indicates my difficulty in understanding what Bisa is saying (even though the transcript does not pick up on the peppering of the discussion with Zulu interjections, which were fairly constant.) I spent much of my time in questioning and rephrasing, purely to try and understand the problem. It is also clear from the first part of the transcript, how much effort I put into trying to establish a basis for trust. The students, particularly the younger two, were clearly suspicious of the tape recorder. It was only near the end of the year that they signed permission to be included in the research.</p>
Xolisi, Jena, Rowan, Rea 2/8/2002
<p><u>Reflexive Diary: 6 August, 2002</u></p> <p>The more I think about it, the more convinced I am, that students (and I include myself in that category) learn by real life experiences. These stories integrate their learning in a way that moves beyond theory. Theory often focuses on the single issues and doesn't or can't take account of the multiplicity of events or the synergies of action that impact on the different situations. This isn't new. The other aspect that is worthy of note, in fact relates to second language students. These stories allow for an integration of the facts and the concepts, which are often fairly abstract, in a way that makes sense of their world. I am aware that a number of second language students are able to pass or even do well at exams if they can transmit information from their texts onto the page (this naturally also applies to first language students). This doesn't, however, test application or comprehension.</p> <p>Sarah: Does this happen after discussions? i.e. working from concrete, contextual to abstract generic to show them the content that has been learned</p>
Carol, Lisi 23/8/2002
<p>Welcome and start with question on journal.</p> <p>Listen and make connections between previous discussions; class work and discussions within the tutorial. Facilitate a student-driven approach but offer options to keep discussion flowing.</p> <p>Facilitate iterative reflective process. Strive to ensure equality of participation and recognition of students' needs. I used the Socratic questioning approach where possible. Provide supportive environment with limited judgment. Try to even out power elements. Recognised adult-based learning and needs. Very little silence – students comfortable with</p>

discussion. Acceptance of students stance and reasoning; summarizing of processes and recognition of feelings

Xolisi, Musa, Zinzi 8/10/2002

Very little input from X, but I didn't follow this up because she was physically involved (active listening, verbal noises of agreement, disagreement and most of the discussion focused on an issue raised by Z. Most of the discussion was between Z and me, with active listening and verbal noises from the other two, but more specifically, Musa. For the first half of the discussion, although I haven't written this down as such, the three would speak, often at the same time. It would seem that they were very comfortable. I noticed that I phrased and rephrased questions or summaries and that my language was far simpler than had I been speaking to first language students. (Used same wording or paraphrased or summarized aspects of discussion).

I noticed that I was very active in this discussion and more controlling than perhaps I should have been. Questioning was used, but also summarizing, rephrasing, recognizing key issues – but also making a lot of the suggestions. However, it was interesting to note that many of these suggestions had in fact, been thought of or tried already, so much of this discussion reflected on what had already been done. Z is a quiet student, as are the other two students. None of the students look to create conflict, but this does not mean that they are passive either. The discussion clearly reflected strategies taken and efforts made to change untenable situations. Thematically, the discussion flowed and each section linked to previous sections. The issues were not peculiar to this group and had been discussed in other formats with other groups and contexts, as well as within their reflective journals.

Table 9.1: Teaching staff members' beliefs and understanding of education within their teaching context in terms of their philosophy and methodologies of teaching

<p>Teaching means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring students understand the fundamentals of the discipline using a practical, applied approach to teaching: (f=3) It is "to try and get the basics across. The things that are really important. I don't like to make it too 'high' for the students. But I am very practical so I teach very practically, and that's what would mean a lot for me." • Promoting critical thinking (f=2) "the ability to take what is given and to look at something and apply what is given to what you are seeing and then reason your way into helping or achieving a goal, a nursing goal." • Supporting a strong theory and practice connection (f=4). • Promoting student enjoyment of the learning process (f=1) and working from the known and the familiar (f=4): "It makes it far more understandable to the students and they are able to then enjoy their learning a lot better than if somebody comes in and talks at a different level and they think "well, how am I going to use this?" And, "I don't understand." So, rather make it practical and also relate it to the practical situation so that when they do go and do their practical...It's fairly familiar to them... That it is not all strange and all just theory and that they haven't had any kind of practice." • Mutual growth (F=2): "Sometimes in teaching, there might be things you need to learn yourself, so you learn and grow together with your student... my experiences wouldn't be half of what their contribution would be." • Using personal experience as a teacher: "That is how I learn the best and so that is how I try to teach as well." • Using different teaching methods • Looking at the macro picture: The one thing that I am 100% sure of- and I have no doubts - that there is no place for the certificate... But what we have shown with the change is that there are a whole lot of competencies that a lot of those students possibly did not have that we now are ensuring that are actually in place to make safer practitioners." • Moving beyond the curriculum, where teaching is based on need (f=4). • Recognizing the value of students' experience, maturity and intuition as the basis for learning, – adult based education (f=4): I don't think that you can actually teach experience. I don't think that you can teach intuition"... I think it is something that develops over time. I don't think that it is something that we can teach. I think that it does develop over time. As the person develops not only in their own knowledge and their own ability but in their maturity and how they approach people. • Seeing the person behind the student (f=4): Awareness of and sensitivity towards students' personal issues, although not taking it on board "How do you separate a student from her problems? Even though you cannot solve their problems. But you have to listen should they actually – you don't have to ask about this. But should they happen to tell us about whatever we can just refer them and let them think about what they want to do about their problem." • Recognising the importance of listening skills. A student needs someone "who can listen to me, somebody who cares, somebody who can support me. And unfortunately, we are dealing with students who are housewives, who single parents. There are so many things you need to consider as a teacher." • Being a role model, a mentor. "As we are here, we are also their role models, we are the people they are going to look up to and say "Oh, how I wish I could do the same for somebody"...I am looking at a person that I could see as a mentor."

- **Acceptance of own/ students limitations:** (f=3): "I think with the Research - I don't feel comfortable leading a research group, and possibly because of that, I am much more textbook oriented, because I am not as comfortable as in (my discipline) settings".

"But at the same time, I think that we have come to the acceptance that we can't make all of them change and we can't make them change their whole approach to the programme."

- **Formalizing concerns about some students' failure to engage in learning:** "What do you do with students like that? We have now actually got them to sign **twice** that they have been informed that for them the best option would be to actually drop maybe (a) one or two subjects and then carry on with the other two successfully complete them and then spend time the next year working on the others."
- **Being aware of and support individual learning status (f=4):** "If students do tend to lag behind a little bit, I also do one-on-one which I also do find useful for students who do lag. But I can only see if they lag behind after a little while and then I will take them in to do a bit of extra work."
- **Being comfortable with one's knowledge and ability as an educator** – and this comes with experience. Knowledge and experience permits risk: "I think as I have taught more and more, I have become more and more comfortable within the teaching environment and have become probably less and less structured."
- **Being a role model, a mentor, a facilitator.**
- **Constantly evaluating** to ensure knowledge gain by using different forms of assessment from different sources for comparative purposes
- Using personal experience as a teacher (f=2): "That is how I learn the best and so that's how I try to teach as well."

Table 9.2: The concept of learning interrogated by teaching staff members

<p>Learning is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth: (f=4): "Learning is more than a piece of paper. Learning means growth, it means broadening my scope of thinking. It means being a safe practitioner. It means being more knowledgeable in a specific aspect, and I always realize that no matter how much I can know but there will always be (room) for improve(ment), whatever I have learned... (Learning) is continuous; it is something that goes on and on. It is indefinite." • Self-growth which is developmental, is based on intuition, maturity and experience • Growth supported by recognition and valuing of the students: "As their opinion matters more in the class and they have more input. I really do feel that they change as people. They grow a lot in that year. I think people come in; they have nothing to say in the beginning and then at the end they have a very valued opinion on a lot of things - And I think that the perception changes for them. I have also had students who have come and have said "I really want to carry on and I want to carry on for myself" - which indicates that they have an idea of what adult learning is about, I think which is to improve themselves" • Openness to learning which promotes self-growth: "It depends on the student themselves. I think that if they come in quite open, a lot of self-growth does occur, but if they come in with preconceived ideas of getting a piece of paper, that growth is very inhibited." • Freedom to learn: Students should feel free to learn. The environment should be such that she is in a position to learn and I am only there to guide and support. • Promoting self-awareness: Students should be "people that know why they are here." • Promoted through involvement: "...as they are going through the course, as they are getting more involved. As their opinion matters more in the class and they have more input. I really do feel that they change as people." • Collaborative learning: "They all have something to offer and that the students learn probably more from the other students than they would from me" • Integration of theory and practice in real terms: "students actually go away with something that they've learned that they can apply. I mean, to me, it doesn't help if they just go away with theory and theory sits in their heads and they actually don't know how to apply it...but there are those who have grown this year... they have learned so much more and how it is making a difference to their practice, how they can take this and make changes in the workplace, which is obviously what we are actually trying to make them do" • Demonstrating competencies: "there are a whole lot of competencies that a lot of those students possibly did not have that we now are ensuring that are actually in place to make safer practitioners." • Skills-based: "Skills are very important. Do they really have skills to actually apply what they have learned? Because knowledge - it doesn't mean that if you know something you are definitely going to apply it. You need to link those two." • Acceptance of own/ students' limitations: "But at the same time, I think that we have come to the acceptance that we can't make all of them change and we can't make them change their whole approach to the programme." • Having a specific outcome in mind: "I would like to see a caring, safe nurse practitioner at the end of the programme. By safe, they have to have the ability to not cause any harm, not miss any conditions that would adversely affect the patients and to be confident that the management, the treatment, the management, the education they give is worthwhile and will improve somebody's quality of life." • A dynamic process: "Knowledge is so dynamic and even the environment you are staying in, the world you are staying in - things change before you can even think, so for us to cope we need to be very open in terms of how we teach and what exactly we teach."
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Table 9.3: Teaching strategies or processes used by the teaching staff members

Staff members teach by:

- **Recognising previous experiences or attitudes negatively impacting on student learning:**
 - ✓ **"Students' prior content-based learning experience:"** Which is one of the problems that we've identified this year. They can regurgitate theory, but they actually can't take that information and use it to the benefit of their working environments. "
 - ✓ **Wrong motivation:** "This year this group, the majority of them have come in, I would say (to the programme) for the wrong reasons – that they've come in for a easy way out of night shift, and the 7/7 (shifts), and weekend work and things like that and they actually don't understand what is involved – in a nutshell, what occupational health nursing is about".
 - ✓ **Desire for status as opposed to true learning:** I think that a lot of them are certificate chasing at the moment.
 - ✓ **Students' acceptance of lower standards for themselves:** "maybe we have our education system to blame. That they have come from a system where a 40% is a pass so it is actually good enough not to actually achieve a minimum of 50% and I think that they have been able to pass based on their ability to recall as apposed to apply knowledge and they believe that the same will happen now."
- **Organising one-on-one interviews where possible prior to student entry to enable students to make informed choices about enrolling (f=4).**
- **Pre-testing to establish knowledge base and determine teaching approach (f=3):** I like to see what the level of knowledge is beforehand especially before we start something difficult or technical such as immunology or immunizations. I just look at their level of knowledge and then adjust my teaching accordingly – so I look at how difficult or easy or practical I should approach it. I try and use everything that is available that would be useful."
- **Teaching from the known to unknown (f=4) :** "take the theory and say that this is what is known and you have got to look at what you've got in front of you, so look at your patient and say 'This is what the patient presents as, or what the person is complaining of' or however you would like to put it and then say' between this and this, what do I have and what is the best manner in which I can make a difference?"
- **Starting with the familiar (f=4).**
- **Keeping things simple and related to the familiar (f=2)** "I find a lot of the research books for many of our black students are very difficult to read and understand, so I bring it down to basics" "Teaching first of all means facilitating, making it easy for the students to learn."
- **Integrating approaches:** "I might even start with what is happening in our daily lives, not just relate it to the book, but practically, what is happening in our daily lives. Move onto concrete issues – things that are important and crucial for them to know and understand and not just to do remote learning. Things that they can actually understand and put in their own words and even add into the new information that they have. They can draw from their experiences and even add to the information that is already available in the books and the internet or anywhere. And I also like sharing with the students what they have seen maybe what they have read from newspapers and link that with what is happening and with what my learning outcomes are. "
- **Providing a culture of learning:** "developed that culture that they work consistently".
- **Repetition and writing down of instructions.** "... try and explain over and over. Write things down" "And I also like when they write an assignment, I prefer that they keep coming to me to give me feedback, so that they don't just come at the end and submit something that is totally wrong because it is very common that our students do not understand the way the questions has been phrased".
- **Supporting the connection between theory and practice:** "because every person is such an individual and you are nursing people and when you look at people, they don't fit into textbooks and I think that that is what you have got to come to grips with (f=4).
- **Interrogating practice and connect with theory:** "because every person is such an individual and when you're looking at people – when you're nursing people- and when you're looking at people, they don't fit into textbooks and I think that that is what you have got to come to grips with."
- **One-on-one remedial teaching sessions – awareness of and sensitivity to individual needs (f=4).**

Identification and sensitive management of weaker students.

- **Recognising that students' experiences drive the learning process:** "I look at the basis that they all have something to offer and that the students learn probably more from the other students than they would from me.. They all come from different experiences. They all have overcome different problems ... you would probably find somebody in class who has been through something like that ...and it is just a good thing to see how they did it and structured it and perhaps used it or perhaps not used it."
- **Supporting students** – additional materials; emotional or academic support.
- **Entering into learning partnerships.** Move together but taking into account different rates of learning: "Sometimes in teaching, you might also even try and explore things you also don't know yourself but you can learn and grow together with your student."
- **Recognising that 'spoon feeding' creates dependence:** It doesn't mean that you must just give a person everything; you want the person to think.
- **Using teachable moments (f=4):** "even if you meet them along the corridors. I do ask them things that will make them comfortable 'Did you understand this assignment?'"
- **Promoting opportunities for frequency of practice.**
- **Using humour and controversy:** "I often try to use humour to try and break that barrier, but once again, a lot of our black students are not exposed to humour and I find that quite difficult in the beginning but in the end, they do respond and I can kid them a bit, but in the beginning it is very difficult to kid them because they take it very personally." (Obviously the lecturer doesn't quite appreciate that the richness of humour within the students' culture is just different).
- **Sensitivity to cultural differences:** "I think many of our black students have been taught not to be very verbal. That they to be quiet..."
- **Clarification of expectations and guidance re anticipated problems:** "We sat down with them and said it's a lot of work. There is no denying that there is a lot of work. There is something like 13 assignments in total that need to be done. They are done in different ways: Some of them are short, some of them are long. But we have actually sat down with students and we've said to them: "Look. We can see that you are a full-time worker, you are a breadwinner, you are a mother and you have children to support etc. Let us make it easier for you."
- **Organising regular teaching contact sessions as opposed to intermitted block teaching:** "I think that you have far more contact with students. You get to know them better. You can focus more attention on those who really need it because they are with you more often. You can actually also pace their work better for them..."
"if it is spread, there will be a better distribution and I think that it will help students as well with time management".
- **Evaluating within the workplace context:** "e.g. health education sessions- we will not do them in the classroom. Students actually score better marks anyway doing it because they don't stand saying " well in the real situation, I would do the following:" (It) is a real life situation, it's a real group of people ...and I think it gives them a much better feel for what is actually going to be expected from them. "
- **Requesting student feedback to enable rethinking and restructuring of programme (f=3):** "...we could get the students to tell us how it could be left there but how it could be made more streamlined, for example..."
- **Visibly guiding the connections between theory and practice** "we have gone is we have then presented the theory and then taken sessions where we have actually then said"Right, now here is a situation. Now take that theory and use it to, for example, design a medical surveillance programme for this worker or this group of workers" to try and get them to shift that way."
- **Structuring programme to meet needs of health service, student learning and professional requirements (f=4).**
- **Promoting creative thinking through guidance:** "We have also told them that there are creative ways of going around the journal articles and things like that..."
- **Recognizing individuality of students (f=4):** "The one thing that that student has actually learned is to come and say "I have a crisis with my time at the moment. I am trying to manage it but I need you to help me by giving me an extension" which I have then –"when you are ready, submit it" because I can see that that is a committed student. "
- **Awareness of individual student needs to guide response with sensitivity and awareness (f=4):** "most of us, I am sure, by this time and even before this time, would have identified the weaker student and try to

and make sure that they do understand without making them embarrassed..”

- **Using multiple teaching strategies (f=4):** “It’s a variety ... I use a lot of audio-visuals, I use a lot of slides as a means of teaching... problem based, as well, where we look at a situation and then they break up into groups... and practice sessions... and little pre-tests before I start something technical... I try and use everything that is available to make it useful... If students do tend to lag behind a little bit, I also do one-on-one.”
- **Lecturing to provide foundational materials (f=3)** There is quite a bit of lecturing that goes on, but it is really to just cover the real bases. “
- **Questioning approach: (f=2)** “So that it becomes a thoughtful process as apposed to just a lecture.”
- **Use of audio-visual aids especially slides:** “ I use a lot of audio-visual aids, such as slides as a means of teaching and I have done surveys previously in class and have found that the students found slides a very useful way of learning.”
- **Problem based learning:** “where we would look at a situation, and they would break up into groups, discuss and give feedback” (f=3).
- **Use of group work, group discussions and skills-based learning (f=4).**
- **Case study approach.**
- **Reflective journaling.**
- **Supporting student reading (f=3).**
- **Clinical bedside teaching (individual)** – work with students (constantly) in practical setting:” I don’t believe that students will do well if they don’t spend a lot of time in the practical setting” (f=2).
- **Promoting prior reading (f=2),** but building in safeguards anticipating that some students do not read: “tried to get them to read beforehand. We have given them readings so that they can actually get a bit of a background so that they could try and participate in the classroom. Some read, some don’t. You then can’t leave those behind. You actually have to make a way of including those that haven’t read because otherwise there is no value in their even sitting in the classroom.”
- **Mind mapping for logical thinking.**
- **Tutorials:** “bring your problems and we will sit as a group and we will look at it. We will try and help in areas. We will then see how the information is flowing.”
- **Continuous assessment using a variety of methods: leads to having to complete work until it is at a satisfactory level (f=4).**
- **Guiding large group guided experience in a practice setting** “we actually taken the students out to factories as two separate groups. That worked very well where then we did walk-through surveys with them so that they had the lecturer and they had – well, I was lucky, I had a small group of 8 – and we actually go through the plant and actually identify problems and speak about the people who are working in that environment”.
- **Using practitioners as role models in the health services (Preceptors): (f=4)** “One of the other big things is the impact that the practitioners out there themselves make on the students...We will link them in with certain ones because there is value being linked with sound practitioners as well.. I also believe that there is value in going to clinics that aren’t up to scratch – but I think that they need to identify what a sound clinic is as well.”
- **Teaching beyond the curriculum,** based on need. “I don’t see myself just concentrating on only what is said in the curriculum. If there is a need for me to go beyond what is in the curriculum.”

Table 9.5: Staff perceptions of the approach within the department to support critical reflective practice

The approach to support critical reflective practice is seen by staff members:

- **As a challenge: the amount of time and energy required which could negatively impact on the needs of other courses (staff, f=2); but countered with the realization that there are benefits as students are reading, thinking about what they are doing and this results in more efficient practice (f=3):**

"My concern about it is basically the amount of time that it does take. That has been my one concern. But then I think they gain from it and the fact (a) that it does make them read - and you can actually follow up that they are actually reading which I think a lot of them don't do and they don't see the value of reading. That's one aspect that gets going. And the fact that they actually start thinking about what they are doing. Because we see a lot of it in industry that they - in fact I had a phone call just yesterday that "I used to everything on everyone, and now I sit and think "Why do I do it?" And now I am starting to think, "Well, let me first do a risk assessment to determine what the person needs and then do only those activities that need to be done." And I think that that kind of benefit is coming out where they actually start to think about what they're doing. Because often I don't think there is reflection. One of the biggest problems, I believe, in nursing practice, is the fact that we don't evaluate what we do. There is no attempt to look at any kind of quality assurance in the programmes that we are running e.g. how we do certain testing e.g. audiometry. Do we ever sit back and say "Are these results a true reflection of the guys' hearing acuity? How can I be sure that they are? What could I actually do to ensure that these are true readings and true values? And I don't think that this happens enough. And I think that this is one of the things that this has made them start to think about- think about what they are doing and why they are actually doing it. Which I think has cut down on some of their workload because they realize that they do a lot of unnecessary stuff because they have never actually thought about why they do it, and they just randomly go ahead and do it because that is what they had always done."

- **Through their understanding of students' perceptions re workload issues (f=3):** "In the beginning, my students moan, and at the end they say, that was great, they didn't realize how much that helped them. Each one of them says it's been a wonderful exercise to go through. (Ruefully) And I know that some of them don't quite come through right from the start but they do near the end and they all have learned through that experience - very much so."

"And I think also they've enjoyed that (the discussions) - they enjoy the informality as well, of - when you come in and you take a topical subject and you read it and they are able to voice an opinion in class and I think that they very much enjoy those sessions and that is teaching them a lot on how to look at things and not accept things at face value. And I hope it carries on their - not just in- but in their work situation - maybe there is a lot of confrontation with other people - I think that it is very important for them to see things in a balance and not just from one point of view. So I think you know that they are starting to think "Yes, but... and trying to see another point of view and then making a decision."

- **As a means of matching student expectations to the reality of the learning needs:** "They are not quick fix qualifications, there is a lot of work we expect from them, but what they must remember is that the work that we expect from them is always related to their prac setting. So, it is not as if the work required is totally alienated from their practice and that they can't use again and we have also told them that there are creative ways of going around the journal articles."
- **As a force for student growth that results from the developmental process of the learning: (f=3)** "For me it is a good approach and for me it is actually meant for mature students. It is an approach, that the sooner it is implemented, the better..." "...I think it's wonderful... No, I do because I think it is one of the main thing that actually makes the students grow quite a lot. Because in a sense, they **have** to read. A lot of students actually come into this group and they don't read. They don't read newspapers, they don't read general things, they don't know about general things and that really links very strongly to community work and its imperative that they start reading but not just reading. You know you can skim something and say, oh, oh and that has happened but their critical thinking, looking at deeper things, learning to criticize, learning to not accept exactly what is written down and to see different points of view. That is my perception really of critical thinking. Thinking about something at a little bit of a deeper level."

Critiquer Questioning and Responses to Students' Reflective Journals

The following table provides an outline of the type of written dialogue [in the form of questions and comments] I had engaged in with the students and corresponding examples exemplifying the process.

A. Critiquer-Questioning to promote different levels of thinking [knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation]	Examples from Students' Reflective Journals
Rhetorical questions - Rhetorical questions are not real questions because the questioner usually knows the answer. Teachers often use these questions to discover what students know about particular topics, but these questions do not foster inquiry nor do they involve students in their own educational endeavours. Rhetorical questions are best used to simply stimulate thought with no answer expected.	<p>I said I had noticed in our discussions that both A and C appeared to be more concerned about learning and sharing than in withholding and abusing power. [10a 7 Aug, 2001; Reflexive Journal]</p>
Deductive Questions – questioning from the general to the specific. David Ausubel's (1968) research on deductive reasoning (inferring details from generalizations or the "big picture") led him to suggest teachers introduce a topic on a general basis then slowly focus on details, linking new information with known information. Ausubel recommended: 1) Present an advanced organizer (something already known) under which the new information may be "filed", 2) Present the new material in context, and 3) Strengthen the cognitive organization of the new material relating to the old. Ask questions like: "If this is true about A, B, and C, what might we conclude about D?" or "Knowing the cause(s) in these cases, what would you guess about the cause(s) in this case?" Wakefield, D.W. 1998	<p>15 April 2002 Xolisi's Journal</p> <p>Maureen's comments: Do you really think so? How important is trust in a relationship? What happens when this element is eroded? The fact that both are your friends, how has your professional position in terms of having to pass on the results, affected this relationship? Is it possible to be HIV positive, without the blood transfusion, sexual contact, (was there any other way that unknowing contact could have been made?) What does this mean?</p>
Socratic questioning: Probe assumptions questions- Many questions can center around the concept of assumptions. The student may be asked for clarification, verification, explanation, or reliability of the assumption. Students may also be asked to identify another assumption which might apply to the particular case. What are you assuming? What is Karen assuming? What could we assume instead? You seem to be assuming _____. Do I understand you correctly? You seem to be assuming _____. How do you justify this as your position? All of your reasoning is dependent on the fact that _____. Why have you based your reasoning on _____ rather than _____? You seem to be assuming _____. How do you justify taking that for granted? Is that always the case? Why do you think the assumption holds here? Why would someone make that assumption? [Paul, 1993 in TRA]	<p>Carol 6 March 2002</p> <p>What does invasion of privacy mean to you? Who, specifically, in the company, did you and your General Manager apologies to? Were the specific employees aware of the breach in confidentiality or, only top management? What are the implications for this, do you think?</p> <p>In terms of the first question, do your new procedures fully address this issue, do you think?</p> <p>Carol 5 September</p> <p>What are the results of your interactions with Dr P? Do you get the results you want? Do you think that because 'you have always worked towards the best interest of the company' that this allows you to override his values or beliefs? How can you anticipate and manage his way of 'always being in a hurry', do you think?</p>
Questions probing belief/value system for justification	<p>Carol 13 March</p> <p>Do you believe that as a woman, you can have everything - the job, the relationship, and the children? Why and how? How do/can you separate out the different elements of your life - working, relationships, learning, and children? Is it possible? What is the effect? What is it that you want for yourself?</p>
Questions for divergent thinking- necessitate more wide-ranging, longer responses with higher level thought processing for example "Why is the Beatles' music so popular in Japan ?" Moritoshi	<p>Carol 19 September</p> <p>I have a challenge for you: try wearing ear plugs for an 8 hour work day and describe how you feel. Consider what it must be like to wear these appliances every working day for that period of time and then ask yourself the question 'How can non-compliance with health and safety issues be overcome?'</p> <p>Have you considered the BASNEF model of behaviour? What motivates people to change? What aspects of change behaviour would you incorporate into your health education model, if you were promoting the</p>

	<p>use of hearing aids?</p> <p>Do you think that understanding the stage of development of the individual might affect his utilization of protective equipment?</p>
<p>Questions for convergent thinking - often have short answers which "encourage similar student responses" and require low level thought processing, for example "Can you ski ? ---- "Yes, I can", "No, I can't".</p>	<p>Xolisi 14 September</p> <p>Xolisi: <i>In our managing people do we only look and magnify their bad sides only or do we give lives to remember the good also about them?</i></p> <p>Maureen's comments: So should we make judgements? How hard it must be to be perfect.</p>
<p>Anticipatory problem solving questions – these are questions that assume that the problem can be solved, and often the questioner has a particular plan of action in mind.</p>	<p>Toko's journal 15/05/2003</p> <p>[Toko was discussion an issue around unethical and corrupt behaviour of her manager]</p> <p>Have you considered discussing this with DENOSA? [This is the Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa]</p> <p>Is there any way that you can take this forward on your informal level?</p> <p>Perhaps we should discuss this in class?</p>
<p>Inference questions - These questions ask students to go beyond the immediately available information. To push beyond the factual in this way is to ask students to find clues, examine them, and discuss what inferences are justified. Inference questions demand that students fill in missing information. Wolfe</p>	<p>Carol's journal 11 April</p> <p>Why do you think that women seem to value special days such as birthday, anniversaries more than men? Is this an assumption on my part or is there some truth in the question? Does this mean they don't care ... or?</p> <p>How did you respond to his forgetfulness?</p> <p>Is behaviour indicative of the value placed on the emotion e.g. if someone regularly doesn't remember, does this mean they don't care?</p>
<p>Inductive Questions - specific to general</p> <p>Hilda Taba (1966) suggested inductive reasoning (arranging information according to inherent classes or principles) comprises the fundamental building blocks of higher thinking involve. Students should be led to infer the organization and significance of the information they are handling. To see this process in action, give students numerous pieces of information and suggest they meaningfully organize it. Strong students know how to organize and value information. Ask your students: "What is most important?", "What is least important?", and "Should you bother learning this? Why?"</p> <p>D.V. Wakefield [1998]</p>	<p>Janet's Journal 20 March 2003</p> <p>Question: if in fact, CEO had been doing so well, why would the mother company make such a radical change? Do you think that the philosophies might not be synchronous - e.g. this CEO worked hard on morale, keeping staff happy, was involved in community outreach programmes - but perhaps did not reach the output target required? All companies are profit driven and perhaps his bottom line in not their bottom line?</p>
<p>Socratic questioning: Purpose/explanation</p> <p>The building up of questions in order to arrive at an explanation or understanding of an issue</p>	<p>Reflexive Journal '11a 2001Entry 11 August 13'</p> <p>At this stage, I asked two questions: One - what was the race group of the patient and Two- why was this question relevant?</p> <p>A number of students chimed in and said that if she were black or coloured, she would be unlikely to ask questions as this passivity on receiving care, generally speaking, was a cultural norm. On the other hand, Indians and whites were far more assertive and non-accepting of treatment without explanations.</p>
<p>Evaluative questions - Evaluative thinking questions are those which deal with matters of judgement, value, and choice. They are characterized by their judgemental quality. Thought processes involved while asking and answering these questions are <i>valuing, judging, defending, or justifying choices</i></p>	<p>Carol 28 March</p> <p>Maureen's response:</p> <p>In retrospect, what could you have done to prevent this from happening? Or was it important that this happen as part of the learning process?</p>
<p>Structure/ how to question - question that will enable to student to structure how to go about the process to find an answer</p>	<p>Carol 2 July</p> <p>What can you do to bring them closer?</p> <p>Ø What are you doing in Richards Bay to help fill in the gap?</p> <p>Ø Have you made friends to bring on home?</p> <p>Ø What if you tackled this side of life (social side) as rigorously as you do work or studies?</p>
<p>Questions about the question - he student might be asked to identify the question, the main point, or the issue at hand. In addition, the student might be asked to break the question into single concepts rather than multiple concepts or determine whether some type of evaluation needs to take place. The student or discussion group may also be asked to identify why this question is important.</p> <p>Is this the same issue as?</p> <p>Does this question ask us to evaluate something?</p> <p>Is this question easy or hard to answer? Why?</p> <p>·What was the point of this question? ·</p> <p>Why do you think I asked this question/ ·</p> <p>What does...mean?</p> <p>How does...apply to everyday life?</p>	<p>Carol 11 July</p> <p>Does it help to reflect on what you did/ do in terms of learning these behaviours? Why/why not? Does it help to reflect on what you did/ do in terms of learning these behaviours? Why/why not?</p>
<p>Interpretation questions - Interpretive questions propose that they</p>	<p>Carol: 25 September</p>

understand the consequences of information or ideas. Asks for deeper probing. Wolfe	<p>Interesting that you have recognized the 'self-esteem' aspect of the problem. I sometimes wonder who people make the choice for - for themselves or their children.</p> <p>Did you know that this concept features quite significantly throughout your diary? Why, do you think? How do you think it affects your practice? [although you have commented indirectly and directly on this in your diary].</p> <p>How much recognition do you get in and for your work? Is it a built in feature? What do you do to elicit recognition?</p> <p>You mention that human beings need recognition. Is this a norm in our profession or in life in general? Why?</p>
<p>Questions for reflective thinking - When teachers ask reflective questions, they are insisting that students ask themselves: "How do I know I know?"; "What does this leave me not knowing?"; "What things do I assume rather than examine?" Such questions may leave a class silent, because they take mulling over. Nonetheless, they eventually lead to important talk about basic assumptions.</p>	<p>Xolisi's journal: 15 July What about the leader? So does the behaviour of the group depend upon the exemplary behaviour of the leader?</p> <p>Xolisi's journal: 3 July It takes courage for you to express these views. I have a question. If you yourself were HIV positive, is there any way you could confidently inject a client in your health care setting? What would be the purpose of revealing your status?</p>
<p>Probe reasoning/evidence questions- This category of probing questions asks for additional examples, evidence which has been discovered, reasons for making statements, adequacy for the reasons, process which lead student to this belief, or anything which would change the student's mind on this issue.</p> <p>What would be an example? Why do you say that? Why do you think that is right? What led you to that belief? How does that apply to this case? What would convince you otherwise? How could we go about finding out if that is true? By what reasoning did you come to that conclusion? Who is in a position to know if that is the case? But is that good evidence to believe that? Why do you say that? What led you to that belief? How does that apply to this case? What would change your mind? But, is that good evidence for that belief? Is there a reason to doubt that evidence? Who is in a position to know that is true? What would you say to someone who said that ____? Can someone else give evidence to support that view? By what reasoning did you come to that conclusion? How could we find out if that is true?</p>	<p>Reeva 20 February, 2003</p> <p>Maureen: does the research indicate this? [Do you remember our discussion at the beginning of the year re which professional group had the most impact on the health status of communities in SA?]</p> <p>Carol's journal: 13 April I was going to ask you how you cope with such a workload but you have answered in terms of the positive attitude. What, in addition to cultivating a positive frame of mind, have you done this year to manage?</p> <p>Janet's diary: 18 February 2002 Maureen's response: Does pre-counselling include the eventuality that you write of? Should it? Is there any other possible explanation of the infection [other than the obvious - another partner]? J. No blood transfusions or any possibilities existed. Maureen - that she could recall?</p>
<p>Open questions - Questions which involve complex thinking require much explanation and detail in their answers and probably time to think and reflect. These questions are often called open or fat questions . They are often used to build up information, to allow for more personal responses and to generate further discussions and questioning. Questions which do not require any definite answer are often used as introductory questions at the beginning of a session. Their purpose may be to set the scene for the content that is to follow by steering the thinking of the students in certain specific directions. Open-ended or divergent questions promote open-mindedness and invite many answers or possibilities. They can stimulate the exploration of concepts and ideas and facilitate creative and critical thinking processes. Emphasis is on the individual. These are the kinds of questions that challenge students and their thinking. Open questions are generally contestable in that they leave us with more to think about and may not bring complete satisfaction. A good question is one that enhances and extends learning so it is important to know about the different kinds and where they fit in the learning environment. A good question should breed more questions and the desire to find answers. Good questions need to take the learner beyond the recall of basic information and challenge. Painter [1996]</p>	<p>Janet's journal: 21 April, 2002</p> <p>Question: You have been part of a merger. Has this had any impact on you? Are there any lessons you can take from this process that could help you with Change Management?</p>
<p>Questions to enthuse Questions that could make the reader feel good about themselves, and</p>	<p>Carol's journal: 18 February, 2002 MAUREEN'S COMMENTS:</p>

perhaps engage them in further sharing	<p>Ø Good for you!</p> <p>Ø Is this something you should share with us?</p> <p>Janet's journal: 26 July</p> <p>J, I know you are a member of your Occupational health society. Is this a possible issue the group needs to review? Have you considered writing a paper for the Occupational health journal re this issue? What are other members in the society experiencing? [Are you on the list server - so that you can get a quick idea of general perceptions?] What is your Company doing re this issue? What do you think they ought to be doing? What can you do?</p>
Transfer questions - transfer questions provoke a kind of breadth of thinking, asking students to take their knowledge to new places	<p>Carol: 18 February</p> <p>If race were not an issue in this country, do you think people would still behave in prejudiced ways? Is it possible to use race as a general explanation for poor behaviour and overlook other prejudices?</p>
Questions for recalling procedure	<p>Carol: 5 April</p> <p>What did you say to her in response? Why?</p>
<p>Questions about knowledge - exhibits previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts and answers</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>What is ... ? How is ... ?</p> <p>Where is ... ? When did ... happen?</p> <p>How did ... happen? How would you explain ... ?</p> <p>Why did ... ? How would you describe ... ?</p> <p>When did ... ? Can you recall ... ?</p> <p>How would you show ... ? Can you select ... ?</p> <p>Who were the main ... ? Can you list three ... ?</p> <p>Which one ... ? Who was ... ?</p>	<p>Janet: 28 April</p> <p>I am just wondering about our role as nurses. Our practice has extended to such a degree that many of our nurses are 'doctoring' and not nursing. Is there a difference? Do we have the skills and knowledge to make the decisions you are discussing? Is this a concern - or should it be?</p>
<p>Questions about comprehension - demonstrating understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions and stating main ideas.</p> <p>Key words: compare, contrast, demonstrate, interpret, explain, extend, illustrate, infer, outline, relate, rephrase, translate, summarize, show, classify</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>How would you classify the type of ... ?</p> <p>How would you compare ... ? contrast ... ?</p> <p>Will you state or interpret in your own words ... ?</p> <p>How would you rephrase the meaning ... ?</p> <p>What facts or ideas show ... ?</p> <p>What is the main idea of ... ?</p> <p>Which statements support ... ?</p> <p>Can you explain what is happening ... what is meant ... ?</p> <p>What can you say about ... ?</p> <p>Which is the best answer ... ?</p> <p>How would you summarize ... ?</p>	<p>Jenny: 29 August</p> <p>What are the alternatives in the light of what is acceptable to people? Perhaps you would be right if this were the rational. I would question this as the major reason, however</p> <p>Jenny: 23 March</p> <p>Maureen's Comments/questions</p> <p>Good point.</p> <p>What would happen if repeated injections of benzyl penicillin ?</p> <p>There is a system (cheap) of conserving water and using soap in areas with limited access to water. Do you know it (Marijke has a reading if you want one).</p>
<p>Questions to promote action / Questions about application - solving problems by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in a different way.</p> <p>Key words: apply, build, choose, construct, develop, interview, make use of, organize, experiment with, plan, select, solve, utilize, model, identify</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>How would you use ... ?</p> <p>What examples can you find to ... ?</p> <p>How would you solve ... using what you have learned ... ?</p> <p>How would you organize ... to show ... ?</p> <p>How would you show your understanding of ... ?</p> <p>What approach would you use to ... ?</p> <p>How would you apply what you learned to develop ... ?</p> <p>What other way would you plan to ... ?</p> <p>What would result if ... ?</p> <p>Can you make use of the facts to ... ?</p> <p>What elements would you choose to change ... ?</p> <p>What facts would you select to show ... ?</p> <p>What questions would you ask in an interview with ... ?</p>	<p>Carol's journal: 8 February</p> <p>Dear Carol</p> <p>In some ways, it is really hard for me to respond appropriately now to entries read so many months later and also because many of your issues have been discussed in tutorials. But I will do my best.</p> <p>It is quite obvious that you have taken on a huge challenge and for me, the challenge is: how to keep both you and your family safe while meeting your other demands. Can you accept a different standard of performance from yourself in either area? What do you anticipate will happen if you continue at the rate that you do? What have you noticed about your lifestyle when trying to analyze your time?</p>
Questions about analysis - examining and breaking information into parts by identifying motives or causes; making inferences and finding evidence to support generalizations.	<p>11 April: Carol</p> <p>Why do you think that women seem to value special days such as birthday, anniversaries more than men? Is this an assumption on my</p>

<p>Key words: analyze, categorize, classify, compare, contrast, discover, dissect, divide, examine, inspect, simplify, survey, take part in, test for, distinguish, list, distinction, theme, relationships, function, motive, inference, assumption, conclusion</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>What are the parts or features of ... ?</p> <p>How is _____ related to ... ?</p> <p>Why do you think ... ?</p> <p>What is the theme ... ?</p> <p>What motive is there ... ?</p> <p>Can you list the parts ... ?</p> <p>What inference can you make ... ?</p> <p>What conclusions can you draw ... ?</p> <p>How would you classify ... ?</p> <p>How would you categorize ... ?</p> <p>Can you identify the difference parts ... ?</p> <p>What evidence can you find ... ?</p> <p>What is the relationship between ... ?</p> <p>Can you make a distinction between ... ?</p> <p>What is the function of ... ?</p> <p>What ideas justify ... ?</p>	<p>part or is there some truth in the question? Does this mean they don't care ... or?</p> <p>How did you respond to his forgetfulness?</p> <p>Is behaviour indicative of the value placed on the emotion e.g. if someone regularly doesn't remember, does this mean they don't care?</p>
<p>Questions about evaluation - presenting and defending opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas or quality of work based on a set of criteria.</p> <p>Key Words: award, choose, conclude, criticize, decide, defend, determine, dispute, evaluate, judge, justify, measure, compare, mark, rate, recommend, rule on, select, agree, interpret, explain, appraise, prioritize, opinion, support, importance, criteria, prove, disprove, assess, influence, perceive, value, estimate, influence, deduct</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>Do you agree with the actions ... ? with the outcomes ... ?</p> <p>What is your opinion of ... ?</p> <p>How would you prove ... ? disprove ... ?</p> <p>Can you assess the value or importance of ... ?</p> <p>Would it be better if ... ?</p> <p>Why did they (the character) choose ... ?</p> <p>What would you recommend ... ?</p> <p>How would you rate the ... ?</p> <p>What would you cite to defend the actions ... ?</p> <p>How would you evaluate ... ?</p> <p>How could you determine ... ?</p> <p>What choice would you have made ... ?</p> <p>What would you select ... ?</p> <p>How would you prioritize ... ?</p> <p>What judgment would you make about ... ?</p> <p>Based on what you know, how would you explain ... ?</p> <p>What information would you use to support the view ... ?</p> <p>How would you justify ... ?</p> <p>What data was used to make the conclusion ... ?</p> <p>Why was it better that ... ?</p> <p>How would you prioritize the facts ... ?</p> <p>How would you compare the ideas ... ? people ... ?</p>	<p>Carol's journal: 28 March, 2002</p> <p>Maureen's response:</p> <p>In retrospect, what could you have done to prevent this from happening? Or was it important that this happen as part of the learning process?</p>
<p>Probe implications/ consequences questions - The student might be asked to describe and discuss the implication of what is being done or said, the effect which would result, the alternatives which might be feasible, or the cause-and-effect of an action.</p> <p>What are you implying by that?</p> <p>When you say _____ are you implying _____?</p> <p>But if that happened, what else would also happen as a result? Why?</p> <p>How can we find out?</p> <p>What does this question assume?</p> <p>Would _____ ask this question differently?</p> <p>How could someone settle this question?</p> <p>Can we break this question down at all?</p> <p>Is this question clear? Do we understand it?</p> <p>Is this question easy or hard to answer? Why?</p> <p>Does this question ask us to evaluate something? What?</p> <p>Do we all agree that this is the question?</p> <p>To answer this question, what other questions must we answer first?</p>	<p>Janet's journal: 13 February, 2003</p> <p>What would happen if the government did not impose this legislation?</p> <p>Janet's journal: 13 February, 2003</p> <p>An interesting article - following close on the heels of the basic minimum wage packages of domestic workers.</p> <p>Can you see any connection to what is happening in industry today? I took a walk around SA Breweries - and the staff complement was noticeable by their absence. What has been the impact of mechanization or the increase thereof - on the economy/ on the worker, do you think?</p> <p>What would happen if the government did not impose this legislation?</p> <p>What is the status of agricultural workers and their families, currently?</p> <p>What are the implications of this article - and your thoughts - for your own nursing practice, do you think?</p> <p>Carol: 14 February, 2002</p>

<p>I'm not sure I understand how you are interpreting this question. Is this the same as _____?</p> <p>How would _____ state the issue?</p> <p>Why is this issue important?</p>	<p>How does this perception help you as a nurse practitioner? Do you manage the contact differently with this thought in mind? What do you do to protect yourself as a nurse? Is it sufficient? You have children of your own and many children follow in their parents' footsteps and want to do what mom or dad does at work does the risk attached to your job affect what you would want for your children?</p> <p>Reeva: 20 February, 2003</p> <p>Maureen: do you think that this is only peculiar to SA?</p>
<p>Closed questions - Many questions we ask in the classroom require only a simple yes /no answer or a brief response. These are usually classified as closed or skinny questions. These questions do not require complex thought to reach the answer. They are usually used to recall information, assess prior knowledge or knowledge gained after teaching. What really produces closure is neither the question nor the answer but the environment in which questions are considered. If the environment encourages the formation of questions as an important activity in its own right, and if it encourages students to use a variety of strategies regarding questions and activities as a step to further inquiry, then even closed questions may be open. Painter 1996</p>	
<p>Questions to empower through insight development</p>	<p>Carol: 23 February</p> <p>This issue of group preparedness and team work plagues you for most of the year. How about picking up on some readings about how to improve or work effectively in a team or talking to an expert in this area?</p> <p>What else could you do to learn how to get a group motivated and working together? Could this help you in your work situation in any way?</p>
<p>Questioning about hypothesis -Typically, questions about what can be predicted and tested are thought of as belonging to sciences and other "hard" pursuits. But, in fact, predictive thinking matters in all domains.</p> <p>Skilled teachers probe for predictions as a way of making students actively aware of their expectations</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 27 February, 2003</p> <p>What would you say to Debbi Raphiti's advice "Ensure that your managers support you at all times. Open your mouth and talk?"</p> <p>How much responsibility do we as nurses bear in maintaining the status quo? (In other words, continuing to operate as we do?)</p> <p>If no-one objects to a situation, what reason is there for managers to change the situation?</p> <p>What type of pressure could we bring to get managers to change the work environment so that it is conducive</p> <p>* to nurses' health and</p> <p>* to patients health?</p>
<p>Probe for Clarification questions - Questions of clarification are basically asking for verification, additional information, or clarification of one point or main idea. The student would be expected to provide the information, expound on an opinion, rephrase the content, or explain why he/she made that particular statement.</p> <p>What do you mean by...</p> <p>What is your main point?</p> <p>How does _____ relate to _____?</p> <p>Could you put that another way?</p> <p>What do you think is the main issue here?</p> <p>Is your basic point _____ or _____?</p> <p>How does this relate to our discussion/problem/issue?</p> <p>What do you think John meant by his remark? What did you take John to mean?</p> <p>Jane, summarize in your own words what Richard has said. Richard, is that what you meant?</p>	<p>12a June Reflexive journal entry</p> <p>[Questions to students introducing themselves in their journal]</p> <p>Tell me about yourself. Who are you? Where do you come from? Tell me about a day/ week in your life/ work life. Tell me about your family. Tell me about your programme, how it meets/ doesn't meet your needs. Tell me about how you learned in the past and if there is difference in how you are being taught now? What are the difficulties/ values you are experiencing?</p> <p>Janet's journal : 27 March, 2003</p> <p>And so what are you trying to say here - you are doing her a favour and therefore she needs to be loyal?</p>
<p>Probe perspectives/viewpoints questions - The student might be asked whether there are alternatives to this viewpoint or perspective, how might other groups or people respond, what argument a person might use who disagrees with this viewpoint, or a comparison of similarities and differences between viewpoints.</p> <p>What would someone who disagrees say?</p> <p>What is an alternative?</p> <p>How are Mary's and John's ideas alike? Different?</p> <p>What are you implying by that?</p> <p>When you say _____, are you implying _____?</p> <p>But, if that happened, what else would happen as a result? Why?</p> <p>What effect would that have?</p> <p>Would that necessarily happen or only possibly/probably happen?</p> <p>If _____ and _____ are the case, then what might also be true?</p> <p>If we say that _____ is ethical, how about _____?</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 12 February, 2003</p> <p>What if it was one of your family?</p> <p>Xolisi's journal: 28 June</p> <p>If you were the minister of Health of SA, what would be your reasons for delaying treatment?</p> <p>Janet's journal: 27 March, 2003</p> <p>Here you have someone who has an 'in-charge' position? How do you get someone like this to 'buy into' your concept for the need to change? For 5 years, her notion of hygiene has been OK - but no longer - how can you get her to accept this 'new notion'? What could you have appealed to?</p> <p>Do you in fact, think you were wrong? What will be the outcome and what will be the cost?</p>
<p>Procedural questions - relate to classroom, lesson and student control processes such</p>	<p>Usually asked in tutorials or contact classroom sessions</p>

<p>as "Who is absent today ?"</p> <p>Questions to promote synthesis - compiling information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions.</p> <p>What changes would you make to solve . . . ?</p> <p>How would you improve . . . ?</p> <p>What would happen if . . . ?</p> <p>Can you elaborate on the reason . . . ?</p> <p>Can you propose an alternative . . . ?</p> <p>Can you invent . . . ?</p> <p>How would you adapt _____ to create a different . . . ?</p> <p>How could you change (modify) the plot (plan) . . . ?</p> <p>What could be done to minimize (maximize) . . . ?</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 6 March</p> <p>What was her menstrual history? What was her state of mind? Is there not a policy on ultrasound's pr</p> <p>Wow So many questions about this. What do you know about false pregnancies?</p> <p>Why was the woman bleeding?</p> <p>Why hadn't the woman attended AN clinic?</p> <p>How did the woman cope afterwards? What kind of support would she have needed?</p> <p>Was there negligence on anyone's part here?</p>
<p>Socratic arc of questioning - But simply posing a variety of questions hardly creates a climate for inquiry. At least as important is the way in which teachers respond to the answers their questions provoke. Thus, recent research (Sacker and Sadker 1985) suggests that too often students' replies meet with little more than a passing "uh-huh" Such responses can stop inquiry dead in its tracks. In place of such dead-end situations, skilled teachers give an exchange of questions a life-course. Across a long arc of questions and answers, they pursue an investigation in which simple factual inquiries give way to increasingly interpretive questions until new insights emerge. For an observer, there is an impression of a kind of mutually constructed improvisation unfolding (Mehan 1978, 1979). In this improvisation, teachers keep questions alive through long stretches of time, coming back to them days, even weeks, after they have first been asked. Creating a climate of enquiry: across an arc of "questions and answers, they pursue and investigation in which simple factual inquiry gives way to increasingly interpretive questions until new insights emerge" . It is almost as if the questions posed form a kind of catwalk of realizable possibilities along which a student can move toward new insights (Luria 1976, Vygotsky 1978, Wertsch, 1978).</p> <p>Wolf, D.P. 1987:4</p>	<p>In general, students did not directly answer my questions in their journal. However, many either returned to the issues and discussed these further in tutorials or in later entries.</p> <p>Lea: 17 March</p> <p>? Maureen: very cute - but in fact, what kind of influence do hormones' play in our behaviour?</p> <p>L's response: Huge, but some don't have "human" control. I really need to become cerebral.</p> <p>Lea: 6 April</p> <p>Maureen: What are the implications for your practice?</p> <p>Maureen: Is cholera an issue on the work front?</p> <p>L's response: No but in KZN employees travel to other areas so must know signs and symptoms.</p> <p>Maureen: Where would you make this table available and why?</p> <p>L's response: travelling teams.</p> <p>Maureen: Why is a table so useful?</p> <p>L's response: So easy to read and evaluate quickly.</p> <p>Lea: 25 April</p> <p>Maureen: and this leads you to ...?</p> <p>L's response: If these are amazing and time is critical, then what can we expect to see in the next decade especially in genetics and DNA research!</p>
<p>CRITIQUER-RESPONSES TO STUDENT ENTRY</p>	<p>EXAMPLE FROM JOURNALS</p>
<p>Acknowledging individual worth.</p> <p>Individualising responses in a way that recognises the uniqueness of the student, allows the student to understand that they are valued,</p>	<p>Nandi's journal: 28 August</p> <p>What a shock for you, Nandi</p> <p>Have you thought of making an appointment with management to express your concerns? I am very proud of you this was a very good reflective process and you integrated your theory on your own situation. Well done!</p>
<p>Recognising the student's personal circumstances/dilemma</p> <p>This follows on from the previous concept, and reminds both the critiquer and the student, that the critiquer is aware of the personal events or influences shaping the student's learning</p>	<p>Reeva's journal: 8 May, 2003</p> <p>I am fairly sure I have responded to this as I remember reading and thinking about it.</p> <p>A question, Reeva. Your first paragraph indicates a sense of despair and a feeling that life just takes over, with or without your control. Does this mean one should not have goals?</p> <p>Your second paragraph is much more hopeful, and personally, I can see the change in you. Would you have accepted 'your humanness' at the beginning of the year and seen it as the strength through which you now view your life? Have your values changed in any way?</p>
<p>Drawing analogies/ creating metaphors</p> <p>Gordon and Pose (1971) suggested metaphorical thinking stretches the mind and forces the learner to think critically. Analogies and metaphors require the learner to enter the land of synthesis and evaluation. Critical thinking in these creative terms may be the ultimate information-processing skill. Forced metaphors or analogies are particularly effective in instigating higher level thinking. A "forced" metaphor requires a learner to associate two ideas that are not commonly linked. For example: "How are schools like gardens?", "Personally devise and explain democracy in the context of a metaphor.", or "What do math equations and language sentences have in common?" [Wakefield, 1998].</p>	<p>Janet's journal: 14 September 2003</p> <p>I suppose most things can be rationalized - but the question is - do we always want to?</p> <p>I am a great Walt Whitman fan and when he suggests we consider a blade of grass or the essence of a mouse - and then query whether or not there is a god.</p>
<p>Identification of relevant elements</p> <p>I have observed that for my students, one of the most difficult aspects of critical thinking, was the ability to focus on key, relevant issues. In many previous instances, students had been told by others in authority was</p>	<p>Carol's journal: 10 April</p> <p>An interesting perspective. It made me think about getting older and wondering if fear of consequences was the reason for staying the same. Do you think that our value system changes as we age? Interesting</p>

relevant. I wanted them to learn to identify this for themselves and recognise the choices they were making and why.	choice of word "fall" why do you think you used that specific word?
Honesty/ authenticity Much of how the student/ critiquer relationship will develop, will depend upon the honesty of the relationship and the ability of the critiquer to provide 'reality checks' in an acceptable manner	Carol's journal: 4th September In a number of schools the teachers anticipate these sorts of reactions and put in a number of measures to try and leaven the playing fields, as it were e.g. cake and suckers for everyone at school etc, etc. There comes a time though, that children learn that life just 'aint fair' and that's the truth. How we choose to respond to those types of situations determines our own sensibilities. Your criteria for life's choices seem to me to be a reasonable one.
Providing information I saw my role as extending the student, and part of this requires a sharing of information. I chose to do this by engaging deeply in the reflections, and if I could offer anything further by means of additional sources or literature, I did.	Reeva's journal: 13 February You might be interested to know that the framework of this programme is based on the model of critical reflective practice developed by Elsie van Aswegen. She will be pleased to know that it had an effect on you. I note with interest your motivational message to the class - marks for nothing. Well, the intent is good, but believe me, you will have earned your mark - even if it isn't in the accepted traditional format. Tell me your thoughts when you have completed your programme.
Structuring the thinking process My function in these journals is to support critical reflective thinking. Ways I tried to achieve this was through trying to challenge and help students structure their thinking processes. Sometimes, this took the form of Socratic questioning and other times, through making connections.	Reeva's journal: June 2003 I am trying to disassociate myself from an event for which I was originally responsible - and so ask you to move into a hypothetical mode. Imagine a similar situation in your clinic where you are on the receiving end - what would make it easier for you to respond so that the issue is dealt with and your persona remains intact? Theoretically, the situation in class should not have evoked an emotive response, for, as you correctly note, your opinion was asked for. Why do you think it did? Could or would you change your management of this situation. If yes, how and why? If no, why not?
Providing direction Whilst much of my input was through questioning, it was sometimes also helpful to point the student in a specific direction, particularly if I was concerned about some of the decision making or interpretation of events.	Reeva's journal: June 2003 Maureen: There is a difference between being dependent on someone [this implies that they make the decisions without necessarily consulting or working with you] and independence - which means that you are in control of the situation and yourself. It doesn't mean that you assume all the responsibility and do all the work. Responsible delegation is just one of the techniques to do this.
Promoting reflective thinking	Reeva's journal: 10 April, 2003 While you mention that you have no control over your own path, perhaps the 6 months might give you space to view who you are without the support of a contact relationship. You might surprise yourself - and who knows what else might be in store for you if you open yourself up to experiences? While you mention that you have no control over your own path, perhaps the 6 months might give you space to view who you are without the support of a contact relationship. You might surprise yourself - and who knows what else might be in store for you if you open yourself up to experiences?
Reinforcing specific concepts	Well done Nandi [4 September] You are not asking her to do anything else but her job. It is amazing the power some people have over others part of being a professional person means assuming proper use of power and I like your choice of words firm and consistent.
Positive reinforcement by praising the student	Nandi's journal: 28 August I am very proud of you. This was a very good reflective process and you integrated your theory on your own situation. Well done! Nandi, you have provided a good description and supporting argument. Well done. Don't you think you should share this?
Accurate observations	Carol's journal: What other kind of stress breakers have you built into your life style? Ø Stress is a theme in your entries. What should this mean to you, do you think?
Drawing analogies-creating metaposition - Gordon and Pose (1971) in Wakefield [1998] suggested metaphorical thinking stretches the mind and forces the learner to think critically. Analogies and metaphors require the learner to enter the land of synthesis and evaluation. Critical thinking in these creative terms may be the ultimate information-processing skill. Forced metaphors or analogies are particularly effective in instigating higher level thinking. A "forced" metaphor requires a learner to associate two ideas that are not commonly linked. For	Janets' journal: 14 September, 2003 I suppose most things can be rationalized - but the question is - do we always want to? I am a great Walt Whitman fan and when he suggests we consider a blade of grass or the essence of a mouse - and then query whether or not there is a god.

example: "How are schools like gardens?", "Personally devise and explain democracy in the context of a metaphor.", or "What do math equations and language sentences have in common?" Wakefield, (1998).	
Acknowledging student's contribution	<p>Jena's journal: 28 May, 2002</p> <p>Dear Jena</p> <p>Well your reflection provoked a lot of thought on my part. I thought about myself as a teacher/facilitator and my efforts to be non-judgmental - but is this possible? I make judgements all the time and in fact, judgements are essential element in critical thinking. Perhaps if I use the word objectively - this holds more truly to what I am trying to achieve.</p> <p>Your stories are wonderful illustrations about choices in judgement - and, importantly, you provide reasons for your decisions. It is only when you have access to reasons that you can then weigh these - and come to a decision - a judgement. When new information arises, your decisions are then re-evaluated on this light - and another judgement is made.</p> <p>I know I am not asking a question and that I am making a statement that you can disregard, as you choose.</p>
Recognition of/planning for next stage	<p>Nandi's journal: 12 February</p> <p>It is nice that you have summarized but it is not necessary. If you just highlight the key points this will save you some time, This is good article to start your entries off.</p>
Promoting critical thinking	<p>Reflexive journal: 'Taentry2 June 2001</p> <p>I went through one of her reflective thought entries. It dealt with professional practice and ethics and her analysis was both apt and thought provoking. I asked a number of questions relating to the relevancy of ethics in today's context and specifically regarding the situations nurses found themselves in today. I asked if we could afford to be ethical considering the reality of the complexity of some situations. Her response dealt with 'how can we not?' I am very interested in situational morality and would love to have debated this longer. It was good to give positive feedback. I also recommended some readings and a theorist on moral development, Kohlberg.</p>
Identifying with the student	<p>Xolisi journal: 31 May</p> <p>I echo your sentiments. When I read about the work that you do, and your sense of nursing, I feel the same pride.</p>
Supporting the student by: *encouragement	<p>Nandi's journal: 21 October</p> <p>I look forward to following your progress in future- and will always be interested in what you are doing.</p>
Linking to previous discussion/entry	<p>Carol's journal: 25 June</p> <p>Sounds like a good plan. We have talked about this in tuts.</p>
Demonstrating awareness of own weakness/lack of knowledge	<p>Toko Topic 6</p> <p>A dilemma indeed. I didn't know how to solve your problem, perhaps we should take this to class?</p> <p>I do know that in life, situations are never simple- and you are going to need to resolve your dilemma between</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What is right and wrong (your own morality) -Loyalty -and intimidation. If is of course easier when there are proper systems in place.
Focusing/highlighting key issues	<p>Carol's journal: 30 April</p> <p>How do we as nurses, form alliances of mutual respect with other health professionals? What should/ could we do? How do we as nurses, form alliances of mutual respect with other health professionals? What should/ could we do?</p>
Criticizing	<p>Nandi's journal: February 12</p> <p>MAUREENS COMMENTS:</p> <p>Nandi, your questions are valid but perhaps you might take into account the fact that this is a club donating funding. The other issues you mention, quite correctly, should be dealt with and so perhaps you might be interested to see an additional form of funding been made available to St Mary's (see Web CT latest health link bulletin).</p>

<p>Recognising processes - restating or reframing to enable student/self to recognise what is happening</p>	<p>Jena's journal: 14 March, 2002 Regarding the checking at the Supermarket. The logic here however is: if you want to compare the costs of 'chicken casserole' tinned vs. cooked, the process may well be comparative. If however, you took the price of a banana - home grown to the grocery store - it may well be cheaper. Theoretically it should also be cheaper to take a small portion of the family's dinner and puree it - than cook separately. In certain situations, growing own vegetables might also prove more expensive (depending on what you are costing). Reeva's Journal: June 2003 Maureen: here you are assuming that everyone is [1] close minded and [2] considered all the alternatives and consequences and/ or [3] has exactly the same motivation or [4] that everyone gives the same amount of thought and care to their actions.</p>
<p>Requesting information Students needed to be aware that although ostensibly the journal was written for themselves, they did have a reader [s]. If I requested specific information, it meant that there were gaps in the entry and that the information proffered was not self-evident.</p>	<p>Carol: 26 August What kind of a referral letter did she write, do you know? Is there anything else she should have done to ensure that she received feedback? Sometimes, liaison by the OHN with the concerned hospital does pay off in the long term. Do you think that personalizing a situation [i.e. making personal contact] will have a positive effect? You seem to do this all the time in your work why should the results be any different for the OHN? Even if, as you note, nursing is just a job why should there not be an appropriate procedure for feedback? If someone works at a supermarket, they do not have a calling; nonetheless, they are still required to do a good job. Why should this be different in nursing?</p>
<p>Reminding These types of comments served more than one purpose: They enabled the students to see that my engagement with their journals was deep – I remembered – but also, it was a way of connecting themes, which is part of the recurrent, reflective process.</p>	<p>Jena's journal: 23 February How empowered are nurses to change processes? (I am really thinking about your second entry here). Carol's journal: 23 August Carol These tutorials have had different meanings for different people. I spelled out my intentions in my own diary entries and the difficult part is that the formula is not and has not been the same for everyone. Much of the process has depended on the individual needs of the students. In a sense, you have missed out on some of the process in that I am only getting to critique your diary entries now. However, as I recognize many of the issues, these have been discussed and debated in the tutorials. I should mention that I am grateful that you have come along with me on this journey and committed to a process that was not always overt or spelled out. You have done this with courage and shared your innermost thoughts and concerns generously and with style. You might like to go back to your reading in Book 1, pages 13-15 on critical reflective thinking and review what you are doing in light of this reading.</p>
<p>Connecting to prior learning</p>	<p>Carol's journal: 20 August As a manager, where do you draw the line? Is there a line? What would have happened if you had asked the company to buy you a computer or at least, found a way to make it tax deductible, as the work you would be doing on the computer will indirectly benefit the company? (If I remember correctly, we did discuss this, didn't we?)</p>
<p>Demonstrating awareness of own feelings/emotions</p>	<p>Xolisi's journal: 31 May I echo your sentiments. When I read about the work that you do, and your sense of nursing, I feel the same pride.</p>
<p>Summarizing</p>	<p>Jena's journal: 17 February This was a very interesting response to a potential power-play situation (i.e. routed through the Matron) I get a strong sense of your being someone very comfortable with yourself - and not needing to be "boss".</p>

LISEKO'S CRITICAL, REFLECTIVE THINKING

DIMENSION OF THOUGHT	Excerpts from Liseko's journal
Analyze event	<p>As I have noticed in my own unit that the standard of care is not improving of our service delivering principals of Batho Pele. As you know equipment has been missing, drugs have been stolen by some members of the staff and some members extending their tea break. All these create unacceptable standard of care. And I think by <u>blowing the whistle</u>, you will be digging your own grave as you will feel that you have been disloyal to your colleagues. You will have been victimized also if no proper action as been taken to those people that are responsible for <u>theft</u>?</p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts) I remember our discussing this issue in a tutorial where Liseko did bring this issue to the group for discussion. SA nursing was plagued (and still is plagued) by the issue of intimidation – and much of this was political in nature. When NS uses the phrase "digging your own grave" - this is literally what has occurred in a number of situations in the past in SA nursing. I believe that it is far easier to have principles when lives and family are not at stake. According the SANC's Nurse's Bill of Rights, nurses have the right to "a working environment which is free of threats, intimidation and/or interference." The issue of power disparities is not just a SA nursing issue. Freshwater, 2000:481 notes: "Nurse on nurse aggression is felt to be more upsetting than that from patients (Farrell 1997, Freshwater 1998). Studies indicate that the hardest acts of aggression to deal with are not the acts of physical aggression by other nurses, but the non-physical attacks, and the hostile undercurrent that prevails. Farrell (1997) describes this as 'professional jealousy', is just as difficult to deal with as explicit physical violence (Glass 1997)." (Freshwater, D. 2000. Crosscurrents: against cultural narration in nursing. <i>Journal of Advanced Nursing</i>. Volume 32 Issue 2 Page 481 - August 2000)</p>
Examine assumptions	<p>The study population was derived from two clinic- the infertility and the preconceptual clinic. It consisted of women who wanted to be pregnant and were highly motivated. Let's <u>assume</u> that they wanted to be fully informed and prepared fro pregnancy and were ready to adopt their lifestyle in order to minimize risks as far as possible.</p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts) Liseko's assumptions do not seem unreasonable: One can infer this hypothesis from the type of clinic consulted- infertility and preconceptual</p>
Identify and focus on salient issues from the situation	<p><u>Fish rich in diet reduces risk.</u> Indication is made that there is reductions of <u>some illnesses</u> through eating fish rich diet.</p> <p>Analysis Eating fish during pregnancy protect against peterim delivery and low birth weight. The rate of peterim deliveries has dropped from 7.1 % to 1,9 % to most women who hade at least 1.5 kg of daily fish intake. This has been proven by research conducted.</p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts) I see that I have not read this entry or I would have commented. Liseko quite correctly notes that there are (or rather, may be?) cultures who are not permitted to eat fish, but this is not of the Zulu culture. However, had she noted that eating fish comprising long chain omega-3 fatty acids is not part of daily living, this would have been more to the point. The suggestion of supplements is valid but I would have asked if these were available and looked at the cost if this was really meant to be a feasible suggestion. The focus on prevention is appropriate considering the primary health care model of health practiced in SA.</p>
Raise and	<p>The question that that I think about when it comes to this situation is why is the government</p>

pursue root questions	turning a blind eye and deaf ear about this situation? How long is it going to remain like this because the most people that are suffering are the ones who remain behind because they are loyal to their country and dedicated to their work?
Analyze emotions connected to event	<p>The most important issue in this article are the nurses who are living South Africa's health sector and look for better jobs overseas due to unsatisfactory working conditions. I have mixed feelings about all this because on the other hand I wish I can join them and explore the new world and learn new things and meet some people with different cultures, values and norms to be able to earn money that will meet all my requirements as a parent and as an individual. (and why would that be wrong?) At the same time it makes me feel said when I think of children that are left behind as child abuse in our country is high and all these results in family disorganisations. On the other hand, it brings frustration especially in working places as few nurses are left to do jobs for more than one person for an example a nurse will be allocated to run 2 wards especially when doing night duty, nurses abused by their colleagues and doctors who seem to think that nurses are their servants.</p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts)</p> <p>The issue of abuse against nurses is raised again. When I think about common themes prevalent in most nursing students' reflective journals, this theme arises time and time again. This is a complex issue. Traditionally, patient populations, especially in black communities, have been acquiescent, passive and unquestioning of treatment. This has changed significantly since 1994 with the introduction of the Patients' Bill of Rights and the SA Constitution. Unfortunately, the conditions and health care environment are not conducive in many instances, for appropriate client care and the lack of health care personnel and inadequate infrastructure have resulted in many instances queues and increasing patient dissatisfaction with resultant expressions of frustrations. Nurses do not feel that they have the power to change the system, and land up on the receiving end of the expressed dissatisfaction. This in turn, affects their perception of the nurse-client relationship. (Goyer, K.C. 2003.HIV/AIDS IN SOUTH AFRICAN PRISONS Published in Monograph No 79, February 2003. HIV/Aids in Prison, Problems, Policies and Potential. Institute for Security Studies. www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No79/Chap1.html)</p> <p>Liseko expresses ambivalent feelings. She believes in what she does, but expresses concern that those who structure her work environment do not, at least, not adequately. She indicates that she is loyal, but at the same time, she believes in her own worth. Her recommendations are practical and logical and demonstrate awareness that nurses themselves should also be part of the solution. Values such as pride and dignity, professionalism are concepts in nursing Liseko indicate that she values.</p> <p>I find her argument sound, and I hear her 'voice' is gaining in strength.</p>
Use knowledge broadly	But again I can't understand because the government of South Africa has offered some child grant to every child who have parents that are unemployed.
Makes interdisciplinary connections	<p>I took the patient personally to one of our working doctors, who saw the patient and said we must refer the patient to ENT clinic as the doctor discussed the patient with a specialty. <u>Guess what?</u> The patient was incision and drainage and then we gave him some antibiotics to take at home.</p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts)</p> <p>I love the 'guess what?'. It is a child-like rhetorical question meaning 'look at me, I have done well!'. Liseko is busy with her primary health care nursing programme, and having her diagnosis/concern confirmed by a specialist is both rewarding and confirmatory of her clinical skills</p>
Analyze contextual issues	As we know that our country is in crisis health workers are migrating to other countries and those left have worked hard under stressful conditions worse then with aggressive abusive patients i.e physical and verbally.
Evaluate arguments, interpretations and beliefs	Before this method of preconceptual screening could be considered or taken as valid, it should be done repeatedly in a more general population such as primary health care setting and tried in a socially deprived area such as rural areas.
Draw accurate conclusions	Government should provide, people living with HIV treatment so that their CD 4 cal count can remain high making their viral load low so that their immune system can resist the opportunistic

	<p>infection such as Tuberculosis, pneumonia and diarrhea.</p> <p>§ People's lives will be prolonged - leading to less orphans which end up being government's burden.</p> <p>§ HAART should available at a less price so that everybody can afford it</p> <p>§ Accurate monitoring of people on HAART.</p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts)</p> <p>Liseko's recommendations are not unrealistic – but there as with her previous analysis of articles, fairly simplistic. She hasn't identified the rationale for the government NOT making available HAART or why there is a problem with providing the drug at reduced cost. At a superficial level, her analysis is fine. Had she looked at the cost factor comparing financial implications, including benefits, for those treated and those not treated - or just the moral issues of treatment, this would have strengthened her argument. Is there a learning benefit to a superficial analysis? I suppose that there is in that in simple terms, Liseko goes to the heart of the problem.</p> <p>Liseko does reflect that we live in a system where the primary health care philosophy is the dominant health service value: It is socialistic by nature i.e. health care should be affordable for all; and the view that the government is responsible for the care of the people in its borders. In many ways the dual system that operates in SA, socialism and capitalism are at odds, but both government and society, seem to find congruence between seemingly diverse and conflicting philosophical systems.</p>
Justifies key results and procedures, explains assumptions and reasons	<p>I think everybody has a choice of keeping the child or abort the child if she knows that she wont be able to maintain the child or she can use contraceptives if she believes that the termination of pregnancy is <u>against her religion</u>.</p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts)</p> <p>NS's observations are not unfair. She starts her argument with supporting evidence of the bonding process, which in normal circumstances, does support a close parental-child relationship. (John Bowlby, cited in Nash, E., Stock, B. and Harper, G. 1990. Human Behaviour. Juta and Co: Kenwyn). However, my questions relate to the risk factors that promote abuse - and NS would be correct in identifying one of these factors as lack of finance. Finance, however, is relative. It depends on how it is used. As NS, again correctly notes, there are government grants but if families do not or cannot live within their means, the child, again, is at risk. NS is not simplistic in her analysis. She does raise questions about power in relationships which do impact on the behaviour of partners. I try, with my questions, to allow her to see that despite available choices, it is not always possible to see or make these choices.</p>
Defend positions and issues	<p>Considering the above article I would <u>suggest</u> the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Government of SA</u> should implement some policies for the protection of health workers. - As we know that our country is in crisis health workers are migrating to other countries and those left have worked hard under stressful conditions worse then with aggressive abusive patients i.e physical and verbally. - Instead our government is concerned about patient's rights as human beings. - <u>Our patients</u> have to learn proper behaviour towards health workers because if they are aggressive and abusive to me it means they are not sick enough to be in hospital and they don't deserve our care. A sick patient wont have a strength to be abusive or aggressive to any staff member. <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts)</p> <p>(1) This is not an unusual issue (violence or aggression of patients) and has been raised by other students in tutorial sessions. Liseko although she does not note this here, is affected because of her circumstances. She works in an outpatient department of a busy state-run hospital in one of the main cities in KZN, and many of her clients, appear to become aggressive, possibly as a result of having to wait for long periods of time. I have a feeling of de je veux in that I had three students in 2002 who worked in this self-same unit, experiencing these self-same issues. The difficulty with these students (and with NS) is that they were fairly junior in a</p>

	<p>very prescribed hierarchical nursing system. Efforts to buck or change the system were problematic in that personality-wise, they were fairly unassuming, non-confrontational, unassertive nurses. Much of the tutorial sessions were devoted to increasing assertiveness skills and problem solving, taking into account their status in their department.</p> <p>(2) I like the way that Liseko draws from the article on the Scottish health service and makes the connection to the SA health service. I would have liked her to have followed up on the suggestions made for the Scottish health service to see if they would have any relevance to her own place of work</p> <p>(3) Liseko fails to look at the situation from the perspective of the patient although I understand her feelings. I know from our tutorial sessions, that it would appear that there were a number of problems within the health service in this department, which did not facilitate towards a more sympathetic understanding of the prevailing conditions of the clients by Liseko</p>
Compare ideals with actual practice	<p>On the other hand, is this the real father of the child or is it the boy friend of the mother? who prefers to be with a man more than her own child. If this report is correct- he is the father. Maybe this man abuses this woman and she does not even have a say in matters of the family, who does not know what the word abuse mean, who sees the man as the head of the family who can not be challenged or questioned in his decision?</p>
Explore implications and consequences	<p>As health workers are we always emphasise on prevention as it is better than cure so I would suggest that this kind of diet should be given to pregnant mothers like iron supplements to prevent such complications.</p>
Draw up and/ or implement an action plan based on the implications raised	
Write clearly and coherently	<p>There was a communication breakdown between us as he was coming from Nigeria. The first thing that came to my mind was that happens to some of them while they are in South Africa. Do they bury each other here in South Africa or the corpse is sent back home. But do they have enough money to transport it as they usually say it cost a lot of money to go back home + - 5000,00. What about relatives? Is there a way of informing them if one of them becomes sick or dies? This whole thing brought a lot sadness in me as I always wonder myself that what will I do if I can get sick while I am here in Durban as I don't have a close relative. Who will come and visit me in hospital?</p>
Accurately cite sources of knowledge used	<p>Nursing Times 2002: 5 February 28 Volume 98</p>
Use own thinking to come to conclusions and solutions	<p>Considering the above article I would suggest the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Government of SA</u> should implement some policies for the protection of health workers. - As we know that our country is in crisis health workers are migrating to other countries and those left have worked hard under stressful conditions worse than with aggressive abusive patients i.e physical and verbally. - Instead our government is concerned about patient's rights as human beings. - <u>Our patients</u> have to learn proper behaviour towards health workers because if they are aggressive and abusive to me it means they are not sick enough to be in hospital and they don't deserve our care. A sick patient won't have a strength to be abusive or aggressive to any staff member.
Come to terms with contradictions and inconsistencies	<p>All midwives would probably agree that preconceptual counselling is a valuable activity likely to improve pregnancy outcomes. However they would recognise that many of the woman most likely to benefit from it <u>would not avail</u> themselves to such services.</p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts)</p> <p>Liseko does recognise that most SA women using the state health care system would not use these services</p>

Judgmental reflectivity	<p>My implications on the nursing practice are as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nurses have to assert themselves, put aside fear and get rid of this vulnerable attitude that makes them easy targets for abuse and feelings of inferior. Yes! - Our employers must start recognising nurses and appreciating our services. And we make them do this how? - They must pay nurses market related salaries and unique conditions of service. This will help to check this exodus of our nurses and the brain drain from our country. - Educate the society about this uncalled for hostility against nurses. - Nursing management (are these also nurses?) need to support their subordinates against abuse by other sectors in the workplace. <p>270: - Nurses themselves must unite and become a difficult to overcome force. They must start thinking about handling their own affairs, like having their own dynamic and influential people, at all decision making acts in matters regarding their work and welfare. (and they can do this how?) A lot of work need to be done by nurses themselves to reclaim their lost pride and dignity by putting our house in order to be professional, friendly and perform our jobs satisfactory. <u>Good argument!</u></p>
Identify learning needs and learning achieved	<p>Important lessons learned from giving birth and running a marathon. I personally found both giving birth and running a marathon a point at which a significant change occurs in my life. Both these achievements have build my character and boosted my self esteem. Both events are learning experiences both physically and mentally. They brought home what my mom had always said to me say as child, <u>"if you set your mind on it, you can do whatever you want in life."</u></p> <p>My memo's (analysis of reflected concepts)</p> <p>Through the comparative analogy of labour likened to a marathon, Liseko shares her values. She is a runner, so physical fitness is important to her. She notes that marathons, which require grit, determination, physical and psychological preparation and staying power, have had a significant effect on her life. Both labour and the marathon are character building and exemplify for Liseko her mother's tenet that determination equates with results. Liseko talks about the building of character and the effects of achievement on self-esteem.</p>

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Note: The references cited here deal with the following:

The text of final thesis

The appendices

The crude analysis of the raw data (e.g. the data bytes) of the eight completed student reflective journals. (Only selected portions of the journals were included in the final thesis)