

A QUALITATIVE EVALUATION OF SOCIAL WORK FIELD INSTRUCTION
OFFERED BY UNIVERSITIES IN THE EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

This research study describes an evaluation of social work field instruction offered by universities in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Qualitative data was collected from agency field instructors, university fieldwork coordinators and social work students. This study's findings indicated that field instruction needs a good foundation of experiential learning that is facilitated by report writing, journal writing and agency and university supervision. Findings also indicated a need for the screening, selection and training of agency field instructors. There was also an indication that universities should develop selection procedures to ensure that the best possible students are accepted into the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) programme. All findings indicated that field instruction programmes are most effective when there is a strong university-agency partnership. The study concludes by making recommendations for future development of standards relating to field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape and South Africa.

Key words: Social work, evaluative research, field instruction, experiential learning, reflection, agency field instructor, university supervisor, university fieldwork coordinator, social work student, social work education, social work training.

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CHAPTER 1:INTRODUCTION

1.1: Introduction

“The prerequisite classes and much of the formal coursework are nearly completed. The opportunities to practice the knowledge and skills are within reach. Out into the field sounds so ominous. Where? Which agency or organisation? The search begins: Fieldwork” (Lilley, 2002:10). Lilley captures the excitement and anxiety experienced by all parties involved in social work field instruction very aptly in the opening paragraph of her discussion in “The Road to Practicum - I want a great one” (2002:10). Social work field instruction is the very heart of social work training and the vehicle through which students have the opportunity to practice the skills, knowledge and values taught in class. It may also be the most challenging part of the social work curriculum, relying on all the parties involved to make it a rewarding learning experience for the social work student. The research was motivated by an interest in the processes used to train social work students, thus the decision to conduct a study relating to field instruction in the Eastern Cape, South Africa - titled: “A qualitative evaluation of social work field instruction offered by universities in the Eastern Cape, South Africa”. It was hoped that this study would add to existing research relating to social work field instruction in South Africa. This introductory chapter will provide a clear outline of the research project and its importance. It will introduce the topic of social work field instruction, present a problem statement, the research question, as well as outline the project’s aims and objectives and present a thesis statement. Furthermore it will identify delineations, limitations and assumptions and present the

significance of the study. Lastly it will provide a brief overview of the chapters to follow and present key terms relating to social work field instruction and its academic context.

1.2: Topic introduction

“The field practicum experience is the integration of the theoretical knowledge you have gained in the classroom with the skills you will learn in the field. It is viewed as a necessary and dependent complement to the didactic classroom experience.” (Birkenmaier and Berg-Weger, 2007:1).

Social Work training involves an important and compulsory component of field instruction. Social work students are the most excited while at the same time experience high levels of anxiety about their first field instruction placement. Field instruction is the social work students' first real contact with practising what they have learnt in class and it is often through the field instruction experience that the social work student recognises that social work is or isn't the correct profession for them. “Field as the ‘signature pedagogy’ is the heart of social work education” (Homonoff, 2008:136). “Signature pedagogy is defined as the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socialises its students to perform the role of practitioner” (CSWE in Dalton, Stevens and Maas-Brady, 2009). Social work students themselves identify field instruction as the centre and most influential part of their training (Gizinski, 1978 in Giddings, Vodde and Cleveland, 2003:192). Strom (1991:187) states that “field-based instruction is a widely recognised cornerstone of social work education”. The importance of field instruction within social work education continues to be recognised and emphasised throughout the training programmes of universities offering the social work degree.

In the United Kingdom (UK) the need for newly qualified social workers to have a higher level of skills was recognised in 2003 by increasing the number of days spent in the field to 200 (Hubbard and Kitchin, 2010:504). Bogo (2005:164) discusses that in the United States, the Council on Social Work Education Accreditation standards identifies a minimum of 400 hours of field instruction for the B(SW) degree. In South Africa, audits by the SACSSP and national conferences have highlighted the importance of quality field instruction programmes to assist in the training of quality social work students.

Tanga (2012:3) states that fieldwork training involves the placement of students at agencies or organisations where they are given an opportunity to work on real cases under the supervision of social workers. Tanga states further that “the significance of fieldwork training cannot be ignored” (2012:3). This begins from the first year level and intensifies in nature until the student reaches a fourth year level. Savaya, Peleg-Oren, Stange and Geron (2003) state that “the conceptual framework underlying field instruction is based on the principle of progression, that is the ordering of the learning experience in increasing levels of knowledge, skills and practice”. Field instruction allows students an opportunity to practice the social work values, skills and knowledge that they have been introduced to, through the theoretical component of their social work training. It is their first experience of working with clients and of the supervisory relationship. Students are expected to engage with clients in communities across all intervention levels through social work agencies, as a means of developing and evaluating their readiness for entering the social work profession. Field instruction allows for the integration of theory and practice from an early level of study so that students have some real work experience and have been effectively evaluated as being ready to enter the profession.

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Field instruction programmes are coordinated by the social work department at the university where the student is studying. Currently these programmes are not standardised or monitored by the Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI). Although standards with regard to programme curricula including fieldwork do exist, they are quite broad and allow the particular social work department to be guided by the theory related to field instruction and the Exit Level Outcomes (ELOs) as developed by the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) (Sewpaul and Lombard, 2004:544).

Bogo (2005:163) identifies the literature relating to field instruction over the last few years in her article that reflects on the various components of field instruction that have been researched and written about. Some of this literature includes: the context of field instruction, evidence based field instruction, models of agency and university field instruction, assessment of students and the training of agency field instructors and university supervisors. These various components have formed an integral part of the study.

There are four parties involved in the implementation of field instruction programmes. These four parties are: the social work student, the agency based field instructor, the university supervisor and the university fieldwork coordinator. A distinction regarding these parties' roles will be made in the literature chapter that follows.

1.3: Problem statement

One of the greatest challenges currently facing field instruction models in the Eastern Cape is the increase of student numbers to the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) programme. Earle (2008) discusses social work as a scarce and critical profession and refers to “the first announcement of social work as a “scarce skill” by the Minister of Social Development, Zola Skweyiya, in a Mail and Gaurdian article on 22 August 2003”. One of the measures being implemented by the government to attract prospective scholars to the profession is the bursaries being offered to students choosing to enter the programme. This puts pressure on social work departments within universities, to accept more students while staff numbers may remain constant. Statistics from one university in the Eastern Cape show an increase in total number of graduates from 42 (in 2004), to 265 (in 2010), over a 6 year period in total (University of Fort Hare, 2012).

Valentine 2004 (in Katz and Schiff, 2007) states that it is in field instruction, that the theory, ethics and skills studied in classroom courses come together to shape the professional identity of the student. It is also mentioned, however, that social changes, cut-backs in publicly funded services including universities and the need for schools of social work to survive within the university context, have all put enormous pressure for accountability and effectiveness on the field instruction units within these schools. Field instruction models are being challenged to adapt creatively to these changes and pressures so as to maintain the quality of training in alignment with higher education requirements (Schmidt, 2012) while at the same time producing more social workers to serve the South African community.

Adding to the problem of high student numbers, is the pressure for the university to place these students at social work agencies in communities, where they will be able to gather practice experience at all levels of social work intervention. This becomes a real challenge with four universities (and five campuses) in the Eastern Cape offering the BSW degree. The reason for the challenge is that all of these students need to have a field instruction experience with only a limited number of social work agencies being able or willing to accommodate students. The hesitancy for agencies to receive social work students could be due to various work related and economic pressures (Strydom, 2002:279 and Bogo, 2005:169) but also because the ratio of social work agencies to social work students, is no longer feasible in the Eastern Cape.

At a national level questions and concerns about the quality of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape are being raised by agency field instructors, university supervisors, field work coordinators and the SACSSP who are involved in field instruction in various ways (ASASWEI, 2011). The resulting effect of the above-mentioned changes on the quality of social work graduate entering the social work profession is also of concern and raising debate within the social work field (ASASWEI, 2011).

1.4: Research questions and objectives

The following three research questions will guide the research project and link directly to the aims and objectives that follow:

- **What are the strengths and weaknesses of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape?**

- **What are the constraints facing field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape?**
- **How do social work field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape comply with the theoretical requirements of experiential learning?**

The research questions link directly to the overall aim of the project which is to evaluate the implementation of social work field instruction programmes, so as to make suggestions for improvement and recommend a best practise model for field instruction in the Eastern Cape. The above mentioned aim is met through the following three objectives:

- **To identify the strengths and weaknesses of field instruction programmes being used by social work departments in universities of the Eastern Cape.**
- **To identify possible constraints on implementation of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape.**
- **To investigate the role that experiential learning plays during field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape.**

1.5: Thesis statement

In light of the challenges facing universities, which can be attributed to a high number of social work students, a limited number of social work agencies in the Eastern Cape and broad guidelines offered for field instruction by ASASWEI and the SACSSP, the aim of the study is to evaluate field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape. The thesis of this work is to gather information relating to all components of social work field instruction from three of the parties involved in field instruction. These parties are identified as being the social work student, the agency field instructor, and the university fieldwork coordinator. Each party will provide useful insights into the various components of field instruction. This data will allow for the evaluation of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape and will result in recommendations and conclusions being drawn that can shape future models of field instruction for use in the area.

1.6: Delineations and limitations

There were a number of limitations regarding this research. Firstly, the research sample used for the focus groups with the social work students and agency field instructors was relatively small in comparison to student numbers and the number of agency field instructors used by universities to supervise the students. The sample of agency field instructors was also only chosen from the East London and Port Elizabeth area, due to financial constraints, making it impossible to move outside the geographical area despite the fact that many students are placed outside of the Eastern Cape (and even South Africa) for their field instruction. The findings could thus also not be generalised nationally.

Secondly, the researcher is employed as an university fieldwork coordinator at one of the universities in the Eastern Cape and is thus in contact with some of the social work students (those from the researcher's university) and some of the agency field instructors; thus it had to be stated carefully during the research process that the researcher was acting in her capacity of researcher and not university fieldwork coordinator. This was especially important during the data collection phase as it was by all means necessary to prevent participants from giving answers that were "required" or given more to please the researcher, instead of open and honest responses.

Thirdly, universities have been using their own models of field instruction for many years and it is in no way assumed that the research findings have had or will have any impact on the way in which they organise their field instruction programmes.

1.7: Assumptions

Firstly, it was assumed that universities in the Eastern Cape all have their own model of fieldwork instruction. Secondly, it was assumed that, from all the different models being used, a standardised model could be developed which is better suited for use at all universities in the Eastern Cape.

1.8: Significance of the study

“The field instruction experience is the factor shown to have the strongest impact on a social worker’s development of practice.”(Birkenmaier and Berg-Weger, 2007:1). “This is the component of training that informs all parties in the training experience of the students’ cognitive journey through knowledge acquisition, conceptualization and application as recognised in Bloom’s taxonomy of learning objectives” (Pohl, 2000). Because of the intense human involvement in social work practice, the training also challenges the full spectrum of the students’ affective domain as identified by Bloom. It is within this domain that the development of a competent professional is shaped (Pohl, 2000).

The evaluation of the field instruction component of the BSW curriculum provides for a reflective lens through which the effectiveness of current practice can be determined and suggestions for the future can be made. “The significance of evaluation research lies in society’s need of valuing, because it requires a systematic, unbiased means of knowing if its products, personnel and programmes are good” (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:345).

Significance of the research will result from the findings of the research being used to refine and adjust field instruction, so as to best suit the training needs of students, field instruction agencies, social work departments and communities within the Eastern Cape and other provinces facing similar challenges.

1.9: Chapter overviews

Chapter 2 begins with a conceptualisation of social work field instruction. This is followed by a discussion relating to the theoretical framework of experiential learning which forms the basis for social work field instruction. The various models of field instruction are identified and discussed. This is followed by a description of the parties involved in social work field instruction and the field instruction seminar. It concludes by looking at the standards as set by IASSW and ASASWEI for social work field instruction and the ELOs of the SACSSP.

In Chapter 3, the qualitative research design, using semi-structured interviews with the university fieldwork coordinators and focus groups with the social work students and agency field instructors, is presented and discussed. This is followed by a discussion relating to the research sample and the research process. The process of data collection and analysis using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is also presented. Lastly, limitations and ethical considerations are discussed.

In Chapter 4, the demographics of the research participants are presented and discussed. This is followed by a presentation and discussion of the research findings.

Chapter 5 presents an evaluative summary of the findings and makes recommendations, drawing on relevant literature throughout. The study is concluded by revisiting the overall research questions, aim and objectives and conclusions regarding whether these have been met are presented.

1.10: **Key concepts and terms**

The following concepts will be used throughout the research and for the purposes of the research will be understood accordingly:

Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree: “The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) has registered the BSW as the current qualification for training social workers in South Africa. It is a four-year qualification and demands that social workers are well grounded in general practice. It requires registration with the SACSSP from a second year level, as training involves both a teaching and practice component” (Rautenbach and Chiba, 2010:23).

Field instruction: “also referred to as field practicum, field work or field education, is the component of social work education where students learn to practice social work through delivering social work services in agency and community settings” (Bogo, 2005:163).

South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP): “The SACSSP is a statutory body that regulates the social service professions in terms of the Social Service Professions Act No 110 of 1978. The vision of the SACSSP is to strive for social justice through the promotion and enhancement of developmental social welfare. Registration with the SACSSP as a student social worker is a statutory requirement when students actually engage in providing services to clients; this takes place from a second year level” (Rautenbach and Chiba, 2010: 24)

Exit Level Outcomes (ELOs): “There are 27 exit-level outcomes with their associated assessment criteria that guide the four year BSW qualification. These 27 ELOs are formulated to demonstrate both a theoretical and field practice component that are inextricably intertwined and cannot be separated in terms of credits and levels” (Rautenbach and Chiba, 2010:24).

International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW): “The IASSW is a worldwide association of schools of social work, other tertiary level social work educational programmes and social work educators. The IASSW promotes the development of social work education throughout the world, develops standards to enhance the quality of social work education, encourages international exchange, provides forums for sharing social work research and scholarship and promotes human right and social development through policy and advocacy activities. The IASSW presents social work education at an international level” (Rautenbach and Chiba, 2010:26). South Africa is a member of the IASSW.

Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI): “ASASWEI strives to be the leading association in the promotion of social work education,

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research and training in South Africa, in collaboration with the international community”

(Rautenbach and Chiba, 2010:26).

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1: Introduction

Chapter 2 provides the reader with an overview of the literature pertaining to the research study. It starts by discussing and exploring social work field instruction. It will then provide a link between social work field instruction and experiential learning as the theoretical foundation for this research. It will explain the relevance and importance of experiential learning (learning by doing) by exploring whether experiential learning is also being implemented across other disciplines of study. The chapter then goes on to discuss the various models that exist for field instruction, the various parties involved in social work field instruction, what is expected from each party and the use of fieldwork seminars within field instruction. Throughout the chapter, challenges presently facing field instruction and the pressures on tertiary institutions to provide effective fieldwork models, so as to produce quality social workers will be discussed. The review also includes detailed work relating to field instruction both nationally and internationally, insight into ASASWEI's work in progress and the ELOs of the SACSSP relating to social work field instruction. In conclusion, the chapter highlights the importance of an evaluation study in relation to improving field instruction within the Eastern Cape, South Africa.

2.2: Conceptualisation of social work field instruction

*“For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them”
Aristotle (in Birkenmaier and Berg-Weger, 2007:1)*

Field instruction is also referred to throughout the literature as field education, fieldwork education, or field practicum. It relates directly to the quote by Aristotle above, simply stated, by doing we learn. According to Jenkins and Shaefor (1981:3), “field instruction is an experiential form of teaching and learning in which the social work student is helped to consciously bring selected knowledge to the practice situation, develops competence in performing practice skills, learns to practice within the framework of social work values and ethics, develops a professional commitment to social work practice, evolves a practice style consistent with personal strengths and capacities and develops the ability to work effectively within a social work agency”. Wilson states that “the field instruction portion of the social work curriculum is designed to help students apply and integrate theoretical concepts learned in the classroom. It is the time when everything comes together” (1981:6). Garthwait defines field instruction “as a mode of study emphasizing the practical application of theory or conceptual knowledge”. The author elaborates further stating that most types of professional education employ some form of in-service training to assist students in applying classroom work to real situations (2008:1). Abrahamson and Fortune state that “the fieldwork component of social work education plays an important role in fusing the knowledge, skills and values of the profession” (1990:273). Moore and Collins discuss diversity and the emphasis that is being placed on anti-discriminatory social work practices and how it is not enough just to teach such practices within a classroom setting (2002:171). The field instruction placement again allows for social work students to “further develop analytical and conceptual skills while demonstrating they are capable of integrating and applying the theoretical material that they have learned in the other core areas of the curriculum to a diversity of practice settings and populations” (Moore and Collins, 2002:172). It can thus be seen that field instruction forms an important part of social work training. Its’ foundation and value lies in the

opportunity to practise the theory taught in class. At the same time, it is an opportunity to reflect upon practice experiences in a supportive learning environment, provided through the supervisory relationship, both at the agency and in the university setting.

As stated in chapter one field instruction is based on the principle of progression and it is expected that as students progress with their theoretical education, so too they will progress in the degree of complexity of their field instruction experiences (Savaya et al, 2003). Shaefor and Jenkins (1981 and 1982, in Savaya et al, 2003) describe three basic approaches to field education: the apprenticeship model, the academic model and the articulated model. Savaya et al (2003:297) state that “over time most schools of social work have adopted the articulated approach to teaching social work.” The authors describe the three models as follows:

- The apprenticeship model begins with an early introduction to field instruction and can even occur prior to the introduction of theory. The emphasis is on the student learning from observing an experienced social worker
- The academic approach is focused on the students cognitive development and teaching. For this model practice is introduced in the final semester and the lecturer assumes responsibility for the classroom learning while the agency field instructor supports and guides and the student then integrates knowledge with theory.
- The articulated approach encourages a partnership between the lecturer and field instruction, with students learning in class and in the field at the same time. Classroom and field instruction tasks increase in complexity congruently over time.

The authors continue by stating that Bogo and Globerman have described two ways of applying the articulated approach, namely the teaching centre model and the field setting model. The teaching centre model involves the agency field instructor taking responsibility for teaching both theory and practice. The field setting model requires that the theory is taught by university staff while an opportunity to practise is provided by an agency under the supervision of a qualified social worker (Savaya et al, 2003:298). The issue of congruency is debated by the authors as they state that it is clear that in the teaching centre model, theory and practice are

aligned as they are facilitated by the same person. In the field setting model there is a greater need for collaboration between the two parties to ensure congruency between what is being taught in the classroom and opportunities provided for in the field instruction programme. “Both class and field learning must be developed with learning objectives that are agreed on and carefully sequenced to allow for their integration” (Savaya et al, 2003:298). Learning environments both in the classroom and in the field should at all times allow for the integration of practice with theory. It would appear that a suitable approach for achieving this outcome is the articulated model using either the teaching centre or the field setting model, with an emphasis on strong links between the classroom and the field setting.

2.3: Experiential learning

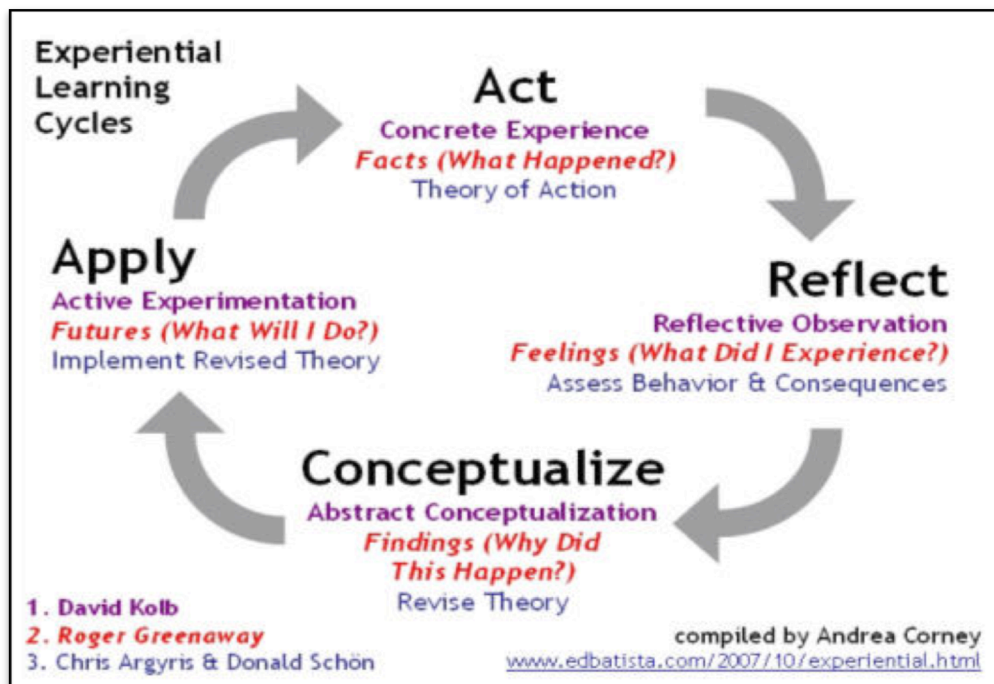
“Research on learning approaches is divided on two traditions, one of which is biased towards academic learning, and the other towards learning from experience”(De Jong, Wierstra and Hermanussen, 2006:155). De Jong et al, have argued that “in school based learning memorizing is more effective however in work based training, memorization plays a much smaller role. Instead, gathering experiential knowledge is the main task” (2006: 155). Goldstein (2001:25) has called for all social work educators “to prepare students for practice by stressing socialization to the profession, knowledge building and growth enhancement through reflective teaching modalities...this kind of education produces a social worker with personal and professional self”. Field instruction, as per the above definition, would then fall under the second approach of learning, the approach whereby learning occurs from experience.

De Jong et al, continue to suggest that experiential learning for work based training can be done by “learning by doing (surrender to experience), guided learning (following instructions and assignments) and reflective learning (experimenting and making sense of the experience)” (2006:155). Taylor and Cheung (2010) state that “educators have been interested in testing the use of effective teaching methods to prepare students for the challenges of social work practice in a diverse world”. “In helping professions, reflective or experiential learning is defined as a process where learners experiment, or in some way actively demonstrate, what they have learned through which active experimentation will produce further but different outputs to gain new insight and critical thinking so that the cycle of learning evolves again” (Moon, 2004 in Taylor and Cheung, 2010).

“In teaching social work practice skills, Kolb’s (1984) work on experiential learning is influential in understanding that the opportunity to engage in an experience is not sufficient. There needs to be reflection on the experience to learn, conceptualization and analysis of the experience, so that the learning can be transferred from one situation to another” (Skilton, 2011). As discussed throughout this section, field instruction relies heavily on the theory of experiential learning. It will thus be useful to explore Kolb’s work on the experiential learning cycle in more detail. Kolb (1984) defines the experiential learning theory as “process knowledge created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge is thus derived from the combination of grasping and transforming the experience. Experiential learning relies on two related modes of grasping the experience - the concrete experience and the abstract conceptualisation of the experience. This is then followed by two modes of transforming the experience - reflective observation and active experimentation. Knowledge is thus constructed as a result of the creative

tension among the four learning modes that are responsive to contextual demands. This process is portrayed as an idealised learning cycle or spiral where the learner touches bases with experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting” (Kolb, 1984). The experiential learning cycle is conceptualised as a spiral and may begin at any one of the four stages (Timm, Birkenmaier and Tebb, 2011:176). Bogo and Vayda (1998) have also presented a framework for integrating theory and practice called The Integrating theory and Practice (ITP) loop process (Perrault and Coleman, 2004:54). “This process is closely aligned to the experiential learning cycle and includes four components namely, Retrieval of experiences, Reflection, Linkage with formal knowledge and Evaluation of students’ professional responses to events or issues” (Perrault and Coleman, 2004:54).

Diagram 1: The four stages in the experiential learning cycle



The four stages in the experiential learning cycle can be seen in the above diagram. (Corney, 2007). The relevance of each stage to social work field instruction and the ITP loop process will now be discussed:

2.3.1: *The concrete experience*

“This is where an immediate experience for learners is created so that learning can take place” (Timmel in Collins and Van Breda, 2010:15) and within social work training can range from case studies, role plays, simulations or contact with real clients during classroom teaching, preparation for field instruction placements, field instruction seminars or through the field instruction programme. These experiences should allow for the exploration and development of social work knowledge, values and skills. Ideally the concrete experience should draw on the life experiences of learners from outside (Collins and Van Breda, 2010:16) and should over time become more complex in nature. The ITP loop describes this stage as being the retrieval stage “where the student recalls a practice situation which triggers either positive or negative feelings about his or her work” (Perrault and Coleman, 2004:54). “Educators, as change agents, present learning opportunities and experiences to induce change in the learner” (Knowles et al, 2005 in Lay and McGuire, 2010:542). For example a first year level of field instruction could focus on cases studies and role plays and then build towards simulation and contact with real clients as the student progresses over the four year period of the BSW degree. These experiences can be included as a part of the preparation for placement in agencies or they can be facilitated within the agencies by agency field instructors. “Experiences should be carefully planned and structured to challenge learners to stretch beyond their personal beliefs and values, in consideration of alternative knowledge” (Lay and McGuire, 2010:542). Alternatively, experiences may present

themselves or be unplanned and spontaneous, and experienced lecturers and agency field instructors will recognise such opportunities to facilitate learning opportunities for their social work students. An example of how a planned and structured experience can be useful upon initial placement of the social work student in an agency is: Reviewing and analysing cases (Knight in Bogo 2005:175) which was found to be one of the most influential teaching activities for assisting social work students in understanding how an agency functions and assisting in the integration of theory and practice. Some other examples of useful concrete experiences are presented in a study done by Mumm (2006:86) where students highlighted the usefulness of modelling (observing a field instructor at work) and co-counselling in the learning of social work skills.

2.3.2: *Observation and reflection*

During this stage the social work student is allowed the opportunity to reflect upon the experience and what it means to them (Collins and Van Breda, 2010:16). The ITP loop describes reflection as “the time where the student must remember the thoughts and feelings evoked by a particular experience, and consider what personal issues were operating, as well as what seemed to work best with the client” (Perrault and Coleman, 2004:54). Initially the classroom lecturer, university supervisor or agency field instructor will assist the social work student in reflecting upon the experience. Questions such as: what has just happened here and how do you feel about what has happened here? are asked. Reflection is important during social work field instruction as it allows the student an opportunity to look back and determine how a particular point was reached (Perrault and Coleman, 2004:53). Journaling and assignments are also a useful tools, often used by university supervisors, to assist in this stage. Timm et al (2011:178) describe the Experiential Community Assessment Project (ECAP) based on the theory and teaching practice

of experiential learning, “where social work students were required to work in groups to assess a community ... and submit reflection papers throughout the semester to help them to integrate the experience” ECAP provides a relevant example of how learning opportunities offered through field instruction programmes with their related activities can be organised and directed at facilitating the social work student, in engaging in the experiential learning cycle. Ideally by the time that the social work student graduates it is hoped that the social work student is able to take themselves through this process of reflection so that they are constantly reviewing their experiences and trying to make sense of them, thus producing a quality professional who is able to develop and improve their knowledge and skills and evaluate their performance independently. “Reflection has been identified as a key component in learning since it was conceptualised by Dewey(1910)...additionally critical thinking has been identified as a key skill for social work practitioners (Gambrill, 2005) and may be essential to the development of reflection that employs intellectual standards for reasoning” (Lay and McGuire 2010:540). Rogers (2001) states that “reflection is critical for social workers in development, renewal and self-correction of practice...reflection occurs through articulation of practice: describing thoughts, feelings, behaviours and attitudes.” The usefulness of reasoning as a skill that can be developed through reflection cannot be denied for the social work profession. It is a skill that needs to be encouraged and developed throughout the BSW educational programme and can be facilitated through the cycle of experiential learning during the university’s field instruction programme.

2.3.3: *Formation of abstract concepts*

This stage involves the social work student asking themselves questions such as: what can I learn from this experience about myself, others, life and the social work profession? “Here the

social work student takes a few steps back from the experience and the personal reflection on the experience...It is here that the theory is introduced to help interpret the experience at a higher level” (Collins and Van Breda, 2010:16). Once again the lecturer during classroom experiences and the university supervisor and agency field instructor play a great role in assisting students to link the experience to theory and knowledge. This stage also links closely to the Linkage stage, as identified by Bogo and Vayda (1998). “Linkage occurs when the student analyses what he or she did and why, as well as what else could have been done” (Perrault and Coleman, 2004:54). Hickcox describes this stage as when the experience is conceptualised, “here discipline related issues, concepts and principles are used to understand the experience” (2002:128). The author states that ideally a personal model as a result of the experience starts to form and develop (Hickcox, 2002:128). The social work student should be linking theory learnt in the classroom to assist in understanding the experience and also developing a sense of self awareness in terms of their own reactions to the experience. This stage of the experiential learning cycle can also be facilitated though specific assignments and discussions either with agency field instructors during supervision or within the classroom or field seminar setting, either with the university supervisor or fieldwork coordinator, during the field instruction programme.

2.3.4: *Active experimentation*

The fourth stage leads to the social work student asking themselves questions such as: what now, where too from here, what does this mean to me and what will I do differently now or keep the same? The social work student is then able to take the learning and progress with it into the world as a new way of living (Collins and Van Breda, 2010:17). In this way the social work student is able to continuously develop in knowledge, skills and values. It is also important to remember that the cycle does not end here, “all learning is relearning - it is conceptualised as a

continuous loop” (Zull, 2002:17). The ITP loop describes this stage as “a professional response: the student reviews the experience deliberately again and considers further reflection and linkage” (Perrault and Coleman, 2004:54).

Timm et al, (2011:177) state that “utilising experiential learning within social work education allows students the opportunity to become more self-aware, which in turn can stimulate an appreciation for clients and neighbourhoods”. The theoretical framework of experiential learning and its relevance to social work teaching and in particular social work field instruction is clearly illustrated. The placement of the social work student within an agency setting immediately implies that there will be experiences that could be useful learning tools and may be meaningful if reflected upon. This then has the potential to allow “for the development of a reflective and critical thinker that is needed for students to practice effectively in a global world” (Lay and McGuire, 2010:540). Experiential learning as an action and a process whereby experiences are continuously re-cycled allows both the student and the supervisor to identify themes and work on developing plans for action within a supportive and motivational professional partnership, resulting in the gap between intended outcomes and actual outcomes and theory and practice being bridged (Perrault and Coleman, 2004:54).

The experiential form of teaching, or learning from experience approach, is not isolated to the training of social work students. Experiential learning is also adopted by other departments such as entrepreneurship and teaching, within educational institutions as a preferred method of facilitating learning. Cantor (in Timm et al, 2011:177) states that “experiential learning is an essential part of higher education”. Kolb and Kolb (2005:193) discuss the concept of experiential

learning as being one of the streams of research explored to improve teaching and learning in higher education.

In 2007, the establishment of social work as a scarce skill by the South African Government led to the implementation of a recruitment and retention strategy by the Department of Social Development with large scale financial assistance for student training being offered (Schmidt, 2012). The implication of this may be that many of the students today are not studying social work because they want to, but rather because they are not accepted into other programmes, or because of the financial assistance that they are offered. The implications of this for experiential learning is that teaching should start with what the students know, teachers should develop the future selves of students and not focus on the lack of interest of students and lastly, teachers should use creative and active learning tasks that allow for 'learning by doing' as in theory this form of learning will endure beyond the next test or exam. In social work, students are required to apply theory from their lectures into practice in the community. "These requirements are operationalised by ELOs that are explicit and applied in an outcomes based approach" (Collins and Van Breda, 2010:14). Here the importance and relevance of experiential learning, as being the foundation of social work and field instruction programmes, is again emphasised.

It is thus evident that experiential learning is important in forming a theoretical basis for social work field instruction. Field instruction is based upon the theoretical foundations of reflection through experiential learning. It will thus be important to use experiential learning as one means of evaluating the programmes of social work field instruction at universities within the Eastern Cape, South Africa.

2.4: Field instruction models

Various models for field instruction exist. The more traditional models where students are placed in social welfare organizations in the community are still widely used. Royse, Dhooper and Rompf discuss the various field instruction placements and arising models (2003:8). The most common types of field instruction are block and concurrent. Other suggested models of field instruction such as rotations, community centre units and group field instruction will also be presented and discussed. These are of particular interest with the challenges facing field instruction in South Africa where there are at times not sufficient availability of the more traditional social work agencies used in the past for student block and concurrent field instruction placements.

2.4.1: *Block model*

The block field instruction placement implies that the student is placed in a fieldwork agency for a continuous period of time – “a whole academic term or a semester with the student devoting four or five days (full time) a week to experiential learning in the agency” (Royse et al, 2003). Liu, Sun and Anderson state that such a model allows students to complete all theory before starting with field instruction, the idea being that students will gain more knowledge and skills before beginning work at agencies (2013:184). A modified block placement indicates the student is spending four days a week at the agency and the fifth day is reserved for lectures, course work, supervision, or research. Liu et al, (2013:184) state that the block model is less commonly used in the United States. In South Africa the modified block placement is adopted by

some universities, with one day a week typically being allowed for field seminars, supervision or lectures.

Theriot, Johnson, Mulvaney and Kretzschmar (2006:214) present a study comparing the block and concurrent models of field instruction and state that universities should be aware that block placements may place extra pressure on students who have other responsibilities such as family or part time employment. Another disadvantage of the block model is the limited time available for lectures or field seminars which assist the student in integrating theory with experiences from the field (Theriot et al, 2006:205). The authors suggest that in such cases the university should offer extended block placements that give students more time to complete the required field hours or even offer a small number of concurrent placements to assist such students (Theriot et al, 2006:214). Some advantages of the block placement include the student being totally immersed in work at the field agency with less other outside distractions for the student (Henton, 1995). The long hours worked also gives the student a chance to experience what full time employment would be like and may result in forming a more supportive supervisory relationship (Theriot et al, 2006:205).

2.4.2: *Concurrent model*

The concurrent field instruction placement states that the student divides their time between course work and field instruction experiences. “The exact proportion of time devoted to each set of learning experience depends on the type of academic term, the number of academic credits and whether or not the students are undergraduates or first, second or third year graduates” (Royse et al., 2003). Liu et al, (2013:184) describe the concurrent model as an integrated placement model where students are both attending lectures and working in agencies at the same

time, the underlying philosophy being that students are more likely to integrate theory if practicing at the same time. Many South African universities make use of the concurrent model or a combination of the two models at different levels within their field instruction programmes.

Literature suggests that this model is most suited to social work students who have obligations, such as family and other work, over and above their study obligations (Theriot et al, 2006:214). The concurrent model may also be preferred by universities as it allows more time for the integration of theory with field activities (Theriot et al, 2006:205). Some disadvantages of the concurrent model include limited placement options, interruptions in the provision of services, and possible negative financial implications for students (Hamilton and Else, 1983 in Theriot et al, 2006:205).

Often South African universities combine the different models at different times during the 4 year training period for the BSW Degree. An example of this would be using the concurrent model at a first, second and third year level and then introducing the block model at a fourth year level. It is useful to note that “Educationally, all of these approaches are considered sound, although students may have preference for one model over another and social work departments can organise the required field instruction in different ways, as long as degree programmes are educationally directed, coordinated and monitored” (Royse, et al, 2003:7). It is also interesting to note that “neither of the models have been developed based on solid empirical evidence, instead we find ourselves confronted with institutionally driven models rather than ones clearly grounded in consumer need, learning and theory” (Henton, 1995 in Theriot et al., 2006: 205). Implying that often universities choose models of field instruction that may be more convenient

and these models may not always be better suited for each student, agency or even clients. Theriot et al, adds to this stating that “certain settings and field of practice might be suited for one model of field over another” (2006:215). For example where it might take students a long time to build rapport with children, a concurrent model might be more appropriate, while in a hospital setting where client turnover is relatively high, a block placement might be more beneficial to both the clients and social work student (Theriot et al, 2006:215).

2.4.3: *Other suggested models of field instruction*

While block and concurrent placement models are the most popular amongst social work field instruction departments, various other suggested models for field instruction should also be explored. Spitzer, Holden Cuzzi, Rutter, Chernack and Rosenberg, identify rotations, community centre units and group field instruction as other suggested models for social work field instruction (2001).

A: *The rotational model*

Birkenmaier, Curley and Rowan discuss the rotational model of field instruction as an alternative to the traditional placement, stating that “this model has been used with increasing frequency over the last decade” (2012:322). The rotational model serves to broaden the range of experiences social work students receive, with students rotating their placements using a wide range of agencies, instead of remaining at one agency for the duration of the field instruction experience (Birkenmaier et al, 2012:322). Birkenmaier explains that rotations take place both internally (within an agency) and externally (at different agencies) and can take place concurrently (at different agencies, on different days in the same week) or sequentially (at one agency at a time) (2012:324). In the past the more traditional concurrent and block placements

have been preferred however universities have been forced to reconsider and adjust these models due to the challenges facing field instruction, in order to continue providing students with individual supervision (Globerman and Bogo, 2003). Literature has noted that individual supervision is also not without challenges, with there being a concern that one-on-one supervision may increase student dependency, there being less time available for such supervision, and students needing to be exposed to a broader range of practice areas, settings and supervisory styles (Birkenmaier et al, 2012:323). These concerns have motivated and paved the way for the use of the rotational model of field instruction. These concerns are also valid within the South African context and perhaps the use of the rotational model would assist in giving students a wider experience of agency settings. The concerns of the rotational model include the potential to lose depth of learning due to less time being spent in one setting and the loss of a home base to which students would return to integrate theory with practice (Birkenmaier 2012:325). Other studies have addressed these concerns and made suggestions such as keeping the same supervisor throughout the process. In one study students reported being highly satisfied with the rotational model, agreeing that the rotational model was helpful and allowed them to learn about a range of services (Volland, 2008).

B: *The community centre model*

Some universities have adopted the community centre model, where students work within communities to identify needs and from there develop macro, meso and micro interventions. These centers have developed in partnership with communities and social work agencies and have a strong focus on developmental principles, serving the community while at the same time serving as a base for students' experiential learning (Rogers, 1995). Lurie and Pinsky describe

the Queens Field Instruction Center as “an administrative unit that provides a closer working relationship between schools of social work and social agencies at all levels”(1973:39). The center allows for the concurrent placement of students over a two year period, with opportunities for multimethod training, and has assisted in students becoming experienced in a wide variety of skills which are community needs based and less agency needs based (Lurie and Pinsky, 1973:40). “The center has also provided participating agencies with potential workers who have a background in a wide range of social work responsibilities” (Lurie and Pinsky, 1973:44). This model is of great interest to the researcher as many universities have clinics where psychology students complete their in service training and these clinics seem to work well, providing an affordable service to a wide range of clients and at the same time a site for the in service training of their students. In light of the pressure from universities for staff involvement in community engagement projects and giving back to communities, combined with financial pressures on Non Governmental Organisations (NGO’s), this model might also serve to assist NGO’s in rendering services and reducing the need for finding traditional placements for the training of social work students.

C: *Group field instruction*

Group supervision in field instruction is also suggested as an alternative model to the one-on-one traditional supervision style commonly used with the block and concurrent field instruction models (Spitzer et al, 2001). “Group supervision is the use of the group setting to implement the administrative, educational and supportive functions of supervision” (Kudashin, 1992:440). The usefulness of group supervision during field instruction includes the mutual aid that students are able to offer each other and the provision of a safe place for students to discuss

their concerns and anxieties (Lager and Robbins, 2004). Group supervision is also useful as students experience a shift from being students in competition with each other to working together within a team context, similar to colleagues in a working environment (Kittle and Gross, 2005:46). This model of field instruction may have disadvantages such as the learning needs of the group taking precedence over the needs of individual members and suggests that for this reason the model be combined with alternate sessions of individual supervision (Kudashin, 1992). Some advantages of the model include firstly, giving the field instructor a platform to address common concerns that reoccur during individual instruction and secondly, group supervision can be more economical in terms of the field instructor's time, where often the field instructor is responsible for a number of students (Kudashin, 1992). This model would also be a relevant model to the South African context as agency field instructors and university supervisors often have groups of students that they are supervising, with limited time available. The students may also benefit from the building of relationships and sharing of experiences in the group supervision setting.

It can thus be seen that the traditional models of field instruction have much relevance, while other suggested models of field instruction can be used to adapt the traditional models and perhaps enhance effectiveness, in light of the changes and challenges facing field instruction programs at universities in the Eastern Cape.

2.5: Parties involved in field instruction

In general, four parties are involved in the social work field instruction experience. These are the social work student, the agency based field instructor (also referred to as the agency supervisor or the field instructor), the university supervisor (also referred to as the faculty liaison) and the university fieldwork coordinator (also referred to as the practical/practicum coordinator).

2.5.1: *The social work student*

Garthwait states that “the social work student in field instruction is expected to follow the guidelines mentioned below, as well as to adhere to the social work code of ethics while engaging in field instruction:

- Prepare and meet weekly for supervision with the field instructor and faculty liaison
- Be in attendance at the agency at agreed upon times and days and, if unable to attend notify the agency field instructor prior to or at the start of the work day
- Behave in a professional manner, including taking responsibility as an adult learner to understand and carry out assigned duties, meet all deadlines, and seek direction when needed
- Carry out field instruction assignments in a manner consistent with agency policy, procedures and format
- Identify learning needs and prepare a learning agreement with specific learning objectives that are acceptable to the agency and university field instructor
- Bring to the attention of the university fieldwork instructor or fieldwork coordinator any practice or behaviour within the agency that is clearly unethical
- Complete and submit all fieldwork written documentation and reports required by the agency and university
- Discuss any areas of disagreement, dissatisfaction or confusion with the agency and university supervisor
- Devote the required number of hours to the field work placement (2008:12)”.

Social work students often experience a combination of feelings when beginning their field instruction placements. Many students are excited to be entering the field but also anxious because the beginning of field instruction marks a journey of “self-examination, testing new competencies, challenging previous conceptions, and confronting personal weaknesses and strengths, all on the path toward establishing a professional identity” (Gelman and Baum, 2010:427). Students often worry about their “lack of skills and experience, logistical aspects such as travel distance, and safety issues” (Gelman and Baum, 2010:427). For many students the field instruction placement will be their first contact with clients, their first experience of real work and their first opportunity to integrate the theory that they have learnt in class into work with clients (Birkenmaier and Berg-Weger, 2007:7). “In terms of clients, students worry about finding them difficult to work with or making mistakes” (Gelman and Baum, 2010:428). These worries manifest in quite a lot of pre-placement anxiety for students. Supervision can be a very supportive relationship in assisting students to manage their anxiety, although initially as it is the first experience that students have of supervision, this also results in some concern for the students. “In terms of supervision, students are concerned about the quality and quantity available, and that field instructors have fair expectations of them” (Gelman and Baum, 2010:428). Students also worry about the workload being too much to manage with workload at the field instruction agency, academic requirements, family and personal obligations, all placing pressure on them (Gelman and Baum, 2012:433). It can thus be seen that field instruction, although a very valuable and integral part of social work education, may cause much pre-placement anxiety for students.

Several student characteristics are mentioned as being important to agency field instructors when they interview students for field placements at their agencies. Royse et al, describe these characteristics as being a strong desire to help others, having an interest and ability to function in the agencies particular setting and emotional maturity (2003:19). Agencies are looking for students who are able to understand clients, who are motivated by the belief that clients can help themselves and students who will not give up easily, as social work can often be a very frustrating profession (Royse et al, 2003:19). Agencies also look for students who are interested in the services that they render and who at the same time are interested in assisting with rendering services to these clients (Royse et al, 2003:20). Lastly many agencies will try to determine whether the student is emotionally and intellectually mature, as these students are often more able to confidently render services while at the same time make use of feedback and guidance given during supervision (Royse et al, 2003:20).

As much as agencies are seeking to select students with these qualities, the field instruction placement also becomes the time when the student is able to test and determine whether social work is really the best matched profession for their values, beliefs, temperament, abilities and skills (Garthwait, 2008). “Each student is a unique individual with a unique personality and set of abilities and interests. In addition, each profession and occupation has a unique set of demands and required skills.” (Garthwait, 2008). Field instruction is an important time for the student to find out whether they ‘fit’ with the profession because in general there is a close relationship between job satisfaction and one’s overall satisfaction with self and life. In this way the importance of field instruction for the student is emphasised, field instruction gives them the opportunity to determine their commitment to the profession, also giving those the opportunity

that find that they do not ‘fit’ with social work, an opportunity to change career options early on in their studies.

2.5.2: *The agency based field instructor*

The agency based field instructor is a social worker working in an agency in the community under whom the social work students will do their field instruction (Horejsi and Garthwait, 1999:11). Field instruction relies partly on agency field instructors who provide supervised practice opportunities for students to practice the necessary knowledge, skills, and values for professional social work. “Social workers who serve as agency field instructors provide a major contribution to the professional preparation of social work practitioners and have a profound influence on student’s professional development” (Rogers and McDonald, 1992:166). Garthwait (2008:13) describes the role of the agency based field instructor:

- Orientation of the student to the agency expectations, policy and procedures
- Provide regular supervision
- Provide the student with adequate accommodation, resources and support staff
- Include the student in agency meetings and training
- Assign learning opportunities appropriate to the student’s abilities and a variety of social work roles
- Participate in university training for agency field instructors
- Monitor and evaluate student performance and meet regularly with university supervisor
- Complete all evaluation forms and reports
- Role model ethical and professional behaviour at all times

Literature continuously focuses on the importance of universities developing programmes to support and train agency field instructors so as to ensure effective supervision, training and evaluation of students, thus enhancing the quality of social work field instruction programmes. Rogers and McDonald (1992:167) discuss the importance of “training agency field instructors and preparing them so that they are able to shift their perceptual lens from practitioner to educator.” Bogo (1981:60) suggests that the shift from social work practitioner to agency field

instructor necessitates learning new knowledge and skills and goes on to describe a model for teaching first time field instructors. Larsen and Hepworth (1982:51) have also identified “a disquieting reality that the inadequate leadership by educators in assisting agency field instructors to learn effective models of teaching leaves agency field instructors in pursuit of ill-defined objectives. This results in field instruction that is varied, uneven and unsystematic.”

Abrahamson and Fortune (1990:273) discuss the importance of the role as the agency field instructor in the training of social work students and developed a training seminar as a requirement for all agency field instructors to continue supervising social work students. The need for such training is evident when compared to the responsibilities assigned to the agency field instructor. Abrahamson and Fortune found that the 10 week training seminar resulted in “higher student satisfaction and that all agency field instructors who participated in the programme found it quite useful in relation to their role of supervising social work students”(1990:273). The authors also state that the training is essential as “agency field instructors must be competent to ensure the success of the educational process” (Abrahamson and Fortune, 1990:273). Caspi and Reid suggest that the use of a task-centred model for field instruction would assist agency field instructors in supervising students by “offering strategies for setting and achieving target goals through a collaborative teaching-learning process.” (1998:55). Knight (2009:241) found that training agency field instructors “may be a way of enhancing student opportunities to engage in group work” – thus again emphasising that training of agency field instructors, even within a specific intervention level, can lead to increased opportunities for student learning.

“Essential supervisory tasks in the role of good agency field instructor would include giving instruction, modelling, monitored practice, allowing students to take risks and facilitating learning from feedback” (O’Connor, 2000). Ornstein and Moses support this statement and present the relational approach to field instruction where “the goal is to promote greater reciprocity and mutuality between participants” (2010:102). The relational perspective to field instruction is one where both parties have “distinctive but equally valuable areas of expertise”, the student has life experience and the experience of working with a particular client while the agency field instructor has more experience and practice wisdom (Ornstein and Moses, 2010:105). Ornstein and Moses continue by suggesting that the agency field instructor should attend to the dynamics between the student and clients but also to the dynamics within the supervisory relationship and should at all times be a model for the student on both of these levels (2010:107). This is important to note as students have been found to adopt their supervisor’s personal supervisory style, thus implying that should the agency field instructor model a more relationship orientated supervisory style, the student would also consider themselves to be more relationship-orientated (Itshaky and Eliahu, 1999:82). Perhaps then in the very same way should an agency field instructor model empathy and understanding and a sensitivity to the student’s needs and concerns, the student will be able to show such qualities when interacting with clients (Ornstein and Moses, 2010:107). It can thus be seen that the agency field instructor plays a very important role in the field instruction process.

A: *Off-site agency field instructors*

Abram, Hartung and Wernet (2000:171) have also discussed the use of agencies where there is no on-site social worker, but where many learning opportunities exist for a social work

student. The student is then matched with an off-site agency field instructor, a qualified social worker, who provides social work education and works together with an on-site task supervisor to address administrative issues. The study conducted by the above mentioned authors shows that such a placement is reliant on the following factors to ensure that the placement is perceived as being of high quality:

- “Students are mature, self-confident, have experience, are able to take initiative and have good communication skills
- On-site task supervisor has extensive knowledge of resources, and is able to work well with the university and the student and the agency is committed to developing students
- Common philosophy and values, clear roles and division of labour and frequent communication between agency task supervisor and off-site social work supervisor” (2000:171).

Field instruction is not noted by many agency field instructors as being an integral part of their job descriptions (Doel, in Hubbard and Kitchen, 2010:510). In a South African context this is seen often when social workers in the field decline requests to become involved in supervising students in the field (Strydom, 2002). Ligon and Ward also note that a challenge for universities, is having many sites for field instruction often in very rural areas, where no agency field instructor is available (2005:240). Because of this, ‘freelancing’ off site agency field instructors has become a valued part of field instruction over the last few years, however “careful thought needs to be given to ensure that they are well equipped alongside other social work professionals” (Hubbard and Kitchen, 2010:517). Ferguson and Smith have also written about the use of off-site agency field instructors, where students are placed at agencies that do not employ social workers however render social justice and social action services within communities (2012:979). This suggested that such placements did allow for much student learning to occur but at times noticing that students needed more support. In the past few years universities in South Africa have been obliged to consider the use of non traditional social work

agencies, where often there are no on-site social work agency field instructors. This has been partly because of the increase in the interest in studying social work and the resulting increase in social work students and secondly because of the more traditional agencies being less willing and able to supervise social work students in the field. Ferguson and Smith (2012:974) discuss the use of such a non traditional placement to facilitate student involvement in promoting social justice within South Africa.

Literature thus supports that although students have to be supervised by a registered social work professional, the agency field instructor does not have to be on-site. More important than having an on-site social work agency field instructor are the quality of the supervisory relationship, and the personal and professional characteristics of the agency field instructor and student.

2.5.3: *The university supervisor*

The university supervisor is a social worker contracted or employed by the university in a supervisory capacity (Horejsi and Garthwait, 1999:11). Urbanowski and Dwyer define the university supervisor as “the representative of the school who coordinates and consults with the agency administrator, agency field instructor, and student in regard to the needs and expectations of all parties involved in the education of the student in the field instruction courses” (1988:212).

According to Garthwait (2008:13) the university supervisor is expected to:

- “Develop a plan with the student and agency field instructor to ensure that the student will be provided with an array of learning opportunities
- Monitor the student’s field placement experience and assist in evaluating the student’s performance

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- Help the agency field instructor and other agency personnel learn about the university's expectations of students, the university curriculum and the university's goals for the placement
- Assist the student in identifying his learning needs, formulating learning objectives and preparing written learning agreement
- Facilitate the student's learning by providing guidance and information
- Meet during the academic semester with the student and the agency field instructor to discuss the fieldwork placement and monitor the student's progress
- Assist the student in integrating theory and specific experiences of the fieldwork placement"

Ligon and Ward state that university supervisors may be full time staff, "who serve multiple roles" within their universities, or are only assigned to field work supervision, they may also be part time staff or retired social workers from the surrounding community (2005:236) The university supervisor and agency field instructor work very closely throughout the field placement, monitoring and evaluating the student and the placement. This close working relationship becomes more effective when the university supervisor and the agency field instructor have a common frame of reference. Thus a partnership becomes important in successfully assisting students to integrate theory and practice. "It is important for both to work from the same theoretical reference and understand each other's roles in the field instruction process" (Giddings, Vodde and Cleveland, 2003:124).

Some challenges for the university supervisors include travel and driving time required to do site visits to the agencies where the students are placed, a shortage of acceptable agencies for the placement of students, a lack of qualified agency field instructors, a lack of cultural diversity and time constraints (Ligon and Ward, 2005:239). Such challenges are relevant to the South African context, where university supervisors are often required to be involved in teaching and research, as well as field instruction at their university, making it quite a challenge to balance the

time needed to fulfil all of these requirements. For part time university supervisors the challenges are the same, as they are often employed as social workers in the community and have limited time available for site visits and supervision of the students. In the Eastern Cape, a large rural province, distance becomes another issue, with sites often being in rural areas and long distances apart, making the time needed to do site visits quite extensive. Some positive aspects of being involved in university supervision include networking with a variety of agencies that render services to the surrounding communities and getting to know the agency's programs and personnel (Ligon and Ward, 2005:240). In the South African context such advantages often open up valuable contacts, for research and community engagement opportunities.

Strydom (2003:278) discusses the needs and expectations of South African agency field instructors in field instruction. The author highlights the role of the agency field instructor in determining the success of the field instruction placement. The author also goes on to highlight that universities need to spend some time attending to the aspects that determine the satisfaction of field instruction during the course of the field instruction programme at the agency. The author also points out that in the present stressful economic conditions many social workers have to deal with high workloads and this in turn has an effect on the time they are able to devote to the supervision of students. The aspects that agency field instructors experience as supportive are discussed and universities are encouraged to devote attention to these in order to strengthen their field instruction programmes. Firstly, support from the agency will influence their willingness to proceed with field instruction. Secondly, the measure to which the field instructor feels supported by the university will influence their willingness to be involved in field instruction. This support is determined by the contact the agency field instructor has with the university

supervisor, the quality of the training programme for the agency field instructor and the benefits that the agency field instructor receives from the university. It is clear from the above that the relationship between the agency field instructor and the university supervisor is critical in influencing the success of the field instruction programme of the university.

2.5.4: *The university fieldwork coordinator*

The university fieldwork coordinator is an employee within the social work department “who is responsible for coordinating the field instruction programme, matching students to agencies in the community and sorting out any problems that should arise during the placement” (Horejsi and Garthwait, 1999:11). Rosenblum and Raphael (1983:69) highlight the following important functions of the university fieldwork coordinator:

- “Promotion of learning opportunities for the student by providing guidance on the integration of theory and practice
- Monitoring the learning opportunities offered to the student as well as assessing the student’s performance
- Liaison with the welfare organization to establish a platform for a co-operative relationship”

Garthwait (2008:12) adds to the above, the following expectations relating to the university fieldwork coordinator:

- “Assume responsibility for the overall management and coordination of the university’s fieldwork programme
- Screen students and assess their readiness for the fieldwork experience
- Assign university supervisor to work with the agency field instructor and student
- Provide learning goals to assist in accomplishing learning objectives developed by the student
- Provide guidelines, evaluation tools and protocols for the evaluation of the student
- Provide orientation and training on the field work programme and field instruction to agency field instructors
- Facilitate a resolution to problems that may arise
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of fieldwork experiences provided by the various agencies and organizations used as fieldwork settings.”

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Rosenfeld (1988:193) refers to the relationship between the agency field instructor and the university and the impact that this relationship has on determining the student's experience of the field instruction placement. If there is not a good university-agency partnership, it could negatively influence the student's placement, as well as having a negative effect on the quality of the university's educational programme. It becomes important for the university fieldwork coordinator to work at building good relationships with agencies and agency field instructors, which may include resolving any problems that arise early on in the field placement -

Maxwell states that "the success of the student field instruction practicum, while for the most part dependant on the effectiveness of the supervision and instruction offered by the agency supervisor, is also influenced by the role played by the university practicum coordinator and/ or school supervisor who has overall responsibility for the practicum as part of the educational institution's social work education programme" (1999:90). Students in the study written about by Maxwell, found that site visits (between one and three) by the fieldwork coordinator to the agency, were mostly viewed by social work students as being helpful to the field instruction experience (1999:90). Some suggestions made by students in this study included more site visits by the university fieldwork coordinator, better preparation for the placement and better communication between the agency and university fieldwork coordinator (Maxwell, 1999:91). It can again be seen that the university fieldwork coordinator plays an important role in building and maintaining relationships between university and agencies. It is also important to students that the university fieldwork coordinator prepares them effectively for the placement and has regular communication with the agencies at which they are placed.

The university fieldwork coordinator is also central in the evaluation of the student and in deciding on the evaluation process. All universities in South Africa make use of different assessment processes when deciding on the final mark for the students' field placement. Some universities allocate a great percentage of the final mark according to the agency field instructor's report, with less of a percentage being awarded for assignments; at other universities the fieldwork coordinator assumes a greater responsibility for awarding marks. It is however true that the fieldwork coordinator is responsible for structuring the assessment process in a manner that is objective, fair and effective in assessing the competencies of students. "There is a need to review the evaluation procedures to try and ensure that the assessment of students is a valid appraisal of their practice competence" (Maxwell, 1999:98).

Another important function of the university fieldwork coordinator is to provide training to agency field instructors (Maxwell, 1999:97). The fieldwork coordinator should ensure that all agency supervisors receive training both in supervision and in field instruction as this will assist in ensuring a quality field instruction placement. 'Free' training, particularly if linked to Continuous Professional Development (CPD) points, is also a way of giving back to agencies, as in South Africa there are very few financial rewards for being involved in field instruction programmes.

Savaya et al., discuss the need for greater communication between universities and agencies to improve congruence of classroom learning and field instruction experiences (2003:307). The author suggests that university fieldwork coordinators should "keep agency field instructors abreast of the academic instruction that students are receiving as any given point, and by

extension of new social work knowledge and practices, it should also strive to augment academia's awareness of the changing realities and pressures that their student face in the field" (2003:307). The fieldwork coordinator should thus also be involved in supporting agency field instructors and sharing new knowledge and information with them, at the same time ensuring that the universities' teaching content is relevant to what is happening in practice during the student's field instruction placement.

2.6: Field instruction seminars

Field instruction seminars are discussed throughout literature as being a valuable part of the field instruction programme. Field instruction seminars are held throughout the field instruction placement and may be facilitated by the university fieldwork coordinator or by the agency field instructor. The seminars can be held either with a small group of students or with the larger class of students, depending on the goal of the seminar. These seminars are initially used to assist in preparing students for their placements and then at a later stage aim to assist students in integrating theory with what are happening at their placements, provide support during the placement and encourage students to share experiences relating to their placements. It is hoped that this contact with other students and the university fieldwork coordinator will enhance the quality of the field instruction placement for students. Garthwait (2008:14) explains that field instruction seminars "bring students from various practicum settings to give them an opportunity to learn about different types of agency settings and to learn from each other's situations" "Field instruction seminars are primarily learner centred, encouraging students to bring to the group any issues or concerns encountered in field placement" (Bushfield, 2005:222). Bushfield supports the

use of integrative seminars as another effective way of assisting students. The author goes on further to state that: “the integrative seminar is intended to assist students in (1) addressing any problems or issues that arise in the field setting; (2) fostering the integration of classroom and internship learning; (3) fostering professional development and socialization” (2005:219). Fieldwork seminars seem to play an important role in assisting students to feel supported during their placements. For the students, having contact with the university fieldwork coordinator also assists in resolving any problems that may arise during their placement and provides a safe place where theory and its link to practice can be discussed and explored.

There are also various discussions relating to the use of technology when facilitating field seminars. Bushfield discusses the use of an online format for the integrative field seminar, despite concerns expressed by faculty, Bushfield states that a web based course delivery format for field integrative seminars was thought to be a valuable laboratory to promote linkages between technology, theory and practice (2005:216). Bushfield states that students found this online seminar of great use and benefit to them (2005: 226). The use of technology would assist South African students greatly as many are placed far away from the university campus and may not even return to campus during their field instruction placement, particularly if the university makes use of the block placement model. Using technology such as Skype may assist such students to maintain contact with the university fieldwork coordinator and other students, despite being placed a long distance away.

2.7: IASSW standards and ASASWEI work in progress

Sewpaul (IASSW) and Jones (IFSW) have embarked on the process of developing global standards for the education and training of the social work profession (2005). This has been documented and it is important to note that the following have been presented as standards with regard to programme curricula including fieldwork:

“With regard to standards regarding programme curricula, schools should consistently aspire towards the following:

- Field education should be sufficient in duration and complexity of task and learning opportunities to ensure that students are prepared for practice.
- Planned co-ordination and links between the school and the agency/field placement setting.
- Provision of orientation for fieldwork supervisors or instructors.
- Provision for the inclusion and participation of field instructors in curriculum development, especially with regard to field education.
- A partnership between the educational institution and the agency and service users in decision making regarding field education and the evaluation of fieldwork performance.
- Making available, to fieldwork instructors or supervisors, a field instruction manual that details its fieldwork standards, procedures and expectations.
- Ensuring that adequate and appropriate resources, to meet the needs of the fieldwork component of the programme, are made available.” (Sewpaul and Jones, 2005).

ASASWEI identified a need to further determine and develop standards for social work field instruction in 2008. The then governing body for Social Work and the SACSSP embarked on initiating the process. The first step undertaken by ASASWEI was to determine the current situation of field instruction within universities in South Africa at that time (2009). For the study, 7 of the 17 universities responded by submitting a situation analysis of their current social work field instruction standards/requirements. Further requests were since made for all universities to respond to this study (Lombard, Harrison and Pruis 2010:1)

The above-mentioned study used 10 minimum standard indicators that were selected for the purposes of the analysis. These were:

- Ratio: Lecturer versus students
- Criteria for selection of field placement organizations
- Type of placement
- Nature of field instruction work
- Level of integration of theory and practice
- Criteria for selection of supervisors
- Assessment criteria
- Criteria for assessors
- Selection of field placement organizations
- Arrangements for field placement

The final analysis indicated that there were similarities, but also significant differences in how field instruction was approached by the respective universities within South Africa (Lombard, Harrison and Pruis, 2010:1). Lecturer: student ratio varied from 1:200, 1:60 and 1:10 at a first year level and from 1:4 and 1:30 at a fourth year level. These figures may indicate a significant difference in the support that students receive at a first and fourth year level, the time and resources provided by a lecturer to ten students at a first year level may be quite different to the time and resources that a lecturer is able to provide to a class of 200. The same applies at a fourth year level where a lecturer supporting a group of four students may be able to give more quality time and resources, than the lecturer who is responsible for a group of 30 students. The selection of field instruction agencies also varies greatly from university to university. Some universities do not place students for field instruction at a first or second year level at all, while other universities select agencies that are able to facilitate first year students observing and volunteering at the agency and that provide opportunities for second year students to observe and render basic services to clients. At a third and fourth year level agencies are selected according to

whether they are able to provide opportunities for micro, meso and macro interventions while other universities select agencies according to their willingness to accept students or willingness to provide students with a minimum number of field instruction working hours or days. Universities also differ in the models used for field instruction, at a first year level some universities use a block model (a full week) while others make use of a university based laboratory programme, at a fourth year level 5 universities use a concurrent model (2 days a week) while 2 use a block placement for either the first or second semester. The number of hours required by university field instruction programmes also varies from year to year with some at a first year level only requiring 40 hours while others require 320 hours - although these are university based. At a fourth year level hours spent in the field range from 480 hours to 800 hours. Although the nature of field instruction differs greatly at a first year level, by the fourth year most universities are placing their students at agencies where they are able to render generic and/or specialised services, offering micro, meso and macro level interventions to clients and expecting a high level of integration of theory and practice.

ASASWEI also commissioned research to be done on lecturer/student ratios and admission requirements of social work departments in South Africa, in 2008 (Reyneke, Nel and Rautenbach, 2009:1). Twelve of the 17 universities responded to this by providing feedback. The above-mentioned study used seven minimum standard indicators that were selected for the purposes of the analysis. These were:

- Current number of undergraduate students
- Current number of postgraduate students
- Staff of department
- Capacity of department
- Division of academic work in department
- Access to universities

- Elements that contribute towards the selection of students

The analysis found that in order to train effectively, the availability of quality field placements and agency field instructors also contribute to the number of students that departments can accommodate. The analysis also identified that in order to increase the number of social work students, attention should be given to the availability of physical resources and staff to supervise students. From the feedback received many respondents indicated that the students that they deal with need additional help as the current educational system, personal problems of the students and trauma experienced by many students leads to more supervision and individual attention. Using the formula, the study's findings indicated that "all departments in South Africa would require more staff to train their students effectively and to maintain high educational standards" (Reyneke, Nel and Rautenbach, 2009:6).

In 2011, ASASWEI hosted a conference relating to social work field instruction in South Africa. The conference theme was *Field Practice Education: Current Trends and Future Directions*. The following subthemes were discussed:

- Preparation of students for field placements
- When should field practice education begin
- Preparation of field practice supervisors
- Selection of field placements
- Generic vs. specialist field placements
- Current trends re payment of students and /or field supervisors
- Policy re transport for students from campus and on the job
- Planning and organization of placements – whose responsibility?

It was evident from the various subthemes that all of the above mentioned issues relate closely to social work field instruction within South Africa. The researcher attended the above-mentioned conference and noted that although the universities have been implementing field

instruction as integral parts of their social work training, there are indeed many differences in the programmes being run by each university. Many universities openly voiced the challenges they face in high student to lecturer ratio and the implication this has for the quality training of social work students. ASASWEI has, through the various studies and discussions amongst universities in South Africa, identified core aspects of social work field instruction that are important in addressing when evaluating social work field instruction at universities in the Eastern Cape, South Africa.

2.8: Exit Level Outcomes by the SACSSP

Field instructions relevance is of a universal and national concern as illustrated below in reference to the American CSWE and the South African SACSSP. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, the American equivalent to the SACSSP) Handbook of Accreditation Standards and Procedures, Educational policies and Academic Standards highlights the universal relevance of field instruction. In this handbook, the CSWE (2001:10) states that: “The field practicum is an integral component of the curriculum in social work education anchored in the mission, goals, and educational level of the programme. It occurs in settings that reinforce students’ identification with the purpose, values and ethics of the profession fosters the integration of empirical and practice based knowledge; and promotes the development of professional competence. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated and evaluated on the basis of criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of programme objectives.”

In South Africa, the SACSSP has introduced exit level outcomes (ELOs) relevant to the profession in an attempt to regulate core components of all social work curriculums. According to Sewpaul and Lombard (2004:553) “it has taken social work training and education in South Africa since the 1920s to develop these standards that are supposedly unique to the current situation of social work in South Africa. They state further that although various other external bodies such as CSWE do exist, it has made more sense for South Africa to develop its own established body whose context reflects the realities of social work in South Africa”. South African universities are required to align their curriculum to the identified ELOs as a manner of ensuring that their curriculum is of a high standard and to allow for the meeting of national standards and a statutorily endorsed accreditation programme. It is up to each university to align their theoretical and field instruction programme to the ELOs that are relevant to their unique programmes. It can thus be said that not each university will for example, align their field instruction programme, to the same ELOs as another university. The importance lies not in universities aligning similar theoretical and field instruction programmes, to the same ELOs but in ensuring that over a four year degree, all ELO’s are achieved. It is useful to mention that many of these ELOs refer to the field instruction programme and can in effect only be met through field instruction and contact with clients on micro, meso and macro levels. It is also true that the ELOs can be met through the teaching of theory and simulation, however the time when this teaching all really comes together is when the student takes this learning and uses it in real situations with clients. This learning is then further internalised as it is processed through the use of the experiential learning cycle and deeper learning starts to take place. It is thus evident that this experiential form of social work training forms a central part of the BSW degree requirements.

The following Table details the 27 Exit level outcomes, with the full document including the set of associated assessment criteria and the programmes critical cross-field outcomes are available on the following website: www.sacssp.org.za (Sewpaul and Lombard, 2004:550).

Table 1: Exit level outcomes

1. Develop and maintain professional social work relationships with client systems
2. Assess client systems' social functioning
3. Plan and implement appropriate social work intervention strategies and techniques at micro, meso and macro levels
4. Access and utilise resources appropriate to client systems' need and strengths
5. Produce and maintain records of social work interventions, processes and outcomes
6. Evaluate the outcomes of social work intervention strategies, techniques and processes
7. Terminate social work intervention
8. Negotiate and utilise contracts during the social work intervention
9. Demonstrate social work values while interacting with human diversity
10. Appraise and implement the ethical principles and values of social work
11. Use, plan and execute social work research
12. Work effectively with social workers and members of inter-sectoral and multi- and/or inter-disciplinary teams in social service delivery
13. Identify, select and implement various techniques, methods and means of raising awareness, developing critical consciousness about the structural forces of oppression, exclusion and disempowerment, and use such awareness to engage people as change agents

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14. Analyse human behaviour with regard to the intersections of race, class, culture, ethnicity, gender, differential abilities and sexual orientation
15. Critically appraise social welfare and social work from a global, regional (African) and national perspective
16. Critically appraise the current status and position of the social work profession within the South African welfare context
17. Apply and uphold the basic values and principles enshrined in the Bill of Rights in the SA Constitution in relation to social work service delivery
18. Elucidate national, provincial and local governance structures, and the general laws and charters governing social welfare policy and social work services in South Africa
19. Demonstrate understanding of how social policies and legislation on social issues impact on these issues and how to use legislation ethically and accountably in order to protect and improve the quality of life of client systems from a social work perspective
20. Demonstrate understanding of how social welfare policy and legislation are developed and influenced
21. Demonstrate understanding of the roles, functions, knowledge and skills, for effective social work supervision and consultation
22. Demonstrate understanding of the roles, functions, principles and characteristics of management and administration within social service delivery
23. Formulate a business plan for the funding of social services
24. Identify the influence of the relationship between socio-political and economic factors on social services
25. Demonstrate understanding of the roles and functions of the social worker within relevant

statutory frameworks

26. Identify how social security is used optimally for the benefit of client systems

27. Identify the purpose , functions and principles of social work within the social development paradigm

Bozalek (2009) discusses the ELOs for social work “as an outcomes-based approach that operationalises the requirements of deep learning and applying theory from lectures into practice with communities and of internalising the values and ethics associated with the profession”. Deep learning is defined by Blunt (in Collins and Van Breda, 2010:14) “as making sense of new ideas. It seeks constructive integration between components of ideas as well as between tasks and new concepts. In deep learning, knowledge can be related to one’s own position, whereas surface learning involves only reproduction of the work of others.” The ELOs can thus clearly be seen as linking very closely with the concept of deep learning and as a result to the process of experiential learning which provides a clear cycle for promoting deep learning.

The SACSSP is presently working with ASASWEI on standardizing social work field instruction at universities in South Africa by ensuring that minimum standards are further developed to promote the training of quality social work students. The SACSSP has also, over the last year, embarked on a process of assessing universities’ compliance with the ELOs to provide feedback with regards to where improvements need to be made. “There have also been some concerns with regards to the ELOs and the fact that they may detract from institutional autonomy and deny context specific realities, e.g. universities that serve predominantly rural communities compared to those that are more urban based” (Sewpaul and Lombard, 2004:550).

Despite these concerns the ELOs can be used and viewed as in progress rather than a fixed product, with the idea of reviewing these over some years.

Pending development of the above mentioned standards, the ELOs, as provided by the SACSSP, closely linked to promoting deep learning and the use of experiential learning, presently provide an evaluative tool with which to evaluate social work field instruction at universities, in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. The evaluation will also provide an opportunity to examine closely the context specific realities as faced by rural universities in the Eastern Cape and the relevance of the ELOs in terms of the challenges faced in rural university settings in South Africa.

2.9: Conclusion

In conclusion, field instruction is a core component of the social work training process. Various models for field instruction exist with suggested models such as rotations, group supervision, and community centres being used to creatively respond to the increased pressures being placed on field instruction at universities. Four key parties are involved in the field instruction process and each has an important role to play in ensuring the success of a quality field instruction experience.

Over the last few years much pressure has been placed on social work field instruction at universities within the Eastern Cape and South Africa. Field instruction is closely based on the process of experiential learning which promotes 'deep learning' as required at universities and as

operationalised by the ELOs of the SACSSP. The ELOs of the SACSSP currently guide the curriculum at universities and the SACSSP is presently involved in developing standards for field instruction as it is clear from research done that while there are many similarities, there are also many differences in their field instruction practices of universities within South Africa.

In the United States, field instruction has clear standards as developed and monitored by the CSWE. There is also extensive literature and research being done with regards to field instruction. Less literature and research is, however, available from a South African perspective and this will need to be further explored and researched in the future to ensure that all social work students receive the same quality field work experience, resulting in a good quality of personal and professional social worker entering the profession.

An evaluative study of social work field instruction at universities in the Eastern Cape, South Africa will serve to identify existing strengths and weaknesses of field instruction programmes and to explore possible constraints facing field instruction programmes. The study will also investigate the role that experiential learning plays during field instruction.

The following chapter will discuss the research design and methodology used during the evaluative study of social work field instruction offered by universities in the Eastern Cape, South Africa.

CHAPTER 3:RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1: Introduction

This chapter explores Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the research approach that has guided the research design and methodology used to conduct the study. IPA is a recently developed and rapidly growing approach to qualitative inquiry (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009:1). “IPA is an approach to qualitative, experiential and psychological research which has been informed by phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography” (Smith, et al., 2009:12). The chapter then goes on to discuss details of the research sample, data collection using both semi-structured interviews and focus groups, data analysis (making use of IPA), the research process and ethical considerations. Lastly, it identifies and discusses challenges and limitations relating to the study.

3.2: Research design and methodology

The research design provides a guideline through which the research will be conducted (Royse, 1991:217). “The research design is something like a blueprint. It outlines the approach to be used to collect the data. It describes the conditions under which the data will be collected; how the respondents will be selected, what instrument will be used; and generally provides information about the who, what, when, where and how of the research project” (Royse,1991:26). An evaluation research design has been used in this research project. Evaluation research or programme evaluation entails the use of scientific methods to measure the

implementation and outcomes of programmes for decision making purposes (Rutman, 1984:10). “Evaluation research - sometimes called programme evaluation - refers to a research purpose that is to evaluate the impact of social interventions such as new teaching methods” (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:334). The appropriateness of an evaluative study for this project is again confirmed by Clarke, who states that “what serves to distinguish an evaluative study from other forms of social research is simply a question of purpose. Evaluation research is action orientated. It is conducted to determine the value or impact of a programme or service, with a view to making recommendations for change” (2005:vi). Babbie and Mouton discuss the relevance of evaluation research in South Africa, a developing country that is interested in assessing for example: “whether efforts at alleviating poverty, improving health care and related interventions, have in fact met their objectives” (2001:336). Clarke goes on to say that evaluation is concerned with bringing about improvements, it examines a programme from many different perspectives and explores linkages between programme activities and outcomes (2005:11). Potter (in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999:217) state that “the major issue in interpretive evaluation is whether the evaluator’s role is to judge the merit or worth of the programme, or whether such judgements emerge naturally from the process of information sharing in which stakeholders become engaged in the course of the evaluation” The second issue as mentioned by Potter is ensuring of scientific rigour when the data is being interpreted and discussed by the researcher, thus implying the importance of the researcher ensuring validity and rigour throughout the study so as to limit this weakness of the evaluative research design (1999:217). An evaluation research design has seemed most suitable for this research project as it aims to evaluate the teaching model of social work field instruction that is being used by the universities in the Eastern Cape. In order for the programme or model of field instruction being used by universities in the Eastern Cape to be

evaluated, the programmes' goals and objectives need to be clearly defined. The goals and objectives for social work field instruction can be identified by the theoretical foundation of experiential learning, literature relating to field instruction and the guidelines provided by IASSW and IFSSW. Other important aspects of evaluation research include:

- identifying and gathering data from the target group or intended beneficiaries -initially the social work students and agencies rendering services to clients;
- looking at the programmes' measures of success and the various components of field instruction that allow for the programme goals to be achieved;
- evaluating the programme infrastructure - lectures, seminars, supervision; field manuals
- identifying the human resource base (who is coordinating the programme?);
- lastly evaluating the stakeholders - agencies, clients, department of social development;
- and the context of the programme - the area in which the programme is being run and its resources or lack thereof.

Programmes are made up of all of the above components and Babbie and Mouton note that “it is useful to evaluate and explore all of the above mentioned components in order to provide a framework for an evaluative study. In the absence of such a framework, the whole evaluation study can become ad hoc and undirected” (2001:343,366).

A qualitative approach to the gathering of data was adopted, as the “data that was needed was descriptive and exploratory and information was required directly from people who were presumed to have the required information” (Hofstee, 2009:132). Kanjee (in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999:287) states that qualitative researchers “are known to want to make sense of feelings or experiences as they occur in the real world”. Padgett discusses qualitative research as being interested in gaining insider perspectives, as being person rather than variable centred, it is also contextual and holistic and lastly qualitative research is interested in depth rather than breadth (2008:3). There are many valid reasons for the study choosing to make use of a qualitative research design. However criticism of qualitative research is widely acknowledged by

many as being that it lacks scientific rigour in comparison to the more traditional quantitative research design. In contrast “quantitative research relies heavily on complicated statistical analyses that require prior knowledge to decode their meaning” (Padget, 2008:1) A qualitative approach was used as the data required was closely related to the experiences of all parties involved in the field instruction programmes. It was felt that the participants, as experts in being part of the programme or model of field instruction, would through a qualitative research design, allow the researcher to gain an understanding of their experiences relating to field instruction. The qualitative approach also links closely to IPA, “which is known to make use of case studies, and more recently focus groups, to focus on meaning, sense making and communication action” (Smith et al., 2009:45).

IPA is a well known qualitative research approach. Houston and Mullan-Jensen state that “at the heart of qualitative investigation into social work is an attempt to understand meaning but in the context of the wider social processes that shape it” (2011:267). IPA aims to understand the experiences of people and the world within which they exist (Palmer, Larkin, De Visser and Fadden, 2010:99). IPA has been closely informed by phenomenology, “a philosophical approach to the study of experience... that is interested in thinking about what the experience of being human is like, in all of its various aspects, but especially in terms of the things that matter to us...” (Smith et al, 2009:11). “The second major underpinning of IPA comes from Hermeneutics, which is the theory of interpretation” (Smith et al., 2009:21). Hermeneutics is concerned with understanding the meaning of the author and linking it to life today (Smith et al, 2009:22). “The third major influence upon IPA is concerned with the particular, ... initially in the detail and depth of analysis ... and also in the sampling procedure that makes use of small purposively-

selected and carefully situated samples” (Smith et al, 2009:29). In this study, IPA has been valuable as it has provided the research with an approach that facilitated the exploration of participants’ experiences of field instruction, the signature pedagogy of their chosen profession. IPA has also been valuable in guiding the interpretation of the data and assisted the researcher in understanding the meaning of the participants and finding its present relevance to field instruction. IPA also provided the researcher with a step by step framework for selecting participants and the detailed analysis of the data. IPA has received some criticism over the years as being potentially over cautious, or too easily satisfied with “first-order” analysis, where data is simply presented and not really analysed (Larkin, Watts and Clifton, 2006:103). These authors continue to point out that “as with many qualitative methods, IPA can be easy to do badly, and difficult to do well, it demands that a number of rather testing balancing acts are maintained by the researcher. For the novice these balancing acts are not always easy.” (2006:103). Another criticism of IPA and qualitative research is that it “is time consuming, labour-intensive, and both imaginatively and emotionally demanding” (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009:42).

The motivation for the research design, as discussed above, was to examine the models of field instruction being used in the Eastern Cape according to the experiences and perceptions of the parties involved, during field instruction, to determine its activities, the population it serves and how it functions (Posavac and Carey, 1992:119). The data gathered from the evaluative research project could be used to provide feedback to the universities involved in the training of social work students and also the stakeholders such as IASSW and SACSSP in developing or adjusting standards relating to field instruction at a national level. This is perhaps valuable in light of the changes that many universities have faced over the last few years and also the recent

audits by the SACSSP and the discussions surrounding the various models of field instruction being implemented throughout South Africa.

3.3: The research sample

According to Royse (1991:112), “the notion behind sampling theory is that a small number of sampling units can tell you something about the total population”. He goes on to say that “sampling works because trends or tendencies within a large population can be discovered from a smaller number of individuals” (1991:112). Purposive sampling is used when participants are invited to take part in a study because they can offer the researcher some meaningful insight into the topic of the study (Houston and Mullan-Jensen, 2011), as opposed to randomised sampling where participants are randomly selected and interviewed. Purposive sampling can also be used in studies that are more concerned with in depth analysis; the researcher may select a few information rich cases (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999:45). Data collection using IPA usually proceeds through purposive sampling (Houston and Mullan-Jensen, 2011) as in this study, where individual, unique experiences relating to field instruction were required from all parties involved. The research project has gathered data from three of the four parties involved in field instruction. Only three of the four parties were invited to participate in the study, as it was felt that the university fieldwork coordinator could represent the university supervisor. It was assumed that these two parties were in close contact with one another as they are both employed by the university and would thus be able to provide similar data. Purposive sampling was used to gather data from three of the parties involved in field instruction from all four universities in the Eastern Cape. Although there are only four universities in the Eastern Cape, data was in fact

gathered from five university campuses due to one university offering the bachelor of social work degree at both of their two campuses. The following table details the population, intended sample and final actual sample, of the research participants.

Table 2: Actual population, intended sample and actual sample

		Fieldwork Coordinator			Agency field instructors			Fourth year social work students	
	Population	Intended sample	Actual sample	Population	Intended sample	Actual sample	Population	Intended sample	Actual sample
University A	2	1	1	200	/	/	300	20	16
University B	2	1	1	22	15 to represent all of agencies serving university A, B and C in the East London area	5	22	6	3
University C	1	1	0	150	/	/	183	15	9
University D	2	1	1	37	5	2	64	8	3

It should be noted that where a purposive sample was initially intended, the number of participants that actually participated in the study was quite low and thus almost certainly not a good representative sample of the population. The implications for the study are that an intended purposive sample became a volunteer sample. The possible bias of a volunteer sample should also be considered when the findings are presented and analysed and in the resulting recommendations. It may well have been that the volunteer sample who participated in the study, had either a positive or negative bias to field instruction and thus volunteered to participate in the study. This limitation will be further discussed and reflected upon, in chapter four and five.

Field instruction offered by universities in the Eastern Cape

For the first part of the study, the fieldwork coordinator from each university was approached to be interviewed, using a semi-structured interview schedule.

For the second part of the study a purposive sample was taken from the social work students within all 4 social work departments in the Eastern Cape. The university fieldwork coordinator chose the sample and the researcher requested that the sample be students who are able to communicate openly and freely and with confidence. This in effect ensured that they were able to actively participate in the focus groups. This sample group as active participants in their university's field instruction programme, provided data on strengths, weaknesses and effectiveness of the core components of the field instruction programmes as set out according to the objectives of the research. It was decided only to include fourth year social work students in the study as it was felt that they may have more experience and knowledge relating to field instruction. Many of the fourth year students may have had the opportunity to be involved in their university's field instruction programme over a number of years. The data needed would encourage the social work four students to reflect upon all the possible field instruction experiences they may have had over their four year degree.

For the third part of the study, a purposive sample was taken from the agency field instructors, based at agencies within East London to represent the three universities that place students within East London. Agencies that take students from all three universities were selected to participate in the study so that they would be able to discuss and evaluate the different field instruction models used by all three universities. Although the actual population for agency field instructors is a very large number, the number of agency field instructors actually situated

in the East London area that supervise students from all three universities, is relatively small. Thus the intended sample seems relatively small if compared to the actual population. The researcher could due to financial constraints not interview agency field instructors from outside of the East London and Port Elizabeth area, with universities using agency field instructors from all over South Africa and at times even using international placements. Agency field instructors from University D were emailed and thereafter contacted telephonically and invited to attend the focus group, in order to discuss and evaluate the field instruction model being used by the university.

Williams states that “purposive sampling ensures that the research obtains a sample that possesses certain characteristics relevant to the study or research” (2000). The sample chosen for this study were chosen according to their involvement as parties in the training of social work students through the process of field instruction. All parties were purposely chosen as they were seen to be closely involved in field instruction and had information relevant and significant to the evaluative study of field instruction offered by universities in the Eastern Cape. Unfortunately as the study progressed, due to the poor response rate from participants, in particular the agency field instructors, the sample became more of a volunteer sample than a purposive sample. The resulting implications of this are presented and discussed further, in chapter four and five of the study.

3.4: Data collection

“An IPA study typically involves a highly intensive and detailed analysis of the accounts produced by a comparatively small number of participants. These verbatim accounts are generally captured via semi-structured interviews, focus groups or diaries” (Larkin, et al 2006:103). IPA studies can be done with a single case study that is analysed in detail but more often IPA is used with a sample size larger than one, with such studies having an important and valuable contribution to make (Smith et al., 2009:38). Data collection for this study made use of both semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

Semi-structured interviews, with interview schedules, were used to gather data from the university fieldwork coordinators, relating to the models of field instruction being used within the Eastern Cape. Such interviews are very closely linked to IPA, where most often semi structured interview schedules with open ended questions are used to collect data. IPA prefers in-depth individual interviews where the participant can verbalise his/her story, thoughts and feelings about a particular experience (Smith, 2004). Semi-structured interviews worked well with the university field coordinators as it allowed for rapport to be developed, and for one person’s understanding to be deeply explored (Palmer et al, 2010:100). Some criticism of the use of semi structured interviews includes the loss of objectivity, and the gathering of data in a value free manner, in fact the relationship between the researcher and the participant often becomes openly supportive and therapeutic with the possibility that boundaries between the researcher and participant may become blurred (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen and Liamputtong, 2007).

Focus groups with semi-structured interview schedules were used to gather data from the social work students and agency field instructors. Gaizauskaite states that “the focus group method can be used appropriately in a variety of ways in social work research, including developing or evaluating programmes and that focus group research provides with speedy results, simultaneously covering variety of ideas, opinions, needs, evaluations or concerns coming from a group of participants” (2012:7). The author goes on to state that a focus group interview is usually guided by a semi-structured open-ended questionnaire. The advantages of a focus group include “the interaction of participants during the focus group that provides information that would not be obtained using other methods of data collection, focus groups are usually also efficient in uncovering new or unexpected information, repeating focus groups also makes it possible to identify trends and patterns in the responses” (Krysik and Finn, 2010). The focus groups held with the agency field instructors and students did in fact serve as a supportive environment in which participants were able to share their ideas and views, much non-verbal behaviour was noticed by the researcher and commented on throughout the discussion. The semi-structured interview schedule was also useful in guiding the discussion. One participant after the focus group was even able to say that for her it was very valuable as she was really able to talk about all her involvement relating to field instruction in a supportive environment and she really enjoyed the experience. On the other hand, focus groups also have some disadvantages, one of these being getting a group of participants to attend a discussion at an agreed upon time. This challenge was experienced in two of the focus groups where some participants did not arrive for the discussion, resulting in the group consisting of two and three members respectively. “Focus groups may be less obviously suitable for IPA researchers because they offer a considerably more complex interactional environment” (Palmer et al, 2010:100). However the same authors

go on to argue that in situations where researchers engage with a naturally occurring group (such as a group of students or agency field instructors) such group discussions may elicit more experiential reflection than a one-to-one interview (2010:100).

Semi-structured interview schedules were designed to assist with the collection of data so as to meet the overall aim of the study which was “To evaluate the implementation of social work field instruction programmes, so as to make suggestions for improvement and recommend a best practice model for field instruction in the Eastern Cape”. (Please see interview schedules as appendix D, E and F). The interview schedules began by eliciting some background information relating to the participants social work field instruction experience and then moved on to more specific questions relating to field instruction. The schedules were submitted in draft format to the researcher’s supervisor and worked down to a final interview schedule of eight questions. The first five questions were designed in relation to the various components of field instruction (model of field instruction, agencies, agency field instructors, social work students and experiential learning), as identified by Bogo (2005). These five questions were followed by three questions relating to the ELO’s, general challenges and recommendations, ensuring that the participants received an opportunity to share any other thoughts or feelings relating to field instruction that might not already have been mentioned in relation to the core components of field instruction. Hofstee states that it is best to interview participants “in a relaxed atmosphere in which everyone feels at ease and that asking some initial easy, background questions works well in this regard” (2009:135). Each of the initial five questions relating to the core components of field instruction was divided into smaller sections as pointers for the researcher, to assist in gathering additional information if participants did not elaborate on this information in response

to the main question. Hofstee states that “it is a good idea for the researcher not to make the questions too narrow but rather to save the more factual types of questions for later on in the interview, when rapport has already been established” (2009:136). It was assumed that a discussion of the core components of field instruction would naturally enable the participants to share about strengths and weaknesses, challenges and usefulness of various parts of the field instruction programmes being used by the different universities. The design of the semi-structured interview schedules was also guided by the objectives of the study so as to ensure that the data gathered would assist in meeting the objectives of the study. The following table shows the relation between the research objectives and the questions used on the interview schedule.

Table 3: Data collection tools

Objectives	Related question on interview schedule
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify strengths and weaknesses of field instruction programmes being used by social work departments in universities of the Eastern Cape. • To identify possible constraints on implementation of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape. 	<p>Describe the model of field instruction being used being used by the university? (question one)</p> <p>Describe the agencies where students are being placed for field instruction? (question two)</p> <p>Describe the field instructors being used to supervise social work students in the field? (question three)</p> <p>Describe the students involved in the field instruction programme at the university? (question four)</p> <p>Describe your understanding of the ELO’s with regards field instruction? (question 6)</p> <p>Describe any challenges not already mentioned that you experience in the training of social work students through field instruction? (question seven)</p> <p>Are there any recommendations you feel could be made to improve field instruction within the Eastern Cape? (question eight).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To investigate the role that experiential learning plays during field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape. 	<p>Describe your understanding of experiential learning and whether it relates to your university’s model of field instruction?(question five).</p>

3.5: Data analysis

“One of the purposes of data analysis is to express the data in a way that is mentally digestible” (Royse, 1991:47). Using IPA as the approach to data analysis had indeed assisted the researcher in describing and interpreting the experiences of all parties involved in the process of field instruction (Houston and Mullan-Jensen, 2011:280). IPA was used to analyse the qualitative data gathered from both the individual interviews and focus groups. “IPA examines in depth how subjects make sense of their life experiences” (Smith, et al, 2009).

Once the data had been collected, the data was analysed according to the steps intrinsic to IPA. “Detailed, verbatim transcripts of the interviews were developed, systematically analysed, themes were searched for and connections were made between transcripts in order to develop a set of master cross transcript themes” (Houston and Mullan-Jensen, 2011).

“The issues of reliability and validity in qualitative research are not as readily codified as has been the case for quantitative research” (Seale and Silverman, 1997:379) Ensuring rigour in qualitative research often has to do with authenticity, rather than reliability (Seale and Silverman, 1997:379). The use of open ended questions assists qualitative research to gain an “authentic” understanding of participants’ experiences (Seale and Silverman, 1996:80). Reliability and validity in qualitative research are properly important and some strategies that may be employed to ensure rigour and validity include supporting generalisations by counts of events and recording data objectively and comprehensively, including the use of audio tapes , video tapes

and different levels of detail in the transcription of data (Seale and Silverman, 1997:380). This research project has aimed to ensure rigour through the use of word counts, this assists in giving readers an idea of how representative and widespread particular instances are (Seale and Silverman, 1997:380) and also ensures the representation of case deviances. Word counts have been included in the presentation of the findings and have also been linked to verbatim quotes from the interviews. The second process of ensuring rigour has also been done through the verbatim independent transcription of interviews, and then followed up through the second transcription of the interviews where more conversational detail was included, giving a more objective, comprehensive and therefore more reliable recording of the data (Seale and Silverman, 1997:381). In qualitative research, the basic strategy for ensuring rigour is systematic and self-conscious research design, data collection, analysis and communication that can be used independently by another researcher and that will produce the same conclusions (Mays and Pope, 1995:109). The main way for ensuring the reliability of qualitative interviews is to keep detailed records of interviews and observations and to document the process of analysis in detail (Mays and Pope, 1995:110). Validation strategies such as feeding the findings back to participants to see if they view the findings as a reasonable account of their experience, was not possible in this study however the same questions used with other research focus groups confirmed similar experiences. Also giving a fair account of deviant cases and attempting to explain why the data may vary or may diverge from theory, can increase reliability and validity of qualitative studies (May and Pope, 1995:111). The researcher has paid special attention to presenting deviant cases under the emerging themes during the presentation of the findings to further ensure the reliability and validity of the study. Another way of presenting qualitative data objectively is to provide the reader with extensive sequences from the original data, followed by detailed commentary (May

and Pope, 1995:112). Samples of the transcription process and emerging analysis are attached as Appendix G, H, I, J and K to the research project.

The emerging themes were then used to evaluate the models of field instruction according to the theory of experiential learning, the ELOs of the SACSSP that guide the BSW programme and the theory relating to field instruction. It was assumed that the analysis of this collected data would allow for the evaluation of the field instruction models currently being used in the Eastern Cape and that it would provide recommendations for future improvement. The following section provides a step by step practical description, as advised by Smith et al (2009) of how the researcher used IPA to analyse the data.

3.5.1: *Step one: Reading and re-reading*

The first step of analysis was to read through the initial transcripts. This was done while listening to the recordings of the interviews and at the same time rewriting the transcripts with more conversational detail being included. The researcher made notes of her own thoughts and feelings in a separate note book, in an attempt to 'bracket' and remove bias from the initial analysis (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009:82). A sample of an initial transcript is attached as Appendix G.

3.5.2: *Step two: Initial noting*

The researcher continued to engage with the transcripts and began to make notes of anything of interest within the transcripts. The transcripts were divided into two columns, one for the actual transcript and the other corresponding column for the researcher notes and comments.

These notes included comments that attempted to understand the participants experience in three ways: descriptive comments focused on describing the content of what the participant said, linguistic comments focused on exploring the use of language by the participant and conceptual comments focused on trying to understand by questioning and trying to conceptualise the experience that the participant is describing (Smith et al, 2009:84). Throughout this step, text that seemed important was also underlined and comments were made. A sample of the initial noting step is attached as Appendix H.

3.5.3: *Step three: Developing emerging themes*

In this step a third column was added to the transcript as developed in step two. This column was used to identify themes that emerged from both the participant and the notes and comments made by the researcher in step two. These themes aimed to capture an understanding of the experience from both the participant words and thoughts and the researcher's interpretation thereof (Smith et al, 2009:91). A sample of step three and the developing of emerging themes is attached as Appendix I.

3.5.4: *Step four: Searching for connections across emergent themes*

The themes have now been identified and organised in chronological order as they emerged from the transcripts. The next step involved the researcher looking for common themes amongst these themes, in each transcript, so that they could be organized under a super-ordinate theme (Smith et al, 2009: 97). These themes were grouped according to context (linking themes to particular events, or times during field instruction), numeration (the number of times the theme occurs) and function (identifying both negative and positive as they present themselves between the participant and researcher) (Smith et al, 2009:98). This was done on the computer, a box was

created where themes were linked to the page on which they occur and to key words within that page. From this a word count was developed. This process (from step one to step four) was repeated with each transcript. A sample of this step is attached as Appendix J.

3.5.5: *Moving to the next case*

The next step involves moving to the next participant's or focus groups' transcript (Smith et al, 2009:100). The researcher had to use the skill of 'bracketing' to ensure that the analysis of the next transcript was not influenced by the data, themes or super-ordinate themes from the last interview. Step one to step four was followed systematically to ensure that the researcher was not influenced by prior interviews. The researcher also made certain that only one transcript was worked on at a time, until step one to step four had been finalized for all interviews, before moving on to the next step.

3.5.6: *Looking for patterns across cases*

Once step one to step five had been completed for each transcript, the researcher was able to look for patterns across all of the interviews. Special attention was also made to represent 'case deviants' within each theme. A master table of themes was generated and is attached as appendix K. "Many IPA studies have a sample group larger than one, such studies have a powerful contribution to make...however when the analysis is primarily at a group level what makes it IPA is the fact that the group level themes are still illustrated with particular examples taken from individuals." (Smith et al., 2009:106).

3.6: The Research process

The researcher has been involved as a part time faculty member of the Department of Social Work and Social Development in the position of fieldwork coordinator for the field instruction programme, over the last three years. During those three years the researcher noticed an increase in student numbers and a challenge arising in terms of placing all the social work students for their field instruction programme. Later on the researcher was asked to become a permanent member of staff and the challenges of providing each student with the opportunity of a quality field instruction experience started to become more real. This resulted in the researcher becoming interested in exploring how other universities cope with these challenges and how they coordinated their field instruction programmes in such a way as to produce quality social workers to enter the profession. Initially, the researcher was intending to conduct an exploratory study, but after feedback from the Higher Degrees Research Committee (HDRC) it was suggested that an evaluative study would be more suitable, as field instruction is a programme that has been implemented over many years and has a basic framework from theory that should guide its implementation within social work programmes at universities.

The study was then limited to universities in the Eastern Cape due to time and financial constraints. Due to the nature of the study being evaluative it was decided that all parties involved in the programme would have to be included in the study and that the data gathered from these parties could then be used to inform best practises within the Eastern Cape while at the same time meeting the aims and objectives of the study.

The development of the research proposal and literature review took about one year to complete. The data collection and data analysis has taken another two years to complete. The university fieldwork coordinators were contacted first, as they assisted the researcher as far as establishing contact with agency field instructors and social work students. The researcher contacted each fieldwork coordinator telephonically and set up a date and time to meet with them individually. The researcher also requested that the fieldwork coordinator assist the researcher in accessing 4th year social work students. The coordinators agreed to do this. The telephonic contact was followed by an email request confirming the appointments for both the individual interview and the focus group with the students. The following four paragraphs go on to detail the research process conducted at each of the four universities.

Telephonic contact was made with the first university, University A. The university fieldwork coordinator was informed with regards the purpose of the research. The university fieldwork coordinator and a lecturer within the social work department agreed to inform the social work level four students of the research project and to invite them to the focus group. The researcher asked for 10-15 participants. The same date, with different times was agreed on for the interview with the university fieldwork coordinator and the focus group with the social work students. Unfortunately, upon arrival the fieldwork coordinator from the campus indicated that she was no longer able to meet with the researcher. The researcher was, however, able to continue to conduct the research with the focus group of university social work level four students. Eight students participated in the focus group, the interview room was a small lecture hall, the participants were able to sit in a circle and they seemed eager and excited to share their experiences with the researcher.

The second university, University B was contacted per email through the fieldwork coordinator. The researcher then approached a university supervisor for the fieldwork programme who indicated that she could ask her group of social work level four students to participate in the focus group. She invited her group of six students, but indicated that she could not guarantee that all the students would attend. Three students arrived for the focus group. A small room was arranged and the students participated well. One concern was the background noise during the recording of the interview and the effect that this would have during the transcription process. The following week telephonic contact was established with the university fieldwork coordinator from University B and an interview was conducted.

The third university, University C was also approached through telephonic and email contact with the university fieldwork coordinator. The fieldwork coordinator was emailed a letter explaining the purpose of the research and an interview schedule. It was agreed that a focus group with the students would be conducted and should there be enough time, the university fieldwork coordinator would be interviewed. Nine students attended and participated in a small lecture venue. The university fieldwork coordinator met briefly with the researcher on the same day but because various other commitments by both the researcher and the university fieldwork coordinator, there was not sufficient time to conduct the interview. A date for a telephonic interview was informally discussed, but was not followed up on immediately by the researcher. The researcher followed up with the university fieldwork coordinator at a later date and, due to the researcher's telephonic recording device not working, a semi-structured email interview was requested. The researcher did not receive a response to this request and it was then decided to

continue with the study, hoping that the data received from the social work students and agency field instructors would suffice.

The fourth university, University D was contacted per email and asked to participate in the study. This was followed up by telephonic contact with a lecturer in the department. The lecturer was emailed a letter describing the study and a copy of the interview schedule. She then invited her group of eight students to attend the focus group and emailed the researcher the contact details for the agencies where their students were placed for field instruction. She also referred the researcher to a member of the faculty who could be interviewed in the position of university fieldwork coordinator. Telephonic contact was made with the university fieldwork coordinator, a letter and interview schedule was also emailed. The university fieldwork coordinator agreed to a telephonic interview as she was on leave during the week that the researcher had set up interviews with the students and field instructors. The agency field instructors from the area were emailed a week before the set date and invited to join the focus group, the email explained the purpose of the research. Telephonic follow up calls were then made to as many agencies as possible. Many were unable to attend due to various other commitments. In the end, five agencies agreed to attend the focus group. This focus group was held in the afternoon and of the five that agreed to attend, only two arrived on the day. The focus group with the social work students was held in the evening as they were busy with field instruction during the day, of the eight that were invited, only three arrived. Both focus groups were held in a small lecture room, with comfortable seating and good acoustics. The number of participants for both the focus groups was disappointing but the researcher decided to continue despite this due to the likelihood of being able to travel to the area again being very small due to the distance involved. Despite

the small number of participants the interviews lasted 1 hour and 1 hour 20 minutes respectively and all areas of discussion were covered.

Research at the second campus of University A, was conducted at the end of October. The department member who was in position of university fieldwork coordinator before the researcher took this position was approached to participate in the research, as well as represent the university fieldwork coordinator from the main campus, who was again unavailable for a telephonic interview. A telephonic interview with the department member representing the university fieldwork coordinator from the East London campus was conducted. Secondly a group of 14 4th year social work students were invited to participate in the focus group. The students were contacted telephonically, the goal and purpose of the research was explained to them and their participation was requested. Of the 14, six were unable to attend. The focus group was held mid-morning on a week day. The students had already completed their field instruction and were finishing with their studies for the year, in the following week. Eight students participated in the focus group and the interview lasted for approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Lastly, 15 agency field instructors from the agencies in and around East London were invited to attend a focus group. They were contacted per email and telephonically two weeks before the time. Most agencies agreed to send a representative to the focus group. Each agency received a letter informing them of the purpose of the study and a copy of the interview schedule. The agencies were chosen purposefully as they are involved in taking students from three of the universities involved in the study. It was felt that they would thus be able to provide rich data about each of the fieldwork programmes from each of the three universities who they are in

partnership with. The participants were emailed again three days prior to the meeting date as a reminder to attend the focus group. On the morning of the focus group, four agency field instructors arrived on time and one arrived approximately 40 minutes into the interview. The last participant also requested to continue with the interview once others had left as she had brought contributions to the discussion from others within her agency that she felt were important for her to share. The focus group lasted 1 hour 45 minutes and continued for 30 minutes longer with the participant who arrived late.

3.7: **Ethical considerations**

Henning (2004:74) states that “the researcher remains accountable for the ethical quality of the study and should take great care”. De Vos (1998:24) goes on to say “the ethical guidelines serve as a basis on which a researcher can evaluate their conduct”.

Durrheim and Wassenaar (1999:66) say that “obtaining consent from participants should not just involve the signing of a consent form; consent should be voluntary and informed”. This implies that the participants receive a full and clear explanation of what is expected from them so that they can decide whether to participate in the research. Keeping the above in mind, the study was conducted with great emphasis on ensuring that each participant was informed of his or her rights to refuse to participate. All participants were also assured of their anonymity, as they were not required to write their names upon the interview schedules. Participants were all given a letter explaining the goals and objectives of the study and were also required to give written consent allowing for the data to be used anonymously for the study. Participants were also given

a copy of the interview schedule either per email or before the session, so as to allow the participants to prepare and also to enhance their right to decline to be a part of the research should they not be willing to participate. Each participant was given a chance to ask questions relating to the study and where the researcher was known to the participants, the researcher openly declared this and reassured participants that they would be treated with dignity and that their right to privacy would at all times be respected as data gathered would not be followed up with individually but would be used and remain within the study.

The researcher also spent some time with the participants after the research interviews and the focus groups when the participants appeared to want to talk about their experiences relating to the research. The social work students at university B, especially seemed interested in talking some more after the focus group and expressing mixed emotions in relation to the topics raised within the focus group. As Durrheim and Wassenaar have observed, “Debriefing after completion of the study is thus an important recognition of the autonomy and dignity of participants” (1999:67).

The researcher has, at all times in the presenting of the data, paid careful attention to the rights of the participants as outlined in the confidentiality statement as signed by the participants before the research was conducted. Careful attention has also been paid to presenting the data accurately and honestly “the reporting of results is identified as being an important ethical consideration” Bershoff (1995).

3.8: Challenges and limitations

Initially the researcher hoped for larger numbers of participants in the focus groups, but as the research was guided by an IPA approach this was justified as the researcher was able to collect and analyse in detail the experiences of the participants involved in field instruction, which takes time (Smith et al, 2009). It must also be noted that the researcher was unable to set up an interview with one of the fieldwork coordinators. Due to time constraints, it was decided to continue with the study despite this. The number of actual participants in the research was thus much lower than the initial intended participants and has been a major limitation of the study. The limitation thus being that the researcher has had to be very cautious in generalising the findings and the resulting recommendations.

My involvement as researcher and also university fieldwork coordinator at one of the universities could have had an impact upon the data given by participants. The researcher aimed to reduce this risk by discussing it openly at the beginning of each interview and focus group, “putting aside common interactional habits and focusing on gaining an understanding of the participants’ experiences” (Smith et al., 2009:67). Despite this it must also be stated that the group of students from the researcher’s own university and the group of agency field instructors may have participated in the research, having a predisposed ‘positive’ interest in field instruction and that their relationship with the fieldwork coordinator might have influenced their participation in the research. It may also have been that the agency field instructors who had a ‘negative’ experience of the supervision of students or a particular university decided not to participate in the research by simply not attending. It must thus again be stated that the findings

and resulting recommendations should be cautiously presented due to the possible 'positive' bias of some participants.

3.9: Conclusion

This chapter has presented the research design and methodology for the study. It has also discussed ethical considerations and the challenges and limitations of the study. Chapter 4 will present the data that was collected during the research process.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1: Introduction

This chapter will firstly present a description of the sample from which the data was collected. Secondly it will present a discussion of the findings that were analysed using IPA. The findings are presented according to the themes that emerged during the data analysis. The themes have been organised under the following headings:

- **University field instruction programmes,**
- **Agencies used for field instruction**
- **Agency field instructors**
- **Social work students**
- **Experiential learning**
- **BSW exit level outcomes**

The aim of the study was to evaluate the implementation of social work field instruction programmes, so as to make suggestions for improvement and recommend a best practice model for field instruction in the Eastern Cape. This aim was to be met through the following three objectives; to identify the strengths and weaknesses of field instruction programmes being used by social work departments in universities in the Eastern Cape; to identify possible constraints on implementation of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape and to investigate the role that experiential learning plays during field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape. In meeting the aim and objectives of the study, the research questions were determined: firstly, what are the strengths and weaknesses of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape, secondly, what are the constraints facing field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape? And lastly, how do social work field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape comply with the

theoretical requirements of experiential learning? In presenting the findings, it is hoped that they will form the foundation for achieving the aims and objectives of the research and providing answers to the research questions.

4.2: Demographics

The following section will provide the reader with demographic data relating to the research participants. The demographic data will, in most instances, be displayed in a figure. A narrative explaining the data represented will follow each figure. The data will be presented in relation to the social work students who participated in the focus groups, the agency based field instructors who participated in the focus groups and the university fieldwork coordinators who participated in the semi-structured interviews.

4.2.1: *Social work students*

The following three figures relate to the gender of the fourth year social work students, the different agencies where the social work students completed their fourth year field instruction placements, and the social work students' previous field instruction experience.

Figure 1: Gender of social work students who participated in the focus groups

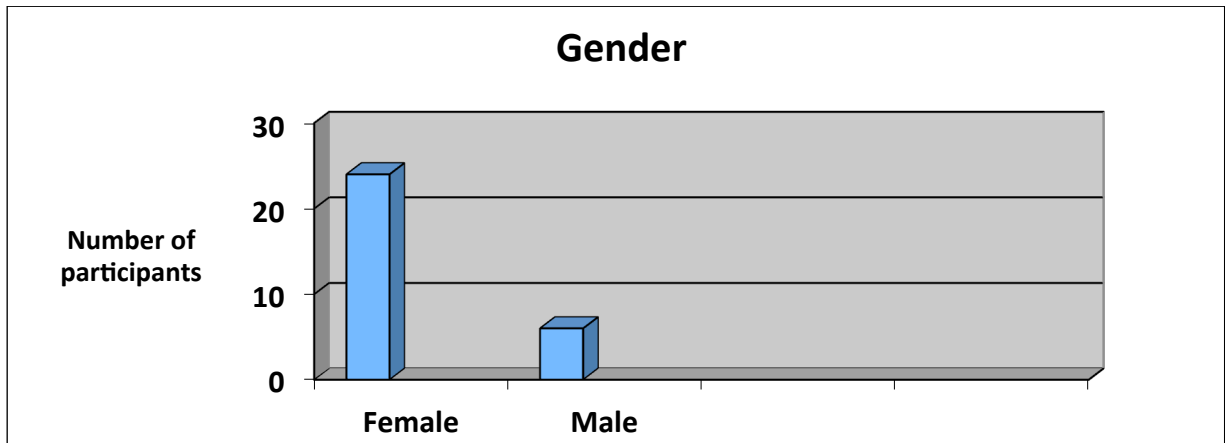


Figure 1 shows that a total number of 30 social work students from four universities in the Eastern Cape participated in the research study. Of these 30 students, 24 (80%) were female and six (20%) were male. This is quite reflective of the reality of social work practice and the composition of the social work classroom, with social work being seen as a primarily ‘female’ profession. Earle (2008, 23) presents statistics relating to “the gender distribution of SACSSP registered social workers over the period 1996 - 2005,... with the largest annual population of females being 89.3% in 2005... and the largest annual population of males being 13.3% in 1996”. These demographics thus relate closely to the gender distribution of social work students that participated in the study.

Figure 2: Various agencies where social work students completed their fourth year field instruction placements

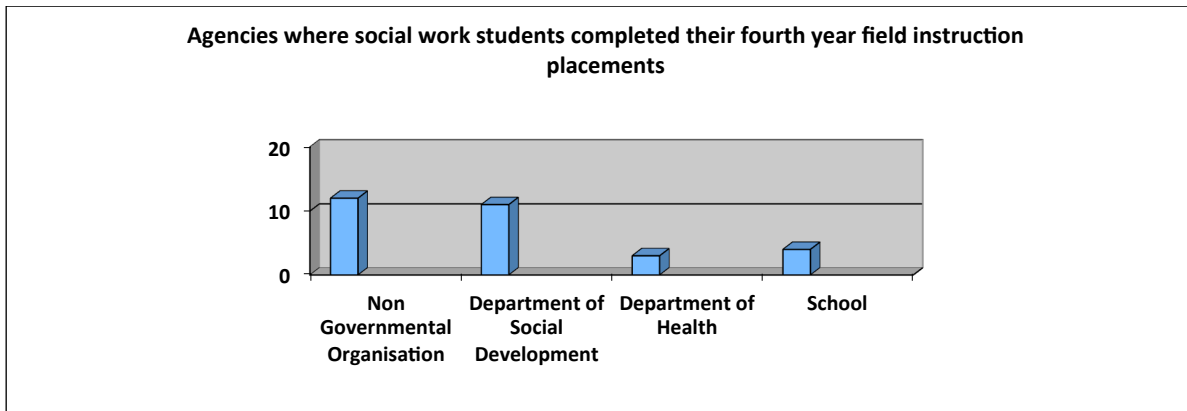
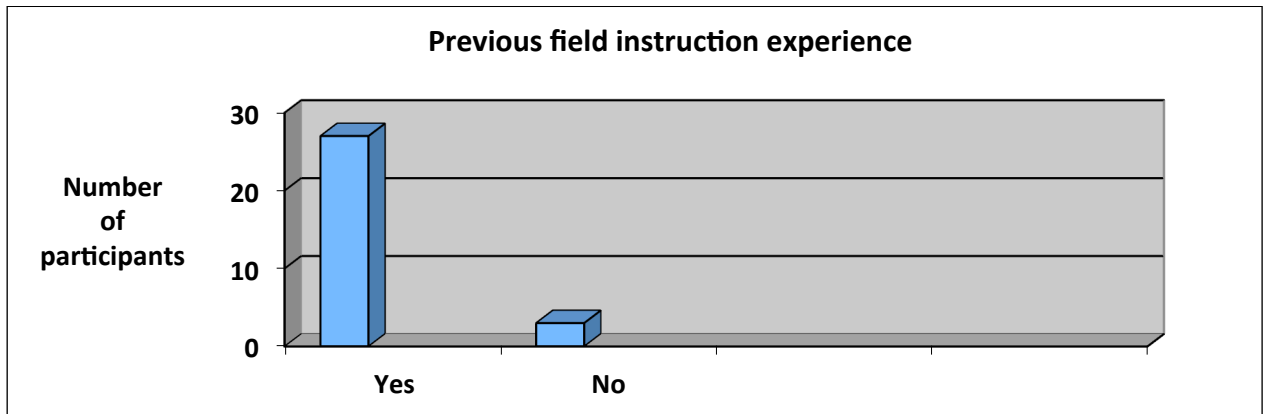


Figure 2 represents the agencies where the social work students were placed for their social work four field instruction training. Twelve of the social work students (40%) stated that they were placed at a nongovernmental organisation, eleven (36.6%) were placed at the Department of Social Development, three were placed at the Department of Health (10%) and four (13.4%) were placed at schools. The data corresponds with Earle's (2008:14) report that states most social workers (3921) are employed by the state with fewer being employed by NGO's (2258), thus making sense in terms of the majority of students being placed for field instruction within state departments as this is where the majority of social workers are employed and the secondly within NGO's who are the second biggest employers of social workers. This data suggests that the majority of students (50%) complete their field instruction within government departments, that are the sponsors of the social work bursaries, with less students (36.6%) completing their field instruction at NGO's. Fewer students (13.4%) are placed within non traditional social work agencies (for example schools). The data suggests that universities in the Eastern Cape are using

the more traditional social work agencies as placements for the social work students, with less students being placed in non traditional social work agencies such as schools.

Figure 3: Social work students' indication of previous field instruction at a first, second or third year level



Of the 30 social work students, 27 (90%) indicated that they had some field instruction experience at a first, second or third year level and three (10%) indicated that they had no previous field instruction before their 4th year placement. These three students did, however, indicate engaging in role plays at a third year level in order to prepare them for a fourth year field instruction experience. This data indicates that all universities are engaging their social work students with some form of preparatory field instruction experiences such as role plays, observations at agencies and personal growth and development experiences. Actual placements at agencies for field instruction are however started at different levels by different universities, with some students being placed at agencies (for observations) from a first year level, and others only having their first placement at an agency during their fourth year of training. Presently there are no prescribed standards with regards to when social work field instruction should begin and this is left up to the individual universities to decide upon.

4.2.2: *Agency based field instructors*

The following three figures will present the demographic data in relation to the agency field instructors who participated in the focus groups held in Port Elizabeth and East London. The first figure presents the agency field instructors' qualifications, the second figure indicates their years of social work experience and the third figure displays the years of experience that they have as agency field instructors, supervising social work students.

Figure 4: Agency field instructors' qualifications

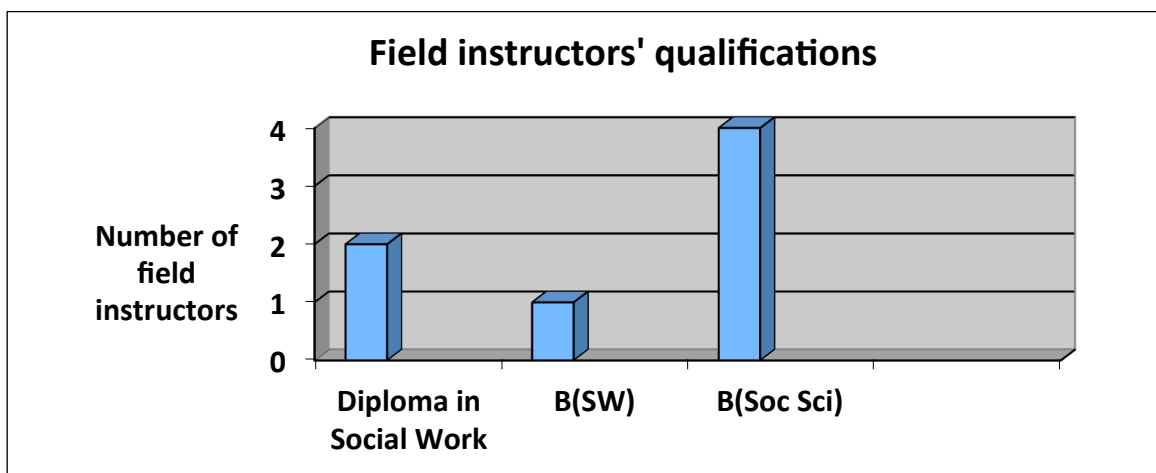


Figure 4 shows that seven agency field instructors participated in the study. Of the seven, two have a three year social work qualification, one has a B(SW) degree and four have a B(Soc Sci)(SW) degree. All of the field instructors participating in the study have thus the appropriate undergraduate qualifications. It was interesting to note that none of them had any further tertiary qualifications at a master's level. The fact that all the agency field instructors have the basic social work degree is important as the SACSSP specifies that social work students may only be supervised by a registered social worker.

Figure 5 - Agency field instructors' years of social work experience

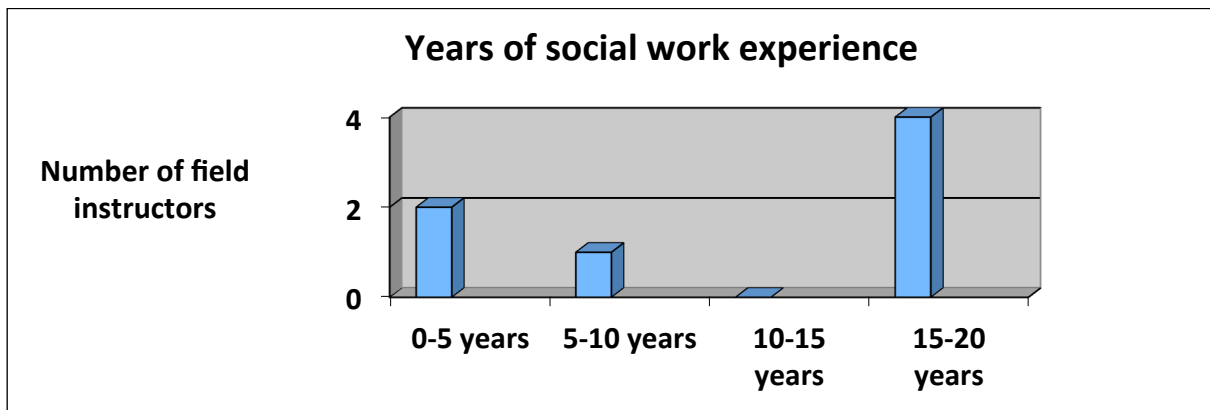


Figure five indicates that out of the seven agency field instructors, two (28.5%) indicated having three to four years of experience in the social work field, one (14%) indicated having eight years of experience and four (57%) indicated between 15 and 20 years of experience. Data indicated that more than half of the agency field instructors have been practicing social work for longer than ten years, indicating vast experience in social work. It should also be stated that this is, in fact, not always the case as some universities who participated in the study shared that they were forced to use agency field instructors who had very little experience or who were not social workers, due to the limited number of field instruction placements. Rogers and McDonald (1992:166) state that “it is easy to assume that good social workers will be good field instructors and that field instruction is a natural progression of the social worker’s professional development. Yet it is unreasonable to expect that social workers will use effective teaching methods and processes that are functional, effective and appropriate for the supervision and evaluation of developing professionals without first having received training or done preparatory coursework”. It should thus be noted that even though a social worker may have many years of experience in the field, this in itself does not make them a ‘good’ agency field instructor.

Figure 6: Agency field instructors' years of experience in the role of supervising social work students

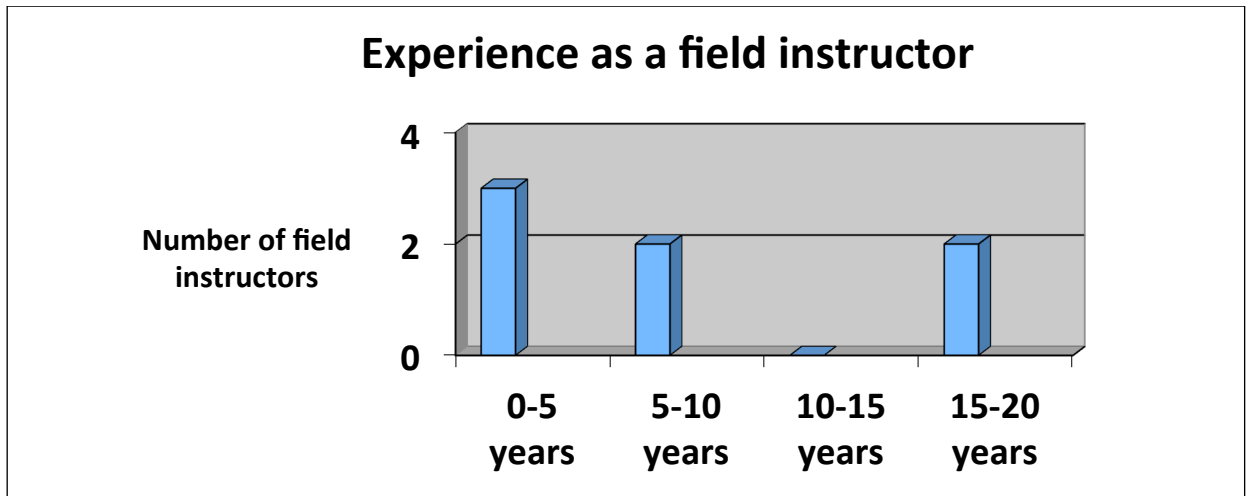


Figure six indicates that three (42.8%) of the agency field instructors have less than five years of experience as agency field instructors, two (28.5%) have between five and ten years of experience and two (28.5%) have between fifteen and twenty years of experience. This indicates that just more than half of the participants would be considered “senior” social workers, with more than 5 years of experience in supervising social work students from universities in the Eastern Cape. Literature states that the majority of agency field instructors have had very little training with “most preparations for this role being either nonexistent or having taken the form of simply orienting field instructors to the curriculum, policies and expectations of a particular social work programme” (Rogers and McDonald, 1992:166). Abrahamson and Fortune (1990:274) state that the field instructor’s competence as an educator is of importance to the success of the educational process. The implication thus being that even many years of experience as an agency field instructor does not guarantee the agency field instructor being

‘good’, rather their effectiveness as an educator becomes of integral importance when assuming the role of agency field instructor.

4.2.3: *Fieldwork coordinators*

The demographic data gathered during the semi-structures interviews with the three university fieldwork coordinators will now be discussed.

Three university fieldwork coordinators were interviewed. One indicated having less than five years of experience as a university fieldwork coordinator, one indicated having between five and ten years of experience and one indicated having more than 20 years of experience in the role of university fieldwork coordinator.

Two of the university fieldwork coordinators indicated having had previous experience in the field of social work and as agency field instructors, in the role of supervising social work students. One university fieldwork coordinator indicated having a master’s qualification and having gone straight from studying into the role of university lecturer and fieldwork coordinator.

4.3: **Findings and data analysis**

A presentation of the findings in relation to the core components of social work field instruction programmes will now follow. All findings are linked to theory and actual quotes received from the various respondents, during the data collection phase. It must again be emphasised that the small sample of participants in relation to the intended sample and actual

population, may have had an effect on the resulting findings. These findings can thus not be generalised.

4.3.1: *University field instruction programmes*

This section starts by presenting a summary of the field instruction programmes offered by universities in the Eastern Cape. This summary is followed by the sub themes that emerged under the main theme of models of field instruction. Under this heading the following themes that relate to the university’s models of field instruction will be presented and discussed:

- **When to start field instruction**
- **Participants’ reactions to university use of the concurrent, block and rotational models of field instruction**
- **Matching of students to agencies for placements**
- **Preparation of students for field instruction**
- **Partnerships between agencies and universities.**
- **Assessment of students**

Table 4: Summary of the universities’ models of field instruction

	Level one	Level two	Level three	Level four
University A	Concurrent classroom skills training and agency observations	Concurrent group and community work practical placements	Concurrent placements at agencies, weekly supervision, report writing	5 month modified block placement, weekly supervision, report writing
University B	none	none	Workshops throughout year for each level of intervention, group discussions, activities, role plays, case studies and report writing	Concurrent 8 month placement at agency, weekly supervision, report writing
University C	Agency visits, role plays, discussions, report writing	Agency observations - three weeks block	Concurrent placement at agencies	6 month block placement
University D	Agency observations, written assignments	Concurrent group and community work practical placements, supervision and report writing, journaling	Concurrent rotational model, supervision, report writing, journaling	5 month modified block placement, supervision, report writing, journaling

Various models for field instruction exist, any of which are considered educationally sound, although students may have a preference for one model over another (Royse, Dhooper and Rompf, 2003:8). The four universities participating in the research project, each have their own fieldwork programme that differs considerably over the four year BSW programme. The above table describes the fieldwork programmes as offered by the universities in the Eastern Cape.

A: When to start field instruction

*“The time we were doing our first year in agencies we were told to go and observe....For the second year we did group work.....3rd year we did community work...when we are doing our final year we go for 5 months for a placement....for five days a week.” **social work student***

*“yes it will be good when they introduce you to the practical...if you can just go just to a agency and you just observe at the organisation, so that when we come to 4th year we don't get that anxiety, we were so lost this year, we were stressing, we have to learn everything at the organisation, we made recommendations at the end of the module and I recommended this...” **social work student***

*“Basically for our students they start by doing prac in their 3rd level, they have practical workshops, they do role plays in those workshops when they get to certain skills we prepare them for doing casework, group work and community work but they just workshops amongst themselves with the help of the facilitator and each other. This happens throughout the year in 3rd year. In 4th year level they apply to do practicals where they placed in an organisation and they need to spend a block week at the organisation usually in early February... and then go once or twice a week...until the end of September” **university fieldwork coordinator***

Most universities within the Eastern Cape offer modules relating to preparing social work students for field instruction that begins from a first year level. In contrast, one university does not allow for any contact with clients until a fourth year level. Students from this university felt that they would prefer to have some sort of contact with agencies or field instruction before a fourth year level as they were very nervous when starting their field instruction as such a late stage during their training. It would thus appear as if social work students perceive starting field instruction at an earlier level than in their fourth year, as a strength of their particular university.

Students that only begin their field instruction with a placement at an agency at a fourth year would prefer to have had previous experience at earlier years.

B: Participants' reactions to the university's use of the block, concurrent and rotational models

"Well we never did anything in first year. For the second year we did group work...we would go every Wednesday...we did community work too in the second semester." **social work student**

"It was the best year. I learnt so much in 3rd year. We had different units and we rotated." **social work student**

"I think this year (level four) that we have done a lot of work in our practicals alone than last year (level three)...the theory that we are doing at the same time until December (shaking head) but this year things are better for us. Even the hours. We are able to focus on one side." **social work student**

"We started in February (student describing fourth year fieldwork). We had one week of orientation at the agency and then after that I work twice a week." **social work student**

"There is just so much work (reflecting on use of concurrent model at a fourth year level), even when you compare to other universities, we have so much work, assignments, reports, tests, research, it is aaah haaa... and then to work at the agency too" **social work student**

"The reports are too much and the research at the same time, we should start research earlier (referring to use of modified block placement)..." **social work student**

"I had a student having a breakdown they cannot handle the pressure, they have the research at the 4th year with the practical so they are not necessary completely focusing on the practical." **agency field instructor**

"The other thing that is really hard is doing the treatise at the same time as well, we don't want to complain because maybe we have to learn to juggle all of this..." **social work student**

The model of field instruction being used differs greatly from university to university in the Eastern Cape, with most universities using a combination of block and concurrent placements from the first year to the fourth year and one university using the rotational model at a third year level. Students reacted positively to the use of the rotational model at a third year level and one

student suggested that it was the best year because of the learning experiences being varied. One university uses a concurrent model at a fourth year level, where the student is required to spend one or two days from February until September, in the field and the rest of the time is devoted to academic work. Theriot, Johnson, Mulvaney and Kretzchmar (2006:205) state that such a model provides more time for integrating classroom and field activities, and the part-time nature of the placement affords students the time to maintain outside employment and activities if so desired. This model seems suitable for the particular university as it is primarily a part time, long distance institution. However this model also seemed to be very stressful for the students who mentioned that the work load was intense. Students using the concurrent model also noted having to work very hard to balance fieldwork and academic studies at the same time. Two universities adopt an approach where the concurrent and block model are combined at a fourth year level, where students are required to combine a research module with 4 days in the field. Students from both of these universities found it quite a challenge to balance working in the field and research at the same time.

“we are not happy (in response to concurrent placements at a third year level) with that arrangement. The thing is that the social worker (student) would report early in the morning saying I am not coming. Which is good but the disadvantage is you would organise clients for him/her.” **agency field instructor**

“It is difficult because on a Friday we don’t expect students to come in but on a Thursday they have to go to the university to hand in something or on a Tuesday they need to come and see someone and they still have their outside supervisor and they also have to go to that supervision. But with the other students they don’t have the outside supervisor...they come in January until June, its 5 months, they come from Monday to Friday every day; they don’t have other responsibilities or work to do. It is not their home town so we have seen they come to work and go back home, with the other students it’s difficult for us to have them because we have got many training sessions on Friday (when they aren’t here) but other students there is nothing to draw their attention away, because they are just here for 5 months to do their practical.” **agency field instructor**

Some of the agency field instructors mentioned that they were not supportive of the concurrent model at a third year level, feeling that students were distracted by academic requirements which impacted upon the field instruction experience. Students and agency field instructors seemed to prefer the use of the block placement at a fourth year level and students stated being better able to focus when not having the distraction of academic pressures at the same time. Agency field instructors also supported the use of the full block model at a fourth year, feeling that this caused fewer distractions for students and thus made the field instruction placement more successful. Theriot et al (2006:205) state that the block model facilitates rapid and intensive learning because there are fewer educational activities in competition for the students' attention, the longer hours may also be more conducive to fostering a mentoring relationship between student and field instructor. The authors go on to state that the major disadvantage of this model is that the limited time available which means that students have fewer opportunities to integrate their practice experiences with other lessons (Theriot, et al, 2006:205). Students who were placed at a fourth year level for a full block placement with no academic pressures seemed to be the most relaxed about their placements and better able to focus on them as a priority. One group of agency field instructors who have experience in the training of students from all the universities in the Eastern Cape agreed that they preferred having students who were placed for a block placement with no other academic pressures. These students appeared to be better able to focus on meeting the requirements of the agency and were not experiencing additional stress as a result of many other academic pressures at the same time.

None of the universities in the study indicated using a community centre model, although the fieldwork coordinators did indicate having strong partnerships with various communities, government departments and NGOs in areas surrounding their universities. Perhaps, when

compared to the community centre model, the only difference is that the university is not directly involved financially in supporting these partnerships and they are not based at the actual university or known to be associated to the university. Strydom suggests that, formal agreements with welfare organizations on the practice education of students should be considered more seriously in order to ensure that agencies draw maximum benefits from the placement by initiating co-operative projects that will also be advantageous for the university (2002:287).

C: Matching of students to agencies for placements

“It was so stressful, waiting to hear from the beginning of the year about our placements but actually I wouldn’t have felt comfortable choosing my own placement as I am so inexperienced and I would not have known what to choose.” **social work student**

“I think it is nice to have a choice but I am learning a lot and I wouldn’t have chosen a drug rehabilitation centre, I am learning a lot, it has taken me out of my comfort zone...it was so stressful waiting to hear where we would be placed but I actually wouldn’t have felt comfortable choosing my own placement as I am so inexperienced and I would not have known what to choose” **social work student**

“We want to choose our own agencies, it will be too expensive to go anywhere to do the practical, we stay at home and work at the agencies there to save costs....the bursary money for practicals only pays out long after we have finished our practicals...like now we haven’t even received the money yet...and it is already long after...” **social work student**

“Basically what we used to do it the students themselves had to contact organisations they were interested in being a part of. And contact (the agencies) themselves which is quite a grown up way of taking responsibility.” **university fieldwork coordinator**

Some universities allowed students to find their own agencies for field instruction, while others coordinated the placement of the student with an agency by matching the student to the placement. Two groups of social work students indicated that their placements are chosen for them by the university fieldwork coordinators in an area surrounding the university where they are studying. They indicated that they were initially not completely happy with their assigned

placements but most felt that at the end it all worked out and their placements were actually assisting in their professional growth and development. They also indicated that the placements were not necessarily placements they would have chosen for themselves and in this way added to their development as they were challenged to work with clients they did not initially see themselves being able to work with. Theory relating to the role of the fieldwork coordinator states that it is the role of the fieldwork coordinator “to assume responsibility for the overall management and coordination of the schools’ field instruction programme and to assign a university supervisor to work jointly with the agency based field instructor and the student” (Garthwait, 2008:12). It is thus not clear whether the fieldwork coordinator should assign an agency to the student or whether the student may find their own placement. What is clear is that it remains the university coordinator’s responsibility to manage and coordinate the university’s field instruction programme, which may become more challenging with students choosing placements all around South Africa and even internationally. Three groups of students that were interviewed for the study are allowed the freedom to select their own agencies for placement at a fourth year level. The students at these universities indicate that they are happy with this as being placed by the university, could influence the costs involved for them as students. It must also be added that these students are allowed to choose placements beyond the borders of the Eastern Cape. Two of these groups of students indicated that a university representative did not visit them during their placements. It was indicated by the students that they would like a site visit to be done as they felt that the work that they were doing was not really being noted or reflected just through their submission of reports.

One university fieldwork coordinator expressed concern over the students that are placed far away, at agencies where it is not known who the agency field instructors is. Financial constraints within universities also make it difficult for university fieldwork coordinators to do site visits all over the country.

*“It is difficult as the students are far away and then site visits become difficult, also if there are problems it is difficult to sort them out straight away and to intervene, at our campus we can manage challenges immediately and do site visits easily, it takes a very strong coordinating component and the coordinator is not just busy with this, she has other work to do too.... resources and staff capacity and also funding, it becomes expensive” **university fieldwork coordinator***

Horejsi and Garthwait state that it is the responsibility of the fieldwork coordinator to sort out any problems that may arise during the placement (1999:11). This may be more possible if the fieldwork coordinator has a good knowledge of and relationship with agencies and the agency field instructors. This partnership can be strengthened through selection and training of field instructors and regular site visits by university supervisors. Homonoff writes about a study where field instructors were interviewed and one of the findings as stated by the participants was that they worked closely with field education departments to choose interns who would be appropriate for their placements and to make a good match with field instructors, thus ensuring effective accountability, evaluation and gatekeeping (2008:151). Limited finances within universities seem to make building good partnerships with agencies and field instructors in areas that are far from the university, very challenging. Based on these findings it may be that if students are allowed to choose their own placements, including national and international placements, financial constraints facing universities in the Eastern Cape would make it challenging for university supervisors to have good partnerships with all the agencies and the agency field instructors and regular contact with students.

D: Preparation of students, by the university, for field instruction

*“We started having orientation in February...she informed us about everything that will be expected from us and from our persons for supervision and at the agencies...all our expectations were discussed and all the requirements...” **social work student discusses positive experience of university orientation***

“We didn’t know what we had to do before prac, only a month later after we had started did they tell us what to do. We do get a book (fieldwork manual) but it has no break downs of what to do. Later we got a rubric showing what we had to do, by when.”

*“if only we get some few workshops on these are the forms that you might come across...what we are actually saying is that it would be much easier if the institution showed us some of these things...” **social work student explains her confusion with forms and report formats for example section 159 and 150 in relation to the Children’s Act***

Students, who experienced preparation by their university as part of the field instruction programme, saw this preparation as being a strength of the model being used by the university. Other students expressed feeling prepared, by the theory that they had received, during the theoretical components of their training. One group of students expressed feeling unprepared for the administrative tasks required by the agencies and recommended that universities prepare them more comprehensively for field instruction by introducing them to these aspects of social work. A thorough orientation of students for the field instruction placements is seen as an important component of the field instruction programme being implemented by the university.

E: Partnerships between agencies and universities.

*“They had an a representative for the agency present at the supervision, that was very functional as many people had practical problems, like gates being locked, that was useful.” **social work student***

*“...I used to want to faint every situation that came in and the supervision with J (university supervisor) helped me.” **social work student***

*“The one university supervisor just comes in once during the placement...we are happy with that...” **agency field instructor***

“it was going to be better if they (university fieldwork coordinator) visited us in our agencies. They will have got an opportunity to interact with our supervisors.”
social work student

“We are in partnership with all universities...” **agency field instructor**

Social work students, agency field instructors and university fieldwork coordinators agree that regular contact between the agencies and university is important during the student's placement. This speaks to a strong partnership between universities and agencies. The partnership is characterised by regular communication which is an important component in a field instruction programme. Despite all participants agreeing that communication and a partnership was important, not all of the universities are able to visit the students during the placement - largely due to high student numbers and financial difficulties within the university. Homonoff states one of the findings from her study was that “an important corresponding implication for social work education is the importance of communication and collaboration between field instructors, their agencies and schools of social work” (2008:151). It may thus perhaps be interpreted that where students are placed at agencies without the support of the university and a university supervisor, this can be seen as a weakness of the university's model of field instruction. Where universities are placing students at agencies without the support of an university supervisor, who has many important roles (Garthwait, 2008:13) many important aspects of the field instruction programme may be lost and weakened, in particular the quality of the partnership between the agency and the university will be effected, which may have a negative impact upon the student's experience of field instruction.

F: Assessment of students

*“It was going to be better if they (university fieldwork coordinator) visited us in our agencies. They will have got an opportunity to interact with our supervisors. That will contribute in the decisions that they make for our marks, they will see the whole picture of what we are doing, the reflection assignment maybe deserves a 60 but if they visited agencies maybe we were not going to get the 60.”***social work student**

*“A report comes from your supervisor (agency field instructor) you bring it back to school. Then you have an oral for casework and groupwork. We went to (another university supervisor) for community work (the oral). You have to submit a placement report..and an evaluation from our supervisors (agency field instructor) and the diary”***social work student**

*“Agency didn’t really give input or look at any of our work...they gave the feedback to the university. Not really a mark. We never got the feedback ourselves.”***social work student**

*“The organisation does assess you but it doesn’t count, the final mark comes from the university. The lecturer come here for the presentation and the university supervisor plays a big role in the final mark”***social work student**

*“They expect you to do everything they ask you to do because you want the marks and you will do it because you want to pass at the end of the day..”***social work student**

*“The only acknowledgement you get is the assessment forms, They (the agency field instructor) give you marks that is the only acknowledgement you get”***social work student**

The students were able to reflect upon their experiences of assessment during field instruction. Some indicated the need for the university to be more involved, making the assessment more reliable, while others indicated never really receiving feedback from the agencies. Garthwait (2008:12) suggests that “it is the role of the fieldwork coordinator to provide guidelines, evaluation tools, and protocols for evaluation of the student. It is the role of the agency field instructor to evaluate the student’s performance in a fair, respectful, rigorous and thorough manner. It is the role of the university supervisor to monitor the student’s experience and assist in evaluating performance” It seems that the assessment of students is thus best done

when all parties are involved in the student's evaluation and is most effective when regular feedback regarding performance is given to students. Varied assessments are also seen as being most effective, for example some students mentioned doing orals, submitting written work and getting feedback from agency supervisors. Receiving little or no feedback from agency field instructors is seen as a challenge for social work students and may impact upon their performance as Garthwait (2008:13) states that it is important for the agency field instructor to provide the student with regular feedback and constructive criticism.

4.3.2: *Agencies used for field instruction*

Various agencies are used for field instruction in the Eastern Cape. The following subheadings will address the themes that emerged during the data collection phase in relation to the agencies used for field instruction by universities in the Eastern Cape.

- **Use of non traditional social work agencies**
- **Lack of agency resources**
- **Orientation for students**
- **Characteristics of 'good' agency for field instruction**
- **Costs related to placement**

A: *Use of non traditional social work agencies*

“Yes without a doubt (they must be supervised by a social work agency field instructor), in the past they made an exception, based on the fact that our students have a university supervisor, they will have contact in weekly basis so we sort of seen as an umbrella but we still would prefer them to have an agency social worker. We can't do that anymore that it has to be a social worker at an organisation and a social worker who is a supervisor from the university's point of view.” **university fieldwork coordinator**

“They (the management in agencies) then appoint an agency coordinator, we try to use reputable agencies with social workers but because of the small amount of agencies in the area, our students outnumber the placements in the area, so we have also started using placements such as schools for our students” **university fieldwork coordinator**

*“It is a more difficult placement and students need the extra support when they don’t have a social work supervisor at the agency but it can still work, we try to give these students more attention” **university fieldwork coordinator***

*“The other thing that the university does is appoint a roaming supervisor for the students placed at schools...” **social work student***

*“And with (on-site non social work agency field instructor) she was very helpful she had a background of psychology and how she dealt with learners in sort of like mothering them, she knows their needs and she is not harsh with them.” **social work student***

Two universities did not use agencies for field instruction if there was not an on-site social worker. The remaining two universities that participated in the study, indicated using non traditional social work agencies as placements for students during field instruction and the reason for this was due to the social work students outnumbering the traditional agencies that employ social workers. Here one of the constraints on the implementation of field instruction in the Eastern Cape is identified by the fieldwork coordinators. Many agencies rendering services to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in the Eastern Cape do render social work related services but are as yet unable to afford the employment of social workers. In such cases an “off-site” social work field instructor was employed by the university to supervise the student. University fieldwork coordinators felt that these placements were effective provided that the students were provided with the support of an off-site social work field instructor. In America, The Council of Social Work Education (CSWE), 1988 states that all social work interns should be supervised by a field instructor who is in possession of a professional social work degree. However, the following exception to the policy does exist, stating that if the field instructor does not hold a social work degree, the university supervisor should assume extra responsibility for the student. Internationally, such a placement is allowed by the CSWE and the issue is one that universities are discussing at great length in South Africa (ASASWEI conference, 2011). In South Africa,

SAQA (2000a and 2000b) states that the assessment of a social work student can only be done by a qualified social worker. This in effect then means that the on-site non social work agency coordinator would not be qualified to assess the social work student, resulting in the university supervisor having to take on a greater responsibility not only in the supervision but also in the assessment of the social work student.

*“I think the bottom line is that these are different professions. Teacher and social worker the other part doesn’t understand the other part.” **social work student when asked about her feelings relating to the use of non-traditional social work agencies***

*“Wow it is a big problem, there (at agencies with no on site agency field instructor) the students are suffering. They have no guidance at all...I don’t think anyone has had a positive experience.” **social work student***

*“Initially I was not happy...as soon as I got to JB (school) I was welcomed and I felt like part of them. They made our stay very comfortable.” **social work student when asked about her placement at a nontraditional social work agency***

Social work students from the different universities indicated different feelings with regards to being placed at agencies without an on-site social work field instructor. Students from two of the universities stated that they had to select agencies to do their fieldwork, where there was an on-site social work field instructor. Students from these universities felt it was imperative to have a social work supervisor at the agency and did not like the idea of being supervised by someone who wasn’t a qualified social worker. Students from the other universities expressed mixed emotions about being placed at agencies where there was no on-site social work field instructor. Most indicated that they were still able to learn a lot and were welcomed into the agency despite not having an on-site social work field instructor. Social work students also indicated that there was a lot of work for them at these agencies and that the agency coordinator at the agency really assisted them greatly throughout the placement. It seems that the social work students themselves preferred to be placed at an agency with an on-site social worker. The fieldwork coordinators

were less concerned about this and felt that the right student with the support of an offsite social work field instructor, could be just as beneficial in the training of the student. Other participants felt that it could work depending on the field instructor and agency. It was however mentioned by various participants that such placements required extra attention and support for the student. None of the students or fieldwork coordinators who were interviewed for the study highlighted any particular difference between the use of a social worker or a non social work agency coordinator. It seems that the non social work field instructors have been chosen as they have a real interest in social work and are in some way able to align their values and beliefs with those of the social work profession. Abram et al state that several factors contribute to a successful field instruction placement, where there is no onsite social work field instructor: the student's characteristics, the agency's characteristics and the relationship between the onsite agency coordinator and the offsite social work field instructor (2000:177). Henderson writes about an Australian study that acknowledged the advantages of offsite social work field instructors working alongside on-site agency coordinators. The main reasons for this being that it increased learning opportunities within non-traditional placements such as schools, the police-force and in court (2010:490). Having an on-site agency coordinator who is not a social worker has its challenges, but these can be overcome by careful planning, additional support and monitoring and careful matching of student, with the particular agency and both the on-site agency coordinator and off-site field instructors (Henderson, 2010:500). Strom suggests that the greatest area of difference between social workers and non social workers was in the importance placed on the recognition of social work values. The author goes on to state that special attention should be given in the way that social work values and ethics are conveyed by agency coordinators who are not themselves recipients of social work education (1991). The authors suggest that although

theory taught in class promotes social justice, these ideas have had less influence on the nature of practice placements and field education and that unless students are given an opportunity to test out these ideas in the field, they may not feel confident to integrate them into their practice as qualified social workers (Ferguson and Smith, 2012:975). One university in South Africa placed a small number of students with agencies focused on advocating for social justice, these placements challenged the more traditional agencies used due to there being no on-site field instructor and due to the social justice services being rendered by the agency (Ferguson and Smith, 2012:9979). These placements were supported through the use of off-site field instructors. Findings indicated that students were indeed able to meet learning outcomes, although at times some additional support was required by students. Despite the agencies having no on-site field instructor, recommendations were made “that social work education in South Africa therefore does well to broaden the context of its field practice opportunities to include such movements and progressive organisations” (Ferguson and Smith, 2012:989). Literature confirms that non traditional agencies seem to offer students a variety of work related experiences and with extra support the placements support quality field instruction experiences for students. The use of non traditional social work agencies within the Eastern Cape as agency’s for field instruction indicate a constraint in terms of the traditional agencies available but also a creative response by universities to place students at agencies where a need for social work students does exist, despite there being no on-site social work field instructor.

B: Lack of agency resources

“Another challenge becomes the transport. (the agency) doesn’t have vehicles maybe there are 30 Social Workers and there is only 3 bakkies and there are people who will be coming that are not related to foster care, it’s a person’s problem and there is no car. Clients will look like we don’t care about their problems. In the foster care we need to do community work but it becomes difficult to write reports so you

*have to create the situation of a client or ask the client how the background is” **social work student***

*“I can talk about lack of resources (in the agency) you will find that in the agency there are for example 30 social workers and there are 2 vehicles to do home visits that leads to the lot of work which is not done in a time that has to be done so that is the challenge. So it ends up the community members and government blaming social workers to not focus on their work but forgetting that government didn’t provide resources to the agency. More especially in terms of stationery and vehicles for home visits we find that the photocopying machine is not working, there are no computers you have to buy or use your own laptop instead of proving computers from the government.” **social work student***

*“Like privacy for instance. There is not privacy in those offices. In one office you will find maybe four social workers and four desks.” **social work student***

*“I think my agency had more strengths...we didn’t have a lack of resources...” **social work student***

Some social work students expressed real concern about the lack of resources within the agencies where they were placed. Their concern was that this had a very real impact upon the services being rendered to clients and this in turn made it difficult to uphold the social work values and ethics. This came through strongly as being one of the constraints on the implementation of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape as the agency’s lack of resources may further impact upon the agency’s willingness to supervise students during their field instruction. It was interesting to note that the students who commented on this were primarily placed within government agencies. Students placed at other agencies did not express these concerns as being too severe, although they did acknowledge some financial pressures within the agency. Homonoff discusses the very real challenge of how to support field instruction in the face of financial pressures bearing down on agencies and the impact that this will have on all parties involved in field instruction (2008:139).

C: Orientation for students

*“At the agency they gave us good orientation and explained all the reports and that helped a lot.” **social work student***

*“I think from the first day they (the agency) lack I think for the first day on your placement they don't actually tell you what to do...” **social work student.***

*“There is no orientation, this is how we work, this is what I want you to do, this is what you mustn't do... I found now that not only to us students even permanent social workers after 2 years they don't even know their job description but they are working there. What about students?” **social work student***

Orientation for the students is of great importance to the success of the field instruction programme. Some students commented that they did not receive any and it was assumed that they should just know everything. They also indicated being fearful to say they do not know what to do and so thus often keep quiet, pretending to do things and very often doing things incorrectly. They clearly indicated that they need some orientation to the agency and the work that they will be required to be doing. Some agency field instructors stated doing orientation and training with students, at the beginning and during the placement. These agency field instructors commented on the positive impact the orientation has on the students' overall professional performance. Garthwait states that the agency field instructor is expected to describe and explain what is expected of the student during field instruction and should also provide the student with a thorough orientation to the agency and its purpose, structure, policies, procedures and ethical standards (2008:13). It seems that some field instructors are more knowledgeable in terms of the appropriate manner in which to assist social work students to have a good learning experience. Students struggle to learn and develop when they are not orientated with regards to the agency where they will be placed and the work that is required of them. Other students receive formal orientation and training and really seem to benefit from this.

D: Characteristics of 'good' agency for field instruction

“ My agency is organized...you feel you are not gaining anything when things are unorganized. When you got to an organization that has deadlines and structure, you know already, planning ahead for three months, it teaches you when you plan then you have good production...” **social work student**

“My learning was good. I got to liaise with other stakeholders.” **social work student**

“My friend is only allowed to do intakes. It is so boring and she isn't learning much” **social work student**

“What I notice is the issue of planning. They are failing to plan in the correct way. They ask you to do something and then quick quick you are chased away and they ask you to do something else” **social work student**

“It starts from the top where the MEC's are appointed and you go down so the problem is actually there from the top. In terms of admin he doesn't know anything. So for me, it is effecting the work of social work at a ground level...in a bad way, Bad way because those people are not good. There was this back to school campaign and there was a programme each and every student will go and get their clothes at the office. The MEC called the district manager she will be there on Friday she called on Wednesday that she will be there on Friday. The district manager didn't call the area or office manager he called the office manager on Thursday that tomorrow the MEC will be here, now think about those social workers have appointments, there are clients that are coming and the district manager is asking every social worker to be there because the MEC is coming. So then that affects the working and clients. Now you have to counsel, you can't even counsel because the client is going to tell the office because you are not there. You can't counsel on Thursday because you are told the MEC will be there each and every social worker is expected to attend, now the client doesn't know, most of the clients use their children's grants. Now you can't counsel with the client...because you are not there. It's a waste of money because some of them come far places with the lot of money maybe he or she borrowed that money.” **social work student**

“One challenge in our organisation our supervisor was fine but we has no time to sit down with the supervisor because the manager will always say you can't sit here and do supervision. People are waiting in Duncan Village you have to do there. WE need to have the target and we are working for target and we never have time to sit down so that our supervisor can read and tell us what to do better in the reports. We always had to rush to go to work.” **social work student**

Students were able to describe varied experiences of agencies. The theme of varied learning opportunities and planning came through quite strongly as positive characteristics of some

agencies used for field instruction. Other students stated a lack of planning in their agencies negatively affecting field instruction but also negatively impacting upon the rendering of services to clients. Another very serious concern raised by the social work students was that, at times, the agencies where they were placed were unable to uphold the social work values and ethics, due to very serious management and political pressures. This ultimately affected the agency's clients - who at times were not assisted as a direct result of management. This pressure also sometimes effected the time allocated to supervision of the social work students. Students also expressed concern over agencies being very political and this having a negative effect on the clients that they were serving. Kane (2004 in Garner, 2006:242) discusses and acknowledges that ethical conflicts between social work's code of ethics and for example managed care preferred methods of operation in the USA do exist. It is also noted that at the same time universities continue to teach students service delivery methods to meet the needs of the clients and the values of the profession with a social justice focus that may be indirect conflict of the organization in which they will practice. The lack of planning within some agencies and the pressure from management seems to cause further stress and at times value and ethical dilemmas for the social work student during their field instruction placement.

E: Costs related to placement

*“They assist me with transport when we go and do our home visits and when I had to call the client's mother they will let us use the phone...” **social work student***

*“We don't cover any travelling costs (to and from work) for the students...they have access to the computer, internet as well as telephone...” **agency field instructor***

All participants stated that the agencies where the students were placed for field instruction were supportive towards the paying of work related costs for the students, with students taking

responsibility for their travel costs to and from work. This may be interpreted as a strength of the agencies providing placements to social work students from the Eastern Cape.

4.3.3: *Agency field instructors*

The agency field instructor has a profound influence on the social work student's professional development (Rogers and McDonald, 1992:166). The following themes relate to the agency field instructors, who provide opportunities for the practical training of social work students.

- **Helpful characteristics of agency field instructors**
- **Unhelpful characteristics of agency field instructors**
- **Training for agency field instructors**
- **Remuneration for agency field instructors**

A: *Helpful characteristics of agency field instructors*

“My supervisor was very committed and always wanted to assist me in everything.” **social work student**

“Guidance, they guided me so well.” **social work student**

“...the good thing about mine is I managed to fill all the gaps” **social work student explains that the agency field instructor gave the varied learning opportunities during the placement**

“When my field instructor introduced me, she would not introduce me a student, she will make me feel I was already a professional...” **social work student**

“My supervisor was very committed and always wanted to assist me in everything. She gave me feedback...” **social work student**

“My colleagues, the students say that their supervisors did not give them a chance to do things on their own whereas in my case I did things on my own. Presentence reports, I will do the report and give it to my supervisor for feedback. I didn't do my work with him but if I did I will not be talking the way that I am. The supervisor had to trust us to do reports.” **social work student**

“I had the most incredible supervisor, she took me out, we went to court, home visits, the hospital. I got to experience many aspects. We did evaluations on ECD’s and old age homes. She let me do a lot and involved me in all. It was amazing to study all these things and then see it all coming together in front of you. That was really good.” **social work student.**

“To give guidance so that the student can see how the theory translates to practice and preparation for future work.” **agency field instructor describes the role of an agency field instructor**

“For me it’s like you don’t take care of them but you help them.” **agency field instructor**

“You give them things to do and they also observe from what you are doing.” **agency field instructor**

“What I like about my supervisor whenever she has done something wrong she will apologise and acknowledge that I was wrong, and not to do it the same thing again.” **social work student**

The participants were able to describe the helpful characteristics of agency supervisors as being giving the students support, guidance (including giving feedback), opportunities to work with them but also opportunities to work independently, giving the students a chance to experience a variety of learning opportunities and lastly being open about their own shortcomings and the mistakes that they make. Garner (2006:240) indicates that previous literature has revealed students view good field instructors as those who prioritise spending time with the student, and reinforce and validate the student through regular feedback. The author elaborates further saying feedback is valued as being important to the student in both the task related areas of knowledge and skills and the socio-emotional functions (Garner, 2006:240). These characteristics speak to the agency field instructor forming a partnership with the student, where both are fully involved with work and study related objectives and work in partnership to achieve these. Frawley-O’Dea and Sarnat (2001, in Ornstein and Moses, 2010:103) describe the relational approach to field instruction “as being defined by mutuality, shared and authorised

power and the co-construction of knowledge” and continue to motivate the use of this model as being particularly useful to the graduate social work programmes and social work field instruction. The relational approach to field instruction supervision, “uses the interactive relationship between the agency field instructor and the student as the centrepiece of the learning experience” (Ornstein and Moses, 2010:103). The participants in this study seems to hint at this partnership and constant involvement by the agency field instructor in the placement as being helpful to the success of field instruction. This can be viewed as one of the strengths of field instruction in the Eastern Cape - there are agency field instructors who are seen as helpful and are good role models to social work students throughout the field instruction experience.

B: Unhelpful characteristics of agency field instructors

*“When you are a student they take it as you are a PA they give you all the files, you more like a slave there...” **social work student***

*“And the other thing they usually take sick leaves when there are students there, those long 4 months.” **social work student***

*“I think for the first day on your placement they don’t actually tell you what you except to do and what not to do they do not guide you, you find yourself stuck somewhere somehow.” **social work student***

*“Unconstructive criticism. Maybe if someone has been doing this for years. She will say that I know this better than you but sometimes there are cases that you do know better than her.” **social work student responds to concern that as a student you cannot make suggestions to the agency field instructor - implying that this is not acceptable***

*“Yes this is real, (ethics and values - theory and what is happening in the field is inconsistent) one client, under foster care, had behavioural problems, instead of going to private office, she (the agency field instructor) just sat there and talked about the whole thing with others there, clients were coming in and out, and it was bad, the things she said the social worker, “you see if you were home none of this would have happened”, she (the child) was raped...so it was just too bad,...it was just not good...” **social work student***

“I remember when I did my progress report. We sit in the passage and she came to me and started shouting in front of everyone..and I asked myself why can’t you just

*call me in your office and tell me in person not in front of everyone...” **social work student***

*“Sometimes you find that those social workers that are working there also don’t know how to counsel clients, they don’t have the capacity and that knowledge how to counsel an individual. I think counselling is a challenge” **social work student***

*“Generally it is the case where the contact person is appointed by the organisation and we have to trust their judgment would be accurate. We have some cases where the supervisors haven’t been suitable. It is not an easy thing to deal with that.” **university fieldwork coordinator***

The social work students were able to discuss various unhelpful characteristics of agency field instructors as being expecting the student to do all the work, being unwilling to listen to the students’ suggestions or ideas, giving harsh feedback at inappropriate times, not exposing the student to a variety of learning opportunities and not maintaining social work values and ethics and not discussing expectations with the student. The unhelpful agency field instructor relationship seems to be viewed as one where the agency field instructor is ‘the boss’ and the social worker viewed as the personal assistant, meant to follow instructions without questioning. Some social work students also experienced their agency field instructors not upholding the social work values such as confidentiality and being non-judgemental as concerning. Giddings et al states that an area that is frequently omitted in field instruction education involves issues surrounding professional behaviour and violations of ethics (2003:210). These issues should be addressed with field instructors, as they are very stressful to students. Facilitating communication around these issues will also involve giving field instructors an opportunity to discuss the difficulties and challenges inherent to their roles (Giddings, et al, 2003:211). Students also felt that where they where agency field instructors were not experienced in a wide range of interventions, such as counselling, they too did not gain this experience. This is in contradiction to the BSW qualifications that attempt to reflect a balance between therapeutic and

developmental intervention strategies (Sewpaul and Lombard, 2004:544). It might, however, be that practising social workers are not reflecting this balance in the services that they are rendering to their clients, thus the student is not gaining experience in this particular method of intervention. This may be translated into a possible weakness of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape as many of the agencies used for field instruction are focused on foster care services, leaving very little time for agency field instructors to focus on other important social work interventions. Thus agency field instructors at these agencies are not providing social work students with the opportunity to learn how to render services that reflect a balance between therapeutic and developmental strategies (Sewpaul and Lombard, 2004:544).

C: Training for agency field instructors

*“Their training would be through the university supervisor, where they explain to them some of the university requirements on the phone, by email they get sent guides that they can read through to explain to them but obviously if they are going to all those things we don’t always know and we do get feedback from students feeling misunderstood by the contact person which does lead me to think that they haven’t always read through the documents” **university fieldwork coordinator***

*“Social workers (field instructors) should do training because some of the young social workers they didn’t supervise well, in the sense that they just let the students to do their own thing. And we have got boundaries and we have got structure in all of that but we could really do with that training or maybe one person from the agency can attend so that the person can take the information back to the agency” **agency field instructor***

*“I think if the student will be placed at a school, I think the teachers may be called for a workshop so that they can be explained about what we do as social workers do and what we don’t do so that there can be a clarity? **social work student***

Two universities indicate having orientation meetings for the fieldwork instructors, these are a few hours spent reviewing the field instruction requirements for the students, however this was not compulsory and not all field instructors attended. There was a general agreement by the agency field instructors, university fieldwork coordinators and social work students interviewed

for this study that training for the agency field instructors and the non social work agency coordinator, in the non traditional social work agencies where there is no onsite social worker, is something that is presently lacking in the field instruction programmes of the universities. It was agreed by all this would strengthen field instruction programmes and result in a better field instruction experience for all parties involved. Rogers and McDonald (1992:166) state that social workers who serve as field instructors provide a major contribution to the preparation of social work practitioners, yet programmes preparing field instructors for this role have been largely non-existent. They continue to say that it is unreasonable to expect that practitioners will use methods and processes that are functional, effective and appropriate for the supervision and evaluation of developing professionals without first having received specialised training. Skolnik (in Strydom, 2002:281) makes some suggestions for field instruction programmes, one of which is the need for training of new field instructors as well as those who already have experience in the field.

D: Remuneration for agency field instructors

*“For me it has been part of the work I am doing. I think remuneration, **it will be just an incentive and it will be just a token of appreciation** to say that we want to recognise what you are doing especially the NGO’s they are not paying as government and so we know the student gets more experience in the NGO’s than in the government department.” **agency field instructor***

*“It is my way of giving back. I never expected anything. I see it as part of my work.” **agency field instructor***

*“We don’t pay the organisation anything for hosting our students we hope it is an experience for them to benefit for having a student the helping will be that way, we really encourage our students to really be an asset in an organisation and the university supervisor is paid by the university” **university fieldwork coordinator***

The field instructors interviewed for this study indicated that they felt no need for remuneration in return for the work involved in supervising social work students. However as

seen in the first response, there seems to be a feeling that if the university would provide some payment the agencies would appreciate this. They did also say that it was a part of their responsibility to assist students and formed a part of any professional social workers' duty, to give back to the social work profession. Agency field instructors also felt that despite it being hard work, the social work students did assist with rendering services to their clients, so the relationship was mutually beneficial. Strydom openly discusses the need for universities to determine what fringe benefits can be offered to field instructors so that the institution may recognise the services provided in a concrete manner. The author makes suggestions such as offering field instructors access to the library and to further education programmes, free consultation or a certificate for services rendered (2002:287). Rosenfeld (in Strydom 2002:286) states that it has been found that offering field instructors fringe benefits results in them adopting a more positive attitude towards the training institution.

4.3.4: *Social work students*

The themes relating to social work students will be presented according to the following subthemes:

- **Characteristics of social work students**
- **Social work students' emotional reaction to field instruction**
- **Impact of high student numbers on field instruction**

A: *Characteristics of social work students*

*“Some people are just doing it for the bursary, they will drop out and leave the profession eventually, also the quality of work that they produce is very poor. Some students don't take the profession seriously; they copy and paste all the work. They ride on others during our group presentations in the first semester and then in the second semester they are all alone. I know it will catch up to them... I don't worry about them.”***social work student**

“I am trying to say I agree with P (another social work student) some of us did not really have a passion for what we doing. We just came here because there is a sponsor.” **social work student**

“Certain behaviour, certain people should be social workers and that is not always what you see. It’s not for everyone.” **social work student**

“Passion and commitment are certain characteristics. You can’t love money...” **social work student**

“Not all of us. To some we are not what are expected from a social work student.” **social work student**

“Attitude...Confidentiality” **social work student in response to researcher enquiring what specific characteristics concern participants in relation to social work students**

“I think it is what is inside. If you aren’t the kind of person who loves people, no matter what theory you get, it won’t work” **social work student**

“I think it should come naturally” **social work student**

“I have noticed the students that are on bursary, it’s like they know they are going to get a job and the ones that are not, know that their families are paying, most of my 3rd year students were not on bursary and they worked very hard...” **agency field instructor**

“We don’t have screening at the university entrance, so that is the problem. It’s about the integrity of the profession. The commitment of the students with the bursary and the problem that it has caused for just entering the social work profession because you have the bursary.” **agency field instructor**

“It is a calling, you work with people, you cannot abuse resources...it has to do with the individual person and their responsibility and motivation” **agency field instructor**

“I think it is the issue of personality, it is the use of responsibility, I don’t think it has to do with the university (theory), we don’t have screening and that is the problem...” **agency field instructor**

“It becomes a challenge as a lot of our students struggle with various difficulties, they have problems at home, they come from poor backgrounds, also a lot of our students are on the social development bursary, these problems and issues come out during the fieldwork because they are dealing with problems similar to their own, sometimes they don’t cope. It would be good if we could meet the students and interview them, discuss their strengths and weaknesses, try to get a picture of who they

are so that we have the right students entering the programme” university fieldwork coordinator

All participants expressed some concern over the students that are involved in the social work programme. There is a general idea that some students may be studying social work because they are getting the cost of their studies covered. The social work students felt that social workers should generally be passionate and not be motivated by money, they felt that these qualities could not always be created through the programme but rather students entering the programme should already have these characteristics. Agency field instructors openly and strongly stated that they could not understand why universities were not screening and selecting students prior to admission to determine what their motives and interests were, thus preventing unsuited persons from entering the profession. Garner states that it has become a real challenge when working with students who perceive themselves as disempowered and externally located in terms of control over their lives, there can also be a group of students who have a multiplicity of personal difficulties and other issues that make successful completion of field instruction very difficult (2006:240). Many of these students enter the education process as a consumer of a ‘product’ with a sense of entitlement, regardless of their performance (Lager and Robbins, 2004). These students create problems in student-supervisory relations and contribute to field instructors being unwilling to commit to working with students (Garner, 2006:240). Bar-On discusses a similar situation in Botswana, a country where there is much poverty, similar to South Africa. The author states that the principle concern of students studying social work in Botswana, is to get a job and compensate themselves for past disadvantages (2010:130). For this reason, empathy for the ‘stranger’ is weak and arises because absolute levels of poverty make the cost of all personal giving prohibitive. He goes on to say that this severe poverty also dulls the senses to the plight of others and thus affects the students’ attitude to field instruction as their motivation is

not primarily to help others less fortunate than themselves (Bar-On, 2010:130). This makes sense and could perhaps be applied to the current South African situation where students from disadvantaged backgrounds receive bursaries to study social work. Agency field instructors, university fieldwork coordinators and social work students who participated in this study, all stated some concern that the 'right' students may not always be studying within the BSW programme. Social work needs students and qualified professionals who are willing, passionate and hard working. Perhaps studying social work just to be able to get an income and employment one day is not sufficient. Perhaps one of the results of university departments not being actively involved in the screening and selection of students entering the programme, can provide answers to the comments from social work students about field instructors who are unethical and uncaring in both their work with clients and in supervising social work students. However theory on experiential learning also motivates that social work programmes have a responsibility to help create social work professionals over the four year programme, that are reflexive and critically reflective, through the use of the experiential learning cycle, implying that even if social work students might enter the programme for the 'wrong' reasons, a professional social worker can be shaped over the course of the programme. One agency field instructor actually indicated that they would not hire students from a particular university based on very poor experiences with their qualified social workers in the past. It was also of great concern that after a 4 year degree, some social workers continued to display unethical behaviours, again highlighting the fact that such values and ethics cannot be forced upon individuals during the training process, they still choose to respond to the university programme or not in growing and developing into quality social work professionals. It may thus be important to prevent such persons from entering the profession at a university level. Garner states that field instruction often serves as a gate keeping

function for agency field instructors to weed such students out of the social work programme (2006:240), but perhaps some form of screening and selection procedure could assist in minimizing the number of unsuited students entering the programme at all.

B: Social work students' emotional reaction to field instruction

"We are paying on our own. We have to eat and look presentable. We don't have nice clothes and shoes." **social work student**

"...we have to borrow money..." **social work student**

"Almost every year it has a bad impact upon us, as students. Because some of us don't even want to go to work because of our experiences of bad fieldwork" **social work student**

"Another thing that is really hard is doing the treatise at the same time as well, we don't want to complain because maybe we have to learn to juggle all of this." **social work student**

"It always seems impossible until it's done" **social work student**

"Expectations from the university and agency is very different...it was so stressful." **social work student**

"...it was very tiring but you get used to it, the experience was wonderful..." **social work student**

"For me that didn't happen. My school knew I was coming." **social work student**
in response to another student who mentioned being stressed as her placement was not organised"

"Also being placed with another student was great. We are the only ones who understand the pressure, and the agency and school pressure" **social work student**

"I am working with teenage girls. I am loving getting to know them, building relationship, doing therapy. What is also nice is that there are a few students placed together, just like chatting and stuff and we help each other" **social work student**

"I had a student having a break down. They cannot handle the pressure. They have the research at the 4th year with the practical, so they are not necessarily focusing on the practical. Students also have personal problems affecting their work." **agency field instructor**

Many of the social work students related their field instruction experiences with feelings of stress, anxiety and inadequacy. The same students were also to reflect on the positive emotions that they experience in relation to working with other students which they acknowledge as being supportive and the actual work done with clients which is seen as rewarding. All groups of students moved from the positive to the more negative emotions throughout the interviews, this perhaps being the most significant finding in terms of this theme. Students seem to experience a wide range of feelings during their field instruction experiences, most indicated being anxious and stressed particularly in the beginning and these then seemed to even out if well received by the agency and once actual work with clients begins. These feelings are described by Royse et al. (2003) as being quite common amongst students who are being assigned real clients and working in an unfamiliar environment. Agency field instructors seemed to have concerns regarding the ability of some social work students to cope, acknowledging the stress that the students were under in terms of managing personal, academic and field instruction requirements at the same time. This may be relevant to the students studying at universities in the Eastern Cape, as these universities are situated in a province where poverty rates are the second highest in South Africa and the universities serve these communities, often offering the chance to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, to gain a tertiary qualification. Such students often have added social challenges related to poverty that may affect their studies. The topic of adult learners is also one being discussed in literature, where such students also have family responsibilities as well as academic requirements to balance (Theriot et al., 2006).

C: *Impact of high student numbers on field instruction*

*“...there are about 200 students at a 4th year level at the one campus and about 90 at our other campus, and the coordinator has other responsibilities as well, with the other first to third year students” **university fieldwork coordinator***

*“I have warned the staff that we will have a high number for students for fieldwork next year, I have been talking about it for a long time” **university fieldwork coordinator***

*“We were the first large group. It will be better next year. If we had more supervision it will be better. Our university supervisor had eight students and our agency work is so fast, so the feedback is a different pace.” **social work student***

*“I think it’s good that the student numbers are high, we need more social workers. We have really bonded this year. I miss the others. The numbers have been good, not a bad thing.” **social work student***

University fieldwork coordinators expressed concern over high student numbers over which they seemed to have no control. The pressure for field instruction is finding enough agencies willing to assist in the supervision of the students and the extra load for university supervisors. This has forced some universities to allow students to choose their own placements and also to allow students to carry out their field instruction all over South Africa, and even at times beyond South African borders, making site visits nearly impossible and resulting in some universities not appointing university supervisors. Some students felt that the large numbers impacted upon supervision and the feedback time in terms of report submissions, while other students did not seem to share these concerns and did not view high student numbers as being problematic. These students felt that the need for more social workers out in the field, justified the high student numbers. Some universities have responded to the high student numbers by employing contract social workers to assist in the supervising of the students as full time university staff members are just not able to manage the supervision of the students due to work pressures and high student numbers. Garner discusses the pressures that faculty members are under, for example budget constraints, pressure to do research, publish and present at conferences, thus resulting in less time and interest in field instruction (2006:238).

4.3.5: *Experiential learning*

The following themes emerged during data analysis in relation to the heading of experiential learning and will be presented throughout this section:

- **Integration of theory and practice**
- **Reflection and self actualisation**
- **Learning**
- **Need for more opportunities to reflect upon experiences**

A: *Integration of theory and practice*

“It is to compliment the theory base from the university, showing students about social work in the field. To give guidance so that the students can see how the theory translates to practice.” **agency field instructor**

“At least the student I have, she is very good. She has the background knowledge (theory) and she tries to relate it to the work that she is doing.” **agency field instructor**

“They (the students) get a chance to practice it (theory) and also to integrate the theory that they have been learning from the university.” **agency field instructor**

“It’s like giving the social work students a chance to practice the theory they have been learning in the university. They get the chance of practicing and also to integrate the theory they have been learning from university and they are trying to apply it practically under the guidance of a social worker who is experienced in the field.” **university fieldwork coordinator**

The agency field instructors and university field work coordinators related their understanding of field instruction and experiential learning to the students being given an opportunity to integrate theory and practice. These findings confirm that agency field instructors and university fieldwork coordinators are able to equate experiential learning to the process of providing students with a concrete experience (the actual field instruction placement) and the importance of linking the experience to theory which forms the third stage of the experiential learning stage - the formation of abstract concepts, where theory is introduced to help the student “interpret the experience at a higher level” (Collins and Van Breda, 2010:16). The social work

students were also able to relate their field instruction experiences to experiential learning and being given an opportunity to apply and integrate theory with practice.

*“I think it is the most important thing. We are expected to apply the theory. They (the university) want to know if I can apply everything that I have learnt.” **social work student***

*I think it is about getting the feel of what is out there. When you learn theory you understand it. If you don't work, you won't understand how.” **social work student***

*“I am seeing theory come to life.” **social work student***

In the above statements it can be seen that students value being given the opportunity of having a field instruction experience. In doing the work they imply gaining a valuable understanding of how theory is applied to the work environment. These statements relate closely to the agency field instructors and university fieldwork coordinators' understanding of experiential learning in being given a concrete experience and then an opportunity to relate it to theory taught during classroom activities. In the last statement the social work student explains the field instruction experience and experiential learning as “theory coming to life” implying a movement, a realness in terms of her understanding of theory, again illustrating that experiential learning is a process of continuous movement (Kolb and Kolb, 2005), that learning and theory is a continuously moving concept and that field instruction encourages such movement or growth. Sacco (2004:179) states that one of the approaches to field instruction is that “theory and practice integration is central to teaching and learning”, thus confirming all participants understanding of field instruction and experiential learning relating to the opportunity to integrate theory with practice.

B: Reflection and self actualization

The second emerging theme under experiential learning was in relation to reflection and self actualization. The theme emerged most strongly amongst the social work students and the

following statements reflect their understanding and purpose of experiential learning with regards field instruction and its link to reflection and self actualization

“My learning was very good...and it improved my strengths. I could identify my strengths, some of the strengths that I did not even know that I have.” **social work student.**

My supervisor gave me feedback about my progress...by progress we are not simply talking about the good stuff...because I believe that in order to be productive weakness should be in a state where I can provide services...we discussed almost everything in supervision...so I kind of grew personally and professionally”. **social work student**

“You learn different characteristics about yourself and you learn different characteristics of other people and you get confident and you learn how to work with these kinds of people” **social work student**

“It changes you, you evaluate yourself and you see okay...” **social work student**

“You learn through your experiences, yo ... and it has been good and overwhelming and we are here and I have learnt a lot. You experience different people and cultures.” **social work student**

“...changes how you think, you even question your own thinking...” **social work student**

“(Our university) does it a lot, the supervisors do it with us, we as students also talk a lot to each other, the workshops also help, we talk a lot and reflect, share and learn from that, we get feedback from our facilitators...the reports always ask that question – what did you learn? What did you do right? Where did you go wrong? What would you have done differently?” **social work student**

“Yes sometimes I feel so angry. We as social workers, they don't practice. They think they are so superior to the clients. If you go to social development theory does not apply. It doesn't exist at all. The other day I went to social development to do research. I am sitting, there is no confidentiality, the door is open, colleagues are coming in and out. She (the social worker) is talking loud, the old man (the client) was so ashamed...I just thought that is bad, people go to the field and they forge the theory. It's sad. Really it's sad because theory is not being applied...the next day I (the social worker) have a client and the next day I tell my colleagues about it, they even say the name of the client.” **social work student**

These statements from the social work students reveal that the experiential learning component of field instruction facilitated a process of reflection about themselves, their own

reactions, their own strengths and weaknesses as individuals and also as developing professionals, resulting in a certain self awareness that seemed to improve their professional selves. Sacco (2004:172) states that developing critically reflective practice especially in social work is important as social workers need to be able to respond to unpredictable situations, uniquely and with creativity. The use of field instruction and its various components such as agency placements, report writing, workshops and supervision seems to have emerged as one of the strengths of social work field instruction programmes. As can be seen above students are able to use learning opportunities to reflect upon themselves and some seem able to do this independently (as not all agency field instructors facilitate this during supervision and not all universities provide structured opportunities for this reflection). The last statement depicts the students' ability to observe a social worker's actions in practice (the experience), reflect upon what happened (perhaps with friends or the agency field instructor) compare it to the theory that the university has taught during the B (SW) programme and then critically reflect upon the fact that the theory being taught at university is not always what is happening in practice (formation of abstract concepts) (Perrault and Coleman, 2004; Hickcox, 2002; and Collins and Van Breda, 2010) and it is hoped that the student would now continue with the experiential learning cycle and decide whether or not to adopt this behavior in their own social work practice. Reflection becomes a very important part of field instruction as it allows the student to gain perspective on matters that were not planned for, such as professionals that are not ethical or competent (Garthwaite, 2008:27). Goldstein (2001:25) has emphasised the role of reflection in creating quality professionals. In helping professions, reflective or experiential learning is defined as a process where learners experiment or in some way actively demonstrate what they have learned, active experimentation will produce further but different outputs to gain new insight and critical

thinking, so that the cycle of learning evolves again (Moon, 2004 in Taylor and Cheung, 2010). For sufficient learning and the continuous development of social work students, it is imperative for both agency field instructors and university supervisors to be well trained in the process of experiential learning and reflection.

C: Learning

*It is difficult to apply theory sometimes. The person centred approach, it is practical, you are challenged here at our university to go and just see what the outcome is.” **social work student***

*“They took us to court and we had to meet some of the lawyers and that was good...we had to observe and at the same time they were teaching you and you were working on the files...” **social work student***

*“We spent a lot of time working with other students and the agencies, seeing how agencies conduct meetings and do admin...” **social work student***

*“The social worker I was under, we used to go through it together, she used to educate me so much. I asked her so many questions and she would reply. Sometimes she would say come to my session and see what I do...” **social work student***

*“You assist them by becoming a role model to the student. They bring stuff (questions) and you assist them so they learn from you. The way you act, the role plays, they learn from that as well. They come and see how you conduct things.” **agency field instructor***

All participants revealed that the field instruction programme itself facilitated the experiential learning cycle and that learning was a very important and large part of this process. The participants then went on to explain various components of the field instruction programme that facilitated their learning. The students stated that much of their learning occurred through observing what was happening at agencies and how their agency field instructors were doing their work. The actual concrete experience as identified by Kolb (1984) in this instance was the observation by the student of a qualified social worker actually doing their work, facilitating a learning experience for the student. This would then often be followed by a discussion either

with the agency field instructor or another student, taking the student further into the experiential learning cycle. Various other activities such as role plays, report writing, supervision, presentations, case files and documents, were used by fieldwork coordinators, university supervisors and agency field instructors to facilitate student learning.

“Completely, experiential learning is definitely our way to start the practical work, they start when they come and do their 3rd year workshop and role plays, it’s all about learning through experiences because we try to facilitate those learning experiences and the students found those workshops really helpful” **university fieldwork coordinator**

“Well report writing, this helps them to think about what they have done, they also have to keep a diary and then they have supervision where the work they are doing is discussed and gives them a chance and an opportunity to reflect” **university fieldwork coordinator**

“I thought that was the purpose of having group supervision with the students (to facilitate learning). For them to tell me what happened, and how did you feel? And what did you do?” **agency field instructor**

It can thus be seen that many fieldwork coordinators and agency field instructors facilitate the learning process for their students through the use of different activities. The use of varied and goal orientated activities to facilitate learning is supported by Sacco (2004:174) as being necessary to facilitate learning and critical reflection. The use of these activities is seen as strengths of any university field work programme and it was confirmed as a strength of field instruction programmes being implemented in the Eastern Cape. One group of students, however, did not feel confident that they were really learning anything during their field instruction due to various challenges that they faced during the placement. These challenges seemed to relate to characteristics of the specific agency where they were placed and the supervision style of the agency field instructor. These have been discussed under section 3.2 and 3.3 but will be elaborated on further as these had an impact on the student’s learning and the lack of structured learning opportunities to facilitate the students learning and development. It is

interesting to note that these students receive no supervision from the university during their field instruction (will be discussed further under 3.5.) and field instructors are expected to provide the students with on-site supervision. Another group of students who similarly felt that they would welcome the chance to process their experiences during field instruction, also indicated having had no supervision during field instruction from their university. Some agency field instructors do not supervise using a foundation of the process of experiential learning, and do not encourage communication and exploration within the supervisory relationship (see section 3.3). Therefore students placed with these field instructors may not be able to complete the experiential learning cycle as the emphasis is on ‘doing’, rather than learning or processing the learner experience. This may limit the social work students’ personal and professional development. This situation is further perpetuated by not having a university supervisor, who could in such cases, take more responsibility for the students’ learning. One group indicated that the amount of report writing required for academic purposes during field instruction limited the amount of time they had to reflect on their own learning. They acknowledged that report writing was assisting them to process what they had done but that the amount of reports and stress involved distracted them from further and deeper reflection. This indicates that some report writing benefits experiential learning, but too much report writing can limit experiential learning. Journal writing was indicated by one fieldwork coordinator as being a less formal and less stressful manner of facilitating experiential learning. Garthwait encourages the use of a journal by social work students so that they can monitor their professional growth over time and allow an opportunity for reflection (2008:28).

D: *Need for more opportunities to reflect upon experiences*

“No uuhh uuuh no one takes us through this.” social work student

*“Sometimes you realize later that you should have done it that way...we always talk about our placement and our experiences (among one another)...supervision would be good to talk about all of this...I thought they would have now but because of university finances...” **social work student***

*“For me I do the reflection with other students or colleagues not so much in supervision.” **social work student***

*“Sometimes you realize later that you should have done it that way, you do think...” **social work student***

*“Also to hear from the other people, what were their experiences? And to share it with the third years too, to prepare them...” **social work student reflects on lack of opportunity to reflect upon experiences as university offers no supervision during the actual placement***

Not all students felt that they were given enough of an opportunity for reflection and revealed desiring more opportunities for reflection but upon further analysis it seems that the student was able to independently take themselves through the experiential learning cycle, which in a way might have met one of the rationale for including critical reflection in curriculum, “social work educators need to be committed to help students learn to think for themselves” (Sacco, 2004:172). Sacco (2004:173) does however emphasize that it is the social work educator’s responsibility through partnerships with agency field instructors to provide supervision for social work students, which will encourage ‘reflecting on action’, the reflection that takes place after action. These students stated the need to talk about their experiences, make sense of what they had experienced during field instruction and indicated that they thought often about their experiences, wishing they had the chance to talk more formally with university supervisors or their agency field instructors. Two groups actually indicated, after the interview, that the focus group had been really beneficial for them, even therapeutic in a sense, as they were given the opportunity to share their experiences with a professional and each other, in a more formal setting. For universities where there is not a shared responsibility between the university

and agency field instructor in terms of supervising the social work student, valuable opportunities for reflection may be lost, this then being identified as a weakness in the particular universities field instruction programme. Reference is made by the student to the fact that university finances seem to be a factor influencing the provision of university supervision, lack of financial resources to support field instruction programmes, then also being identified as a possible constraint experienced by universities in the Eastern Cape.

4.3.6: *BSW Exit Level Outcomes*

“We would benefit from some broad guidelines relating to field instruction, it would be good to get the agencies on board in terms of these guidelines because many times they are not wanting to take on students, getting them on board and planning with them for these guidelines will be important... our students are required to be registered with the council but other than that there are no real national standards or guidelines for field instruction, it would be good to develop a more formal guideline or policy for field instruction in South Africa, I am not sure who would be responsible for this, perhaps the council or the universities?” **university fieldwork coordinator**

“ELO’s what we have to know when we get out and are finished.” **social work student**

“Relevant, yes but we don’t really know them.” **social work student**

“I know but not really” **social work student in response to relevance of ELO’s to field instruction**

“Basically each has an outcome, groupwork has an outcome, casework has an outcome.” **social work student**

Most students and field instructors were aware of the ELOs and were accepting of their relevance to field instruction. Field instructors identified being informed of them during orientation with the university and in the fieldwork manuals. Sewpaul and Lombard (2004:553) state that, although the registration of social work qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is a statutory requirement of South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), and was imposed, it nevertheless holds some promise and it signifies an achievement by the

social work profession. The authors comment that these are the first nationally formulated and accepted standards, since the inception of social work education and training in South Africa since the 1920s. All the university fieldwork coordinators also agreed on the relevance and importance of the ELOs with regards the development of a social worker, able to work generically within a South African context. One university fieldwork coordinator felt that the ELOs were relevant but broad. It was felt that field instruction programmes could be strengthened from the development of guidelines that were specific to field instruction but at the same time achieving and relating to the ELOs. This would ensure quality of field instruction programmes and student competence, rather than implying that through meeting the ELOs using teaching, research and field instruction, the student would be deemed competent. A suggestion was made that the relevant parties sit together to develop national guidelines for field instruction and that agencies should be included in the development of such standards. Lombard, Harrison and Pruis (2010:1) state that there is a need to develop minimum practice training standards in South Africa. An initial process of gathering data from all universities was done and it was found that there are similarities, but also significant differences in how practice training is approached by the respective universities. The document goes on to state that minimum standards should be captured in the university field instruction manual.

4.4: Conclusion

This chapter has presented the demographic data of all the participants who took part in the research study. Secondly, it has presented the findings according to the themes that emerged from the qualitative data, using IPA. These themes have been organised under the following

headings: models of field instruction, agencies used for field instruction, agency field instructors, social work students, experiential learning and BSW exit level outcomes. It should again be stated that due to the limited number of actual participants, in comparison to the number of intended participants, being relatively small, the findings while being helpful in evaluating field instruction programmes, cannot be generalised. The next chapter will conclude the study by presenting an evaluative summary of the findings, drawing conclusions and making recommendations relating to the models of field instruction being used by universities in the Eastern Cape.

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1: Introduction

Chapter four began by presenting the demographics of the social work students, agency field instructors and the university fieldwork coordinators, who participated in the study. It then presented and discussed the findings in relation to the themes that emerged during the data analysis stage. The master themes were identified as: university field instruction programmes; agencies used for field instruction, agency field instructors, social work students, experiential learning and ELO's. Various subordinate themes that emerged within the master themes were also presented and discussed. Chapter five will begin by summarising the findings with a discussion relating to the study's objectives and research questions. This will be done by using the findings to: identify the strengths and weaknesses of social work field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape, identify possible constraints on implementation of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape and determine the role that experiential learning plays during field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape. This will be done using an evaluative framework, which states the importance of using a framework to guide the evaluation of the programme. Such a framework will include looking at the programmes' goals and objectives, measures of success, programme components and infrastructure, human resource base, stakeholders and the context of the programme. This will then be followed by recommendations that may assist in improving field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape. Lastly, Chapter five concludes the study by revisiting the study's overall aim, objectives and

research questions, discusses whether these have been achieved and makes recommendations for future research.

5.2: Discussion

It is important to note that due to the very low number of participants in the study, the discussion that follows cannot be generalised and this should thus be kept in mind throughout this section. It may also be that the participants who did decide to participate in the study, may have been positively biased towards the researcher, the university or field instruction. This possible positive bias, may have been their motivation to participate in the research, while other participants declined the invitation to participate, either being uninterested in the research or having a negative bias towards the researcher, the university or field instruction. The resulting discussion should thus also be read with this in mind.

5.2.1: *Strengths of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape*

The following strengths of social work field instruction programmes offered by universities in the Eastern Cape will now be discussed:

- **Starting field instruction at a second year level**
- **Use of block model at level four**
- **Use of rotational model at third level**
- **Use of university supervisors during field instruction**
- **Support of agencies for field instruction**
- **Support of agency field instructors for field instruction**
- **Learning during field instruction**
- **Use of nontraditional agencies for field instruction**

A: Starting field instruction at a second year level

Three of the universities in the Eastern Cape begin the field instruction programme at the second level of the BSW programme which assists the social work students in growing in knowledge, values and skills over the course of the programme. This results in some level of confidence by the time they begin their level four field instruction programmes. Starting field instruction at the second level of the BSW training, is a strength of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape. This strength is further highlighted by the high student numbers over the four year BSW programme, most of whom are receiving some sort of field instruction experience which must take a great deal of organizing and coordinating from the university fieldwork coordinators, in light of the constraints facing universities in the Eastern Cape.

B: Use of block model at level four

Field instructors and students stated that they did not support the model where academic requirements were intensive during the time of field instruction, as this distracted from the student being able to focus on the work required by the agency. It resulted in the student being stressed, anxious and distracted. It can thus be concluded that, according to this study, the universities who are using the block placement model for field instruction at a fourth year level are using the model that is best suited for the students and agencies in the Eastern Cape. This can be seen as a strength of the field instruction programmes of these two particular universities.

C: Use of rotational model at third level

The parties involved in this project expressed varied opinions with regards to the third year field instruction programmes. Students revealed learning much and valuing the experience. Some agencies were supportive of the concurrent placement; others were strongly opposed to it due to practical issues of only having students in the office once a week. Again university requirements

were seen to be distracting to the student's work experience. The question then seems to be whether the third year field instruction placement can, in fact, be beneficial to social work students and agencies in the context of field instruction in the Eastern Cape. One university has a strong partnership with a NGO and a government agency, where all their students are accommodated for a field instruction experience on a rotation basis, once a week. The partnership between this university and the agencies, and the use of the rotational model at the third year level, serves as a great strength of their field instruction programme.

D: *Use of university supervisors during field instruction*

Two of the universities who participated in this study indicated assigning university supervisors to all of their students who take part in field instruction - this was identified as a strength by both the social work students, agency field instructors and university fieldwork coordinators and it is discussed at length in literature.

E: *Support of agencies for field instruction*

Some agencies used for field instruction placements provide students with orientation and varied learning opportunities and this assists in the student having a positive learning experience during the field instruction placement. Having such agencies to support field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape is a strength of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape.

F: *Support of agency field instructors for field instruction*

Many agency field instructors are helpful during field instruction, providing the social work student with support, opportunities for discussion, feedback and a variety of learning experiences. Having the support of agency field instructors in the Eastern Cape, where at a fourth

year level, there is an average of 569 students requiring supervision by a registered social worker, is in itself, a strength of university field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape.

G: *Learning during field instruction*

Most of the social work students who participated in this study were able to reflect upon the usefulness of the learning that occurs during field instruction programmes. This learning takes place in many forms such as: observations, reviewing case files and documents, report writing, presentations, doing work with clients and during supervision. The learning that occurs through field instruction programmes is a very important strength of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape.

H: *Use of nontraditional agencies for field instruction*

The last strength was tentatively mentioned by university fieldwork coordinators and social work students during the discussion of the use on nontraditional agencies for field instruction placements of social work students. However it was also seen as a challenge by other participants. Two universities in the Eastern Cape are using nontraditional agencies for the placement of social work students. These students are supported by the university through the appointment of off-site social work field instructors. The researcher would like to suggest that although such placements have challenges, the universities making use of such nontraditional agencies are responding creatively both to the need for more agencies to assist in the training of social work students due to high student numbers and to the limited number of traditional social work agencies in the Eastern Cape. This creative response by these universities is seen as a strength of the university's field instruction programme. These universities are also responding to the need for social work services, through the placement of social work students at agencies where there is no on-site social worker but where the need for social work services exists, in a

province that is challenged by high poverty rates and many related social problems. It is thus the opinion of the researcher that using nontraditional agencies for the placement of social work students, with the support of an off-site social work field instructor is a creative response to the constraints facing universities in the Eastern Cape and may be viewed as a strength of the field instruction programmes being implemented by these two universities.

5.2.2: *Weaknesses of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape*

The following weaknesses of social work field instruction programmes offered by universities in the Eastern Cape will now be discussed:

- **Starting field instruction at level four**
- **Limited involvement by university with agency and student during placement**
- **Assessment process not including all parties involved in field instruction**
- **No screening for social work students studying social work**
- **No selection or screening of agencies and agency field instructors being used for field instruction**

A: *Starting field instruction at level four*

One university places their social work students at an agency only at the fourth year level. This was seen by the students as being too late in the programme and they seemed to feel that they would benefit from starting with their field instruction placement at an earlier level. While this may not necessarily be seen as a weakness of the particular university's field instruction programme, the students felt that having had previous experiences, it would have reduced some of the anxiety and stress that they experienced due to not having had previous field instruction experiences

B: *Limited involvement by university with agency and student during placement*

A second possible weakness of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape appears to be that not all programmes initiate regular contact between the agency field instructor and the

university during the placement. This may cause university and agency expectations to be different or too many for social work students to cope with. Some students are placed for field instruction with limited or no involvement by the university. This may cause more stress for social work students, limiting opportunities for support, reflection, feedback on work done and academic guidance, all of which are perceived as being within the role of the university supervisor. Universities who do not assign university supervisors for their social work students are missing a very important part of the agency-university-student partnership that is essential for a quality field instruction programme.

C: *Assessment process not including all parties involved in field instruction*

Some students expressed concern that the university was not involved in the mark that was awarded by the agency field instructor. This resulted in the student at times feeling disempowered during the placement, as they needed a mark from the agency field instructor in order to pass field instruction. Other students indicated that they would like the university to be more involved by visiting the agency and meeting their agency field instructor, as this may have an impact upon their final mark. Such methods of assessment, where one party is awarded complete power in allocating a mark for the student may be seen as a weakness of that particular university's field instruction programme. Students also mentioned not receiving regular or any feedback with regards work being done during their placements. Garthwait (2008: 216) discusses the assessment process with regards field instruction and states that the student should receive informal feedback and suggestions throughout the placement and that the formal assessment may include feedback from a variety of agency staff, the university supervisor and the student may also be asked to evaluate their own performance." An unfair or inaccurate assessment exists when the student did not receive ongoing feedback, guidance, and suggestions and when

interpersonal factors such as personality conflicts between student and field instructor influence student performance ...” (Garthwait, 2008:217). Students who participated in this study felt that where feedback from agencies and universities was received late or was not received at all, and where the agency field instructor or university supervisor assigned the mark without consulting other parties involved in the field instruction placement - such an assessment was not benefitting the student. It may thus be concluded that where assessments are based on feedback from one party only - this is a weakness of that particular university’s field instruction model.

D: *No screening for social work students studying social work*

None of the universities in the Eastern Cape are involved with the selection and screening of social work students entering the social work programme. Agency field instructors, social work students and fieldwork coordinators mentioned some concerns with regards some of the students that are accepted into the social work programme. Agency field instructors felt that a weakness of social work field instruction programmes was the lack of screening for social work students entering the programme.

E: *No selection or screening of agencies and agency field instructors being used for field instruction*

Many agency and agency field instructor ‘unhelpful characteristics’ were discussed throughout the interviews. Agencies and agency field instructors should be interested in mentoring and training students and be able to support students in integrating theory with practice. Some students express frustration with agencies and agency field instructors where they are not guided, orientated or mentored through their placements. It can this be concluded that a weakness of the current models of field instruction in the Eastern Cape may be the lack of agency and agency field instructor screening and selection.

5.2.3: *Constraints facing field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape*

The following constraints in relation to field instruction programmes at universities in the Eastern Cape will now be discussed:

- **High student numbers**
- **Geographical location of the university**
- **Limited finances**
- **Lack of resources at agencies used for field instruction**

A: *High student numbers*

There has been much pressure by the government for universities to assist in the training of social workers. This began when the Minister of Social Development declared social work a scarce skills profession (Earle, 2008) and the National and Provincial departments began offering substantial bursaries to students who chose to study social work. Social work departments at universities in the Eastern Cape have seen a substantial increase in social work students over the last few years. It is the suggestion of the researcher that the increase in student numbers may not always have resulted in increased finances and staff to ensure the quality of field instruction programmes. Some university fieldwork coordinators seem to have responded creatively to these challenges by restructuring the models of field instruction with the support of additional staff and finances. High student numbers have a direct impact upon field instruction programmes where students are required to be placed with agencies for their field instruction placements from a second year level. It is the researcher's opinion that the increase in student numbers may have had an impact upon the quality and quantity of university supervision being offered by universities in the Eastern Cape. University staff may no longer be able to cope with the high number of students. It may also be that the increase in student numbers has had an impact upon the selection and screening of social work agencies and agency field instructors being used for field instruction placements, which then in turn affects the quality of the placement and may

explain the many unhelpful characteristics of agency and agency field instructors' being experienced by students during their placements. It may thus be suggested that the high student numbers in the BSW programme, may be a constraint for field instruction programmes.

B: *Geographical location of the universities*

Two of the universities are situated in rural communities of the Eastern Cape. This may be seen as a constraint to the placement of social work students at agencies close to the university. These two universities allow their student to complete their field instruction anywhere within South Africa and at times internationally. This may have an effect on the quality of the field instruction placements as universities are not able to select, screen or visit the student during the placement so as to provide university support. This may explain why some universities do not have a strong partnership with agencies and agency field instructors that are being used for field instruction programmes. The rural context of the universities also limits the number of agencies and agency field instructors that are readily available and in close proximity to the university to assist in the supervision of social work students.

C: *Limited finances*

Social work students and fieldwork coordinators hinted that there may not be enough financial support within the university to allow for the university supervision of students and site visits to the agencies where they are placed. Limited finances can be seen as a constraint facing some field instruction programmes at universities in the Eastern Cape. This is understandable in light of the very serious financial pressures facing one of the universities in the Eastern Cape and the fact that two of the universities in the Eastern Cape are historically disadvantaged.

D: *Lack of resources at agencies used for field instruction*

The social work students discussed many examples of the impact that the lack of resources within agencies used for field instruction, presented to the rendering of services during field instruction placements. The lack of resources within agencies in the Eastern Cape is another constraint facing field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape. Students are placed at agencies and expected to render services according to theory taught during the BSW programme. The lack of resources at agencies may limit the work that is required from the student during the placement. The students themselves felt that the agency lack of resources was a constraint facing their placements and the services that that they were expected to render for agency and academic requirements.

5.2.4: *Role of experiential learning in field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape*

It is recommended that all universities base their field instruction models on a foundation of experiential learning. Lay and McGuire suggest that “social work educators are challenged to devise strategies which enable students to develop skills in reflection and critical thinking to practice in a global world” (2010:540). The development of critical reflection and reflexivity is built on the work of Dewey (1910) who defined reflection and Kolb (1983) who developed and conceptualised learning as a continuous loop, an on-going process grounded in personal experience. The social work profession needs social workers who are able to think critically, are open to new experiences and paradigms and are committed to lifelong learning (ASSWA, 2004 in Lay and McGuire, 2010:542). Educators as change agents present learning opportunities and experiences to induce change in the learner (Knowles et al, 2005), for example through field instruction, these experiences must be examined to make learning explicit (Lay and McGuire, 2010:542). In teaching social work practice skills, Kolb’s work (1984) on experiential learning is

influential in understanding that the opportunity to engage in an experience is not sufficient. There needs to be reflection on the experience to learn, conceptualization and analysis of the experience, so that the learning can be transferred from one situation to another (Skilton, 2011). The placement of social work students at agencies for field instruction is clearly allowing opportunities for the students to integrate theory with practice. The students mentioned that during field instruction they were able to see theory coming to life, to practice what they had learnt at university and they were also able to reflect upon theory being different to practice. This shows that field instruction and its related activities such as observing, role plays, rendering services to clients, report writing etc is giving students the opportunity to integrate theory with practice, resulting in much learning and reflection, continuing into self actualisation. Most social work students interviewed for the study acknowledge learning by doing and thus an awareness of the experiential learning cycle. Some universities facilitate this learning by the appointment of university supervisors that assist the student in reflecting and making sense of their learning. Report writing, use of journals and making use of supervision are the main tools used to facilitate this reflection. Students also stated that these tools assisted them in integrating theory with practice. Some agency field instructors also use experiential learning as a part of agency supervision. Other students struggle to make sense of their learning and although they are practising, are not given sufficient opportunities for reflection. This seems due to agency field instructors not facilitating supervision using the experiential learning cycle and also because these students do not have university supervisors with whom they meet. Another goal of field instruction is “to allow for students to integrate theory with practice; it is the medium through which students integrate knowledge and values with practice in an agency setting” (Schenk, Grossman and Glassman, 1991). Many suggestions are made throughout literature as to how best

this can be facilitated; however it is left up to the university to decide how best they will facilitate the process of experiential learning. As a result of this, the universities in the Eastern Cape are all using different programme components to facilitate experiential learning, some more effective than others. Global standards state simply that “field education should be sufficient in duration and complexity of tasks and learning opportunities to ensure that students are prepared for professional practise” (Sewpaul and Jones, 2005). Again, it is left up to the university to decide how they will organise the various programme components that will facilitate the process of integrating theory with practise. “The goals and objectives of a programme are designed to address the needs of a particular target group, they should be formulated in as concrete and observable manner as possible” (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:343). The intended beneficiaries for social work field instruction are the social work students, for whom their field instruction experiences will be the core of their educational experience and a valued part of their training (Giddings et al, 2003:191). The social work students voiced learning and gaining much experience during field instruction. Most social work students were able to acknowledge the value of field instruction in preparing them for joining the social work profession. It can thus be concluded that the role of experiential learning during field instruction programmes is facilitating the integration of theory into practice, is facilitating the learning process and is allowing opportunities for reflection and self actualisation. The experiential learning cycle is made more effective when supported by related agency and university activities and goals.

5.3: Recommendations

The following recommendations will now be presented, based on the findings in Chapter four and the discussion above in Chapter five. It is important to note that initially it was hoped that the study's findings and resulting recommendations would assist in providing some recommendations for a best practice model in the Eastern Cape, where most universities seem to face similar challenges. However due to the limited sample of participants, these recommendations cannot be generalised and as a result cannot be used to assist in developing a best practice model for universities in the Eastern Cape. The following recommendations will be presented:

- **Development of a strong agency, university and student partnership**
- **Exploring the use of nontraditional models of field instruction**
- **Training of agency field instructors**
- **Selection and screening of social work students**
- **Development of a student- staff ratio**
- **Development of guidelines for field instruction**

5.3.1: *Development of a strong agency, university and student partnership*

A partner is defined as “a person who shares or takes part with another or others” (Oxford English Dictionary, 1995). One recommendation for field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape is that universities work on building and maintaining good partnerships with agencies and agency field instructors that are part of university field instruction programmes. A partnership implies working with others, which in turn may be interpreted as having regular communication with another or others. Such communication may take on various forms but it should be build on “sharing or taking part with another or others” (Oxford English Dictionary, 1995). The

researcher would like to recommend that such a partnership may be strengthened in the following three ways:

A: *Orientation by university for students, agencies and agency field instructors*

This may be in the form of meetings and/or through the use of a detailed field instruction manual including outlining the role of each party involved, due dates, report outlines, and rubrics for assessments. The global standards for the education and training of the social work profession (Sewpaul and Jones, 2005) state that “each university should make available to fieldwork instructors or supervisors a field instruction manual that details its standards, procedures, assessment criteria and expectations”. Having these details in a field instruction manual before field instruction begins would greatly assist agency field instructors and social work students and would perhaps assist in relieving some of the stress and anxiety experienced by the social work students, throughout the field instruction experience. The use of a detailed field instruction manual could also assist agencies and field instructors who are unable to attend an actual orientation meeting due to being far away from the university. The university offering an orientation meeting, supported with the use of a thorough and detailed field instruction manual, is thus recommended to strengthen field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape.

B: *Regular communication between the university and agency and agency field instructor*

Students benefit from the support of both university and agency field instructors throughout the placement. Each party should have a clearly defined role which will assist in supporting the student to achieve their learning goals for field instruction. Literature confirms the involvement of both the university supervisor and the agency field instructor throughout the field instruction programme and defines each role as being very different (Garthwait, 2008, Horejesi and Garthwait 1999, Jenkins and Shaefor, 1981, Royse et al., 2003). This implies the use of

university supervisors for each student, to initiate site visits, telephonic contact, email contact, skype with agencies, agency field instructors and students throughout the placement. The use of university supervisors throughout the field instruction placement, for each social work student is thus recommended.

C: Assessments to include agency field instructor, university supervisor and student

It was determined through the study that social work students are at times assessed by agency field instructors, at other times by the university supervisor or the university fieldwork coordinator. It was stressed that feedback by the agency field instructor should be given with regard to the social work students' performance, but it was suggested that the final mark be determined by the university supervisor in consultation with the university fieldwork coordinator. It was also felt by participants in the research that the main focus for assessment should be on the students' performance within the agency with some academic requirements. These academic requirements should be limited and should not distract the social work student from the primary focus of rendering services at the agency. This partnership between the university and agency in determining the social work student's final mark should encourage the empowerment of the social work student. For agencies with no on-site social work supervisor, the feedback regarding the students' performance should be given by the off-site social work supervisor.

D: Agency input into theory being taught

Agency field instructors should also be allowed input in to the theory being taught during the BSW training - this could perhaps be done during an orientation meeting or individually with agency field instructors in accordance to their field of specialty and will assist universities in building a good partnership, through regular communication. Sewpaul and Jones (2005:220)

support this, saying that universities should ensure that agencies and agency field instructors are included in “the planning of theoretical components of the degree and the related learning activities” This may also assist universities in better preparing social work students for the more ‘practical’ aspects of practice, which was mentioned as an area where theory and practice was not always aligned.

5.3.2: *Exploring use of non traditional models of field instruction*

The second recommendation is that universities in the Eastern Cape explore the use of alternatives to the more traditional block and concurrent models of field instruction. In Chapter two, some variations on the traditional model for field instruction were presented and discussed. Spitzer et al, (2001) discussed the use of the rotational model, where students are rotated internally (within different sections of the agency) and externally (amongst different agencies), either concurrently or for block periods. The use of the rotational model by one university at the third year level, in this study, was a creative response by the university, to facilitate each student being given an opportunity to experience different agencies and different intervention methods. The use of non traditional agencies within this model may also ensure that each student is given the opportunity to experience field instruction in a traditional social work agency. It is thus recommended that other universities explore the use of the rotational model within their field instruction programmes.

The community center model was also discussed by Rogers (1995) and Lurie and Pinsky (1973). Rogers (1995) describes such centers as having developed “in partnership with communities and social work agencies”, these centers have a strong developmental focus, and work at building relationships with communities to identify their needs and then rendering services in conjunction with social work agencies. The advantage of this model is that the center

is developmental in nature, thus upholding the values of the social work profession while at the same time opening up new placements for social work students' field instruction placements. It is thus recommended that universities explore the use of such centers within their agency field instruction programmes.

5.3.3: *Training of agency field instructors*

It was determined from the interviews with the university fieldwork coordinators that agency field instructors are not screened, selected or trained with regards to the role that they will be playing in supervising social work students. It is thus recommended that a training programme for agency field instructors be introduced by universities in the Eastern Cape. Garner lists all the studies over the years that have emphasised the relationship between the field instructor and student in field instruction as the most important relationship in the teaching/learning process (2006:238). It would thus make sense, to invest through training, in the professional growth and development of the field instructors responsible for agency supervision of the social work students. Offering formal, structured training for agency field instructors could assist in empowering field instructors which is imperative for a successful field instruction programme. This will also assist fieldwork coordinators in getting to know agency field instructors and could serve as a screening procedure for the university. It would also assist in building the university, field instructor partnership. Should agency field instructors be selected, screened and trained there would need to be less involvement from a university supervisor. The university supervisor would only need to play a supportive role to the social work student and agency field instructor, taking responsibility for university assessment requirements. University supervisors could then have more resources such as time to mentor social work students that are

placed at non-traditional social work agencies where no on-site social worker field instructor is present.

For field instructors that are placed outside of the Eastern Cape, an alternative could be the use of technology for the submission of learning assignments. The training programme could be registered with the SACSSP so that participants receive continuous professional development (CPD) points upon completion.

5.3.4: Selection and screening of social work students

It is recommended that department staff members become actively involved in developing selection and screening procedures for students entering the BSW degree. Selection interviews and written narratives could be used in addition to the student needing to meet the requirements needed to apply for entry at a university. Past studies have indicated that “self-empowered, competent students achieve satisfaction and happiness in pursuit of goals in any education programme” (Garner, 2006:240). This is especially important in light of the current situation where some students might be motivated to join the profession studying because they are able to receive a bursary. It could be a costly and perhaps time intensive process but would assist in choosing the students with a good belief in themselves and a motivation to work within the social work profession - facilitating change and empowering others. This is important, as social work is a challenging profession, with very little financial remuneration at the end of the day.

5.3.5: Development of a student- staff ratio

It is also recommended that student numbers be guided by the number of staff at the university and the availability of field instruction agencies in the surrounding areas. Having a student-staff ratio norm is of critical importance to determine the number of students a school of

social work can take in comparison to existing resources, it is a norm that directly affects quality assurance (Lombard, Harrison, Pruis, 2010:1).

5.3.6: *Development of guidelines for field instruction*

ASASWEI has expressed its concern with developing standards for social work field instruction and is in the process of gathering data from all universities to try to determine what each university is doing for their field instruction programmes (Lombard, Harrison and Pruis, 2010). The SACSSP also has an interest in the success of field instruction as it is a statutory body, which regulates social work education, training and practice (Sewpaul and Lombard, 2004:542). Their interest was recently displayed by the audits that they initiated and conducted at the universities in the Eastern Cape in 2012. Again the need for ASASWEI and the SACSSP to develop guidelines with regards to field instruction was highlighted. There seems to be a need for the development of guidelines that are specific to field instruction. ASASWEI is in the process of gathering data relating to field instruction from the different universities, who offer the BSW degree in South Africa, in order to determine minimum standards for practical training of social work students (Lombard and Harrison, 2010:1). This study supports the development of such guidelines as it will give universities a minimum standard from which to work from. These guidelines could assist universities in advocating for more staff and finances with which to support field instruction modules. These minimum standards should in no way restrict universities' or academic freedom in determining the best model of field instruction for their university and students. Rather, it should inform best practice and be broad enough to allow universities to continue functioning independently while at the same time ensuring a quality field instruction programme.

5.4: Conclusion

This study has aimed to evaluate the implementation of social work field instruction programmes, so as to make suggestions for improvement and recommend a best practice model for field instruction in the Eastern Cape. It has gathered data from social work students, agency field instructors and university fieldwork coordinators through the use of semi-structured interview schedules. The data was then analysed and presented in chapter four according to the themes that emerged during the analysis. Chapter five has discussed the findings and made tentative recommendations that may be used to strengthen field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape.

The study has identified and discussed the strengths and weaknesses of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape. It has identified and discussed the various constraints facing the implementation of field instruction programmes in the Eastern Cape. The study has also investigated the role that experiential learning has played during field instruction and has found that the learning that occurs because of this approach, to be of great value to the training of the social work students from these universities.

It was initially hoped that the data could be evaluated against the theoretical guidelines of experiential learning as well as the compliance prescribed by the ELOs. It was however during the course of the study realised that this would not be possible due to the enormity of the task of examining each of the 27 ELO's and whether each social work student from each of the four universities was in fact complying to each ELO. The study was thus narrowed to focus on an

evaluation of the field instruction components and theoretical guidelines of experiential learning through the data gathered from the three parties, although some reference is made throughout the study to the ELO's.

It may thus be concluded that the study has been able to answer the research questions and meet the research objectives. Despite this it must be stated that it did appear as if some of the social work students and all of the agency field instructors who attended the focus groups had a very positive regard towards social work field instruction. The implication being that the social work students and agency field instructors who were in fact more critical and disillusioned with social work field instruction did not attend the focus groups. This is a major limitation of the study and again it must be emphasised that because of this, the findings cannot be generalised.

It was initially hoped that the findings would assist in meeting the overall aim of the study, to evaluate the implementation of social work field instruction programmes, so as to make suggestions for improvement and recommend a best practice model for field instruction in the Eastern Cape. Unfortunately due to the sample of participants being very small and some having had a vested interest in field instruction, this part of the research aim has become a limitation of the study itself and was not met by the end of the study.

5.5: Future research

The following suggestions are made with regards to future research:

- Exploring training programmes for agency field instructors
- Development of a training programme for agency field instructors
- Exploring the use of a community centre model for the training of social work students

Field instruction offered by universities in the Eastern Cape

- Evaluating the effectiveness of non traditional agencies, without off-site agency field instructors, in the training of social work students

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APPENDIX A: LETTER TO UNIVERSITY FIELDWORK COORDINATOR

Department of Social Work

University of Fort Hare

50 Church Street

East London

3 February 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a Social Work Master's student at the University of Fort Hare. My area of study is the training of social work students. I am especially interested in exploring the various models of field instruction being used by Universities in the Eastern Cape. This is a subject that has been discussed at length in recent documentation and seminars and is of real interest to social work education and training at the present time.

The findings of this study would be valuable to the Universities of the Eastern Cape as it would reflect upon the various models being used in the Eastern Cape and in contributing towards the development of standards for social work field instruction in the future. It would also assist in identifying a better suited model of field instruction for use by drawing on the strengths of the models currently being implemented.

I would hereby like to request your permission to interview the faculty member involved in coordinating field instruction within your university's social work department. I will observe all the ethical protocols relevant to this type of research, which will be supervised by the University of Fort Hare.

My contact details are as follows:

Tel : 043 704 7047/ 082 494 8780 or Email: kschmidt@ufh.ac.za

Thanking you

Yours faithfully

K. Schmidt

APPENDIX B: LETTER TO AGENCY FIELD INSTRUCTORS

Department of Social Work

University of Fort Hare

50 Church Street

East London

1 November 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a Social Work Master's student at the University of Fort Hare. My area of study is the training of social work students. I am especially interested in exploring the various models of field instruction being used by Universities in the Eastern Cape. This is a subject that has been discussed at length in recent documentation and seminars and is of real interest to social work education and training at the present time.

The findings of this study would be valuable to the Universities of the Eastern Cape as it would reflect upon the various field instruction models being used. It will also be contributing towards the development of standards for social work field instruction in the future.

I would hereby like to request your permission to interview staff members involved in supervising social work students within your agency. I will observe all the ethical protocols relevant to this type of research, which will be supervised by the University of Fort Hare. The interviews will be in the form of a focus group to be held on Thursday 15 November, from 9:00 - 10:30, venue F115 in the social work department at the University of Fort Hare, East London Campus. I look forward to seeing you and also to hearing the valuable contributions you as agency social workers can provide in terms of current field instruction practices.

My contact details are as follows:

Tel : 043 704 7104/ 082 494 8780 or Email: kschmidt@ufh.ac.za

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely

K. Schmidt

**APPENDIX C: LETTER TO UNIVERSITY FIELDWORK COORDINATORS FOR
SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS**

Department of Social Work

University of Fort Hare

50 Church Street

East London

3 February 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a Social Work Master's student at the University of Fort Hare. My area of study is the training of social work students. I am especially interested in exploring the various models of field instruction being used by Universities in the Eastern Cape. This is a subject that has been discussed at length in recent documentation and seminars and is of real interest to social work education and training at the present time.

The findings of this study would be valuable to the Universities of the Eastern Cape as it would reflect upon the various models being used in the Eastern Cape and in contributing towards the development of standards for social work field instruction in the future. It would also assist in identifying a better suited model of field instruction for use by drawing on the strengths of the models currently being implemented.

I would hereby like to request your permission to interview a group of social work 4 students within your university's social work department. I will observe all the ethical protocols relevant to this type of research, which will be supervised by the University of Fort Hare.

My contact details are as follows:

Tel : 043 704 7047/ 082 494 8780 or Email: kschmidt@ufh.ac.za

Thanking you

Yours faithfully

K. Schmidt

APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FIELDWORK COORDINATOR

SECTION 1 : PLEASE COMPLETE BELOW

Qualification		Length of present employment	
University of employment		Previous work experience	

SECTION 2 : INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Describe the model of field instruction currently being used within the university where you are employed .
 - No of credits, hours in field, type of placement, preparation, supervision, manuals, portfolios of evidence, ELOs
2. Describe the agencies where the students are placed for field instruction
 - Selection process, site visits
3. Describe the field instructors being used to supervise students within agencies in the field.
 - Recruitment, selection and screening process, contact throughout placement, remuneration
4. Describe the students involved in the field instruction program at your university.
 - Number at each level, selection process, assessment for readiness to enter program, evaluations
5. Describe your understanding of experiential learning and whether it relates to your university's model of field instruction.
 - Is it used during field instruction, who takes the student through this process, are students able to grasp this deeper level of learning?
6. Describe your understanding of the ELOs with regards field instruction.
 - Relevance to SA and field instruction, how are they measured
7. Describe any challenges not already mentioned that you experience in the training of social work students through field instruction.
 - Costs, availability of placement agencies, etc.
8. Are there any recommendations you feel could be made to improve field instruction models within the Eastern Cape ?

APPENDIX E: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR AGENCY BASED FIELD INSTRUCTORS

SECTION 1 : DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Qualification:		Agency of employment:	
Length of employment in this agency		How long have you been in the role of an agency field instructor:	
Other experience in social work field:		Other experience in the role of an agency field instructor:	

SECTION TWO : INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Describe your understanding of social work field instruction.
 - What does it mean to you?
2. Describe the agency where you are currently working as a field instructor.
 - NGO, no of social workers, involvement in methods of social work, policy relating to costs involved with students
3. Describe how you started becoming involved in field instruction?
 - Recruitment, selection, screening of self as instructor and agency, relationship with university, contact with university, remuneration, training,
4. Describe the general character of the students and the work you do with the students during their placement at your agency.
 - Are students ethical and professional, are they ready for field instruction when they arrive at agency, what type of supervision model do you use with them, no received by agency,
5. Describe your understanding of experiential learning.
 - What does it mean to you, your agency, your work with clients, supervision with the student, in your opinion are students able to grasp this deeper level of learning?
- 6 Describe your understanding of the ELOs with regards field instruction.
 - Does your agency know what ELOs are, did you receive information about them, training, relevance of ELOs for training of social work students
7. Describe any challenges not already mentioned that you experience in the training of social work students through field instruction.
8. Are there any recommendations you feel could be made to improve field instruction models or the training of social work students within the Eastern Cape?

APPENDIX F: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

SECTION 1 : PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

• Level of study: •	• Year of study: •
• Current placement for field instruction: •	• Previous field instruction placements: •

SECTION 2 : INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Describe the model of field instruction currently being used by the university where you are a student.
 - Credits, hours in the field, type of placement, preparation, supervision, manuals, portfolios of evidence, ELOs, what is it supposed to entail?
2. Describe the agency where you are currently working as a student social worker.
 - how were you placed, do you find own placement, is it chosen for you, by whom?, pros and cons of agency in training social work student
3. Describe your agency field instructor and the relationship that you have with them.
 - Supportive, open door policy, problem solving process, supervision
4. Describe the general character of the students you are studying with
 - Do they uphold social work ethics and professionalism, do you feel ready to work with clients, how do you cope with the challenges of field instruction?
5. Describe your understanding and experience of experiential learning.
 - Can you explain this concept, how do you feel about learning in this way, is it relevant to the training you have received over the last few years, does it relate to field instruction?
6. Describe your understanding of the exit level outcomes in relation to field instruction.
 - What is your understanding of ELOs, are they relevant to your studies, do you think about them and meeting them, what do you feel you have learnt through field instruction?
7. Describe any challenges not already mentioned that you have experienced through your training as a social work student that relate to field instruction.
8. Are there any recommendations you feel could be made to improve field instruction models and the training of social work students within the Eastern Cape?

**APPENDIX G: STEP ONE: INITIAL TRANSCRIPT FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS,
UNIVERSITY D**

R - Researcher

P - Participant (3 social work students)

University D

R - I am going to record, to start with each of you can tell me about the social work field instruction that you have done from first year till fourth year?

P - Well we never did anything in 1st year, for second year we did group work with grade 8's at schools.

R - And then how many weeks of group work did you do?

P - About six, we would go every Wednesday, you have the whole day with no lectures

P - We were placed for the day at different schools, we did our own programmes and worked in pairs, we did a needs assessment, drafted a program in groups, facilitated in pairs.

R - How did you do the needs assessment?

P - We did a survey, in classes of about 30

R - Did you choose the schools where you were assigned

P - No, one of the challenges we had was when we arrived the school didn't really know why we were there.

P - For me that didn't happen, my school knew I was coming.

R - Anything else for the second year level?

P - We did community work too, in the second semester. One of the pracs we had we only did the theory after we did it. It was quite a challenge, that was a problem for us, a big problem. We only found the theory when we were evaluating the project and then we found out oh there is a process, doing the evaluation we realized this is not community work that we are doing...it was group work.

P - We also presented for this.

R - You presented?

P - Yes when we present we do a power point presentation, you dread this. It is exciting but incredibly stressful for us, but we didn't present in third year, maybe because there were so many of us, the numbers were overwhelming

P - They were preparing us for 4th year, when we had like a million presentations.

R - Take me back to the comm. Work

P - We just had to do a project, we had never done this before, we spent a lot of time working with the students and the agencies, seeing how agencies conduct meetings and do admin, this was my first experience.

R - And the working hours?

P - We spent the whole day at the agency, whatever the working hours were..you had a successful project.

P - Yes we did a garden, we worked with dept agriculture and it was pretty successful.

P - For me like I noticed that the organizational profiled is important, it is nice because you get to know the people in the organization.

P - Ya we wrote one for the community work, you have to show and indicate your position where you fit in,you didn't really know the theory.

P - We struggled with application, with one if the modules we had to evaluate a project and that was useful because we could see where we had gone wrong, oh we could have done this or that, that was good because we could fill in the gaps.

R - It was a useful exercise so you could reflect?

P - Yes it was good

P - Oh was also nice to work in a group and get others input, you can't always evaluate on your own, it becomes very limited.

R - Tell me about your field instruction experiences for the third year?

P - It was the best year.I learnt so much in 3rd year, we had different units and we rotated. Different people would be at different units and then move around. We were at NICRO and we ran self

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empowerment groups with ex offenders. That was the highlight for me. We had topics but could plan the programmes. We could do everything. It was a lot of paperwork. You had to evaluate and all of that.

R - And tell me did you spend a full day doing fieldwork?

P - We just went in and did our group work, used the morning s to prepare and do poster, we also had supervision for that group on campus, one day a group, another helpful thing was the sup as I had very little contact with adults and we facilitated alone.

R - What did your supervisor do, or what made the supervision helpful for you?

P - It was a safe place where you could vent your feelings, what went wrong, what was it that you were not sure about.

P - It was really nice to hear other peoples stories, we couldn't wait for it.

P - It was a table like that and we all got a time to speak, no one could interrupt you, that was great.

P - They also had a rep for the agency present at the supervision. That was very functional as many people had practical problems, like gates being locked, that was helpful..

R - So every session was with an agency rep too?

P - Yes and also the agency was also there when I ran my group work to check that all was right.

R - It was a good partnership?

P - Yes it was. We also submitted our programme before time and it was stressful but we got feedback before the time and give us feedback it was so helpful.

R - Agency or academic supervisor would give you feedback

P - Academic.

P - Agency didn't really give input or look at any of our work, one day they sat in for half of our session, gave feedback to the university, not really a mark, we never got the feedback ourselves.

P - The written feedback would have been good.

P - Because we had previous exp with group work I felt our skills were good and I was confident, those type of skills like blocking and drawing out, group dynamics.

R - What was it that helped you build that foundation?

P - We had the module to when we got to 3rd year we had all the theory and skills.

P - For 2nd year we did theory and prac at the same time. We has a prac course with each other, we would role play our sessions from micro and that was interesting, at the same time as 2nd year and 3rd year pracs, that was helpful, we were role playing, getting feedback and supervision and doing it at the same time

R - Ok and then tell my about semester 2 in your third year, what happened then?

P - It was 3 units. We were at the department and each student gets a supervisor and you work with that supervisor for the duration of your unit, like statutory work, assessments, family assessments and organisational profile and comm. profile.

P - We arrived and did a comm. Profile and org profile and then assess of fam and then we did hvisits and ass, the third unit was stat work, 4 units, 1 a tnicor, 3 at the dept, there were many of us, we all had a turn, spending the whole day at dept, wed form 8 - 4.

R - How did you find the other 3 units, you seemed to learn a lot form micro?

P - I didn't enjoy it.

R - What did you not enjoy?

P - Well my sup was low on the organogram, was very monotonous, she didn't do much, only foster care, it was depressing, I would dread wednesdays, I think it was the supervision.

P - I had the most incredible sup, she took me out, we went to court, home visits, the hosp, I go to experience many aspects, we did evaluations on ECD,s and old age homes, she let me do a lot and involved me in all, it was amazing you study these things and then see it all coming together in front of you, that was really good.

R - You feel the expereince had a lot to do with the supervisor you are placed with? What was different for you?

P - My supervisor wasn't supposed to be a supervisor, the first one moved to a different unit and they had to found another supervisor for me, she didn't really know what to do with me and wasn't keen to have me.

R - She wasn't keen to be a supervisor or see you, that affected the placement.

R - Each supervisor had one social work student?

P - Some had two students.

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P - My supervisor was so good, he would come in the morning and dedicate his day to us, and ask for opinions, it was so nice and then I did group work and I was taken by a new supervisor, he was also a good supervisor, he let me do a lot.

R - So part of good supervisor is letting you do lots of things?

P - Yes it takes trust but it is good for us.

R - And your fourth year of field instruction?

P - We work for four months.

R - And how is it going?

P - I am loving it.

R - What do you love about it?

P - I am working with teenage girls, I am loving getting to know them, building relationship, the therapy and ya..what is also nice there are a few students placed together, just like chatting and stuff and we help each other.

R - There is support.

P - Yes.

R - Do you choose where you go?

P - No.

R - How do you feel about this?

P - I think that it is always nice to have a choice but I am learning a lot and I wouldn't have chosen a drug rehab, it has challenged me and I am learning a lot, it has taken me out of my comfort zone

R - And the others?

P - The agency supervisor asked me who I want to work with at the home, I said not teenagers, he asked why etc

P - And that is where I am placed now, it is so difficult but so challenging and I am enjoying it and I am so attached to those boys, I even want to volunteer with them next year, I took over from a social worker., The boys rejected me right away, they closed their boundaries, I felt so rejected, it was so hard but then I forced myself into their space and I said I am here I am not going anywhere, but we worked it out...I learnt how to work through it all.

R - So different experiences but it sounds like you learn from the placements even though it wasn't what you initially wanted?

P - It was so stressful, waiting to hear from the beg of the year about our placements but actually I wouldn't have felt comfy choosing my own placements as I am so inexperienced and I would not have known what to choose.

R - Has theory helped you with your pracs?

P - Yes a lot.

R - Which theory?

P - The helping process, Lombard and Grey for community development and Toseland and Rivas for group work, watching how theory all comes together. I was doing my mid year prac and putting all the theory together and realising all I had done right also the org profile and assessing, identifying the gaps.

R - What sort of gaps?

P - These children are not getting best interests of the child. It took me along time to make sense of this, eg holiday placements, child doesn't want to go, it took me long to understand, reports help me understand.

P - You see the reports on file and what you are taught at university, the report wring is so different, point form at agency, university uses long reports.

P - One of the gaps I see is the agency is not using much theory, very little theory for treatment, structure made no sense, was just educational, full of information, no ice breakers, it was so stressful, I was in tears, each week we had to rewrite the programme for the group work as the programme was not substantial according to theory especially for a student who had never worked before

P - Other gap was treatment plan, linking techniques and theory to assessed problem, assessments I can do but the intervention, we only did CBT and solution based therapy and I use it often but it is not enough and the agency doesn't have anything to assist us. Its so much pressure to come up with interventions that will be appropriate and effective.

R - Are you placed with social workers?

P - Yes it helps.

Field instruction offered by universities in the Eastern Cape

R - And others?

P - Wow it is a really big problem. There are people that are suffering, they have not got any guidance at all, the schools have it the worse, the school has their own agenda of what they want the student to do, another would just send children to her, they thought she was a guidance teacher, role definition was very blurred.

R - Has anyone had a positive experience at a school?

P - No I don't think so..the other thing they have done is to have a roaming sup for the school placements but the sup is not always around..it hasn't really worked.

P - The other challenge I have had is a heavy case load, it is an intensive programme as it is plus the university requirements and I think my agency sees me as a social worker not a student. I don't have enough time, I do admin work at home, then university work and go to bed at 12. There is not enough time to go to the university requirements and the requirements are detailed and the weighting is heavy but you are working with people's lives and have to render quality services. but I have my organisational profiled at university so there is not a lot of communication. Between the two supervisors, my agency supervisor and university supervisor she just expects me to do the work.

R - What do you feel can be done about this?

P - If my client case load was smaller and I did all of my work at work and then go home and do university work, there is just no time.

R - What are the university requirements for you?

P - 6 proces reports micro, 2 training reports, an intervention plan, and a case study with an intervention.

R - Training reports?

P - Training reports using long format, skills thoughts feelings.

P - We get marks and feedback for these.

P - Also a problem is we do not have due dates for the reports, and now all of a sudden you have to make your own due dates, I never stick to these.

P - What was really difficult for me was I didn't know I had to submit for approval, then we come to sup, then we are told we have to submit prior to running the programmes, then there is a time lag between feedback, I couldn't start, but I had to as agency said we had to.

P - We didn't know what we had to do before prac, only a month later after we had started did they tell us what to do, we do get a book but it has no break downs of what to do, later on we got a rubric showing what we had to do by when...

P - Expectations from the agency and university are very different. Then when I got hold of the rubric I realised I had to integrate theory, I did it all wrong, it was so stressful.

P - For me it was different, it was difficult as there was no time, children are busy and we have to try and fit in, they can't change their schedules for us.

P - I think what made my prac so much more manageable, is the agency sup, she goes through everything with me and checks how I am doing,

P - I think what is great about my prac is the reflection.

P - Also being placed with another student is great, we are the only ones who understand, the pressure and the agency and the school pressure

P - Others are all alone, they had no social worker at the agency and had poor university support.

P - My friend is only allowed to do intakes, it is so boring and she isn't learning much.

P - We were the first large group, it will be better next year, if we have more supervision it will be better, our university supervisor had 8 students and our agency work is so fast so the feedback pace is so different.

P - Knowing what to do before the time will really help, getting the rubric before time will help.

P - I think it is good the numbers are high, we need more social workers, we have really bonded this year, I miss the others, the numbers have been good I don't think our numbers being good had been a bad thing.

R - Any concerns about types of students?

P - People who are just doing it for the bursary, they will drop out, leave the profession, also the quality of work produced is very poor, some students don't take the profession seriously, they copy and paste all the work, group work in the first semester they ride on others and then second semester they are all alone.I know it will catch up to them. I don't worry about them.

Field instruction offered by universities in the Eastern Cape

P - Some of the other students I wonder how they got this far. This year I was teaching someone how to reference at a fourth year level. I should not be teaching someone how to do this. There should be a standard, if feel some of the students don't meet this standard.

P - Some are good when it comes to theory but then when it comes to prac they don't cope,

P - I do struggle to integrate but then when I come back I realize I just did it.

P - I think it should come naturally.

P - And I think and make mistakes but I have time to change them.

R - Can you tell me a little about the ELO's?

P - ELO's we had a workshop but they are incredibly broad and so many, they seem a while away from achieving, them, the rubric is much more valuable, it is real.

R - Could you tell me about your understanding of experiential learning?

P - Oh it is working, you learn things that are placement specific, it is the point of prac, without it, it is all theory, it doesn't come alive without it, 1 session and then 2nd session is so much better because of exp learning, you can just do it after a while, it is amazing for me as I wouldn't have been able to do it without the experience.

P - and the second part is talking about it, what went well, do differently?

R - where do you get the opportunity to do this?

P - For me it is with university supervisor, we get the chance to do this, it is good

P - For me I do the reflection with other students or colleagues not so much in supervision.

R - Any other challenges relating to field instruction?

P - Other thing that is really hard is doing the treatise at the same time as well. We don't want to complain because maybe we have to learn to juggle all of this.

P - I don't agree for me if we could have started earlier in the year so that we were finishing close to start of pracs, it would have been helpful to start earlier

P - It always seems impossible till it's done

P - Its tough, it's quite consuming, which I don't think on every level people always acknowledge, I wish someone had prepared me for not having a life this year, we were like I can't wait, we will have the evenings free, but that never happened.

P - Some preparation from first year would have been good.

R - Anything else?

P - Despite the challenges, being able to prac is the most incredible experience, this is what I have studied for, I am seeing theory come to life, so despite all the challenges I done always know if I am going to make it but I know it is helping me for work one day and preparing me.

P - Guys do you know we have work experience already and I look forward to our graduation day and telling people that we are working.

APPENDIX H: STEP TWO INITIAL NOTING

University - D

Students - S (DS - student from university D)

Researcher - R

1. Describe the model of field instruction currently being used by the university where you are a student

Line		Content	Comments
1	DS	Well we never did anything in 1 st year, for second year we did group work with grade 8's at schools	
2	R	And then how many weeks of group work did you do?	
3	DS	About 6, we would go every Wednesday, you have the whole day with no lectures.	Concurrent
4	DS	We were placed for the day at different schools, we did our own programmes and worked in pairs, we did a needs assessment, drafted a program in groups, facilitated in pairs.	Concurrent
5	R	Did you choose the schools where you or where you assigned to the schools?	
6	DS	No, one of the challenges we had was when we arrived the school didn't really know why we were there,	Matched by university - agency not prepared - challenge
7	DS	For me that didn't happen, my school knew I was coming	Matched by univ - well organised
8	DS	We did community work too in the second semester. One of the pracs we had we only did the theory after we did it, it was quite a challenge, that was a problem for us, a big problem, we only found the theory when we were evaluating the project and then we found out oh there is a process, doing the evaluation we realized this is not community work that we are doing...it was group work.	Timing of theory and prac not working
9	DS	Yes when we present we do a power point presentation, you dread this. It is exciting but incredibly stressful for us but we didn't present in third year, maybe because there were so many of us, the numbers were overwhelming.	Stress of field instruction High student numbers impact upon programme
10	DS	They were preparing us for 4 th year, when we had like a million presentations.	University using presentations to facilitate student learning
11	R	Take me back to the community work..	
12	DS	We just had to do a project, we had never done this before, we spent a lot of time working with the students and the agencies, seeing how agencies conduct meetings and do admin, this was my first experience	Learning at agencies
13	DS	We spent the whole day at the agency, whatever the working hours were..you had a successful project...	Concurrent placement
14		Yes we did a garden, we worked with dept agriculture and it was pretty successful..	Feeling of accomplishment
15	DS	For me like I noticed that the organizational profile is important, it is nice because you get to know the people in the organization	Relevance of field instruction tasks - such as organizational profiles to learning
16	DS	Yes, a we wrote one for the community work, you have to show and indicate your position where you fit in, you didn't really know the theory.	Learning through field instruction tasks
17	DS	We struggled with application. With one if the modules we had to evaluate a project and that was useful because we could see where we had gone wrong. Oh we could have done this or that, that was good because we could fill in the gaps	Relevance of theory to practice
18	R	It was a useful exercise so you could reflect	
19	DS	Yes it was good	
20	DS	Oh was also nice to work in a group and get others input. You can't always evaluate on your own. It becomes very limited.	Working with other students is a positive experience
21	R	And for third year?	
22	DS	It was the best year. I learnt so much in 3 rd year. We had different units and we rotated. Different people would be at	Rotational model of field instruction - good in view of

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		different units and then move around. We were at NICRO and we ran self empowerment groups with ex offenders. That was the highlight for me. We had topics but could plan the programmes. We could do everything, it was a lot of paperwork. We had to evaluate and all of that.	student
23	R	And tell me did you spend the full day at the organization?	
24	DS	We just went in and did our groupwork. We used the mornings to prepare and do a poster. We also had supervision for that in a group on campus. Another helpful thing was the supervision as I had very little contact with adults and we facilitated alone.	Concurrent model at third year level. Usefulness of supervision
25	DS	For 2 nd year we did theory and prac at the same time, we has a prac course with each other, we would role play our sessions from nicro and that was interesting, at the same time as 2 nd year and 3 rd year pracs, that was help ful, we were roleplaying, getting feedback and supervision and doing it at the same time.	Learning through role plays, feedback and supervision
26	R	Ok and then tell my about sem 2 what happened then?	
27	DS	It was 3 units, we were at the department and each student gets a supervisor. You work with that supervisor for the duration of your unit. Like statutory work, assessments, family assessments and organisational profile and community profile.	Rotational model - varied placements
28	R	And 4 th year prac?	
29	DS	We work for 4 months.	Block placment
30	R	And how is it going?	

2. Describe the agency where you are or have worked as a student social worker

31	DS	We arrived and did a comm. Profile and org profile and then assess of families and then we did home visits and assessments. The third unit was statutory work. There were 4 units. 1 at Nicro, 3 at the department. There were many of us. We all had a turn, spending the whole day at the department on a Wednesday from 8 - 4.	Rotational model
32	R	How did you find the other 3 units, you seemed to learn a lot from Nicro?	
33	DS	I didn't enjoy it. Well my sup was low on the organogram. It was very monotonous. She didn't do much. Only foster care. It was depressing. I would dread Wednesday. I think it was the supervision.	Not enjoying experience - due to agency field instruction not being interested, not providing planned learning experiences?
34	DS	I am working with teenage girls, I am loving getting to know them, building relationship, the therapy and ya..what is also nice there are a few students placed tog, just like chatting and stuff and we help each other.	Usefulness of working with other students - viewed as supportive
35	DS	There is support	
36	DS	Yes..	
37	R	Do you choose where you go?	
38	DS	No. It was so stressful, waiting to hear from the beg of the year about our placements but actually I wouldn't have felt comfy choosing my own placements as I am so inexperienced and I would not have known what to choose.	Students placed by university
39	R	How do you feel about this?	
40	DS	I think that it is always nice to have a choice but I am learning a lot and I wouldn't have chosen a drug rehab. It has challenged me and I am learning a lot. It has taken me out of my comfort zone.	Placement by university - mixed emotions
41	R	And the others?	
42	DS	The agency sup asked me who I want to work with at the home, I said not teenagers, he asked why etc. And that is where I am placed now. It is so difficult but so challenging and I am enjoying it and I am so attached to those boys. I even want to volunteer with them next year. I took over from a social worker. The boys rejected me right away. They closed their boundaries. I felt so rejected. It was so hard but then I forced myself into their space and I said I am here I am not going anywhere, but we worked it out...I learnt how to	Student matched by agency field instructor - mixed emotions

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		work through it all.	
43	R	So different exp but it sounds like you learn from the placements even though it wasn't what you initially wanted.	
44	R	Are you placed with social workers?	
45	DS	Yes it helps.	Traditional agencies with social worker seen by student as helpful
46	R	And others?	
47	DS	Wow it is a really big problem. There are people that are suffering. They have not got any guidance at all. The schools have it the worse, the school has their own agenda of what they want the student to do. Another would just send children to her, they thought she was a guidance teacher. The role definition was very blurred.	Discussing other students experiences Non traditional placements - not supported.
48	R	Has anyone had a pos exp at a school?	
49	DS	No I don't think so..the other thing they have done is to have a roaming sup for the school placements but the sup is not always around..it hasn't really worked.	Not supporting non traditional placements

3. Describe your agency field instructor and the relationship that you have with them

50	R	What made the supervision helpful for you?	
51	DS	It was a safe place where you could vent your feelings, what went wrong, what was it that you were not sure about?	Agency Supervision - talking and reflection
52	DS	It was really nice to hear other peoples' stories, we couldn't wait for it	University supervision Sharing and learning form others
53	DS	It was a table like this and we all got a time to speak, no one could interrupt you, that was great	University supervision - helpful
54	DS	They also had a rep for the agency present at the supervision, that was very functional as many people had practical problems, like gates being locked, that was helpful	Partnership between agency and university supervision useful
55	R	So every session was with an agency representative too?	
56	DS	Yes and also the agency was also there when I ran my group to check that all was right.	Involvement by agency field instructor useful
57	R	It was a good partnership.	
58	DS	Yes it was, we also submitted our programme before the time and it was stressful but we got feedback before the time and this gave us feedback it was so helpful.	Feedback from university supervisor - helpful to students
59	R	Agency or academic would give you feedback?	Support from univ or agency - which is more important?
60	DS	Academic	
61	DS	Agency didn't really give input or look at any of our work. One day they sat in for half of our session. They gave feedback to the university. Not really a mark. We never got the feedback ourselves.	Agency would observe students' work Desire to have feedback from agency assessments
62	DS	The written feedback would have been good.	Students would like agency feedback
63	DS	Because we had previous exp with group work I felt our skills were good and I was confident. Those type of skills like blocking and drawing out, group dynamics.	Usefulness of having previous field instructin experiences - builds competence and skills
64	R	What was it that helped you build that foundation?	
66	DS	We had the module to when we got to 3 rd year we had all the theory and skills.	Theory before practice - building student confidence
67	R	What did you not enjoy?	
68	DS	I had the most incredible supervisor, she took me out, we went to court, home visits, the hospital. I got to experience many aspects. We did evaluations on ECD's and old age homes. She let me do a lot and involved me in all. It was amazing you study these things and then see it all coming together in front of you. That was really good.	Usefull characteristics of agency field instructor:
69	R	You feel the prac had a lot to do with the supervisor you are placed with? What was different for you?	
70	DS	My supervisor wasn't supposed to be a supervisor. The first one moved to a different unit and they had to find another supervisor for me. She didn't really know what to do with me and wasn't	Unhelpful characteristics of agency field instructors

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		keen to have me.	
71	DS	My supervisor was so good. He would do home visits in the morning and dedicate his day to us and ask for opinions. It was so nice and then I did group work and I was taken by a new supervisor. He was also a good supervisor. He let me do a lot.	Helpful characteristics of agency field instructors
72	R	So part of good supervision is letting you do lots of things.	
73	DS	Yes it takes trust but it is good for us.	Helpful characteristics of agency field instructors
74	DS	I think what made my prac so much more manageable, is the agency sup, she goes through everything with me and checks how I am doing.	Good agency field instructor - strong impact upon success of placement

4. Describe the general character of the students that you are studying with?

75	DS	I think it is good the numbers are high, we need more social workers, we have really bonded this year, I miss the others, the numbers have been good I don't think our numbers being good had been a bad thing..	High student numbers - seen as good
76	DS	We were the first large group, it will be better next year, if we have more supervision it will be better, our university supervisor had 8 students and our agency work is so fast so the feedback pace is so different.	High student numbers - impact upon supervision and feedback from reports -
77	R	Any concerns about types of students?	
78	DS	People who are just doing it for the bursary, they will drop out, leave the profession. Also the quality of work produced is very poor. Some students don't take the profession seriously. They copy and paste all the work. Group work in the first semester, they ride on others and then second semester they are all alone...I know it will catch up to them...I don't worry about them..	Characteristics of students - some not able to produce good quality work
79	DS	Some of the other students I wonder how they got this far, this year I was teaching someone how to ref. At a fourth year level? I should not be teaching someone how to do this. There should be a standard. I feel some of the students don't meet this standard. Some are good when it comes to theory but then when it comes to prac they don't cope.	Characteristics of students - struggle to apply theory during practice
	DS	I do struggle to integrate but then when I come back I realize I just did it...	Others - reflective and learn from mistakes
80	DS	I think it should come naturally....	Reflection should come naturally?
81	DS	And I think and make mistakes but I have time to change them...	Learning by doing - from making mistakes

5. Describe your understanding and experience of experiential learning?

82	R	What is your understanding of experiential learning? Do you know what it is?	Students not really sure?
83	DS	Oh it is working, you learn things that are placement specific, it is the point of practical, without it, it is all theory, it doesn't come alive without it, 1 session and then 2 nd session is so much better because of exp learning, you can just do it after a while, it is amazing for me as I wouldn't have been able to do it without the experience...	Then they started to realize what it was about.
84	R	The second part talking about it, what went well, what will you do differently?	Reflection after the experience
85	DS	For me it is with university supervision. We get the chance to do this, it is good.	Using supervision for reflection
86	DS	For me I do the reflection with other students or colleagues not so much in supervision.	Reflection with colleagues and other students

6. Describe your understanding of the exit level outcomes in relation to field instruction?

87	DS	ELO's we had a workshop but they are incredibly broad and so many, they seem a while away from achieving, them, the rubric is much more valuable...it is real...	Other students very quiet, unsure about ELO's?
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7. Describe any other challenges not already mentioned relating to field instruction?

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88, 89	DS	What was really difficult for me was I didn't know I had to submit for approval, then we come to sup, then we are told we have to submit prior, then there is a time lag between feedback, couldn't start, but had to as agency said we had to...	
90	DS	We didn't know what we had to do before prac, only a month later after we had started did they tell us what to do, we do get a book but it has no break downs of what to do, later on we got a rubric showing what we had to do by when.	Lack of orientation by university
91	DS	The other challenge I have had is a heavy case load, it is an intensive programme as it is plus the university requirements and I think my a sees me as a social worker not a student, I don't have enough time, I do admin work at home, then university work and go to bed at 12, there is not enough time to get to the university requirements and the requirements are detailed and specific and the weighting is heavy but you are working with people's lives and have to render quality services but I have my org profiled at university so there is not a lot of comm. Btw the 2 sup, my agency sup and university supervisor they just expect me to do the work.	Expectations from agency and university - stressful for students
92	R	What do you feel can be done about this?	
93	DS	If my client case load was smaller and I did all of my work at work and then go home and do university work, there is just no time.	Balance between agency and university requirements needed
94	DS	Also a problem is we do not have due dates for the reports, and now all of a sudden you have to make your own due dates...I never stick to these.	Working independently - challenging for students
95	DS	Expectations from agency and university is very different, then when I got hold of the rubric I realised I had to integrate theory, I did it all wrong, it was so stressful.	Stressful for students - requirements overwhelming and late orientation by university
96	DS	For me it was different, it was difficult as there was not time, children are busy and we have to try and fit in, they can't change their schedules for us.	

8. Are there any recommendations you feel could be made to improve field instruction models in the Eastern Cape?

97	R	Has theory helped you with your pracs?	
98	DS	Yes a lot..	Theory is useful and appropriate
99	R	Which theory?	
100	DS	The helping process, Lomabrd and Grey for community development and Toseland and Rivas for group work, watching how theory all comes together, I was doing my mid year prac and putting all the theory tog and realizing all I had done right also the org profile and assessing, identifying the gaps	Integration of theory and prac is happening
101	R	What sort of gaps?	
102	DS	It took me a long time to make sense of this, eg holiday placements, child doesn't want to go, it took me long to understand, reports help me understand the best interests of the child.	Students not prepared for more practical aspects of theory
103	DS	You see the reports on file and what you are taught at university, the report wring is so different, point form at agency, university reaches the format for long reports.	Gap between what is happening at university and the agencies
104	DS	One of the gaps I see is the agency is not using much theory, very little theory for treatment, structure made no sense, was just educational, full of information, no ice breakers, it was so stressful, I was in tears, each week we had to rewrite the prog for the gwork as the prog was not substantial according to theory especially for a student who had never worked before.	Agencies not using theory
105	DS	Other gap was treatment plan, linking techniques and theory to assessed problem, assessments I can do but the intervention, we only did CBT and solution based therapy and I use it often but it is not enough and the agency doesn't have any thing to assist us, its so much pressure to come up with intervention that will be appropriate and effective...	Agencies not using theory
106	DS	We were the first large group, it will be better nxt year, if we have more sup it will be better, our univ sup had 8 students and our	Impact of high student numbers

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		agency work is so fast so the feedback pace is so different,	
107	DS	Knowing what to do before the time will really help, getting the rubric before time will help.	Importance of university orientation.
108	DS	I think what is great about my prac is the reflection	Learning from reflection
109	DS	Also being placed with another student is great, we are the only ones who understand, the pressure and the agency and school pressure	Support of other students
110	DS	Others are all alone, they had no social worker at the agency and had poor university support.	Support of other students
111	DS	My friend is only allowed to do intakes, it is so boring and she isn't learning much.	Variety of tasks and learning opportunities
112	DS	Other thing that is really hard is doing the treatise at the same time as well, we don't wan to complain because maybe we have to learn to juggle all of this...	Modified block placement - stressful for students
113	DS	I don't agree for me if we could have started earlier in the year so that we were finishing close to start of pracs,it would have been helpful to start earlier...	
115	DS	It always seems impossible till its done.....	Feeling of inadequacy along the way
116	DS	It's tough, it's quite consuming, which I don't think on every level people have had a life this year, we were like I can't wait, we will have the evenings free, but that never happened...	Feelings stressed
117	DS	Some prep from 1 st year would have been good...	
118	R	Anything else...	
119, 120	DS	Despite the challenges, being able to prac is the most incredible experience, this is what I have studied for, I am seeing theory come to life, so despite all the challenges I don't always know if I am going to make it but I know it is helping me for work one day and preparing me..	Learning by doing - experiential learning

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APPENDIX I: STEP THREE: DEVELOPING EMERGING THEMES

University - D

Students - S (DS - student from university D)

Researcher - R

9. Describe the model of field instruction currently being used by the university where you are a student

Line		Content	Comments	Emerging Themes
1	DS	Well we never did anything in 1 st year, for second year we did group work with grade 8's at schools		Model of FI - concurrent
2	R	And then how many weeks of group work did you do?		
3	DS	About 6, we would go every Wednesday, you have the whole day with no lectures.	Concurrent	Model FI- concurrent
4	DS	We were placed for the day at different schools, we did our own programmes and worked in pairs, we did a needs assessment, drafted a program in groups, facilitated in pairs.	Concurrent	Model of FI - concurrent
5	R	Did you choose the schools where you or where you assigned to the schools?		
6	DS	No, one of the challenges we had was when we arrived the school didn't really know why we were there,	Matched by university - agency not prepared - challenge	Model of FI - partnernship btw univ and agency important
7	DS	For me that didn't happen, my school knew I was coming	Matched by univ - well organised	Model of FI - partnership
8	DS	We did community work too in the second semester. One of the pracs we had we only did the theory after we did it, it was quite a challenge, that was a problem for us, a big problem, we only found the theory when we were evaluating the project and then we found out oh there is a process, doing the evaluation we realized this is not community work that we are doing...it was group work.	Timing of theory and prac not working	Experiential learning - Theory and practice
9	DS	Yes when we present we do a power point presentation, you dread this. It is exciting but incredibly stressful for us but we didn't present in third year, maybe because there were so many of us, the numbers were overwhelming.	Stress of field instruction High student numbers impact upon programme	Social work students feeling stressed EL - learning by presentations
10	DS	They were preparing us for 4 th year, when we had like a million presentations.	University using presentations to facilitate student learning	Experiential learning - learning through presentations
11	R	Take me back to the community work..		
12	DS	We just had to do a project, we had never done this before, we spent a lot of time working with the students and the agencies, seeing how agencies conduct meetings and do admin, this was my first experience	Learning at agencies	Experiential learning - learning by observing
13	DS	We spent the whole day at the agency, whatever the working hours were..you had a successful project...	Concurrent placement	Model of field instruction
14		Yes we did a garden, we worked with dept agriculture and it was pretty successful..	Feeling of accomplishment	Feelings relating to field instruction
15	DS	For me like I noticed that the organizational profile is important, it is nice because you get to know the people in the organization	Relevance of field instruction tasks - such as organizational profiles to learning	Experiential learning - learning through written tasks
16	DS	Yes, a we wrote one for the community work, you have to show and indicate your position where you fit in, you didn't really know the theory.	Learning through field instruction tasks	Experiential learning - learning through written tasks
17	DS	We struggled with application. With one if the modules we had to evaluate a project and that was useful because we could see where we had gone wrong. Oh we could have done this or that, that was good because we could fill in the gaps	Relevance of theory to practice	Experiential learning - integration of theory and practice
18	R	It was a useful exercise so you could reflect		
19	DS	Yes it was good		EL - reflection
20	DS	Oh was also nice to work in a group and get others input. You can't always evaluate on your own. It becomes very limited.	Working with other students is a positive expereince	Social work students/ model of field instruction

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21	R	And for third year?		
22	DS	It was the best year. I learnt so much in 3 rd year. We had different units and we rotated. Different people would be at different units and then move around. We were at NICRO and we ran self empowerment groups with ex offenders. That was the highlight for me. We had topics but could plan the programmes. We could do everything, it was a lot of paperwork. We had to evaluate and all of that.	Rotational model of field instruction - good in view of student	Model of field instruction
23	R	And tell me did you spend the full day at the organization?		
24	DS	We just went in and did our groupwork. We used the mornings to prepare and do a poster. We also had supervision for that in a group on campus. Another helpful thing was the supervision as I had very little contact with adults and we facilitated alone.	Concurrent model at third year level. Usefulness of supervision	Model of field instruction and use of university supervision = strength
25	DS	For 2 nd year we did theory and prac at the same time, we has a prac course with each other, we would role play our sessions from micro and that was interesting, at the same time as 2 nd year and 3 rd year pracs, that was help ful, we were roleplaying, getting feedback and supervision and doing it at the same time.	Learning through role plays, feedback and supervision	Expereintial learning - activies used to facilitate learning
26	R	Ok and then tell my about sem 2 what happened then?		
27	DS	It was 3 units, we were at the department and each student gets a supervisor. You work with that supervisor for the duration of your unit. Like statutory work, assessments, family assessments and organisational profile and community profile.	Rotational model - varied placements	Model of field instruction
28	R	And 4 th year prac?		
29	DS	We work for 4 months.	Block placment	Model of field instruction
30	R	And how is it going?		

10. Describe the agency where you are or have worked as a student social worker

31	DS	We arrived and did a comm. Profile and org profile and then assess of families and then we did home visits and assessments. The third unit was statutory work. There were 4 units. 1 at Nicro, 3 at the department. There were many of us. We all had a turn, spending the whole day at the department on a Wednesday from 8 - 4.	Rotational model	Model of field instruction - rotational
32	R	How did you find the other 3 units, you seemed to learn a lot from Nicro?		
33	DS	I didn't enjoy it. Well my sup was low on the organogram. It was very monotonous. She didn't do much. Only foster care. It was depressing. I would dread Wednesday. I think it was the supervision.	Not enjoying experience - due to agency field instruction not being interested, not providing planned learning experiences?	Unhelpful characteristics of agency field instructors Student feelings relating to field instruction
34	DS	I am working with teenage girls, I am loving getting to know them, building relationship, the therapy and ya..what is also nice there are a few students placed tog, just like chatting and stuff and we help each other.	Usefulness of working with other students - viewed as supportive	Model of FI - placing students together seen as strength
35	DS	There is support		
36	DS	Yes..		
37	R	Do you choose where you go?		
38	DS	No. It was so stressful, waiting to hear from the beg of the year about our placements but actually I wouldn't have felt comfy choosing my own placements as I am so inexperienced and I would not have known what to choose.	Students placed by university	Model of FI - university chooses agency
39	R	How do you feel about this?		
40	DS	I think that it is always nice to have a choice but I am	Placement by university	Model of FI - university

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		learning a lot and I wouldn't have chosen a drug rehab. It has challenged me and I am learning a lot. It has taken me out of my comfort zone.	- mixed emotions	chooses agency
41	R	And the others?		
42	DS	The agency sup asked me who I want to work with at the home, I said not teenagers, he asked why etc. And that is where I am placed now. It is so difficult but so challenging and I am enjoying it and I am so attached to those boys. I even want to volunteer with them next year. I took over from a social worker. The boys rejected me right away. They closed their boundaries. I felt so rejected. It was so hard but then I forced myself into their space and I said I am here I am not going anywhere, but we worked it out...I learnt how to work through it all.	Student matched by agency field instructor - mixed emotions	Experiential learning - learning by doing, actual placement (not always comfortable!)
43	R	So different exp but it sounds like you learn from the placements even though it wasn't what you initially wanted.		
44	R	Are you placed with social workers?		
45	DS	Yes it helps.	Traditional agencies with social worker seen by student as helpful	Model of FI - using traditional agencies with on site field instructors
46	R	And others?		
47	DS	Wow it is a really big problem. There are people that are suffering. They have not got any guidance at all. The schools have it the worse, the school has their own agenda of what they want the student to do. Another would just send children to her, they thought she was a guidance teacher. The role definition was very blurred.	Discussing other students experiences Non traditional placements - not supported.	Model of FI - using non traditional agencies
48	R	Has anyone had a pos exp at a school?		
49	DS	No I don't think so..the other thing they have done is to have a roaming sup for the school placements but the sup is not always around..it hasn't really worked.	Not supporting non traditional placements	Model of FI - using non traditional placements

11. Describe your agency field instructor and the relationship that you have with them

50	R	What made the supervision helpful for you?		
51	DS	It was a safe place where you could vent your feelings, what went wrong, what was it that you were not sure about?	Agency Supervision - talking and reflection	Helpful characteristics of agency field instructor
52	DS	It was really nice to hear other peoples' stories, we couldn't wait for it	University supervision Sharing and learning form others	EL : Learning from others during supervision
53	DS	It was a table like this and we all got a time to speak, no one could interrupt you, that was great	University supervision - helpful	EL : learning through supervision and discussions
54	DS	They also had a rep for the agency present at the supervision, that was very functional as many people had practical problems, like gates being locked, that was helpful	Partnership between agency and university supervision useful	Model of FI - partnership between agency and univ
55	R	So every session was with an agency representative too?		
56	DS	Yes and also the agency was also there when I ran my group to check that all was right.	Involvement by agency field instructor useful	Model of FI - partnership between agency and univ
57	R	It was a good partnership.		
58	DS	Yes it was, we also submitted our programme before the time and it was stressful but we got feedback before the time and this gave us feedback it was so helpful.	Feedback from university supervisor - helpful to students	EL: learning through report writing and feedback
59	R	Agency or academic would give you feedback?	Support from univ or agency - which is more important?	
60	DS	Academic		Model of FI: usefulness of university supervision

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61	DS	Agency didn't really give input or look at any of our work. One day they sat in for half of our session. They gave feedback to the university. Not really a mark. We never got the feedback ourselves.	Agency would observe students' work Desire to have feedback from agency assessments	Models of FI: student evaluations
62	DS	The written feedback would have been good.	Students would like agency feedback	Model of FI: student evaluations
63	DS	Because we had previous exp with group work I felt our skills were good and I was confident. Those type of skills like blocking and drawing out, group dynamics.	Usefulness of having previous field instructin experiences - builds competence and skills	Model of FI - starting early with FI
64	R	What was it that helped you build that foundation?		
66	DS	We had the module to when we got to 3 rd year we had all the theory and skills.	Theory before practice - building student confidence	Model of FI - starting early with FI
67	R	What did you not enjoy?		
68	DS	I had the most incredible supervisor, she took me out, we went to court, home visits, the hospital. I got to experience many aspects. We did evaluations on ECD's and old age homes. She let me do a lot and involved me in all. It was amazing you study these things and then see it all coming together in front of you. That was really good.	Usefull characteristics of agency field instructor:	Helpful characteristics of agency field instructor
69	R	You feel the prac had a lot to do with the supervisor you are placed with? What was different for you?		
70	DS	My supervisor wasn't supposed to be a supervisor. The first one moved to a different unit and they had to find another supervisor for me. She didn't really know what to do with me and wasn't keen to have me.	Unhelpful characteristics of agency field instructors	Unhelpful characteristics of agency field instructor
71	DS	My supervisor was so good. He would do home visits in the morning and dedicate his day to us and ask for opinions. It was so nice and then I did group work and I was taken by a new supervisor. He was also a good supervisor. He let me do a lot.	Helpful characteristics of agency field instructors	Helpful characteristics of agency field instructor
72	R	So part of good supervision is letting you do lots of things.		
73	DS	Yes it takes trust but it is good for us.	Helpful characteristics of agency field instructors	Helpful characteristics of agency field instructors
74	DS	I think what made my prac so much more manageable, is the agency sup, she goes through everything with me and checks how I am doing.	Good agency field instructor - strong impact upon success of placement	Helpful characteristics of agency field instructors

12. Describe the general character of the students that you are studying with?

75	DS	I think it is good the numbers are high, we need more social workers, we have really bonded this year, I miss the others, the numbers have been good I don't think our numbers being good had been a bad thing..	High student numbers - seen as good	Social work students - high student numbers
76	DS	We were the first large group, it will be better next year, if we have more supervision it will be better, our university supervisor had 8 students and our agency work is so fast so the feedback pace is so different.	High student numbers - impact upon supervision and feedback from reports -	Social work students - high student numbers
77	R	Any concerns about types of students?		
78	DS	People who are just doing it for the bursary, they will drop out, leave the profession. Also the quality of work produced is very poor. Some students don't take the profession seriously. They copy and paste all the work. Group work in the first semester, they ride on others and then second semester they are all alone...I know it will catch up to them...I don't worry about them..	Characteristics of students - some not able to produce good quality work	Social work students - characteristics of students
79	DS	Some of the other students I wonder how they got this far, this year I was teaching someone how to ref. At a fourth year level? I should not be teaching someone how to do this. There should be a standard. I feel some	Characteristics of students - struggle to apply theory during practice	Social work students - characteristics of students

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		of the students don't meet this standard. Some are good when it comes to theory but then when it comes to prac they don't cope.		
	DS	I do struggle to integrate but then when I come back I realize I just did it...	Others - reflective and learn from mistakes	Social work students - characteristics of students
80	DS	I think it should come naturally....	Reflection should come naturally?	Social work students - characteristics of students
81	DS	And I think and make mistakes but I have time to change them...	Learning by doing - from making mistakes	Social work students - characteristics of students

13. Describe your understanding and experience of experiential learning?

82	R	What is your understanding of experiential learning? Do you know what it is?	Students not really sure?	
83	DS	Oh it is working, you learn things that are placement specific, it is the point of practical, without it, it is all theory, it doesn't come alive without it, 1 session and then 2 nd session is so much better because of experiential learning, you can just do it after a while, it is amazing for me as I wouldn't have been able to do it without the experience...	Then they started to realize what it was about.	EL: learning by doing, and integration of prac and theory
84	R	The second part talking about it, what went well, what will you do differently?	Reflection after the experience	EL: reflection
85	DS	For me it is with university supervision. We get the chance to do this, it is good.	Using supervision for reflection	EL: Reflection through supervision
86	DS	For me I do the reflection with other students or colleagues not so much in supervision.	Reflection with colleagues and other students	EL: Reflection through other relationships :

14. Describe your understanding of the exit level outcomes in relation to field instruction?

87	DS	ELO's we had a workshop but they are incredibly broad and so many, they seem a while away from achieving, them, the rubric is much more valuable...it is real...	Other students very quiet, unsure about ELO's?	ELO's broad
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15. Describe any other challenges not already mentioned relating to field instruction?

88, 89	DS	What was really difficult for me was I didn't know I had to submit for approval, then we come to sup, then we are told we have to submit prior, then there is a time lag between feedback, couldn't start, but had to as agency said we had to...		Model of FI: University supervision
90	DS	We didn't know what we had to do before prac, only a month later after we had started did they tell us what to do, we do get a book but it has no break downs of what to do, later on we got a rubric showing what we had to do by when.	Lack of orientation by university	Model of FI: Orientation and preparation of students by university
91	DS	The other challenge I have had is a heavy case load, it is an intensive programme as it is plus the university requirements and I think my agency sees me as a social worker not a student, I don't have enough time, I do admin work at home, then university work and go to bed at 12, there is not enough time to get to the university requirements and the requirements are detailed and specific and the weighting is heavy but you are working with people's lives and have to render quality services but I have my org profiled at university so there is not a lot of comm. Btw the 2 sup, my agency sup and university supervisor they just expect me to do the work.	Expectations from agency and university - stressful for students	Model of FI: partnership, agency and univ requirements should be balanced Social work students - feeling stressed
92	R	What do you feel can be done about this?		
93	DS	If my client case load was smaller and I did all of my work at work and then go home and do university work, there is just no time.	Balance between agency and university requirements needed	Model of FI: partnership
94	DS	Also a problem is we do not have due dates for the	Working independently -	Model of FI: orientation

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		reports, and now all of a sudden you have to make your own due dates...I never stick to these.	challenging for students	and prep of students too include due dates
95	DS	Expectations from agency and university is very different, then when I got hold of the rubric I realised I had to integrate theory, I did it all wrong, it was so stressful.	Stressful for students - requirements overwhelming and late orientation by university	Model of FI: partnership Social work students - feeling stressed
96	DS	For me it was different, it was difficult as there was not time, children are busy and we have to try and fit in, they can't change their schedules for us.		

16. Are there any recommendations you feel could be made to improve field instruction models in the Eastern Cape?

97	R	Has theory helped you with your pracs?		
98	DS	Yes a lot..	Theory is useful and appropriate	
99	R	Which theory?		
100	DS	The helping process, Lomabrd and Grey for community development and Toseland and Rivas for group work, watching how theory all comes together, I was doing my mid year prac and putting all the theory tog and realizing all I had done right also the org profile and assessing, identifying the gaps	Integration of theory and prac is happening	EL: integration of theory and practice
101	R	What sort of gaps?		
102	DS	It took me a long time to make sense of this, eg holiday placements, child doesn't want to go, it took me long to understand, reports help me understand the best interests of the child.	Students not prepared for more practical aspects of theory	EL: integration of theory and prac
103	DS	You see the reports on file and what you are taught at university, the report writing is so different, point form at agency, university reaches the format for long reports.	Gap between what is happening at university and the agencies	EL: integration of theory and prac
104	DS	One of the gaps I see is the agency is not using much theory, very little theory for treatment, structure made no sense, was just educational, full of information, no ice breakers, it was so stressful, I was in tears, each week we had to rewrite the prog for the gwork as the prog was not substantial according to theory especially for a student who had never worked before.	Agencies not using theory	EL: integration of theory and prac
105	DS	Other gap was treatment plan, linking techniques and theory to assessed problem, assessments I can do but the intervention, we only did CBT and solution based therapy and I use it often but it is not enough and the agency doesn't have anything to assist us, its so much pressure to come up with intervention that will be appropriate and effective...	Agencies not using theory	EL: integration of theory and prac
106	DS	We were the first large group, it will be better next year, if we have more sup it will be better, our univ sup had 8 students and our agency work is so fast so the feedback pace is so different,	Impact of high student numbers	Social work students-high student numbers
107	DS	Knowing what to do before the time will really help, getting the rubric before time will help.	Importance of university orientation.	Model of FI - orientation for students
108	DS	I think what is great about my prac is the reflection	Learning from reflection	EL: reflection
109	DS	Also being placed with another student is great, we are the only ones who understand, the pressure and the agency and school pressure	Support of other students	Model of FI: placing students together
110	DS	Others are all alone, they had no social worker at the agency and had poor university support.	Support of other students	Model of FI: use of non traditional placements
111	DS	My friend is only allowed to do intakes, it is so boring and she isn't learning much.	Variety of tasks and learning opportunities	Agency: characteristics for poor placement - lack of learning opportunities
112	DS	Other thing that is really hard is doing the treatise at the same time as well, we don't want to complain because maybe we have to learn to juggle all of this...	Modified block placement - stressful for students	Model of FI: modified block
113	DS	I don't agree for me if we could have started earlier in the year so that we were finishing close to start of pracs,it would have been helpful to start earlier...		Model of FI: modified block
115	DS	It always seems impossible till its done.....	Feeling of inadequacy	Social work students:

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			along the way	feelings
116	DS	It's tough, it's quite consuming, which I don't think on every level people have had a life this year, we were like I can't wait, we will have the evenings free, but that never happened...	Feelings stressed	Social work students: feelings work too much
117	DS	Some prep from 1 st year would have been good...		Model of FI: orientation and prep for students
118	R	Anything else...		
119, 120	DS	Despite the challenges, being able to prac is the most incredible experience, this is what I have studied for, I am seeing theory come to life, so despite all the challenges I don't always know if I am going to make it but I know it is helping me for work one day and preparing me..	Learning by doing - experiential learning	EL: integration of theory and prac Social work students: mixed emotions

APPENDIX J: STEP FOUR: SEARCHING FOR CONNECTIONS ACROSS EMERGENT

THEMES

Social work students, university D - Red

<u>Emerging themes and word counts</u>	<u>Corresponding line in transcript</u>
<u>Models of field instruction</u>	
Universities using concurrent model at second year level - group work and comm work (4)	1,3, 4, 8
Rotational model - students enjoyed and supportive of this (3)	22, 27, 31
Block model at fourth year level (1)	29
University choosing placement - matching students Students supportive of this (2)	38, 40
Partnership between agency and university; good communication between the two (5)	6, 7,54, 56, 57,
No orientation by university, return dates (4)	90, 94, 108, 117,
Feedback for reports very late (2)	89, 107
Expectations from university and agency different - causes stress (3)	91, 93, 95
Placement with other students - supportive (3)	20, 34, 35
Use and usefulness of university supervisors, feedback late at times (6)	24, 53, 54, 58, 60, 89
Support to starting FI at early level (2)	63, 66
<u>Agencies used for field instruction</u>	
work monotonous - unhelpful for students - lack of varied learning opportunities (2)	33, 112
<u>Agency field instructors</u>	
Social workers (1)	45
Non social workers (not supporting such placements) (3)	47, 49, 111
No written feedback received by students for evaluation - seen as not being useful (2)	61, 62,

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Good supervisor - giving student variety of learning experiences, listening and reflecting, observing the student (6)	51, 56, 68, 71, 73, 74
Unhelpful characteristics of supervisor - supervisors not really interested in supervision (2)	33, 70,
<u>Social work students</u>	
Feelings relating to placement: stress, anxious, enjoying it (14)	6, 33, 34, 58, 89, 90, 93, 94, 95, 113, 114, 115, 116, 119
Feeling placement was well organized and thus not stressful (1)	7
Enjoy being placed with other students - for support (3)	34, 36, 110
High numbers (3)	9, 75, 107
Type of students - not always suited to profession but also suitable (6)	77, 78, 78, 79, 80, 81
<u>Experiential learning</u>	
Learning form feedback (2)	25, 58
Learning through presentations (2)	9, 10
Learning by doing (5)	12, 13, 14, 42, 83
Learning by observing (1)	12,
Learning by being there - placement itself learning opportunity (1)	15,
Learning through report writing and written tasks (5)	15, 16, 22, 42, 102
Learning through reflection (9)	17, 18, 19, 25, 51, 58, 85, 86, 109
Learning through supervision (7)	24, 25, 51, 52, 53, 54, 85
Learning through role playing (1)	25
Learning from being placed with others (1)	20,
Relevance of theory and practice, application of theory made easier through field instruction tasks, integration of theory and prac, prac and theory not always same, prac and theory not complementary in terms of timing (13)	8, 17, 63, 66, 68, 83, 98, 100, 119, 102, 103, 104, 105,
<u>ELO'S</u>	
Acknowledged but very broad - vague?(1)	87

APPENDIX K: STEP FIVE MASTER TABLE OF THEMES FOR SOCIAL WORK

STUDENTS

University A - Black

University B - Blue

University C - Green

University D - Red

MAIN THEMES AND SUBORDINATE THEMES (WORD COUNT)	CORRESPONDING TRANSCRIPT AND LINE
<p>UNIVERSITY FIEDL INSTRUCTION PROGRAMMES</p> <p>Models of field instruction (16) Concurrent overwhelming, Block one week and then concurrent not supported by agencies in EC, Universities using concurrent model at second year level - group work and comm work, Block preferable, Block model at fourth year level, Rotational model - students enjoyed and supportive of this</p> <p>Placement of student at agency: (6) Supporting student being matched by university to agency, Choosing placements, University choosing placement - matching students student's supportive of this</p> <p>Partnership between agency and university: (24) orientation for agencies and non traditional agencies, Partnership between universities and students, Strong partnership with agencies, Expectations from university and agency different - causes stress, Helpfulness of university supervision</p> <p>Assessments: (10), Evaluation of students by agency and university, oral presentation, Evaluations by agency field instructors - not perceived as empowering for students, No written feedback received by students for evaluation - seen as not being useful</p> <p>When to start: (9) Recommending starting of FI at early level of studies, Level two, observations</p> <p>Orientation for students and agencies: (9) No orientation by university, return dates, Orientation by university viewed as very helpful for students, Feedback for reports very late</p> <p>Use of non traditional agencies: (16) Not supporting the use of non traditional agencies, support for use of non traditional agencies, Non traditional agencies with no onsite social worker acceptable, Non social workers (not supporting such placements), Social workers, Helpfulness of off site supervision</p> <p>AGENCIES USED FOR FIELD INSTRUCTION</p> <p>Unhelpful agency characteristics for field instruction (20), Results driven less time for supervision and training of students, Lack of resources, Lack of resources - frustrating for students and</p>	<p>2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 34, 35, 73, 1,3, 4, 8, 2, 29 22, 31,</p> <p>8, 10, 22, 24, 38, 40</p> <p>23, 24, 26, 28, 72, 73, 54, 56, 57, 89, 107, 34, 87, 88, 36, 38, 48, 50, 52, 6, 19, 21, 29, 37</p> <p>15, 16, 17, 102, 32, 29, 31, 76, 61, 62,</p> <p>63, 66, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 11, 9</p> <p>90, 94, 108, 117, 2, 4, 95, 6, 89,</p> <p>11, 22, 14, 19, 27, 37, 4, 7, 47, 49, 111, 45, 17, 19, 21, 35</p> <p>36, 25, 26, 36, 40, 41, 13, 15, 17, 18, 21, 23, 36, 45, 6, 15, 68, 70, 71, 72</p>

<p>impacting upon service delivery, Lack of resources impact upon service delivery - unhelpful, Requirements overwhelming for students, Agencies operating at managerial level - not putting best interest of clients first - poor example to students ,</p> <p>Helpful agency characteristics for FI: (6)Orientation for students, Organised and good at planning = good placement, work monotonous - unhelpful for students - lack of varied learning opportunities, Desire to have variety of experiences = successful placement</p>	<p>53, 55, 33, 112, 34, 42</p>
<p>Costs at work covered by agency</p>	<p>30</p>
<p>AGENCY FIELD INSTRUCTORS</p> <p>Helpful characteristics of agency FI (16), Partner with students = good characteristics = successful placement, Giving feedback viewed as positive characteristic, Giving chance to students to work independently viewed as positive, Helpful characteristics - working together, discussions, observing, Good supervisor - giving student variety of learning experiences, Seen as superior and will not accept feedback from students - not useful for growth of student - lack of partnership, Orientation is being done at some agencies</p> <p>Unhelpful characteristics of agency FI (29), Unhelpful characteristics - not partnership with student, Not ethical - respect and confidentiality, Unhelpful characteristics of supervisor - supervisors not really interested in supervision, Treat ssw as PA's - no structured learning opportunities, Grooming seen as useful characteristic - orientation for students useful - not being done, Agency FI not clear about own role and responsibilities</p>	<p>31, 32, 33,34, 57, 61, 63, 65, 68, 71, 73, 74, 62, 64, 66</p> <p>6, 34, 43, 39, 40, 43, 47, 47, 70, 29, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 60, 61, 74, 75, 76, 40, 42, 43, 46, 49, 57, 59, 44, 56,</p>
<p>SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS:</p> <p>Mixed emotions(35), Feeling placement was well organized and thus not stressful, Enjoy being placed with other students - for support, Feeling unprepared and anxious, Financial stress, Experiencing FI as stressful and overwhelming, Working with team of other professional also creates stress, Not enjoyable experience - stressful for students, Work load overwhelming, Feeling overwhelmed, stressed</p> <p>Characteristics of social work students (17), Only certain students suited to social work profession and not all students studying have them qualities, Type of students - not always suited to profession, Believing social work is a calling, need to have certain characteristics to be successful as a social worker</p> <p>High numbers: (4)- not an issue, High number of social work students , Influenced by number of students</p>	<p>6, 39, 41, 7, 34, 36, 110, 42, 44, 46, 47, 49, 51, 54, 56, 57,59, 60, 77, 78, 78, 79, 80, 81, 32, 33, 96, 98, 100, 101, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 47,</p> <p>43, 20, 25, 28, 29, 32, , 93, 94, 95,113, 114, 115, 116, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 78, 80, 81, 83, 84, 86,</p> <p>75, 1, 9, 107,</p>

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<p>EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING : Integration of theory with practice (36), Application of theory, Relevance of theory and practice, integration of theory and prac, Preparation of students in terms of theory taught, Gap between theory and practice, Theory different from practice, Prac and theory not always same, Theory and prac not complementary ito timing, Value dilemma's, Value dilemma's for students, Value dihlemma's Reflection, self actualization (25), Reflection eg using supervision and report writing, Learning through reflection, Self actualization (adopting social work values) Learning : (37) Observation as learning opportunity, Learning by observing - at times observing incorrect professional behavior and deciding not to do the same, Learning by observing Learning by doing, Learning by doing Learning through discussions with field instructor Learning from case files and documents Learning through presentations Learning by being there - placement itself learning opportunity Learning through report writing Learning through supervision Learning through role playing Feeling that there are not enough opportunities for reflection within the university:(3) ELO's : Existent: (7), Acknowledged but not foundational, Acknowledged vaguely</p>	<p>6, 8, 19, 20, 103, 104, 106, 108, 109, 111 9, 11, 13, 17, 64, 8, 17, 63, 66, 68, 83, 98, 100, 119, 102, 103, 104, 105, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 49, 51, 53, 43, 66, 68, 9, 30, 70, 71, 72, 22, 71, 1, 56, 59, 63, 65, 92, 94, 95, 97, 48, 49, 66, 67, 17, 19, 25, 58, 85, 86, 109, 18, 28, 48, 49, 67 8, 46, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 47, 53, 12, 13, 14, 15, 26, 27, 38, 62, 64, 12, 13, 14, 83, 47, 9 10, 15, 16, 22, 42 24, 25, 51, 52, 53, 54, 85 25 91, 98, 99 91, 92, 93, 95, 69, 87</p>
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