UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

School of Education

Seeing the Point: Conceptions of Learning and Teaching for Transfer and Influences on Teaching Practice

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

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SEEING THE POINT: CONCEPTIONS OF LEARNING AND TEACHING
FOR TRANSFER AND INFLUENCES ON PRACTICE

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This research explored the relationship between lecturers' conceptions of transferability of
learning and the influence of this on their teaching practice. The central proposition was
that if transferability of learning lies at the heart of teaching, then lecturers should have
specific conceptions of transfer which underpin and feature in their teaching.

The research was a qualitative study comparing the teaching of two different courses in
similar subject areas at one university. One course had a professional vocational orientation
and the other was a more generic degree programme. The main methods of investigation
were semi – structured interviews, observations and focus groups. Data were analysed
using a variety of processes but focusing particularly on exploring variations and internal
relationships common to phenomenographical techniques. A matrix framework was
produced, locating lecturers' conceptions of teaching for transfer with observations of their
practice.

One of the main findings was that lecturers did hold conceptions of teaching for transfer
and there was a marked difference between those held by psychology lecturers and those by
social work lecturers. Secondly there was some evidence that these conceptions did
influence teaching practice and that transfer techniques occurred most frequently when
teachers drew on experience whether their own or those of students.

These findings build upon and extend previous research associated with conceptions of
learning and teaching by adding the dimension of 'focus on transfer'. The greater the focus
on transfer and this was particularly so with the social work lecturers who used more of the
teaching for transfer techniques than the psychology lecturers, the more able students were
to 'see the point' and apply their learning.   Being explicit with students about why any
aspect of the curriculum was relevant and how it could be applied, facilitated the learning
transfer process.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I…Roz Collins…………………………………………

declare that the thesis entitled

Seeing the Point: Conceptions of Learning and Teaching for Transfer and Influences on Practice

and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
- where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
- where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
- where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- none of this work has been published before submission,

Signed: …………………………………………………………………………..

Date:………………………………………………………………………….

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Thank you to my mum who said I shouldn't give up. Mostly thanks and apologies to my children: Melanie; Tasha; Jessica; James and Samuel and my grandchildren: Nathaniel; Jack and Jake who have been neglected and ignored and sometimes even shouted at whilst I was at the PC - Sorry.

Chapter 1 – 'Bo-Peep' Theory of Transfer

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to identify conceptions of transfer of learning that lecturers' hold and how these influence their practice in relation to the empirical evidence on promoting teaching for transfer within a higher education context. This research aims to build on the research into conceptions of learning and teaching in higher education. Findings from previous research into conceptions have determined that lecturers in higher education have particular types of conceptions of teaching and student learning. These conceptions range from seeing teaching as 'reproduction' to seeing teaching as 'facilitating' learning. This investigation seeks to extend the previous research by focusing on the implications for transfer in relation to conceptions of teaching in two similar subject courses in one institution. One course was selected for its claims to have a vocational/professional orientation; the other for its claims to have an academic/generic orientation. The findings are contrasted with current understandings about how to promote learning transfer and examined for any discernible difference according to espoused course orientation. A matrix of the findings is developed related to conceptions of teaching for transfer and subsequently mapped to teaching practices.

The context and impetus for this research lies in the government policy known as the skills agenda, see for instance (Council for Vice Chancellors (CVCP) et al., 1998; Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), 1997; DfEE, 2000a; DfEE, 1999; DfEE, 2000b; DfEE, 2000c) and is based upon the premise that learning is transferable from a formal learning environment to other contexts, including from the higher education environment to the context of a working environment. Higher education institutions and teaching practitioners have complied with this premise and adopted what has been termed 'a bo-peep' theory of transfer: "Let them alone and they'll come home, wagging their tails behind them" (Perkins and Salomon, 1988: p.23).

The skills agenda has extended to the notion of a learning society and life long learning, born out of a belief that a new knowledge economy needs a more skilled workforce in order

to increase productivity and achieve success in a global economy. Many government initiatives and policy changes have arisen out of this assumption, most recently for example, the report by Lord Sandy Leitch (2006) entitled 'Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills'. This highly acclaimed report states "*Wherever possible, skills should be portable to deliver mobility in the labour markets for individuals and employers*" (p.3) and skills are referred to throughout the report as "*economically valuable skills*". Interestingly the report uses the term 'economically valuable' throughout the report but never defines what these are.

Coffield (2000), an expert in the field of life-long learning says

> *the alleged link between investment in education and economic performance is a belief rather than an established research finding. Despite extensive research, no causal connection has been found...*(p.8)

It seems that the general assumptions underpinning government policy are that learning and skills are tangible, measurable entities that transfer automatically into the required context and that by emphasising or encouraging certain learning and skills growth in society, this will naturally result in a more productive work force/economy. As Coffield (2000) suggests government investment in up-skilling the workforce appears to be based on a set of misguided assumptions as the review of research in Chapter 2 will demonstrate. It is worth noting at this point that the notion of transfer is applied to 'learning' and to 'skills', and both terms are used interchangeably in the literature. The government adopts the term 'skill' and yet 'skills' in themselves are defined in different ways by different perspectives, or as above not defined at all. This will also be explored further in chapter 2.

Currently the debate about transferability is less well developed than other areas of the learning and skills literature. Historically psychologists, such as Ellis (1965) described learning transfer as occurring when "*experience or performance on one task influences the performance on some subsequent task*" (p.3). At this time investigations took the form of experimental design where transfer was 'measured' using comparisons with control groups. This type of research has subsequently been termed "*nonanalytic*" by Underwood in 1957 cited in Ellis (1965:p.6) due to a lack of taking into account certain variables or isolating

those that may promote learning transfer. Later studies looked at the dimensions of transfer and why transfer occurs. Earlier studies were more concerned about whether transfer occurred at all. However Ellis (1965) did identify some pertinent questions which remain to be answered by even the most recent research, explored in later chapters and suggested the following four areas of further investigation:

> *1. What are effective ways of measuring transfer of learning; 2. What are the factors or conditions that influence transfer; 3. Are particular theories of transfer valid for certain kinds of learning; 4. How can we organise the curricula so as to best ensure positive transfer?* (p.7)

This particular study seeks to focus in part on areas 2. Do conceptions of teaching affect teaching practice, but to also contribute to 4. If teaching conceptions do affect practice which conceptions help to positively influence teaching practice and learning transfer?

Tolly and Murphy articulate transfer as *"a link between previous and future learning"* they contend *"the ability to transfer is the essence of what it means to be a lifelong learner"* (p.19). The above concept of transfer incorporating the learner using meta-cognitive strategies in transferring learning from one context to another encapsulates and bounds the concept of transfer for this study.

The most appropriate approach to explore this topic falls within what one can generally term an interpretative paradigm which incorporates a number of qualitative approaches. There appears to be little consensus about how to classify the various approaches of qualitative research as highlighted by Denzin & Lincoln (1998) who suggest these varying conceptions have evolved over time but still are a matter of debate (p.79). However the term 'interpretative approach' is used by Schwandt (2001); Crotty (1998); and Denzin & Lincoln (1998). Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2000) say that the interpretative paradigm is characterised by *"a concern for the individual "*and the central endeavour of the paradigm is to *"understand the subjective world of human experience…. "The focus is on meaning and intended behaviour…and theory is emergent from the research process"* (p.22-23). Data collection and analysis has been in the form of negotiated meanings and understandings, shaped and bounded by culture and socially constructed in relationships with participants (Patton, 1990).

The philosophical approach adopted is through the lens of existential phenomenology Schutz in Cohen et al (2000). The research process has been iterative, sequentially descriptive and explanatory. The main methods of data collection were interviews with tutors and observation of teaching, triangulated with focus groups and interviews with students. I have chosen to draw upon phenomenographical techniques for the mode of analysis (Trigwell, 2000) as this mode has been used substantively in the exploration of conceptions in higher education.

> *The aim of phenomenography is to take differing experiences, understandings and characterize them: in terms of 'categories of description' logically related to each other, and forming hierarchies in relation to given criteria. Such an ordered set of categories is called the 'outcome space' of the phenomenon concept in question* (Marton, 1994: p.4424). Also cited in (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000).

The data were analysed and compared with current empirical evidence on teaching for transfer and conceptions of learning and teaching gained by other researchers thus far.

The key question for this research was: what are lecturers' conceptions of learning and teaching transfer and how do these conceptions influence their teaching practice? Subsidiary questions were:

1. How do such conceptions build on the work of other recent research?

2. Do these conceptions differ according to the perceived purpose/outcome of the teaching, i.e. preparing students to directly enter the world of work or preparing students to undertake further research?

3. How do these conceptions compare to what we currently know about learning and skills transfer.

4. What are the implications (if any) for informing the development of teaching practice in higher education?

Andrews (2003) states that the actual questions have to answer to the criteria of a) manageable – that is, suggesting a research methodology and answerable within the course of the research project and b) workable – of sufficient scale within the scope of the project. By adopting the use of a small comparative qualitative study the research seeks to meet the criteria of a) manageable and b) workable. The criteria proposed by Robson, (2002) that good research questions should be: *"clear; specific; answerable; interconnected and*

substantively worthwhile" (p.59) have also been used as a guiding framework in the above question formulation.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter two locates the study within a review of the literature which examines the notion of learning, approaches to the differentiation between knowledge, skills, learning and application of learning, theories about how learning is transferred and relevant associated empirical investigations. Research into conceptions of learning and teaching is explored and reported. The chapter finishes with an epistemological analysis of the literature in order to orientate and introduce the reader to the proposed approach taken in the following methodology chapter.

Chapter three details the methodological approach adopted, the research design and the process of data collection and analysis. The data collected is presented and discussed in chapters four and five using a series of analyses, including phenomenographical analysis. Chapter six presents a further analysis, including some implications and limitations of the study and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2 – The Learning Transfer Debate

Introduction

This literature review is ordered into six sections that relate to and build on each other in an attempt to paint a picture of the landscape surrounding the research question. Firstly a brief exploration of early research into how people learn, traces the development of understanding learning and how this might be related to learning transfer. The next section focuses on the terms 'learning' and 'skills' to show how the different interpretations and applications in the literature only seem to confuse rather than clarify the terms, begging the question 'is there a difference'? Section three moves onto to examine the issues and arguments about learning and skills transfer. Various foci of interest adopted by different fields are presented to help organise the debate. An explication of the significance of learning transfer as being at the heart of learning and education is offered through examining our understanding of learning and meta-cognition.

Empirical findings related to teaching for transfer are contrasted and evidence of effective teaching for transfer methods are presented in section four. Section five explores the limited number but closely related research to this study. It looks at conceptions of teaching practice and learning amongst a few stakeholders, providing the rationale for this particular study and the analytical approach taken.

Finally section six offers a perusal of the literature in relation to philosophical epistemological approaches and is helpful in justifying and placing this research within the interpretative paradigm.

How do People Learn?

Theories about how people learn have evolved over time and can be broadly assigned to the psychological categories of the behaviourists or the cognitivists and most theories seem to borrow from both (Schunk,1996). Differences in definitions exist but recent texts seem to agree that learning is about "*an enduring change in behaviour, or in the capacity to behave in a given fashion, which results from practice or other forms of experience*" Shuell, cited

in Schunk (1996: p.2). Heregenhalm (2001) describes learning as an 'intervening' variable where the independent variable is some form of stimulus resulting in learning and an observable change in behaviour. The response is seen as the dependent variable. Learning itself is inferred from observable change and assessed on verbalisation, writing, action etc. Breaking down Shuell's definition leaves us with some ambiguities, Shuell mentions "*capacity to behave*'" implying that a change in behaviour may not be immediately observable. "*Enduring change*" this involves the capacity for sustained change, not momentary, yet he says we also have to account for natural memory loss. The change in behaviour resulting from experience or practice also has to discount behaviour that occurs as a consequence of heredity influences. These explanations suggest that our current assessment of learning is still quite nebulous and full of caveats. We may or may not observe a change in behaviour, we cannot predict or prescribe when that change may take place and we are unclear about when change is due to the environment or innate factors, especially when the interaction of both is required for change to occur.

Behaviourists, see for example Skinner, (2005) and cognitivists, see for example Ausubel, Novak & Hanesia (1978) agree that environment and personal differences both play a role in the learning process. Behaviourists however emphasise the potential of the environment and cognitivists focus more upon personal cognitive processes Schunk (1996) for promoting learning. Both schools of thought also treat the role of memory and motivation to learn, differently, which has a significant impact on what might be considered effective teaching. The behaviourists believe in regular re-enforcement and review to maintain memory and motivation, whereas the cognitivists posit the importance of how material is organised and related to existing knowledge for better recall and also take into account, factors such as: the setting of goals, self efficacy and outcome expectations as factors affecting motivation (Schunk 1996).

In the early sixties Bruner (1962) a cognitive theorist advanced the notion of discovery learning where learners develop cognitive function progressively by being exposed to directed activity and moving from the specifics of cause and effect to generalisation. Critics of this approach suggest that prior knowledge cannot be assumed and that discovery in

itself has to be linked to what is already known for the learner to identify the most appropriate outcome. Ausubel et al (1978) in the late sixties proposed 'meaningful reception theory' where learners should be given an initial overview or 'advanced organiser' explanation of the whole to aid relational linkages. Learning becomes meaningful when the tutor uses 'expository teaching' presenting new information related to what is present in long-term memory. It has been shown that advanced organiser techniques positively promote learning transfer Schunk (1996).

Educational constructivists Kolb (1984) through to Biggs (1999) suggest that thinking is largely constructed through and out of experience of situations. Social constructivists focus on the importance of social interaction in shaping learning. Alternatively situated cognition proposes that learning is the sum of cognitions, affects, behaviours and environments, in any given situation. The other assumption underpinning constructivism is that we all have 'implicit theories' about how we learn and these can be positive or negative affiliations that aid or inhibit further learning. Vygotsky in Schunk (1996) built on constructivism contending that unlike the rest of the animal kingdom humans are not simply recipients of the environment but we change and manipulate it. Emphasising the interaction between persons and their environment as a basis for learning he coined the term 'dialectical constructivism'. Many aspects of our environment are products of culture. Vygotsky advances that learning is culturally bound and is a product of internal processes interacting with the environment, thus integrating the behaviourist and cognitivist schools. Building on this, is the idea of concept learning where we recognise something as a set of related characteristics. Two different perspectives of concept learning are proposed. The first views concepts as an understanding of the heuristics and attributes of the situation and the other view is termed the 'prototype theory' where the concept is formed based on similar but not exclusive attributes. Implications for teachers are suggested as: *"defining concepts and specifying the distinguishing attributes and stating relevant examples"* (Schunk, 1996: pp. 191-232).

Although all slightly different, a picture of possible effective teaching strategies is beginning to emerge, such as: building on previous knowledge and experience; linking concepts; looking for similarities and so on.

A useful theory particularly relevant to the learning transfer debate is about the relationship between conditional knowledge and meta-cognition. Knowledge is categorised into declarative – knowing that, procedural knowledge – knowing how and conditional knowledge – knowing why and when (Biggs, 1999). Meta-cognition is explained as using all three types of knowledge, declarative, procedural and conditional systematically to inform our ability to understand how we are learning and to decide on the most effective strategies for the task. "*Meta-cognition refers to the knowledge, awareness and control of one's own learning*" Case & Gunstone (2002: p.184). Using meta-cognitive strategies is not necessarily automatic and teaching learners how to learn has been shown to enhance overall learning. Teaching meta- cognitive strategies is teaching how to learn and this is at the heart of the debate about learning transfer. Is transfer really about teaching learners the process of how to transfer what is learnt or is it about teaching what content is needed to transfer, the crux of the issue could be construed as process versus content.

The main premise of this investigation is that learning must be applied if it is to be of use to us, situationally specific knowledge and skills appear to be of little utility if progression in understanding is the goal.

In summary, different theories about learning have evolved and changed but remain complex. It seems there are specifically labeled types of knowledge and it takes all of these forms of knowledge to apply or transfer what we learn. This study advocates the importance of 'transfer' as being at the heart of learning and will later discuss in more detail how this relates to what is termed meta-cognition.

Learning and skills: Is there a Difference?
Academics in the eighties challenged what was seen as government interference and the rhetoric of vocationalism Palmer (1986: pp.37-44) decried what he termed 'skillsology'

versus culture accusing the policy makers of being means-ended utilitarians, denying learners credit for anything other than what is demonstrable:

> *And it is this exploration of meaning, this liberation from the present, which a traditional education in general - and an arts education in particular - makes possible. It is a possibility which is precluded in the time and motion philistinism of skillsology.'* (p.44)

Research in the early nineties and also in 2000 appeared to agree that the language of skills and competence was rooted in the ascribed social and economic value of a 'technocratic ideology' Norris (1991:p339) and (Barnett, 2001; Harris & Palmer, 2000; Jessup, 1991; Spenner, 1990; Vallas, 1990). Sociologists in particular voiced concern regarding the over simplification of measuring skills for operational purposes and the myriad perspectives:

> *Because researchers have used widely varying conceptions and measures of skill, the empirical literature is rife with inconsistent and contradictory findings that point in several directions at once...for skill research can have massive implications for public policies, as seems implied by the comparable worth of literature* (Vallas,1990: p.379).

Cree & Macaulay (2000) go further still

> *Recent epistemological debate suggests that traditional ways of conceptualising 'knowledge' and 'skills' as separate entities has been misleading, and this area has been re-conceptualised under the general rubric of knowledge. Knowledge involved in action or while undertaking a task includes conceptual knowledge (knowing that) procedural knowledge (knowing knowledge) and strategic knowledge (knowing what to do when* (p.9).

Broader debate about the integration of vocational and academic learning acknowledged the feasibility of the integration of 'simple' motor type skills and knowledge, but posed questions about higher order learning and skills. How is it possible to call 'problem solving' a skill when it requires high levels of cognitive activity. Some have argued in fact that there is no clear distinction between knowing and doing (Blass, 1999; Brown & Scase, 1994; Hinchcliffe, 2002; Jessup, 1991; Kivinen & Ristella, 2002). Focusing upon the role of higher education Kivinen and Ristella assert that skill development on its own, will never be enough

> *Even the highest form of education can no longer only entail the development of disciplinary skills that are rather narrowly seen as cognitive, but also the*

acquisition of a variety of habits that comprise dispositions and ways of acting (p.424).

In a small empirical case study of students in higher education, Tait & Godfey (1999) introduced a unit of core skills for all level one students at a university. They reported that the notion of generic skills was in no way helpful to teaching and assessment in higher education and that, students also needed to practise discipline specific skills so that they could see the relevance and intended application.

In a more recent study with students Lucas, Cox, Croudace &Milford (2004) found that students themselves held tacit notions of skills development and associated skills, relating them more closely to personal attributes that arise naturally and over time, and unrelated to the specifications of skills on their courses.

Taking a slightly different view Hyland (1997) and Whitson (1998) focus upon the emphasis made by the policy makers on the transferability and generic nature of skills and both critique the validity of the assumption. Hyland in 'Skills that fail to travel' (THES, 1997) says that "*because there is no common agreement about what constitutes skill the debate is fatuous and redundant*" and Whitson argues that the whole skill debate implies deficits in both students and the system and that:

> *Successful skill transfer is evidently not simple it is about using previously acquired skills in the same, or similar situations. Oates (1992, p238) argues that transfer always involves 'adapting an old skill to a new situation' and cites Piaget on the way 'effective performance and learning emerges from an interaction between our existing skills, constructs, etc. and a new task or situation. Learning involves adaptation and conflict; transfer is itself a learning process.* (p.314*)...*
>
> *Dearing's 'learning to learn' could be read as 'learning to transfer', to apply knowledge, understanding and skill to new situations. The question is whether it will lead to a search for the 'real' transferable skills, or re-direct attention to the learning process itself* (p.314*).*

The question about skills and/or learning transferability is supported by some educationalists who contend that transfer is a skill in itself that can and should be taught (Misko, 1998; Shepherd, 2000). Tolley & Murphy (2000) suggest that

transfer should be thought of not as an event but as a continuation of the learning process – a link between previous and future learning then it may not be too much of an exaggeration to suggest that learning to transfer lies at the heart of lifelong learning, and the ability to transfer is the essence of what it means to be a lifelong learner (p.19).

In this line of thought the notion of transfer over-rides any particular skill and is seen as central to the learning process.

A related perspective is offered by Fettes (2000) who discusses the socially constructed nature of skill, less in a social and economic sense and more as negotiated meaning. A substantive proponent of this view is Holmes (Holmes, 1994; Holmes, 1998; Holmes, 2000a; Holmes, 2000b; Holmes, 2002). Holmes questions the meaning of skills and the explosion of skills in the language of education and employment; he suggests that skills can be distinguished through different discourses, i.e.

- mundane, everyday, colloquial discourse
- political economic
- pedagogic – form and process of curriculum
- personnel and human resource management
- scientific psychology

In these articles he discusses the plethora of lists and models of skills and the lack of a coherent collective understanding. Holmes says that skills should be conceived through mediated understanding between the employer and graduate –in the **practice – identity model**. Graduate identity lies in the interaction and interpretation of expectations that are performed in practice. He explains that graduate identity is formed from the interaction between the organisation and the individual and the closer the graduate can articulate the cultural language of skills the closer the alignment between themselves and the perceived expected skills desired by the organisation (Holmes, 2000b).

The learning/skills debate lives on and continues to challenge, amongst other issues, the language of skills, the existence of skills and the assumption of learning transfer.
The contention in this study is that it appears to be very difficult to differentiate or discern the difference between knowledge and skills in relation to learning, from the literature. Due

to this, this research will treat 'learning' and 'skills' as a homogenous entity although it is fully appreciated that the discussion surrounding this issue would be a thesis in itself.

Learning and Skills Transfer

It is widely accepted and acknowledged that transfer is a complex and difficult area that still needs further exploration (Bennett, Dunne, & Carre, 2000). Many perspectives will be discussed but it can be seen that our knowledge of transfer remains limited and lacking in overall agreement. This lack of underpinning theory has left an important gap in pedagogical understanding and application.

In a relatively recent and uniquely comprehensive text on teaching for transfer edited by Mckeough, Lupart & Marini (1995), the introduction states that,

> *Transfer of learning is universally accepted as the ultimate aim of teaching.*
> *However achieving this goal is one of teachings most formidable problems.*
> *Researchers have been more successful in showing how people fail to transfer*
> *learning than they have been in producing it, and teachers and employers alike*
> *bemoan student 'inability to use' what they have learned* (p.vii).

However some empirical data, across a range of educational contexts (Perkins, 1991; Perkins & Salomon, 1988; Perkins & Salomon, 1989; Perkins, 1995; Reboy, 1991; Thomas, 1992), suggests that transfer does occur and that certain teaching practices promote transfer of learning much more than others. This point is discussed further in the section on exploring empirical investigation into teaching for transfer.

Most of this learning and skills transfer research, now somewhat dated, has been collected by cognitive psychologists often rooted in the traditions and methods of the positivist paradigm. (Mckeough et al (1995) pose the question "*What research paradigms should we use to learn more about teaching for transfer?*"(p.3). Like Ellis (1965), McKeough et al raise the issues of what to study or investigate, the learner, the task or the context. The list of what to investigate in relation to the transfer of learning and skills grows longer, attracting different types of investigation and disciplines. These include: psychology; education; and human resource development researchers. The main issues raised are discussed below, taking each discipline in turn or integrating these where linkages or contradictions are apparent. Psychologists are not homogenous in their school of thought or

approach, although there is some evidence of limited convergence over time. In the early twentieth century the stimulus-response S –R psychologists such as Pavlov, studied similarities in stimulus. Gestalt psychologists focused more on looking at perception and motivation of the learner and whether these personal characteristics affected the ability to transfer. Developmental psychologists concentrated on how learners acquired previous experience and how this is used particularly in relation to forward and backward reaching transfer.

Historically the behaviourists, such as, Chi in Mckeough et al (1995) understood learning transfer as occurring where the learner identified similar features or circumstances in a situation, this was called identical elements theory. The problem with this view was how to discern how similar the elements need to be and how many elements the learner needs to recognise to transfer learning to another situation. Other early theories included mental discipline where it was believed that certain disciplines can 'borrow' more readily from similar disciplines and the concept of generalisation where the learner will transfer the response to a similar stimulus in a different situation. These early theories are not currently dismissed. Rather they have been assimilated into slightly more complex theories derived by the cognitivists through empirical investigation. Transfer is not an automatic activity and mostly seems to involve the use of conditional knowledge, as previously discussed, that is, the learner has to understand and invoke meta-cognitive strategies.

The phenomenon of transfer is not a single entity and different elements have been identified. Royer (1986) in Schunk (1996) distinguished between near and far transfer and literal and figural transfer. These concepts imply near transfer occurs when similarities in learning and the context are apparent, later termed, situated cognition theory. Far transfer occurs where there are only a few 'hooks' for the learner to recognise. Literal transfer is when the actual same skill or knowledge transfers over into a new context and figural transfer is where the learner generalises the learning to other representations such as, the use of analogies or metaphor. Salomon & Perkins (1989) in their seminal work on transfer, discuss notions of low and high road transfer. High road transfer can either be backward reaching or forward reaching. They suggest that by adopting constructivist teaching type

methods: drawing on previous experience or knowledge, backward transfer is more likely to occur. They also recommend using analogies, encouraging abstraction and explicitly encouraging meta-cognitive strategies/heuristics to promote forward transfer. Low road transfer only occurs when practice is somewhat automated and opportunities to apply to varied situations are present so that triggers can be recognised. Salomon & Perkins (1989) also cite some convincing experiments where students taught content knowledge versus students taught meta-cognitive strategies respectively showed significant gains in understanding (p.127).

A very comprehensive empirical study of transfer of learning using a range of methods to measure different aspects was conducted by the psychologists Pennington, Nicolich, & Rahm (1995) who concluded that learning by rote transfers to highly similar problems but learning by understanding, results in transfer to less similar or novel problems. The writers contend that identical elements theory has progressed to information processing concepts and declarative knowledge elaboration is underestimated due to the current emphasis on skills transfer being interpreted as procedural transfer. Hammouri, (2003) an educationalist, also undertook a relatively large scale (n=178) experimental investigation of student cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies which concluded that meta-cognition as relative to holistic and analytic problem solving strategies is indeed very complex, incorporating a wide range of variables positively and negatively correlated with both types of strategies. Hammouri outlines the range of strategies previously identified by other researchers, as: looping and anti-looping heuristics; means end analysis; forward and backward; generate and test; holistic and analytic; recalling analogical problems; formal algebraic; decomposing and simplifying (p.527). All these strategies are strikingly similar to those discussed earlier, from the fields of psychology and education and also authors such as Reboy (1991); Salomon & Perkins (2003) and Shepherd (2000) – to name but a few. All of whom have worked to promote learning transfer. Hammouri (2003) concludes that:

> *Whilst it is impossible to define an ideal problem solving or thinking process for every problem solving context, it is safe to say that a universal pre-requisite for problem solving is to equip students with a repertoire of de-contextualised*

strategies, processes, types, images and metaphors that can be used to help frame
different dilemmas (p.585).

The psychologists are in agreement that utilising strategies for transfer can be complex, difficult and lacking in endurance, impeded by not understanding which strategy to apply. The ability to transfer by the learner can also be inhibited by not being aware of how to modify for different contexts, not perceiving the strategy as relevant or not having the opportunity to apply the strategy in alternative situations. All these aspects have serious implications for the educator regarding how to facilitate transfer of learning across contexts.

Turning to the educationalists who perhaps predictably focus more on the practical methods that teachers should use to promote transfer, Phye & Sanders (1997) advise that learners need three levels of instruction and practise to harness their meta-cognitive abilities. First is the acquisition phase – learning the content, secondly– the retention phase, further encouragement to recall and practice again and thirdly the transfer phase where participants are actively encouraged to apply the learning to new situations. This may sound somewhat simplistic and others have attempted to explicate more sophisticated approaches. For example Brown, Collins, & Duguid (1989) all discuss the situatedness of learning in terms of acquiring new knowledge in context and the relational and socially constructed nature of learning. These authors suggest the uptake of what they term cognitive apprenticeship – promoting learning within the nexus of activity, tool and culture and encouraging collaborative learning engaging in social interaction and the circulation of narrative, all provide a rich learning environment. Essential and salient features of the 'teaching' for transfer process, they suggest include collective problem solving, displaying multiple roles, confronting ineffective strategies and providing collaborative work skills (p.40).

Down (2005) focuses on teaching practice in general and suggests:

> *that a shift in teaching practice is essential if learners are to be actively empowered*
> *to learn in ways which reduce their conditioned dependency on formal learning*
> *tools and ritualised events and develop their capacity for lifelong experiential and*
> *investigative learning* (p.2*).*

Down is advocating here for a student centred approach if transfer is to be achieved. She also argues that transfer can be spontaneous but offers no real evidence or explanation except to suggest that it may occur as a result of puzzlement. Her argument seems rather self contradictory as on the one hand, she argues that learning transfer is an integration of different learning theories requiring the learner to deconstruct and reconstruct understandings within multiple frameworks and where the learner discerns difference, transfer can occur yet on the other hand she suggests that the process can occur spontaneously. This explanation implies a carefully crafted learning experience laden with problem solving scenarios to develop meta-cognition much less than a spontaneous occurrence. Although her argument seems rather weak ultimately she concurs with Brown et al (1989) suggesting that, requiring the learner to puzzle and search for solutions will stimulate transfer.

Two other studies by educationalists would seem worthy of note. Both studies have targeted student perception of learning and skill transfer. A recent study by Burke, Jones, & Doherty (2005) set out to assess student perceptions of the knowledge and skills acquired during their undergraduate degree programmes and to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of the strategies adopted in respect of learning transfer. The study used a survey instrument (n=116) administered to level 3 students across two similar courses. In essence, the study identified what students perceived that they had learned to transfer: communication skills (oral and written) (38%), interaction with others (34.5%) and applied knowledge (31%). Generally students struggled to identify what strategies they used to promote transfer. The study suggested that further research should focus more on the process of the outcomes of skill acquisition and transfer, such as the learning environment and fidelity of course design - similarity in learning task to projected desired application and also recommends the use of mixed methodologies.

Thompson, Brooks, & Lizarraga (2003) also educationalists investigated transfer of learning by interviewing students on a distance learning course in Human Resource Development (HRD) and triangulated the student data by interviewing workplace supervisors. Both students and supervisors reported positive transfer to the workplace.

Similar to Burke et al (2005) they found transfer (to some extent) of communication skills, leadership and team building, HRD discipline skills, adult learning principles, research and evaluations skills and professional development concepts.

It seems there is some evidence of perceived transfer of what might be termed the 'soft skills' from the learning context to the transfer context. Thompson et al (2003) and Burke et al (2005) both conclude with recommendations for further research into teaching methods and teaching style – as partially addressed by this study.

Following on from this educational study of HRD student professionals, the field of human resources (H.R) has a notably established history of interest and investigation into learning transfer.

In 2002 the Association of Human Resource Development committed significant coverage of the issue of learning transfer at their annual conference in Hawaii. Cromwell & Kolb (2002) focused on three elements in the work environment: organizational support, management support and peer support, collected via a survey administered three times over a year-long period to facilitate time series analysis. They found that management support was the most significant variable after 1 year in the job to positively influence learning transfer. Kupritz & Reddy (2002) compared learning environment to workplace design, utilizing content analysis techniques of interviews. They found that particularly where work/job roles required concentration/reflection not surprisingly open plan offices were not conducive to transfer of learning. Enos & Kehrhahn (2002) sampled managers in the workplace and investigated the relationship between transfer of learning, proficiency, work environment variables and informal learning. They concluded that managers learn most via informal learning and that management proficiency is the product of informal learning, they claim the transfer process is moderated through self regulation (p.25).

Much of the H.R. research seeks measurement and solutions. Prior to the H.R. conference, Holton, Reid, & Ruona (2000) developed what they termed a generalized learning transfer system inventory (LTSI). This instrument attempts to measure all factors; the person, the training and the organization.

The article discusses the development and testing of the construct validity of the instrument and is self critical of not measuring work attitudes and personality. It suggests the instrument should allow H.R. practitioners to measure transfer thereby shifting the research emphasis to effective interventions that promote transfer. They concluded that climate and job ability are the most influential variables.

Noe (2000) criticizes the LTSI for ignoring previous empirical studies that collectively show that supervisor support, peer support and climate are positively related to transfer. Ruona et al (2002) took the work on LTSI further in 2002 advancing the limitations of LTSI as a measure of training outcomes and therefore only serving as some indication of participants' antecedent ability and motivation (Ruona et al, 2002). Ruona virtually dismisses the instrument she helped to develop, suggesting participant reaction is a very poor indicator of transfer and that learner utility/enjoyment is a better indicator of transfer. It seems the eventual conclusions of the HR specialists are that there are limitations of survey instruments in measuring transfer, due to the vast number of variables, requiring many controls in the research design.

Studies of learning transfer from a psychological, sociological, pedagogical or H.R organizational perspective offer a mix of analyses and outcomes offering tentative suggestions about the how and what of transfer. This is often justified by the stated complexity of the subject and further differentiated by adopting different paradigmatic interpretations and assumptions. If there are disagreements about how much learning transfer can be achieved and by what means, there seems to some agreement that it is difficult and complex in terms of what is transferred and by how much.

Suffice to say knowledge of learning transfer is growing but it is questionable whether this has achieved coherence or consensus. These are not necessarily pre-requisites for theory formulation, but the lack of coherence and consensus continues to limit understanding or inform pedagogical practice!

Many empirical studies have taken place and have generally confirmed some of the propositions discussed, such as: the existence of and different types of learning transfer; the range of probable effective teaching strategies; the importance of promoting learner meta-cognitive processes and that some 'skills' seem to transfer more readily than others. These empirical studies will be explored more fully in the following section.

Empirical Findings Related to Teaching for Transfer

The majority of the research in this area appears to be derived from educationalists adopting a social scientific empirical approach. Many studies assume constructivist type principles of building upon previous learner experience, see for example (Perkins, 1995). The majority adopt a pragmatic approach concentrating on the task, as in, how the learning is designed or assessed (Reboy, 1991; Thomas, 1992). Others have tested aspects of the learning environment focusing on the learner context (Columbo, Sadowski, & Walsh 2000). Some studies offer generic methods or principles for teaching to promote transfer Shepherd (2000) and others centre upon specific factors in the learning process (Calais, Belk, Larmon, & Sparks, 1999). The majority of the literature occurs in the nineties but goes back as much as 20 years ago with the odd study as recent as 2002. As the research unfolds it is possible to identify similarities in the findings and recommendations, see for example table one. This section ends with a summary of the most commonly cited teaching strategies which will be re-visited to inform the analysis of the data relating to teaching practice in chapters four and five.

Returning to the seminal work on learning transfer by Salomon and Perkins who advocate that intelligence can be learned, they suggest the specific teaching techniques of 'hugging' and 'bridging' to promote transfer (1988, 1995). Akin to the theory of zone proximal development as posed by Vygotsky and developed by Mercer in the use of 'scaffolding techniques' Mercer (1991). Hugging is described as the tutor actively using previously learned content and applying it to a new situation, so stimulating low road transfer. Bridging, Salomon et al suggest, should be used to meet the conditions of high road transfer that is, mediating the processes of abstraction and connection making, by explicitly highlighting the underlying principles behind a problem and generalising these to a range of

situations. An interesting discussion by Lauder & Reynolds (1999) about practice to practice and theory to practice transfer as applied to the nursing profession reiterates notions of meta-cognition and situated learning. Similar to Salomon et al they also suggest two specific instructional vehicles for encouraging transfer, namely the use of metaphor and analogies.

In 1989 the Educational Resources and Clearing Center (ERIC) invited an annual review of the theory and practice of teaching for transfer. This was conducted by Batterfield & Nelson, (1989). They offered a comprehensive evolutionary explanation of the theories and mechanisms associated with learning transfer, such as: common elements theory; elements as schemata; and more recently, information processing theory. Understanding of transfer mechanisms has also progressed from simple to sophisticated; from conditioned association to assimilation and accommodation to complex cognitive mechanisms. Batterfield and Nelson also suggest that, it is not the fault of the learner if she/he fails to transfer but the failure is caused by 'disabled' teaching practices. They advocate as a minimum the encouragement of inferential reasoning and meta-cognitive activities. They finally raise questions for particular fields of research, for educational research they say *"The extent to which educational practices reflect current conceptions of transfer is unknown..... and .....Are any aspects of classroom teaching designed specifically to promote transfer"* (p.28), questions of particular relevance to this research.

Two educationalists from the U.S.A in the early nineties undertook quite different empirical studies but there are fundamental similarities in their findings and recommendations. Reboy (1991) reviewed a number of empirical studies that adopted the 'functional context education' model which, advocates teaching reading and mathematics skills in contexts that are relevant to the individual, drawing upon learner's prior knowledge and using 'real life' situations, tasks and materials that the learner may encounter after training. In studies ranging from army training to primary aged school children the experiments showed gains in general and specific literacy skills. Reboy (1991) goes on to suggest a list of practices she believes improve learning transfer. Similarly, Thomas (1992) conducted a very interesting study teaching parents a range of parenting skills. The study comprised 31

parents drawn from 5 different sites. It concluded that utilisation of specific teaching techniques achieved high road transfer. The study identified 4 principles, based on the transfer of learning research and cognitive theory that it recommends can be used for guiding curricular decisions; instructional development and teaching practices in ways that support transferable learning. The following table contrasts their recommendations and highlights some similarities.

Table 2.1 Comparison of recommendations/observations:

Reboy,1991 (pp.1-17)	Thomas, 1992 (pp.4-35)	Commentary
Introduce maintaining contingencies – As students identify a relevant positive example further integrate this into their experiences.	Much of vocational education has emphasised behavioural task analysis but this does not provide the kind of information needed to support instructional development that enhances high road transfer. This is because of the focus on the observable behavioural dimensions of transfer situations only emphasises surface features.	Focus on the general not the specific both in terms of application and abstractions
Use common stimuli – If students are likely to come across materials or situations in work settings then use the same stimuli	Create in the learning situation fidelity to transfer situations – create the same kinds of mental processing during learning to reflect the same that transfer situations may require	Enable learners to see similarities in different situations
Use sufficient stimulus exemplars - use many examples for same situation eg if writing in sentences ask children to do this in all lessons.	Emphasise intermediate level knowledge in curricular decisions - Intermediate knowledge is domain related and relevant to numerous situations and problems. This knowledge is critical to high road transfer, and can be abstracted and connected to new problems.	Apply processes across numerous situations
Train loosely – make loose not rigid connections get students to think critically about the problem as	Reflect the complexities of knowledge and its application in diverse multidimensional contexts, problems and	Encourage multiple and critical applications

opposed to the content of what they just learnt.	situations - flexible knowledge is connected to many different circumstances and problems, making connections and restructuring encourages appropriately complex understanding. Over simplification of knowledge is to be avoided.	
Promote precision – learners should be able to identify a range of situations to apply learning and importantly to also know specifically when the learning is NOT applicable.		Calais,1999 – screen out distracting thoughts?
	Stimulate and challenge the students to transfer their knowledge during learning and support their efforts to do so on their own - because high road transfer is intentional learning transfer, it depends on a stance of self-directedness. Self directedness has to do with learners monitoring themselves and viewing themselves as being in charge of their learning rather than expecting others, such as the teacher, to direct them.	Calais,1999- self efficacy Lim and Johnson,2002- Goal directed – learner motivation

The table appears to show that there are common teaching strategies that can enhance learning transfer.

Further, Thomas (1992) flags implications for education as we currently know it:

- Teachers are not trained to apply these principles in fact the opposite is true.
- High road transfer is a relevant priority for vocational education and for those interested in integrating vocational and academic education.

- There is a need to develop ways of assessing transferable learning – assessments need to detect complex and deep understanding, integration, flexibility and reconstruction of knowledge (pp.61-63)

Also in the early nineties research was taking place in the U.K in response to policy changes about youth training and employment practice. Wolf, Kelson & Silver (1990) undertook a specific study across 56 youth training programmes focusing upon particular skills, the training provided and how the skills were transferred. They used four different vocational groups, some of which were given training specific to their own occupational area and others who purposefully received very varied training and a group that received no special training serving as a control group. Efforts were made to replicate working environments and situations for all participants. The study concluded that the more varied the training, the more the participants were able to deal with general problem solving and transfer to a wider range of contexts.

In 1995 Mckeough et al edited a text incorporating chapters from different educational researchers and practitioners focusing firstly on the evolution of research and understanding about transfer and then on different elements of successful teaching for transfer strategies. Significantly all writers suggest that generalisation of learning is the primary key to transfer. Divergence of opinion comes over whether explicit explanation of how to transfer learning is a necessary prerequisite alongside deep understanding or whether deep understanding in itself is enough to achieve transfer.

In 1999 Chen & Klahr (1999) undertook a significant empirical study of 87 school children across a few grades testing how children acquire a domain-general processing strategy and generalise it across various contexts. They tested 3 different teaching approaches: explicit training within domains plus the use of probing questions, this promoted a basic transfer strategy; using probing questions on their own, this showed no transfer effect; direct instruction about how to generalise to other contexts, this improved the children's ability to generalise and facilitated conceptual change in domain due to promotion of conceptual application. From their research it seems that explicit training/instruction in generalisation

is most helpful to transfer. They also discovered that ability to transfer in general improved with cognitive maturation.

Hattie, Biggs, & Purdie (1996) carried out a meta-analysis of 51 studies aiming to enhance student learning via a number of interventions. They categorised the results following Biggs' taxonomy of 4 hierarchical sequentially inclusive categories of learning, contrasted in a matrix with near and far transfer. They concluded that far transfer and higher order learning appear to be related and that learning context, similar task domain and promotion of learner activity and meta-cognitive awareness all contribute to higher order learning (p.99). They advocate the incorporation of 'strategy teaching' as integral to all learning and not to be separated from content.

> *The students will need to know what those strategies are, of course, and also the conditional knowledge that empowers them: the how, when, where and why of their use. In other words, effective strategy training becomes embedded in the teaching context itself, a conclusion that has profound implications for future research, development, and application in strategy training* (p.131).

Hattie et al are supportive of situated cognition which emphasises the idea that much of what is learned is specific to the situation in which it is learned (Anderson, Reder, & Simon, 1996). Different researchers interpret this in different ways from facilitating similar elements of the learner context to promoting thinking strategies such as meta-cognitive awareness. In a complex but specific study Griffin (1995) investigated the transferability of map reading skills which explored the comparative effectiveness of two instructional methods, one based on the tenets of situated cognition and the other a traditional classroom-based presentation. Two classes of fourth graders from a university research school completed instruction in map skills. Following instruction, both groups completed assessments, one of which was designed to assess far transfer of knowledge. The situated cognition group performed significantly better on the far transfer test than did the traditional instruction group. Anderson et al (1996) in a review of the literature on situated cognition suggest that, whilst the theory has been useful, it is overstated and the claims made are not adequately substantiated in the research. Perhaps it is more a reflection of how situated cognition is conceived and operationalised as discussed above.

Interestingly, thus far the literature search has produced only two studies that have adopted a more qualitative approach and both have focused upon the skill of understanding meaning within written texts. Pressley in (McKeough et al, 1995) worked as a participant observer in classes using different instructional strategies across a range of schools. Each strategy is carefully described and evaluated, but emphasises a focus on process rather than content.

The other research is by Butzkamm (2000) as a practitioner teaching languages he experimented with techniques that moved students away from being 'drilled' with content repetition to what he terms the generative principles [process] applied to discourse. He concludes by asserting that his methods are the most effective in leading students from sentence formation to conversation, hence promoting transfer of learning (p.158). Although both of these studies adopt a qualitative approach, justification and philosophical dimensions are noticeably absent.

Other specific studies looking at meta-cognitive development have concluded that aspects such as learning environment can have a supportive or detrimental effect. Case & Gunstone (2002) suggest "*cover less uncover more*" (p.463). They found that changing assessments from the time constrained type to longer term approaches e.g. reflective logs, encouraged conceptual change from surface to deep learning approaches. Two factors which had a detrimental effect to deeper learning were heavy workload and time pressure in assessments.

Pursuing a slightly different agenda, but also regarding assessment tasks Rawson (2000) argues against the political discourse of graduate skills and advocates the most important skill as that of 'learning to learn' or becoming self aware of how we learn, a meta-cognitive activity. He posits that current assessment practice propagates dependency, militating against meta-cognitive learning. He advocates that students should be an essential collaborative component of the assessment process if they are to take ownership of their own learning.

Taking the notion of meta-cognition and factors allied to transfer, two studies which have interesting linkages in terms of the findings are Calais et al (1999) and Lim & Johnson (2002). Calais et al in a comprehensive review of the literature suggest greater transfer is achieved by four factors: the learner having the knowledge of when, how and why to apply a strategy otherwise referred to as meta-cognition; learner perseverance and self efficacy; the ability to screen out distracting thoughts; the degree of learner declarative knowledge so that requisite knowledge can be activated and applied to the new problem (pp.15-20). Lim and Johnson (2002) conducted an in depth investigation into trainee perceptions of factors that influence learning transfer with HRD professionals in an international organisation. Using a mixed methodology of time series interviews, documentary analysis and self report questionnaires they examined three different aspects, learning content, trainee characteristics and work environment factors. For learning content – greater 'far' transfer was achieved by teaching concepts, general theories and principles rather than specific knowledge or skills. In the case of trainee characteristics, those trainees who had pre-planned relevant goals were more likely to achieve higher transfer. For work environment having a supportive work environment, especially having a supportive supervisor on returning to the work environment and opportunities to apply learning, resulted in increased transfer. Both studies suggest: the teaching of strategies and principles; that learner characteristics such as perseverance and goal setting are important implying a link to learner motivation and that a level of pre-existing knowledge is more likely to be activated in applied situations. Shepherd (2001) quotes Campione in highlighting the importance of teaching underlying principles

> *A considerable amount of research indicates that individuals are able to transfer what they have learned, even between tasks that share no superficial similarity, as long as they have understood the underlying principle* (p.18).

Cree & Macaulay (2000) advocate a whole range of teaching methods to promote transfer and holistic approaches to learning:

> *This enhances learning and cognitive flexibility by providing a mixture of learning tasks and processes - a repertoire of possibilities - from which learners are able to pick their learning procedure. It also enhances meta-cognitive awareness: the ability to select a suitable strategy for dealing with the task in hand. ..Transfer of learning will thus be facilitated by a learning experience that is well taught and well integrated with previous knowledge, teaching methods which seek to enhance*

the ability of the students to make connections and ample scope for putting learning into practice (p.17)

An empirical investigation by Columbo, Sadowski, & Walsh (2000) tested holistic learning and integrated approaches. They focused attention on kindergarten children showing that even at a young age in the learning process teaching for transfer strategies can be effective. They undertook a comparative study of two different sites (kindergartens) to test various teaching and learning methods. This action research made use of 'learning centres' to promote active learning and engagement and holistic learning [not fragmented pieces of knowledge]. They concluded that action learning type interventions increased transfer of learning. Others like Misko (1998) in her detailed and comprehensive report to the Australian National Council for Vocational Education and Research agrees *"It seems that facts, strategies and relevant applications of these strategies need to be taught in tandem"* (p.25).

In conclusion it seems that regardless of the age of subjects or the learning orientation, as in vocational learning, certain teaching strategies used in unison do promote learning transfer.

Turning to the field of higher education Shepherd (2000) offers a very specific framework for lecturers to promote learning transfer. He suggests a number of methods for classroom practice and proposes six incremental steps that students need to take in attempting to solve a new problem; analysis, association, assessment, adaptation, application, and appraisal and offers detailed advice on how to take students through each step. Like Rawson (2000) Shepherd says it is not the transfer of skills that are at the centre of the issue but the skill of learning how to transfer.

> *In an important sense transfer resides in the person, not in the skill. It is a personal quality rather than an attribute of the skill that one acquires. This implies that:*
> *- training for transfer should involve personal development rather than simply skills acquisition*
> *- learning to transfer should be seen as a continuous process, not as a one-off event* (p.18).

In summary it seems there has been quite significant research into teaching practice and what practices best promote learning transfer. There seems to be common agreement that transfer is promoted through teaching strategies such as:

- helping learners to infer learning to other situations;
- using techniques such as bridging, hugging, scaffolding, metaphors and analogies;
- for teachers to point out where learning is not relevant to particular situations;
- Encouraging learners to 'plug in' to existing knowledge or experience and generalising from the specific;
- Asking learners to apply learning to many relevant contexts;
- Enabling learners to make connections and identify the underlying principles, concepts and complexity.

One further element of agreement is the need to be explicit about when teaching is directed at developing meta-cognitive awareness and strategies, teaching how to transfer or as Rawson (2000: pp.225-38) contends, teaching learning to learn. Transfer is also more likely when the learners themselves set goals, are self regulating and have a belief in their own ability to learn and persevere.

Yet the issue of transfer within main stream educational literature appears to be quite neglected. This investigation starts from a different perspective focusing less upon the actual teaching strategies and more on what may lie behind the teaching strategies adopted. This study aims to offer alternative explanations related to the conceptions of learning and teaching transfer held by lecturers and how this affects teaching practice. It is anticipated that the proposed research will significantly contribute to further the understanding of 'learning transfer' by identifying lecturer conceptions and practice that may help or hinder transfer and contribute to the body of knowledge about effective pedagogic practice.

Conceptions of Teaching and Learning

Until relatively recently the research into learning and teaching in higher education has been limited. The early nineties saw a small rash of publications on how to teach in higher

education, (Morgan, 1993; Ramsden, 1992) and (Laurillard, 1993) for example. These texts were all strongly influenced by the phenomenographical approach taken by researchers like, Marton and Saljo in the seventies cited in Bruce & Gerbner (2003). The phenomenographical approach has taken the conceptions or understandings of individuals as the primary phenomenon. The phenomenon is defined as *'the sum of all the qualitatively different ways it is seen, understood and experienced'* from Marton 2003 in Bruce & Gerbner (2003: p.1). Initial research concentrated on student conceptions of learning, such as (Saljo, 1979).

A preliminary but important discussion arises due to the fact that confusion sometimes seems to arise in writings concerning phenomenography, because terms such as 'categories of description' 'dimensions of variation' and 'conceptions' appear to be used almost interchangeably. This has lead to much debate in the literature, and some like Bowden, (2000) prefer not use the term 'conception' as an outcome of analysis, as he says conceptions are relational between the object and the individual, so the conception is unavailable to the researcher. He (ibid) suggests using 'categories of description' as they imply a more temporal and context dependent meaning. Marton & Wing Yan Pong (2005) also discuss difference or discernment as emanating as 'dimensions of variation', but their main point in the following quotation is that discernment only arises once we have attached meaning to a 'phenomenon' and in that discernment phenomenographers are looking for difference or variation.

Marton &Wing Yan Pong (2005) contend that this second order approach enables the discernment of variation within conceptions.

> *Meaning always presupposes discernment and discernment always presupposes variation (cf.Marton & Tsui, 2004) There is thus no discernment without variation; hence every feature discerned corresponds to a certain dimension of variation in which the objects compared with other objects.* (p.336)

So in discussing conceptions Marton et al are referring to the original conceptions that participants may hold and are apparent in individual transcripts. Clusters of understandings across individual transcripts begin to emerge and as these are discerned they form 'categories of description'. In summary

The aim of phenomenography is to take differing experiences, understandings and characterize them: in terms of 'categories of description' logically related to each other, and forming hierarchies in relation to given criteria. Such an ordered set of categories is called the 'outcome space' of the phenomenon concept in question (Marton, 1994: p.4424). Also cited in (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000).

The advice offered by Marton and Booth quoted in Akerlind (2005) *is that the outcomes should be parsimonious – i.e. that the critical variation in experiences observed in the data be represented by a set of as few categories as possible* (p.323).

Previous phenomenographic research has found between four and seven categories of lecturer and student conceptions of different aspects of approaches to teaching and learning.

As Marton also suggests above, the categories of description are usually presented as hierarchical in nature, i.e. each category subsumes the next, although this has not been exclusively the case. Samuelowicz & Bain (1992) argue that usually the categories of description are bi-polar and if this is the case then the more complex conceptions do not subsume earlier conceptions however progressive patterns or relationships may support structuring the conceptions along a continuum [Please note here that Samuelowicz & Bain, (1992) are referring to conceptions but others Bowden (2000) would have referred to these conceptions as categories of description].

Turning to the outcomes of phenomenographical research a recent piece of research looking at student conceptions of learning, relevant to this study was by Vermunt (1996) who examined students' learning strategies, mental models of learning, learning orientations, and interpretations and appraisals of instructional measures (p.25). The findings of Vermunt's study are salient to this research because a) he focused upon meta-cognitive, cognitive and affective learning activities and b) he subsequently used phenomenographic analysis of his results. The phenomenographic technique of data analysis will also be adopted in this investigation for two reasons. First because it is a tried and tested strategy shown to be valuable in uncovering qualitative variation in experiences of the learning and teaching context. Secondly while this study explores a different dimension in learning and teaching, comparison of outcomes with previous studies may make the findings more meaningful. This has been similarly justified by Bruce & Gerbner (1995), who said,

The outcomes of this exploration of lecturers' conceptions of student learning also have a number of implications for future research. Firstly, the value of describing the same phenomena from the viewpoint of different groups is endorsed. Previous research has indicated that identifying conceptions of learning held by different learners in different settings is likely to reveal 'new' conceptions (p.3).

For Vermunt (1996) the variation of categorical conceptions suggested four qualitatively different learning styles undirected, reproduction directed, meaning directed, and application directed. Vermunt concluded that most instructional measures in higher education do not have the intended effects. This, he says is due to the commonly adopted didactic teaching model and its unsuitability vis a vis the encouragement of 'active self regulated learning processes' – or meta-cognitive strategies (p.26). Vermunt advocates moving all students towards meaning and application directed learning styles but suggests that current traditional teaching practices not only discourage this but can cause regression to the reproduction learning style.

In another piece of research by Ingerslev (2003) a Danish professor of education, students and lecturers were studied longitudinally over 3 years using a multi-method approach. Ingerslev concluded that: there are 2 types of teachers - transmissive teachers resulting in reproductive passive students and - dialogic, interpretative teachers resulting in learner meta-cognitive development. Interestingly, in terms of the implications derived from the findings of this study, he concurs with Vermunt noting that students changed their approach to learning according to teaching practice.

"It is intriguing to observe the changes in students' learning according to their teachers teaching and knowledge concept." (p.5) It seems, from these studies that teaching practice really does affect student learning style. If the goal of higher education is independent life long learning or encouraging meaning and application learning styles, then Vermunt suggests the general principles of teaching design should be:

> *focusing on learning and thinking activities, teaching of thinking strategies situated in a subject domain, gradual transfer of control, developing the students' mental model of learning, taking the learning orientation into account, and **promoting transfer of learning and thinking strategies*** [own emphasis added] (p.48).

In the early nineties research interest also turned to teachers' conceptions of learning and teaching and the scholarship of teaching. Samuelowicz & Bain (1992) postulated that a) academics will hold different conceptualisations of teaching and b) that their teaching practice will be based, implicitly or explicitly on these individual theories and c) that these theories will be expressed through curriculum structures, methods and/or assessment. Trigwell, Prosser, & Taylor (1994) maintained that research into student learning to teach students better learning strategies is not in itself enough to improve the learning outcomes for students and that in the same way as the research into students, the intentions, conceptions and strategies of lecturers need to be studied and addressed before we can expect substantial improvements in approaches to teaching (p.76).

Different aspects of teachers' conceptions have been previously explored. These include: approaches to teaching in a specific discipline at a specific level (Trigwell et al 1994); lecturers' conceptions of student learning (Bruce & Gerbner, 1995); conceptions of growing and learning as a university teacher (Akerlind, 2003); conceptions of the scholarship of teaching (Trigwell, Martin, Benjamin and Prosser, 2005); comparison of students and lecturers' conceptions of learning in context (Franz, Ferrera, Loh, Pendergast, Service, Stormont, Taylor, Thambiratnam, & Williamson, 1996) and conceptions of teaching held by academic teachers (Samuelowicz & Bain, 1992). More recently Carnell, (2007) investigated conceptions of effective teaching in higher education. The findings from all these studies are strikingly broadly similar, although the actual focus of investigation was different.

The range of variation in conceptions of teaching in the above named studies numbered between four and seven and all conceptions were classified hierarchically. Most researchers claimed that the categories of teaching conceptions were each subsumed by the next level meaning that most conceptions seemed to be sequentially inclusive. The range of conceptions in all the studies indicated that teaching can be perceived as a continuum, at the lowest level as imparting information to transmitting knowledge to facilitating understanding to changing student conceptions to at the highest level, supporting student learning (Samuelwicz et al, 1992). These findings reflect the theories associated with

surface and deep approaches to learning. Where the learner is focused upon the signs in the content, memorisation and replication or where the learner is focused upon the signification in the content, critical analysis and interpretation, respectively Ramsden (1992: p.46).

In the study conducted by Franz et al (1996), where student and lecturer conceptions were explored and compared, students also held the conceptions of 'learning to be what the lecturer expects' suggestive of surface/instrumental approaches and 'learning as the object of study', suggestive of deep/holistic approaches (Ramsden, 1992). Other than this there is a consensus of similar hierarchies amongst the above authors. According to these studies learning is seen by lecturers and students, as a hierarchy beginning as: memorisation; to understanding; to developing professional competence; to viewing the world from different perspectives and ending with a personal change in attitudes, belief or behaviour.

The study into university lecturers' conceptions of learning by Bruce and Gerbner (1995), demonstrated similarities, in that learning was also seen as hierarchically ordered, from acquiring knowledge through the use of study skills to absorption of new knowledge and the ability to explain and apply it; development of thinking skills and the ability to reason; developing the competencies of beginning professionals; changing personal attitudes, beliefs or behaviours to ultimately becoming a participative pedagogic experience.

Akerlind (2003) sought to identify relationships between university teaching practice and teacher development. In her study she discovered four main conceptions of teaching; transmission focused, student relations focused, student engagement focused and student learning focused. These conceptions were then contrasted with the espoused aspirations of teachers in terms of teacher comfort, teaching practice and student learning. These areas were then mapped against the articulated area of development, ease of teaching; confidence as a teacher, teachers' knowledge and skills or the students' learning and development. As one might anticipate increased teacher development and focus on student learning showed alignment. An important observation for this research is that,

"These findings raise the possibility that developmentally, a broader understanding of teaching may precede a broader understanding of growth and development as a teacher" (p.389). If the findings of this study identify lecturer conceptions relevant to learning

transfer, raising awareness of these conceptions may assist lecturer training programmes in broadening the understanding of teaching, as already implemented by, for example; Trigwell et al (2000).

Carnell (2007) discovered that university teacher conceptions of effective teaching were closely associated with the university lecturers' own preferences for learning. She did not observe any teaching practice but the characteristics cited by the lecturers were more towards learning as dialogue, co-operation and learning communities.

The research reported in this thesis aims to build on the above findings by exploring conceptions of how, why and when learning might be transferred. Theories of learning transfer imply that strategies to promote transfer are more likely to be found within the practice of those lecturers who hold more sophisticated and less traditional conceptions of teaching and learning. This study aims to compare lecturer conceptions with their practice to establish whether a relationship between the two exists and if this is the case whether more sophisticated conceptions are associated with more effective teaching for transfer practice.

Epistemological Analysis of the Literature for the Purpose of Justifying the Philosophical Approach

Analysis of the discourse in relation to learning skills and subsequent transfer is wide-ranging, often contradictory, fragmented and presented with hidden or unarticulated epistemologies. The concept of transfer is often discussed in terms of particular skills and transfer across domains. Caught up in the literature is the debate about the existence of skills within the context of learning and this is reflected in the following analysis. Writers adopt and use the terms, skills, learning and skill interchangeably when examining the concept of transfer. This study firstly aimed to identify an epistemological framework to assist in the meta-analysis of the literature. Thus the process of organizing the literature, by examining opposing perspectives and designing and devising a relational typology enabled me to identify, justify and select the most appropriate perspective for this particular research.

The range of debates about learning and skills and the extent of transfer boil down to discussing whether it is necessary to transfer particular skills from one context to another or whether it is the skill of transferring learning across contexts that is required. The proposed literature typology depicts two right-angled intersecting dimensions, [Figure 2.1, page 53]. One of the dimensions **XY** has an epistemological theme ranging from conceptions of an 'acceptance' that reality is out there – positivist/empiricist **X**, through to the interpretative paradigm in the exploration of hermeneutic linguistics and negotiated meaning **Y**. Within this theme sits a political philosophical dimension that reflects the relationship between the positivist extrinsic value of measurable learning - skill (economic – cultural capital) **X** through to the negotiated meaning and intrinsic value of learning or skills (identity – phenomenological) **Y**.

The other dimension **AB** represents a psychological pedagogical theme related to the notion of learning and skills and transferability. At the **A** end of the dimension, sits the situated learning theory associated with learning in context and virtual inability to transfer, and at the **B** end sits the assumption that transfer is a natural outcome of imparting any knowledge from one being to another, is the so called bo-peep theory (Salomon & Perkins, 1989). Somewhere in the middle of this dimension is the meta-cognitive theory that suggests the pedagogical context should teach the skills of transferring learning, advocating constructivist teaching methods as the normative framework. Perspectives can then be placed according to the proximity of the paradigms within quadrants **1, 2, 3** and **4.**
It is proposed to select a representative range of research studies and perspectives to illustrate how these relate to the typology and each other.

Broadly speaking the 'field' of research can be differentiated into 'types' of literature, sometimes these 'types' all neatly work on similar assumptions – as the typology will show. In other cases it can be seen that although the research may be of a similar 'type' it is based upon a different set of assumptions and ideas. For example quadrants **1** and **3** show that most of the research commissioned by the Department of Education and Employment

(DfEE, 2000a; DfEE, 1999; DfEE, 2000b; DfEE, 2000d) (later the DfES now DIUS[1])
assumes the existence of tangible and measurable learning entities - skills. The value
attached to them is explicit and economic and inherent, in the very nature of the
commissioned research, for example, [Graduate Careers, Graduate standards, graduate
work, students' attributes] is the presumption that learning and skills can be acquired out of
the context to which they will be applied, yet still recommending in context experience, i.e.
work based learning (DfEE, 1999; Harvey, Moon, & Geall, 1995; Harvey, Moon, & Geall,
1997; Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC), 1997).

Cognitive psychologists Salomon & Perkins (1989) emphasise the processes of learning
and transfer choosing to leave definitions alone. They acknowledge the existence of
learning processes or cognitive skills but the question of what these actually are moves
them more along the continuum towards the **Y** dimension of hermeneutic enquiry. The
value in this case of learning is seen as intrinsically derived but only measurable in its
extrinsic exemplification.

Empirical pedagogical studies such as (Hattie et al,1996; Lauder & Reynolds, 1999; Reboy,
1991; Thomas, 1992; & Claxton et al, 1996) discuss and identify many skills and learning
processes and attempt to measure the transfer of learning across contexts resulting in
recommending a set of associated teaching heuristics. Similarities occur in the
recommendations for practice of these authors hinting at some level of efficacy. According
to the framework I am proposing here these studies can be placed fairly closely to the
positivist side as they define reasonably precisely the actual processes or skills they are
attempting to enable participants to transfer. In many cases these are discussed as 'skills of
transfer' 'meta-cognitive' 'learning to learn'. If empirical results are to be accepted then it
follows that the learning and skills as defined by these studies have an extrinsic value,
although not necessarily associated with political/economic agendas. Rawson (2000)
appears to agree that skill means learning to learn, *'learning to do* things *better*' but he
focuses upon how the assessment process can enhance these skills. Shepherd (2000) also

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[1] Department for Education Skills (DfES) changed to Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
(DIUS) in 2007.

asserts the transferability of skill as a skill in itself so he quickly turns his attention to how teaching practice can positively contribute to the transferability of skill. In both these cases then, Rawson and Shepherd have considered how empirical findings can be applied to practice, fully accepting the positivist epistemology tempered with their own definitions and moving more towards intrinsic value and close to dimension **Y** in terms of transferability.

At the **Y** end, the perspective is more about pedagogical philosophical discourse – Holmes (2000a) who discusses skill as negotiated meaning between an organisation and graduate, and concludes that skill is nebulous and sectarian to organisations. For Holmes the epistemology of skill is more towards the interpretative end of the continuum rooted in organisational culture and socially constructed. The value can be seen as intrinsically generated as the 'skill' of the individual is the ability to interpret and interact with external expectations, the power and attributed value therefore lies in the culture of the organisation. Holmes calls this 'the practice identity model'. Holmes' contention is that the meaning of skill is negotiated; this infers that he assumes that some learning and skill acquisition may be developed in context, towards the **A** side of the dimension.

Payne (2000) contends that whilst skills and learning are prescribed by the political/economic agenda it reduces learning to the lowest common denominator and instead of moving society into liberal '*post Fordist nirvana*' it maintains a status quo of the '*neo-Fordist cage*'. He quotes a recent study of employers in Scotland where skills were defined in 'aesthetic' terms such as; dress code; non-descript accent and so on, moving society towards a cultural cavity of uniform values.

> *In the final analysis, skill remains as ever socially constructed, while the more it overlaps with attitudes, behaviours and character traits, the more it becomes bound up with the cultural capital of certain social groups, and acquires the distinctive whiff of elitism* (p.363).

It seems Payne is arguing that whilst skill continues to be defined, constructed, valued and motivated by political-economic epistemological assumptions, they are reduced to visible measurable entities that presumably can be acquired in any context. Payne's review appears

to place him close to the social constructivist end of the spectrum on the **Y** dimension and towards the 'bo-peep' any context/transferable skills **B** dimension. Similarly Steinburg, (1990), a sociologist, puts forward a very convincing argument regarding the social construction of skills in relation to gender and power imbalances and how the value placed on certain skills is simply a reflection of a continuing inequitable society.

Whitson (1998) like Payne also questions the notion of skill and certainly airs concerns about who defines or places the value on certain skills, advising interpretation of the skills agenda to be approached with caution. Whitson discusses the ill-defined ever changing list of 'skills', and suggests that some terms such as 'managing stress' can be more accurately conceived as attributes. It seems that Whitson can be seen as erring on the side of the **Y** epistemological perspective, on the one hand not denying that skills exist but on the other not casting them into the realm of negotiated meanings. Whitson contends that 'skill' is about the application of learning across contexts. He argues that learning involves adaptation and conflict and that transfer itself is a learning process (p.314).

Bridges (1994) also contends that skills of transfer are meta-cognitive abilities that require subtle change in any context even if only in a temporal sense, leaning towards a phenomenological perspective.

Attewell (1990), an occupational sociologist postulates four conceptions of skill which he calls positivist, phenomenologist, neo-Weberian socially constructionist and Marxist. In some ways this treatment of the skills discourse is not dissimilar to the proposed typology except that when these perspectives are taken they fail to accommodate much of the research. It also seems that in terms of neo-Weberian and Marxist perspectives these are not polarised but similar entities in terms of their associated intrinsic and extrinsic value. Neo-Weberian identification and justification of skill can be seen as internally constructed and initially intrinsically coveted in order to gain extrinsic value. Marx contended that skill was about control akin to Weber's argument that the case for professionalism is socially constructed and the attached value lies with the creator of the skill construction. This line of argument is also pursued by Brown & Scase (1994) who argue that the value of skill

emanates from the political ideal of middle class values and that while this cycle of value persists, skill will be defined and propagated by class. In this sense social constructivism and Marxism go hand in hand and are not opposite ends of the spectrum. It is argued here that Attewell's exemplification of a skills typology is rather narrow and lacks the stark contrast he appears to claim. This is where Brown and Scase differ as they say skill value and perception are inherently part of one's sociological context implying in context acquisition and yet increased chances of transfer depend on the quality of the originating context, not unlike the Marxist argument.

(Barnett, 1994; Barnett, 1997; Barnett & Griffin, 1997) say that the whole debate needs to be reviewed and re-cast into a different world view, he calls this '*a life world view*'. In some respects Barnett (1994) is challenging the whole notion of skill and learning in any context as he argues that the arenas of higher education and work based learning are both constrained by their own limited definitions of learning. He suggests that only the *'life world'* view elicits transformation and that discourse in itself is reflective and unconstrained by the boundaries of organisational or academic norms. This could be interpreted as skills being internally derived and intrinsically valued but not absolutely denying their existence or accepting a determinist position. Some might say that this is too ideological but if construed from the view of critical theory where actors, once informed, to some extent control the context, then skills could be conceived as a potential instrument for checking and challenging the status quo, serving an emancipatory and liberating function.

The typology attempts to show that learning and skills can be understood as intersecting dimensions from **A** to **B.** In the **A** perspective, skills are learnt and replicable when practised in the relevant contexts, and thereby more easily transferable. This is also known as situated learning theory, or as some might call it, training. At the **B** perspective skill is constructed as a meta-cognitive ability to transfer learning, learnt in an abstract context and applied appropriately through individual recognition of varying contexts. On the **XY** continuum, skills can be viewed as simple real measurable entities, politically prescribed and extrinsically valued at the **X** end of the dimension, through to the negotiated and

connoted meaning inherent in communication, internally constructed and intrinsically derived and valued, at the **Y** end of the continuum.

Human conceptions cannot be observed or measured only mediated through the understandings of the researcher. For this investigation an empiricist approach would prove to be, not only inappropriate, but impossible in terms of eliciting data. The purpose of the investigation is not to produce generalizations, but to explore conceptions and thinking in relation to teaching practice with a view to gaining insights into processes and any relationship which may or may not exist between teacher conceptions and practice. It can be seen that my perspective of enquiry [My Research Question] is placed towards the **Y** end of the **XY** dimension on the typology and the **AB** dimension is part of the actual research question. So the current position this investigation occupies can be seen in figure one, close to interpretative approaches **Y** and in the centre of the **AB** dimension [p.51]. As the investigation proceeds it is envisaged that a position on the **AB** dimension will be adopted and justified, see chapter six.

Analysis through this epistemological 'lens' has helped me identify important philosophical differences in the relevant research literature and has enabled me to adopt the most appropriate philosophical paradigm to examine conceptions of transfer for this particular study.

The learning/skills transfer debate – Where do you stand?

This second typology (figure 2.2) on page 54 overlays the first typology (figure 2.1). It attempts to illustrate the different theoretical positions of the literature, whilst asking individual higher education practitioners to consider their own position in relation to the range of epistemological perspectives.

The typology has 2 dimensions, XY and AB. The XY dimension is horizontal and represents the literature that discusses skills as quantifiable, real and measurable X, through to skills being socially constructed, incorporating cultural capital claims to the end of the dimension where skills are conceived as emancipatory ideologies, Y. The AB dimension is the vertical intersection and represents the range of pedagogical literature. The advocates of

skill acquisition in context to enable transfer sit in the A dimension, this view states skills are best learnt in similar contexts or environments to where they will ultimately be needed, this is also called situated learning. At the B end of this vertical dimension are those who assume skills will transfer automatically regardless of the context in which they are taught. Towards the B dimension sit those who contend that skills/learning can transfer but that particular teaching methods should be adopted to help students develop meta-cognitive strategies or the skill of learning to learn.

In quadrant 1 are "The Quantifiable In-situ's", these proponents would believe that learning transfer is better achieved through teaching in similar/simulated learning environments, some might call this training. Skills/learning would be represented as 'real', quantifiable and specific, such as: number or IT skills sometimes also termed competencies. Examples of this characterization would be the DFEE (1997), the Learning and Skills Council (L.S.C) who advocate National Vocational Qualifications or the Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR) (1995).

In quadrant 2 are "The In-situ Cultural Capitalists", these perspectives have less concern over how skills/learning are acquired as they are more concerned about how skills are conceived and who puts the value label on any particular attribute. For some this has a political dimension where the power to attribute value lies with the powerful few in society and is a way of maintaining the status quo, such as Brown and Scase (1994). Similarly Holmes'(1994) view of skills discusses the co-construction of skills between graduate and prospective employer.

In quadrant 3 are "The Formal Learning Quantifers" like those in quadrant 1 there is an acceptance that skills are real and measurable but their belief is that skills can be acquired in formal learning contexts that can then transfer to other environments, such as the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (Q.C.A) who specify curriculum standards for accreditation or the Quality Assurance Agency (Q.A.A) formerly the HEQC who introduced the specification of learning outcomes, including key and transferable skills to higher education.

In quadrant 4 are the "In the eye of the beholder/social constructivists" these perspectives advocate the interpretative nature of skills/learning where the value lies in the nature of negotiated meaning, such as the sociological perspectives of Payne (2000) and Bridges (1994), who also suggest that learning and skills transfer can be achieved in formal learning environments by helping learners to transfer by teaching meta-cognitive strategies or the skills of learning to learn as posited by Whitson (1998).

Figure 2.1

Epistemological Typology

A
In Context Transfer
/Situated Learning Theory

Competency
Wolf, et al   Chi et al

Reboy   Claxton
Gill et al   HEQC
                    Dunne

Harvey et al   Attewell
Attewell   Hattie et al   Butzkamm   Holmes   Barnett
X   Positivist   DfEE   AGR   Brown et   Collins   Social
Extrinsic Value   Quantifiable   al   Constructivism

HEQC   Whitson
Bennett et al   Tait, et al   Thomas
                                    Batterfield   Solomon et   Pressley
Gibbs et al   Hodgkinson   et al   al   Rawson   Steinburg
        Otter   Payne
HEFCE   Lauder et al
                                                            Tolly
                        Shepherd
Lissenburgh   Perkins.D   Bridges
et al

Q.C.A

Out of Context Transfer
/Meta-Cognitive Theory

B

Y
Phenomenological
existential
/Intrinsic Value

Figure 2.2
Where do you stand?

A
In Context Transfer

The learning/skills transfer debate

Competency

The
Quantifiable
In-situ's

In-situ
Cultural
Capitalists

L.S.C

Reboy   Claxton

Dunne

Attewell

Attewell   Attewell

Attewell   Butzkamm   Holmes   Barnett

X   Hattie et al
Positivist   DfEE   AGR   Brown et al   Collins   **Y**
Interpretative

HEQC/QAA   Whitson

Thomas

Bennett et al   Tait, et al   Batterfield   Solomon et   Pressley
et al   al   Steinburg

Gibbs et al   Hodgkinson   Rawson   Payne

HEFCE   Lauder et al

Shepherd   In the eye of the
beholder
The Formal   Social
Learning   constructivists
Q.C.A   Quantifiers

Formal learning context

B

Chapter 3 – Methods and Reflections

Introduction

Having placed this study within the context of previous research this chapter explains how the investigation was undertaken. The overall approach was phenomenological, that is through the interpretative paradigm. The data collection process and initial analysis of the data, adopted a hermeneutic approach that is co-constructing meaning throughout in an iterative pattern. The final data analysis utilised the phenomenographic method. The research is placed first within the overarching paradigm. This is followed by a discussion of the researcher as instrument and an analysis of the benefits and shortcomings of the self in the research process. The research design is then outlined including the data collection methods adopted. Each method is then discussed separately and justified as appropriate for this particular study. The ethical considerations and protocols adopted are noted and the issues of validity, reliability and triangulation addressed. The second part of the chapter describes the process of data collection and some of the problems encountered. Finally an account is offered of the processes of data analysis. Many approaches were taken but the main approach finally was that of phenomenographic analysis, as this has been shown to be particularly effective in identifying different conceptions held by lecturers and students as noted in chapter two.

The key question for this research was: what are lecturers' conceptions of learning and teaching transfer and how do these conceptions influence their teaching practice? The methods enabling the answers to the subsidiary questions posed in chapter one are addressed here:

    1. How do such conceptions build on the work of other recent research?

    By adopting phenomenographic analysis, it is envisaged that the form of outcomes will be comparable to previous similar research.

    2. Do these conceptions differ according to the perceived purpose/outcome of the teaching, i.e. preparing students to directly enter the world of work or preparing students to undertake further research?

By adopting a comparative design of two differently orientated courses and interviewing and observing lecturers teaching practice, conceptions of teaching for transfer should become apparent. Importantly student perceptions of lecturer teaching practice, their associated learning approaches and learning outcomes will be collected through student focus groups for comparison with the lecturer data, with a view to triangulation and verification.

3. How do these conceptions compare to what we currently know about learning and skills transfer.

By using indicators that 'operationalise' effective teaching for transfer techniques from the learning and skills literature, in the participant observation framework, as proposed by Jones (1996) comparison of conceptions to what we currently know about learning and skills transfer has been built into the methodology.

4. What are the implications (if any) for informing the development of teaching practice in higher education?

The findings from the lecturer data should indicate how lecturer conceptions influence teaching practice and the findings from the student data should indicate the impact of lecturer practice on the student learning experience.

Primary Methodological Approach

The primary methodological approach adopted falls broadly within an interpretative paradigm and using hermeneutic processes, as this seemed most appropriate for addressing the research question. One of the main aims of this investigation was to elicit participants' conceptions of teaching for transfer. It was essentially exploratory and focused on human understanding. Unlike the empiricist/positivist approach where knowledge formation is linear and cumulative, hermeneutics conceives knowledge as a cycle of continuous multi-directional knowledge transformation.

I chose this approach for a number of reasons, first to further understanding of lecturers' conceptions of their practice, second to explore whether those conceptions influenced teaching practice, third to study how students responded to teaching practices and fourthly to discern any differences in lecturer conceptions between two higher education courses of

study. My choice of methodology was guided by the research question, the 'fit for purpose' criteria suggested by Cohen et al (2000) and my own preferences.

Such an interpretative approach has been challenged by those of a positivist persuasion for its inherent subjectivity and the biases researchers may bring from their own experiences of culture, history and so on. Cohen et al (2000) indicate that Husserl from the school of phenomenology recommended that we attempt to 'bracket' ourselves to free ourselves from our usual ways of perceiving the world. But for Gadamer, they explain this was wholly unsatisfactory. In addition to the fact that it is impossible to escape from our pre-understandings, it is the awareness of our pre-understandings that advantages the social scientist and opens the mind to the interplay between interpretations (Scott & Usher, 1996:p.21). This study takes a similar phenomenological approach, acknowledging subjectivity and the inescapability of deeply held beliefs, values and assumptions. It is argued that awareness of these aspects is a benefit for this type of enquiry.

In summary, adopting this perspective enables the researcher to enter into the conceptual world of their subjects and to elicit their meanings and interpretations of experiences. It is through our interactions and the meanings we attribute to them that we socially construct our realities (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Cohen et al) point out that Schutz cited in Burrell and Morgan (1979) contends that 'meaning' only takes on understanding when we reflect upon our experiences using our goals and intentions in the situation as a lens. This approach seemed particular relevant in seeking to understand lecturers' conceptions and intentions in teaching for transfer.

Awareness of Self in the Research Process
In studies of this kind, the researcher is an inevitable part of the frame. Meanings are constructed through human interaction; the process is iterative and concurrently interpretative. In this way, sense making occurs in a cycle of reciprocal interaction and interpretation known as 'the double hermeneutic' (Scott & Usher, 1996:19).
I recognized that the methods I chose and the intention to understand participants' conceptions and meanings would inevitably involve my own understanding. While the

aspiration was to elicit participants' meanings, my commitment and knowledge of the field will have influenced what I chose to ask, observe and document. This has been a dynamic and changing process, not pre-determined, but co-constructivist.

My own values have also played a part in the interpretation. In fact as Denzin (1989:p. 24) states all researchers are partisan and value free interpretative research is impossible. In some respects holding similar values to participants may be beneficial in terms of building rapport and trust. As Kvale, (1996) notes

> *The deliberate use of the subjective perspective need not be a negative bias; rather, the personal perspectives of the subjects and the interpreter can provide a distinctive and sensitive understanding of the phenomena of the everyday life world* (p.291).

At the same time I have constantly tried to monitor and suspend my own values throughout the data collection process, so they did not dominate and preclude me understanding participants' views, see section on ethical protocols.

Jorgensen (1990) argues that prior personal experience can advantage the researcher in that s/he can more quickly establish rapport with participants and understand the values and politics of the situation. Rather than denying personal involvement what is required is an awareness of these personal interests and values and how they interact in the research. I believe my familiarity with the higher education context, language, culture and subject discipline has helped me to relate to participants in terms of quickly establishing rapport and probing 'intelligently'. I also believe that this enabled me to gain honest responses. People knew me and knew I had an understanding of the context and so were less likely to give responses that were not genuine (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Research Design

Initially the aim of the design was to find and compare two similar subject areas in two different universities. After a number of unsuccessful attempts at negotiating access I agreed in consultation with my supervisor to proceed on a different basis**.** Lecturers in these institutions either did not reply to my request or said that they were too busy to be interviewed. The investigation then turned to the identification of two programmes of

study with differently espoused orientations in one institution, the one in which I worked. The choice of which courses to study was made according to the following criteria:

- my basic knowledge of the disciplines - in order to make rational comparisons;
- my understanding of the courses and orientation of the degree programmes - to maintain trust and credibility with participants;
- my comprehension of the essentials of the course – to be able to build on participant contributions.

One course (in psychology) stated it was part of 'a generic' degree preparing graduates for many different types of work roles and/or further post graduate study. The other course (in social work) indicated that it was part of 'a specific' degree preparing graduates for direct entry into a particular profession. The courses had different identities: one had a traditional academic orientation – not necessarily teaching for a specific vocation and the other a vocational orientation – explicitly teaching for transfer to the workplace. The courses were from cognate fields and were selected, through purposive and opportunity sampling.

Three different methods were adopted – interviewing, observation and focus groups. These seemed most apt in a study with a phenomenological orientation aiming to explore participants' conceptions of transfer and how they influenced their practice. As Bogdan and Biklen suggest

> *'There is a logical connection between the techniques of participant observation, in-depth interviewing and phenomenological theory and inductive reasoning. If you want to understand the way people think about their world.....you need to get close....to hear them talk and observe them...'*(p.32).

The sample size needed to be realistic. The initial target of between 12 –16 lecturer interviewees was achieved. Fourteen were involved, seven from one subject area and seven from the other. Student sampling was also opportunistic. Samples of students, twenty eight in total were interviewed, either individually or collectively (using focus group techniques where appropriate). The whole sample consisted of level three students. This level was chosen as students would have had more experience of the course and the teaching to draw

upon, than students from the lower levels. The psychology students consisted of three focus groups (seventeen students) and the social work students consisted of two focus groups and two individual interviews (eleven students). Individual interviews were set up when the students could not make the focus groups due to them being on student placement. I also began to keep a research diary at this time for any personal thoughts about the process of data collection and analysis.

Methods

Interviewing

The primary method adopted was interviewing; the primary source of data therefore stemmed from the tutors themselves, in terms of their articulated conceptions of learning and skills transfer. Interviews were semi structured and subsequent to each, a teaching session of the tutor's choice was observed. Focus groups and interviews were then conducted with level 3 students.

Purpose

Kvale (1996) indicates that the purpose of the interview is

> *to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena'* (p.6)…*The qualitative research interview is a construction site of knowledge….literally an Inter View, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest* (Kvale, 1996:p.2).

Cohen et al (2000) discuss the interview as a two way process of communication and interpretation where data is not caught but generated by the process and Fielding (1993:p. 137) notes that it is to *'find out what kinds of things are happening rather than to determine the frequency of pre-determined kinds of things…'*. This style of interviewing seemed most appropriate in an exploratory study of this kind.

Bogdan & Biklen (1998) also discuss the opportunity to alter the type of interview as the research proceeds. Initially the interviewer may encourage free flowing exploratory conversations with interviewees and subsequently move onto to a slightly more structured approach as themes or patterns begin to emerge (p.95). And Scott & Usher (1996) note that

the virtue of interviews is the non-standardisation of data gathering enabling the inquiry to be frequently redirected on the basis of *"the data coming in from the field to ever more fruitful areas of investigation"* (p.20).

Style of interview

The style of interviewing I adopted was semi- structured. This involved thinking through the kinds of issues I wished to explore as well as leaving room for participants to generate their own understandings. A structured interview would be too prescriptive and might elicit only limited information. The unstructured interview would be too broad with the danger of producing an overwhelming amount of data not relevant to the line of enquiry. In a semi-structured interview the inquirer has

> *worked out a set of questions in advance, but is free to modify their order based upon her perceptions of what seems most appropriate in the context of the 'conversation', can change the way they are worded, give explanations, leave out particular questions which seem inappropriate with a particular interviewee or include additional ones* (Robson, 1993:p.231).

In this way the interviewer has the freedom to be flexible and change different factors according to the nature and context of the interview but is also armed with a loose structure and guidelines as an aide memoir. The interview guidelines, see Appendix One, adopted the recommended format outlined by Robson (1993) of an introduction, general subject headings and key questions, prompts, and concluding comments.

I found the semi –structured interview useful in that I refined certain elements in the interview questions and remained open to others outlined by participants.
However there are limitations to this type of interview. From my perspective, as the reader will see later, even a semi-structured interview accumulates a mass of data which can lead to difficulties with analysis and keeping track of the context.

All interviews and focus groups were recorded (with permission of participants) and subsequently transcribed. As Powney & Watts (1987) note the use of audiotape frees the interviewer to concentrate on the task at hand, though it has to be accepted that loss of data is still inevitable in terms of what is actually recorded (non-verbal responses) and again in

the transcription. Powney et al also suggest two stages to transcription, firstly verbatim recording including all conversational nuances and secondly listening and noting emphasis and comment (p.148). Other aspects of the interview should also be recorded as part of the whole analysis such as interviewee selection and approach, interviewee preparation, contextual factors, biographical details and interview guidelines. All these 'other' elements of the data I recorded in my research diary.

Participant Observations

Observation was chosen to augment findings from the interviews with tutors and as a means of triangulation which Robson (2002) indicates is a widely used strategy of verification in qualitative inquiry. Jorgensen (1990) also suggests that participant observation is especially appropriate for exploratory and descriptive studies and for generating theoretical interpretations (p.13). He comments that it is

> *appropriate for a wide range of scholarly problems pertinent to human existence. It focuses on human interaction and meaning viewed from the insiders' viewpoint in everyday life situations and settings* (p.23).

In discussing the limitations and advantages of the different methods used in field studies McCall & Simmons (1969) say that participant observation is descriptive (though framed by theoretical categories) and has

> 1) *An unusual quality of open-endedness and constant revision of study design and 2) an unusual degree of receptiveness within the study to* **subjects' conceptions** (p.19). [emphasis added]

Participant observation is seen as especially helpful for this research as the focus is on the conceptions of participants and as McCall and Simmons (1969) suggest, this method is particularly receptive to studying conceptions. It is also highly suitable for the subject of learning transfer within higher education because it offers an opportunity to study practices in a naturalistic setting.

> *The participant observer comes to a social situation with two purposes: 1 to engage in activities appropriate to the situation and 2 to observe the activities, people and physical aspects of the situation* (Spradley, 1980:p.54).

I chose to observe classes following interviews with lecturers based upon, opportunity, availability and the lecturers' espoused preferences.

The kind of observation you conduct is affected to some extent by the role you choose. McCall & Simmons (1969) discuss the range of roles the researcher can take during observation from complete participant to complete non-participant observer (pp.30-37). Jorgensen (1990) talks about researcher involvement ranging from the 'native insider' to more marginal or nominal roles (p.21). Spradley (1980) refers to levels of participation using terms such as: passive, active, moderate. My own level of involvement was constrained by the limited number of opportunities there were to observe teaching sessions. Given this I could not adopt the role of complete participant observer, even if this was desirable and ethically appropriate. In this context I chose to be a non-participant observer and negotiated access with staff and students openly declaring my interests to both students and tutors (Jorgensen, 1990) . Disadvantages of limited or more passive involvement cited by McCall & Simmons (1969:p. 36) are that a researcher is likely to misunderstand observations. My familiarity with the environment and insider knowledge helped to off set any possible misunderstandings. Further Jorgensen (1990) argues that prior personal experience can advantage the researcher by being able to more quickly establish rapport with participants and understand the values and politics of the situation.

Spradley outlines what he terms 'the developmental research sequence' where he describes a systematic series of observations: descriptive, focused and selected; and respective types of analysis: domain analysis, taxonomic analysis and componential analysis, eventually discovering cultural themes. This sequence would be useful to the ethnographer studying various phenomena over a reasonably prolonged time frame. However this research was constrained by the limitations of time and access and so was less applicable here. I had to find ways of setting generic criteria to guide my observations.

Jones (1996) usefully discusses the idea of 'operationalisation of a concept' that is, '*to be able to specify instances of that concept in the world around you*' (p.24), in other words to note what would characterize the concept if you saw it. He emphasises that the researcher

needs to be clear about what they are observing: that the chosen index measures need to relate to the actual phenomena being researched and that the concepts can be operationalised in different ways to achieve 'multiple operationism' (p.25). By looking for a relationship in different situations, with different subjects under different circumstances and using different techniques of measurement, concept replication is achieved and meets the requirements of triangulation.

Indicators in this study were derived from participant interviews and analysis of what empirical evidence was available on how to effectively teach for transfer. See later in this section for the criteria of indicators used during observations.

There are many different ways to observe from structured to unstructured - setting criteria to guide observations or using more detailed description as, for example, observing in naturalistic settings. For the purpose of this research the use of index measures as described by Jones was seen as a helpful way forward.

In order to provide a framework for analysis and guide my observations I devised three different frameworks, see Appendices Two and Three.

1 Framework one adapted from Spradley (1980)

The first framework was developed from Spradley's (1980) discussion on observational indicators which are used as criteria for focusing observations. Spradley discusses the notion of grand tour and mini tour observations. He suggests nine different dimensions of classification for analysis purposes, arranged both horizontally and vertically to form a matrix. These dimensions are: space, object, act, activity, event, time, actor, goal, and feeling. Grand tour observations overview many dimensions whereas mini tour observations may focus upon where two particular dimensions meet, such as the act and the actor. Jones (1996) adds to the actor dimension by focusing on forms of observational behaviour such as non-verbal, extralinguistic and spatial behaviours (p.80). All these seem particularly relevant to this research as lecturers generally deploy all these aspects of behaviour during teaching practice. In my study I initially used grand tour exploratory observations which were later used to inform more focused mini tour observations, though

occasionally I moved between the two in following the sequentially descriptive and explanatory nature of the research process.

Spradley's (1980) matrix adapted

Space	1	Note learning environment	Time	6	Day/Date/Time
Object	2	Teaching aids	Actor	7	Lecturer behaviour – non-verbal, extralinguistic, spatial
Act	3	Teaching session	Goal	8	TFT techniques demonstrated?
Activity	4	Student participation	Feeling	9	How did learning environment feel?
Event	5	Lecture/seminar, etc			

2 Framework two derived from review of the literature

This second framework follows Jones (1996) injunction to be clear about what it is one is observing. Drawing on the findings and theories from empirical investigations into teaching for transfer summarised in chapter two and the initial findings from the lecturer interviews, the following criteria were developed as a guide to observing 'operational' examples in the lecturers' teaching practice.

- Hugging (before and now) - referring to previous ground they felt they had covered, usually in the last lecture or previous week
- Bridging (identify underlying principles & generalize) - referring to the context and/or the underlying principles or concepts.
- Metaphors/Analogies – used to help 'trigger' the student understanding, such as: famous stories or characters.
- Drawing inferences - make deductions or infer from professional experience or practice.
- Integrate and re-integrate examples - into what they were trying to explain to students drawing upon their own personal experience or examples in the literature or offer practice examples
- Use same stimuli as in work settings - students are asked to apply or understand something in a particular situation in a particular occupational role.
- Use many different examples for same situation – Try to offer many alternative explanations/examples

- Encourage multiple and critical applications – Apply to many and different situations
- Instruct when NOT applicable – Point out when something does NOT apply
- Encourage self belief/efficacy in learners to learn - helping the students to believe in their own abilities
- Generalise to other contexts – Apply the specific to the general and place in other contexts
- Explicit explanation of how to generalize (Meta-cog/Learning to learn?) – Help students to understand why and how to learn
- Assessment of pre-requisite declarative knowledge – attempt to gauge what information has already been understood and assimilated.

3 Framework three adapted from Shepherd (2000)

The third framework was developed from the work of Shepherd (2000) who offers a very specific framework for lecturers to promote learning transfer. He suggests a number of methods for classroom practice and proposes six incremental steps that students need to take in attempting to solve a new problem: analysis, association, assessment, adaptation, application and appraisal.

This framework was added to the observation sheets but I found it of little use in that it was very difficult to ascribe any particular observations to such broad criteria. On reflection this might be due to the fact that Shepherd suggests the students need to go through this process and perhaps in one observation session this would have been impossible for me to identify where the students might be in the process, if indeed they were under going the process in the first place. The other explanation for the framework's lack of usefulness might have been my inability to focus and use three frameworks at the same time.

Focus groups

The final method of data collection extending and building on the other methods was to undertake focus groups with students. Focus groups are an increasingly common research method of collecting qualitative data from a range of people focused and stimulated by the interchange between them.

> "*Rather than attempting to observe behaviour as it naturally occurs, focus groups create concentrated conversations that might never occur in the 'real world'*" (Morgan, 1998: p.31).

Adopting this particular method allowed me to capture the composite views of students. Unlike group interviews the focus is upon the conversations between participants guided by the questions posed by the moderator. Participants were able to reflect and compare individual experiences enabling me to gain an insight quite quickly into what was perceived as common and shared experience and where individuals felt their experience was different due to other factors.

Gathering data collectively in this way enabled me to immediately triangulate observations with student perceptions of teaching methods and student understandings of learning transfer, mutually negotiating and constructing reality with participants.

The question framework guidelines for conducting the focus groups can be found at Appendix Four.

Ethical Considerations and Protocols

The ethical protocol I adopted in this study drew on the ethical guidelines recommended by the School of Education and have been endorsed by the ethics committee of the University. The exact protocol I developed to ensure ethical practice in the conduct of the research was adapted from Simons (1989) and is outlined on Appendix Five. In this section I indicate exactly how I acted in the research process in relation to several of these ethical issues.

Informed consent

Informed consent from participants is needed before any data can be collected. Informed consent can be defined as

> '*the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an*
> *investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their*
> *decisions'* Dienar and Crandall, 1978 cited in (Cohen et al, 2000).

Gaining informed consent is important in any research but was particularly so in this study as there were only a small number of participants who were part of an easily identified community (Powney and Watts). In these circumstances, Cohen et al (2000) recommend that researchers should promise confidentiality and use a number of ways of protecting participant identity/traceability, such as aggregation of data and crude report categories that

are meaningless to the reader. Simons (1989) suggest that negotiation over what can and cannot be made public is the preferred route to dealing with this issue.

The procedures I took to ensure informed consent were full disclosure of what the research was about, a promise to check and seek clearance of participant comments that were possibly identifiable by others and negotiation with them over the accuracy and meaning of their comments. I also explained that I would anonymise all quotations but pointed out that others might well be able to recognise their own contributions and that of close colleagues. A similar procedure was adopted with students but in practice the clearance of comments was very difficult to achieve as students had left the institution by the time this data was available. However efforts have been made to avoid the use of identifiable comments. Accuracy and meaning is less of an issue as the majority of student data was collected in focus groups where comments are substantiated collectively.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity are two procedures that are often linked to gain honest data and to protect an individual's privacy in research. Yet as already stated this is not always possible to achieve. In this study, due to its small scale and in the institution in which I work, I stressed that absolute confidentiality was probably out of the question. Participants were asked if they understood and if they still wished to participate. All agreed. The situation was probably helped by the fact that in phenomenographical analysis, the focus is on generalisation of categories of description and not on individual transcripts. Had the study been focused on individuals rather than issues, it would have been even more difficult to anonymize and more negotiation would have been needed to seek clearance of comments.

Sensitivity to context and participants

The overriding principle of ethics is to do no harm. Formal procedures such as those above are important but it is also important to be sensitive to issues in the research process itself in relating to people and contexts (Kvale, 1996). I tried to be sensitive to participants, alert to the fact that asking them to reflect upon their practice may have increased levels of self

awareness, analysis and possibly anxiety. The students, in particular, disclosed very personal accounts of their learning experiences and great care has been taken to remove any reference in their quotations to the names of other students or lecturers.

Openness

Many of the texts advise the interviewer to be as open as possible (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Cohen et al, 2000). This is a point that could be extended to the whole process of research and I have aspired to follow this practice. I have been open about the purpose and rationale for this research, sharing interview questions with participants (see Appendix Six, letter to participants), and clearing comments with them where they were potentially identifiable. All interview/focus group transcripts were checked by participants for accuracy and all direct quotations used in the thesis from the lecturer participants have been checked and agreed by them. However such openness has to be balanced against the possible effect on participants in relation to the amount of information they receive and causing subsequent disinterest or annoyance.

Validity, Reliability and Triangulation

Many of the ways to achieve reliability and validity in research discussed in the literature stem from a positivist approach to research concerned with objectivist knowledge. In qualitative research concerned with subjectivist knowledge different criteria of validity and reliability need to be adopted to match the nature of the phenomena being investigated. As Sandberg (1997) points out in relation to phenomenography:

> *Therefore in establishing reliability of the findings produced in phenomenography, it is inappropriate to rely on the criteria based on an objectivistic epistemology. Instead the criteria must accord with the phenomenological epistemological assumptions underlying phenomenography, that human knowledge is intentionally constituted through individuals' experience of their reality* (p.208).

Further as Prosser (1993) quoting Marton observes:

> *Fundamental to phenomenography is the idea that people experience and understand various aspects of the world around them in qualitatively different ways, and that how we go about understanding and experiencing that world is inseparable from what we experience and understand* (Marton, 1988:p.21).

Various other authors, see for example Guba and Lincoln & Guba (1985, 1989) have posited alternative validity criteria for qualitative research in general. Seale points out that Lincoln & Guba suggest replacing internal validity with credibility and external validity with rich description of context to enable transferability (p.77).

To ensure internal validity in this study, I adopted the alternative quality checks of participant verification, established engagement in the field, observation and triangulation, as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) in (Seale, 2004:p.77).

The concept of triangulation has been advanced by several authors, the most notable of which is Denzin (1978) in Seale (2004:p.77) as a process for contributing to the validity of accounts.   It can be achieved in different ways – through, for example, triangulation of methods, sources, researchers and theories. In this research, method and source triangulation were used**.** I compared the significance of issues arising from different sources of data and different data collection methods, i.e. interviews; participant observation and focus groups with lecturers and students.

External validity enables the researcher to apply or generalise findings to other contexts. Lincoln & Guba (1985) above, suggest that detailed and rich description of context allows the reader to make a decision about the relevant transferability of the findings, if indeed further application of particular findings was the aim of the research. Akerlind (2005) in his study of the variation and commonality in phenomenographic methods concluded that validity can be achieved through communicability and /or pragmatic consideration, in other words it is important to communicate the whole process in detail. By auditing and continuously reflecting on the process throughout I aimed to achieve accuracy and consistency of reporting and ensure that the data was dependable and capable of being confirmed (Seale, 2004). I also added to the dependability of the data by carefully recording each stage of the data collection and analysis as well as reflections and observations in my research diary.

The Process of Data Collection

Once I had established the research design I conducted a pilot interview in July 2005, using a draft list of guidance questions. After listening to the tape of the interview, changes to the questions were made. Two particular points led me to make to these changes. First I noted the difficulty I had in getting the tutor to articulate what she actually did in teaching sessions – how she actually helped the students to learn and to apply their learning. Secondly, I was not fully aware of how different the interviewee felt she taught differently depending on the level of the students. Both these aspects informed the changes to the final interview question guidelines.

I contacted prospective participants by email, see Appendix Six, and after one week emailed again saying I would be in touch by phone to make an appointment to interview them. In-depth interviews were then conducted with course leaders /tutors across both courses. Interviews generally took place at a venue nominated by the interviewees. All interviews were recorded (with permission) and transcribed.

All tutors who were interviewed were observed in a 'teaching contact' situation of their choice, teaching practice being the phenomena under investigation at that particular time. The 'tutor' practice and student interaction were observed concurrently. Notes were taken by the researcher during each observation session using the frameworks described in the section on observation. Examples of anonymised completed recordings can be seen at Appendix Seven.

I recruited students for the focus groups and interviews through standard communication processes via the lecturers. Generally focus groups took place immediately after a teaching session in the same room so that students didn't have to remember where or when the focus group sessions were taking place. The focus groups generally lasted for about an hour. I provided the students with refreshments as a small token of appreciation.

The Process of Data Analysis

Stage one

Data analysis proceeded in four stages. The first stage involved reading each transcript at least three times in its entirety to help familiarize me with the data and begin to think about identifying significant issues.

Stage two

Stage two involved the input of the data from the transcripts of the fourteen lecturer interviews and the notes from the participant observation sessions into a qualitative analysis computer software programme called NVIVO, enabling the data to be explored in a number of ways. In seeking to approach the analysis of data in an interpretative way Patrick (2000) suggests broadly following Sandberg's (1997) recommended steps, a process I also tried to follow. These are looking for:

> *- an orientation towards the phenomenon and how it appears throughout the research process*
> *- seeking to describe the experience under investigation, rather than trying to explain it*
> *- horizontalising the material being analysed - treating everything which is said as being of equal importance*
> *- seeking structural features in the experience under investigation*
> *- using intentionality as a correlational rule (looking at what is focused on and how it is represented* (p.131)

As the data was imported into NVIVO each transcript was labeled according to the source and type of document, i.e. lecturer interview or observation. The next step involved looking for similarities and anomalies in the data. Broad themes began to emerge and the transcripts were coded to these categories or nodes as they are termed in NVIVO. A total of 28 nodes were developed from the interview data. Closer examination led to dismissing nodes that had only one quotation and merging other nodes where close similarities were apparent**.** One of the main benefits of using NVIVO at that stage was the opportunity to freely move the data around and make an immediate assessment of previous judgments. This process occurred in a grounded way often using key words from the narrative text as naturally occurring labels.

Finally the nodes or categories numbered 23 in total, and from these I began to 'lay out' the data in narrative text, looking for particular relationships or patterns. I attempted to 'tell the data story' and sought to simply describe the content and possible linkages in the data. In this way the main themes are exposed but not really uncovered. Any attempt to begin to explain what the themes meant was suspended until all of the data had been unraveled. The main issues and observations were summarized at the end of this part of the process, see Appendix Eight, as the data at this stage still seemed too substantive to recall.

The student data was also treated in the same way so that the data sets moved together in this second stage of analysis. Excerpts of the transcripts, nodes and the 'laid out' data can be accessed at Appendices Nine, Ten and Eleven respectively. Twenty four categories were derived from the student data and sixteen categories from the observational data through the same process.

Stage three

The second stage data was then re-examined looking for density of themes and possibly different re-connections. The number of themes was still quite expansive and so I tried to 'view' the data at different 'cuts' for example lecturers compared to lecturers or observations compared to student data. The possible number of relationships and connections began to feel incomprehensible. I decided to build some layered models in NVIVO, see Appendix Twelve, in order to try and make sense of the data and perhaps identify overarching themes or connections. Although this offered a different representation of the data it still didn't seem to be really 'saying' anything. I returned to the writings and research regarding phenomenography, as explored in chapter 2 under the section entitled 'Conceptions of Learning and Teaching'. Researchers such as (Akerlind, 2005; Bruce & Gerbner, 1995; Samuelowicz & Bain, 1992; Trigwell, 2000; Trigwell, Prosser, & Taylor, 1994) all posit that this technique of analysis had been shown to be particularly useful in identifying conceptions and finding structures to explain clusters of conceptual understandings, in the field of education.

A similar process of analysis for the student data was undertaken from stages one to three and the findings are reported in Chapter Five. The student data seemed to fall into three strands. The first - student experiences of 'learning and teaching' - reflected similarities to the lecturer categories of description continuum and where this data appears to triangulate the two sets of data are contrasted and mapped together. The second was the students' approaches to learning and the third the students' espoused outcomes from their learning experiences.

Stage four

Stage four was phenomenographic analysis. The essence of this form of analysis is that it seeks to describe the major features of the different ways a group of people relate to a phenomenon (Bowden, 2000: p.15). Phenomenography focuses upon the variation or differences of understandings between participants rather than on each individual's view alone. The researcher is not seeking representation or generalization but rather looking for the gaps or outcome spaces between conceptions, not on the individual conceptions as a reflection of the outcomes.

Reformulation of lecturer data

As I re- examined the data from lecturers, I began to see differential categories of description and some of the themes from the stage two analysis, such as 'teaching across the levels', which did not fit these categories, were discarded. 'Categories of description' is the term used by phenomenographers to represent the amalgamation of individual conceptions of a phenomenon. In this research the categories of description are the collective representations of conceptions of teaching for transfer, derived from participants during data collection. A fuller discussion of the issues surrounding 'categories of description' and the outcomes from other phenomenographical research can be found in Chapter two. The particular focus adopted in this research has aspired to what Bowden (2000) calls developmental phenomenographical research rather than pure phenomenographical research, reflecting the aim to produce outcomes that can be used to help subjects (p.6).

Six internally related 'categories of description' were found in the data. The process of analysis and interpretation was iterative and dynamic until the categories evolved and seemed to form some logical order. The categories of description were generated by looking through the data for differences between conceptions and suddenly realizing that particular espoused beliefs and views were actually characteristics of whole categories of description not separate entities linked together in other ways. These categories of description were placed on a continuum, where one end represents a traditional formal approach to teaching and the other end represents a focus on transfer approach. In some instances elements of a category of description may have been derived from one transcript only. This is appropriate in this form of analysis as representation or generalisability is not the aim, simply a description of the range of categories of description. The categories are not strictly hierarchical, as categories of description often are in phenomenographical analysis. They are discrete, although similarities across certain categories were detected. These are exemplified and discussed in chapter four where it can be seen that individual elements of original conceptions are shared across the categories of description.

Participant observations

The participant observation recordings were then set alongside the continuum of lecturer conceptions to form a matrix and build a picture of where examples in the teaching (observed from the criteria for teaching for transfer in the analytical framework) related to characteristics of a particular category of description from the interview data. To enable identification of which group of lecturers are referred to in the matrix each group was assigned a different symbol; this is further explained alongside the matrix in Chapter four. Further analysis, including linkages, relationships and contradictions with previous research are discussed in chapter six.

Chapter Four – From Teaching as Taught to a Focus on Transfer

Introduction

In this chapter and the next the outcomes of the data analysis are presented. This chapter examines the findings that emerged from two of the three main data sources employed in the research - interviews with lecturers and observations of their practice. Chapter five discusses the findings of the student focus groups and interviews with students. The design for data collection and the process of data analysis is described in the methodology chapter. A brief recap is given here to indicate how the findings below were reached.

The analysis of data was approached in a number of the different ways and stages with the ultimate process being phenomenographical. The focus in phenomenography is on the differences or variation in dimensions otherwise termed 'categories of description' of a particular phenomenon articulated by participants. The point is, to try and identify in the original conceptions of participants the range of categories of description pertinent to the line of enquiry. In this case that is to find the range of understandings associated with the phenomena of teaching for transfer across a given sample. A total of six categories of description emerged from the data, these were then ordered sequentially, in relation to the espoused approaches adopted in relation to teaching for transfer and placed along a continuum in a logical order.

The continuum has been mapped on to a matrix to show the reader where the data appears to triangulate between interviews and observations. The matrix below maps the findings from the interviews against the teaching for transfer observation criteria framework derived from the literature review. The top row represents the 'categories of description' in the continuum and the columns constitute the analytic framework criteria, as outlined in chapter 3, used in the participant observation sessions.

The continuum across the top of the matrix shows the categories of description derived from the lecturer conceptions identified in the interview data. The symbol ● represents the psychology lecturers and the symbol ◉ represents the social work lecturers. These symbols

occur on the matrix where there is evidence in the data base of interviews and observations to support the connection. Where no symbols appear then the interview data is still discussed at length but there were no actual observations from the lecturers' practice to support what the lecturers had said. The symbols do not represent a particular number of observations but identify examples of where the technique in practice mapped to a characteristic of a category of description. For example within the category of description entitled 'Drawing on student personal experience' the search for examples of the lecturers doing this in practice was found in the data under the observation criteria numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12 in the matrix. The full analysis of observations can be found at Appendix Thirteen where the reader can see how the process of interpretation was undertaken.

To re-cap the horizontal axis refers to the categories of description of teaching drawn from the analysis of interviews, the vertical axis to the criteria by which classes were observed.

Table 4:1 Categories of description of teaching for transfer - phenomenon derived from interviews cross referenced by participant observation analytic framework

Categories of description from interviews → Participant Observation Criteria ↓	Teaching as taught	Boring and Dry	Drawing on the student personal experience	Teaching from professional practice experience	Challenging behaviours and attitudes	Focus on transfer
1 Hugging	●	●	●◎	◎	◎	
2 Bridging		●	●◎	◎	◎	◎
3 Metaphors		●	◎	◎		
4 Drawing inferences	●		●◎	◎	◎	◎
5 Integrate examples			●◎	◎		
6 Work setting stimuli				◎	◎	
7 Many e.gs same situation			●	◎	◎	
8 Critical applications			●	◎		
9 When not applicable	●			●◎		
10 Self efficacy		●	●◎	◎		◎
11 Generalize other contexts			◎	◎	◎	
12 Encourage meta-cog			●	●◎	◎	◎
13 Pre-req declarative knowledge	●	●				

Psychology lecturers = ● Social work lecturers = ◎

Initial Overview of the Matrix

This matrix can be read in different ways. Of most note, is the clear distinction that can be observed between the psychology lecturers and the social work lecturers. The psychology lecturers appear to emerge solely in the first two categories of description and the social work lecturers appear to emerge solely in the last two categories of description. Shared categories of description occur in the middle two sections of the continuum where some commonalities in teaching for transfer techniques and elements of conceptions have been identified. Possible explanations for these differences become apparent when the lecturer background and experience are explored towards the end of this chapter.

Another observation that can be made from the matrix is that all of the lecturers, to some extent, incorporated some of the teaching for transfer techniques into their teaching practice. However, occurrences of utilizing these techniques appear less frequently at the beginning and the end of the categories of description continuum. This may indicate that deploying any of these techniques is a real challenge for most lecturers. Certain categories of description seem more disposed to using these techniques over others, this will be one aspect of discussion in chapter six.

Presentation of the Findings

To protect lecturer identity, each lecturer has been assigned a simple code, S to represent Social Work lecturers and P to represent Psychology lecturers and a number from 1 to 7 to indicate the sequence of the data collection. S4, for example, represents the fourth Social Work lecturer interviewed; P3, the third Psychology lecturer, and so on. Each quotation stems from an individual lecturer but where categories of description are discussed and explored the reader will see that multiple quotations are used to show the prevalence of some views over others within that particular category.

However in phenomenographical analysis the reader will recall that the emphasis in analysis is on the variation or differences between the data rather than on the actual levels of occurrences in the data itself. The focus is not the density of individual conceptions as the researcher is not seeking representation or generalization but rather looking for the gaps

between the original conceptions – see chapter three for an in depth explanation. Each quotation attempts to highlight particular characteristics of the category of description and may therefore not refer directly to the overarching category such as 'teaching as taught' in every quotation. The reader will be able to see where an individual has already been referred to [from the assigned coding] earlier in the section of that category of description.

Each of the six categories of description identified and represented in the continuum is now explored in a separate section per category, of this chapter. Each section draws on excerpts of the many quotations contained in the first stage of analysis of the lecturer interviews; and excerpts from recordings of the participant observation sessions that appear to support the data in the lecturers' categories of description.

The following is an excerpt from the grand tour observations as adapted from (Spradley, 1980), explained in chapter three, made of the psychology lecturer teaching sessions only. It is presented here to help familiarize the reader with the context and setting of these observations, and so is placed at the beginning of the sections relating to the categories of description that appear exclusive to the psychology lecturers. An excerpt of the social work grand tour observations can be found before the section entitled 'Teaching as professional practice experience'. These final three sections describe the categories of description that were virtually exclusive to the social work lecturer data.

The Learning and Teaching Environment
It was noted in the grand tour observations that the teaching sessions took place in tiered lecture theatres, a teaching laboratory – with personal computers (P.Cs) or in modern rooms with no natural light. Students appeared to be physically comfortable and had enough space to work**.** All the lecturers used power point and handouts. One (P5) also used video streaming, audio recordings and a white-board, and another (P7) a data projector and P.Cs for each student, teaching them a particular software package. All the teaching sessions were timetabled for an hour and most finished within 50 minutes. The days and times of the day varied throughout the week.

Categories of Description

1 Teaching as taught

This category of description, solely described by psychology lecturers, is characterised primarily by the lecturers referring to their teaching as emulating the way they themselves were taught and translating this into their practice. Other features are described later in the section. "*My teaching styles are based around my own experience as a student*" (P1).

The same applied to assessment. "*… I did find that I was drawing on a very personal experience of what worked for me especially when it came to deciding how to decide what forms of assessment to use'*(P4)

Some lecturers seemed to draw on their own experience of being a learner when they lacked experience and confidence. Often this led to a focus on content and delivery of the syllabus. This was evident both in what they said and in what I observed of their teaching.

> *Ok this is my first proper job full time in education. It's been an uphill, I wouldn't say struggle, but yeah, I would say struggle! It's been a steep steep learning curve and it's opened my eyes to a lot of things"… and so it's been very difficult to adjust, at first I was very rigid, I was determined this is how I was going to do it... this is how I was taught* (P5).

Observation of this lecturer's teaching indicated that she stuck very much to the content instructing clearly, staying close to her lesson plan and sticking with theory at all times. For example, in a seminar about anti- social personality disorder, in trying to draw inferences (4) she asked students 'from the other **theories** they had learnt what other ones could be applied to psychopaths for example; Freud's displacement **theory?** (P5). Similarly in assessing their pre-requisite knowledge (13) 'she asked/checked what students could remember and which **theories** were relevant (P5). There was also evidence of her adopting the technique of instructing when something was not applicable (9) 'in terms of **theories/content,** the lecturer made it clear it was not applicable to certain other psychological theories, so pointing out what theories applied and what theories did not apply to anti-social personality disorder (P5).

It is clear from what this lecturer said and the observations that she stayed close to the theory and content but that she also adopted a number of teaching for transfer techniques as

described above, even though she had very little in the way of practical information to help the students grasp the concepts.

The following lecturer had substantive teaching experience but still drew very much on his own learning experience, even, as he says, to the possible detriment of the student learning experience.

> *I think, well this is the way I learnt, this is the way that I know I can best deliver the material to them and so in some ways it's tough on those people who don't learn in the same ways that I did ... I just think more about what I think is an effective way of delivering the material to them* (P7*).*

Another characteristic of this category of description came to light when the lecturers were asked how they went about planning and delivering their teaching sessions. It seemed the focus was mainly on content and syllabus and getting the information across, as the following quotations indicate.

> *I see myself as articulating the syllabus and providing the outline of the syllabus that is being covered by the course and so nearly all of my teaching will be initially lecture...then to think about the things and direct their thinking rather than them listening more in the lectures. It's quite a traditional model and I'm relatively happy with that. I do expect students to be fairly independent in their learning in terms of their going out and finding material and to supplement the classes that I deliver* (P1).

> *Like now I'll just pick up things an hour before I'm going in and just have a skim through ...syllabus and it's just what's in that chapter in the text book, basically* (P2).

> *Essentially ... I just go through the process of actually researching the area, collecting as much information as I can about the area and then trying to put it together in a coherent kind of story because that's the way that I like to deliver* (P7).

> *Major thing I think about is probably the content I'm led by the content that I want to get across by the syllabus ...* (P1)

This focus on staying close to the content was also evident in an observation session when another lecturer (P7) started by saying 'Remember before Easter we looked at ANOVA (ANalysis Of VAriance between groups) within design and last week we highlighted differences remember homogeneity of variance tests, remember from the lecture?'

Although the lecturer here is focused on the content, he actually also demonstrated the teaching for transfer technique number 2 (hugging) that is referring to previous ground/content he had covered.

When students did not meet lecturers' expectations, they expressed disappointment and frustration with them for not being like they were as students. The following lecturer who had vocational experience both in teaching at a primary level and in forensic psychology said …

> *I think I had a sort of an idea of how students would learn because from my own experience of how I would learn* [so you know] *you kind of bring that with you, how I have learnt myself and this is what I would expect other people to do and that's probably a lot more independent than they are capable of...* (P3)

Some went further and expressed concern about the problems they had helping the students to learn

> *…I*t *caused me to dub a new term I don't know if it exists 'learning resistance' which I didn't actually know existed but I've actually experienced it in my students* (P6).

> *…I know with some of them you know, I can't, its just going to be a brick wall for some of them regardless of what you try* (P7).

> *I think that* [what might help] *possibly is making them understand why are we actually teaching them this, you know we are not doing this to torture you, we are actually trying to teach you something* (P6)

These comments suggest that students fell short of lecturer expectations and that where this was the case, the lecturers were either unsure what else to do to get them to learn or actually did not see it as their role to adapt their teaching or support students in their learning. The following quotation in particular highlights the latter point

> *Really, but there's a lot of hot air about how students learn and so on and I think in some ways there is too much emphasis on, or too much concentration on the process of teaching and learning rather than getting on with it in some ways* (P7). Although this lecturer did articulate an awareness of different learning styles "*maybe this isn't what you want to know, but in terms of the way that I teach students, I know that it is probably not the way that some of them would like to be taught or the situation where they would learn most effectively* (P7).

A related feature of this category of description is the lecturers' need to control the student learning experience.

> *They have a paper to read each week which they must read, I take a hard line if they haven't read what I've asked them* (P2)

> *I don't want to let it go too active because personally I don't want to lose control of the session so I do try to maintain a structure* (P5)

In adopting the teaching for transfer technique of 'assessing pre-requisite knowledge' (13) this lecturer used closed questions rather than open dialogue implying fear of losing control - Observed lots of checking of understanding - at each stage 'Everyone ok? everyone keeping up? does everyone understand? anybody unclear?'(P7).

> *I'm trying to maintain something relaxed while also keeping them controlled and directed about it (P4)*

During an observation this lecturer adopted the 'hugging'(1) teaching for transfer technique by linking to previous learning but the narrative is clearly directive in style - 'Linked to previous lecture – **I will set** context – we will explore later' (P3).

It seemed, in the main, that lectures were delivered in a didactic style and the lecturers felt pressured into delivering as much material as they could get through.

> *Anybody doing this kind of job its all about learning about how much material you can get through, the level at which you are working at* (P7)

> *You know you've obviously seen a lecture and that's pretty standard format so I'll give them the information … and I think that's very common with all of us that we do that* (P3).

The narrative in this observation implies a rather traditional formal tone –'Well done you all got it right - correct well done - you know this' (P1). – 'You know this already' (P2). Yet at the same time this lecturer is clearly trying to 'Encourage self efficacy/confidence in the students, teaching for transfer technique number 10**.**

There was a tacit knowledge that the students took an instrumentalist approach to assessment rather than being genuinely interested in the subject and content. Two of the psychology lecturers discussed the issue of the students' attitude to assessment.

> *Therefore the choice of topic comes afterwards, which was the easiest question, which one am I going to find the easiest to write lots of stuff about, you know rather than being interested in psychological development* (P5).

This quotation implies that the students are motivated to take the easiest route and is related to the quotation below saying that their [the students] main concern is the actual mark, and so assessment is seen as the 'stick' to ensure the students do the work.

> *But for lots of them its just getting the mark at the end so if they, so that's the stick in some ways that they know that the exercise that they are doing is going to be assessed* (P7).

Also suggestive of a lack of student engagement this psychology lecturer worried about student attendance and was considering adopting an instrumental approach herself, to attendance, through assessment.

> *I have had concerns about attendance and if there is anything that I could do to change the assessment so that means assessing them all constantly through so part of their assessment is to be coming to the seminars* (P4).

Summary – teaching as taught

From the evidence presented here there seem to be six characteristics of the 'teaching as taught' category of description. Lecturers often draw on their personal experience of how they were taught and assessed, these included using very formal teaching methods such as lectures and power point. They tend to stay close to the content and theories and sometimes this is due a lack of experience and confidence. The aim is always to get through the syllabus, leading to the adoption, for the most part, of an instructional role. When students do not respond, lecturers express frustration that they are not learning in the way that they did as students and talk of having to control the students learning experience including enforcing attendance through assessment strategies. A related feature to this characteristic is the lecturer's acknowledgement of the students' instrumental approaches to assessment.

2. Boring and dry

The major, but not exclusive characteristic, of this second category of description also mentioned solely by the psychology lecturers was that they wanted to entertain the students or give them some fun, particularly in the context of performing on a stage. One of the lecturers said "*I even pretended to be a horse last week to keep them interested*" (P7). The lecturers often referred to the fact that they felt the content was dry and boring and in an attempt to try and interest and engage the students they tried to think of ways to entertain them.

> *… its being an entertainer although I don't think I'm a particularly good entertainer but in terms of doing lectures, **although a lot of the time the material is very dry** I try to get the information across in hopefully a fairly light way'* (P7).

The lecturer above (P7) attempts the teaching for transfer technique of 'bridging' (2) not by linking relationships of variables but by focusing on types of nuts in an attempt to engage or entertain the students – 'What is DV? Dependent variable, remember it is something we can't control. So if there is no difference in people and the number of peanuts eaten the significant difference depends on the nut type, which is the dependent variable' (P7).

Most lectures were delivered through PowerPoint, using colour etc in the presentation in order to try to maintain the students' attention.

> *I always use PowerPoint, I like to use lots of colours just because I think that if you have to sit and watch a presentation and its all the same blank colours, black and white or whatever … I haven't used much video yet but I will be showing a documentary on personality disorders when they come back from break (P6).*

> *I have to have a bit of fun doing it as well, if I have a little bit of fun**, maybe they will find it interesting or something,** so I try to make these kind of presentations a bit you know an animation, a picture and whatever as much as you can do with a fixed slide really (P6)… because I'm coming from the point of view **that I know that probably a lot of them will not enjoy the subject themselves,** so just getting them to enjoy doing the activity is, you know, just to try and hook them in so if they enjoy the activity they may understand the activity and what they are trying to do and get the concept that we are trying to get across at the end (P6).*

The following lecturers were observed using the teaching for transfer technique of using metaphors or analogies (3) - The lecturers tried to reflect similar conceptions that the students may recognize through funny sayings/films - 'People were called crackpots because their behaviour had changed due to lead poisoning; Huntingtons Chorea – like dancing choreography; Mad as a hatter' (P1); 'Remember Hannibal Lecter he showed no emotion and would be diagnosed as Anti-social Psychotic Disorder (APD)' (P5*).*

Another lecturer discussed how she tried to take the subject to extremes to shock and motivate the students to participate.

> *There's always a theme that comes out of it and this year it was like in previous years it's often been about religion and other things and we've spent a lot of time thinking about. This year it was animal consciousness and if animals are conscious should you really eat them? There is evidence to suggest that before age 3, children aren't conscious, so would it actually be better to eat a baby? The students loved it and everybody kept calling each other? Was I advocating baby eating as the only logical consequence of our beliefs? So every year some people change to vegetarianism or stop being a vegetarian. I think baby eating might have been a step too far. But it was just great they wouldn't let go of it and there were loads of people really interested...not that I'm advocating cannibalism* (P2).

Summary – Boring and dry

This second category of description on the continuum is characterized by the lecturers showing an awareness of the students' response to 'difficult' or 'dry' material and their [the lecturers'] attempts to overcome this response, by aiming to entertain or engage the students in enjoyable activities. Lecturers belonging to this category of description may also demonstrate attempts to present information in an interesting way, through, colour, animation and so on and by drawing upon the use of metaphor to help the students understand and remember the subject material.

3. Drawing on the students' personal experiences

The third category of description is characterised by the lecturers drawing upon the students' personal experience and where this is lacking, using case studies, metaphors or examples to help the students understand the relevance or applicability of the subject in hand. Both groups of lecturers appeared to use the students' experience in their teaching.

Two of the psychology lecturers here describe how they used the student experience by encouraging students to give their own examples or giving examples that related to roles the students might have in the future

> *I've always tried to you know bring in their own experiences so that they can give their own examples and I think that way integrating it into their own understanding a bit better* (P6.)

The following psychology lecturer used an example of a research instrument in the 'real world'

> *I probably would give examples of the kinds of area that we do, the way that I teach it at the moment is that students do an assessment before they actually start on their own projects, they do an assessment where they actually analyse the British crime survey* (P7).

When the subject of psychology was about 'dysfunctional' behaviours in people then examples or case studies were utilised.

> *Obviously where they don't have a particular type of experience I will use real examples so like in one of the seminars where I wanted them to understand the difficulty of diagnosing disorders I used two real life client examples so that I could talk to them about these people and how they were treated and how they were actually diagnosed* (P6).

During an observation session where the subject was psychological disorders**,** the lecturer used a range of teaching resources including case study examples and adopted a range of teaching for transfer techniques.
This session included: Hugging –(1) Referring back to previous learning - 'This is linked to the example referred to this morning re (ADHD)Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (P5) (case study); Bridging – (2) referring to the context or the underlying principles **–** The

lecturer showed a video – (case study) of 'interviews with a psychologist and people with APD, the video cites an experiment to test stimuli and response. The video showed a MRI (Magnetic resonating imaging) scan comparison between brains of patients and 'normal' brains, on the scan showed very different responses to emotive words, the documentary concludes this fits with psycho-dynamic theory and a failure to develop super ego' (P5).

She tried to integrate many examples (5). For instance she used a handout to illustrate the type of criminal activities associated with APD e.g. damage to property, promiscuity which she then followed up by saying 'what has been your experience (referring to the students)?; 'what criminal activities do you associate with this disorder' (P5). The purpose was partly also to show the students how psychopaths and sociopaths are portrayed in the media (P5 session) she gave lots of examples for the same situation (7).

In encouraging critical applications (8) the same psychology lecturer asked the students to critique from their own experiences. For instance 'from your own experience, whether this is from what you have read or seen on TV consider whether you possess any of these characteristics? (noted on checklist handout.) How many criteria would you need to meet for diagnosis? Did any of you think about the categorizing criteria?'

As the lecturer moved around the groups and listened to their discussions she encouraged self efficacy – (10) by cautiously responding to students, building on their comments without saying the students' response was actually incorrect. (P5)

In another observation session, in which the lecture was about cognitive psychology, other teaching for transfer techniques were used. In this case the students' direct experience or direct participation in the session was used. She (P2) began by asking the students to participate in a memory experiment using metaphors (3). In talking about memory and association she advised the students to adopt certain behaviours before revision and to adopt the same behaviours before an exam. For example she asked the students to use certain memory techniques and consider which was the most effective e.g. revision for exams – eat chocolate and eat again just before exam (P2). Later she requested that the

students apply examples from their own experience - drawing on the student understanding of the 'central executive' (cognitive psychology term used for describing a part of the process of memorization) part of the memory. She also gave examples of: how to utilize 'elaborated' memory and how to help remember complex information (P2). In discussing these examples the students were (4) drawing inferences and finding many examples for the same situation (7) and the lecturer was encouraging meta-cognition (12) by encouraging the students to personally 'test' the concepts she was explaining during the lecture, telling them she was building on their existing schema.

The social work lecturers also used the students' personal experience, in this instance below to challenge their values and link their experience to the policy context.

> *… in this sort of poverty quiz it asks them to rank really what they view as necessities and which are not really necessities but are quite desirable, so its amazing how students actually think that its perfectly alright for people not to have a television or not to have a fridge or not to have a best set of clothes (S2).*

After this the students were asked to keep a diary of their own spending for the week and at the next session the students collectively explored the differences between what was OK for them to spend money on compared to other (service user) people. This social work lecturer discussed how using a range of experience - the student's previous experience, the lecturer's professional experience and typical 'service user' experience all helps students stand back and analyse scenarios through different eyes or perspectives not previously considered.

> *By starting with a specific or particular experience students can see the value of what they are learning and see how it might be useful to them. I also think it is crucial if people can make sense of what they have been doing and experiencing up to now. They perhaps have been going through a job or going through life and not being able to or having the tools to stand back and look at life sociologically or from a social policy point of view, or thinking about values in an explicit conscious way. So what I tend to use is a mixture. There might be some bits of my own experience, but more likely it would be case study type material and also their experience. Sometimes it's a prepared case study that they look at and they have certain questions they have with which to*

pull it apart, sometimes it might be something that they have brought with them obviously suitably anonymised (S7)

These methods were later observed in use in a session about working with communities. The lecturer began by asking the students to discuss positive and negative experiences from their own experience of communities with each other (S7) so bridging (2) the subject by getting the students to think about the context of the subject. Towards the end of the session she asked them to summarise the content to each other and responded with 'Good point, interesting point, - I was going to say that, sure. I've heard some really good ideas' (S7), so promoting self efficacy (10).

This next social work lecturer actually asked students to bring in photos of themselves as children so that they could relate to their own experience as a child and then to apply this 'sense' to children involved in social service cases in the media. He used the creative method of building a big group collage.

He began the session with a hugging technique (1) – 'Do you remember 5 cases of disproved cot death in the press this year' (S6).

> *We talk about children quite coldly in a sense, you know this is childcare law this is child protection law, but actually when you get people to bring in pictures and you say to them look it would be great if you brought in some of your own stuff but if you want to then take something out of magazines and I think it makes it real. So you get this large collage with people, some of their own stuff in there, stuff from the media and they can look at it and actually they see children and they can reflect on their own childhoods and so forth so it makes it more holistic, it makes it more a real living thing* (S6)

In another session observed, the seminar was about child development and the significance of play. The lecturer began by bridging (2)**,** giving the students a handout and asking them to refer specifically to their own experience. Students were asked to share examples from their own experience and development as a child with play (S5), so integrating examples (5). Then the lecturer asked them to apply this to now and consider how adults play, this lead up to the question, what is the function of play? (S5).

She also asked students to recall and discuss how they used play as a child to help management of fear as part of cognitive development e.g. 'Murder in the Dark' 'Hide and seek' 'What's the time Mr Wolf'(S5) and helped them to draw inferences (4) by remembering examples of how toys can be used to adapt to different social environments e.g skipping rope. What toys did the students remember that served this purpose?(S5). Students discussed their own examples of fear and for example, the big scary house. They identified how adults doing bungee jumps is a way of experiencing fear in a controlled environment (S5) and in this way the students began generalizing to other contexts (11).

During an observation session about a 'service user' reaching a crisis point the lecturer boldly asked the students

"Have you ever got to that crisis point?' 'Have you experienced that in yourself or a colleague? 'Think about a crisis you've experienced it is a process not a single point" *(S4)* so asking the students to think of a personal situation and then to apply it in a general sense (11).

Summary - Drawing on the student's personal experience

In this category of description the lecturers would adapt a range of ways of starting with the students' experience and integrating this into their learning. Engaging them in an activity where the outcomes challenge their personal assumptions; asking the students to use images of themselves; using 'real' data or 'real' case studies of people suffering dysfunctional disorders were all ways in which the lecturers were trying to get the students to connect with the subject matter and their own experiences. Examples in the observations covered a greater number of the teaching for transfer techniques than was evident in other categories of description. The participant observations offered a myriad of examples of the lecturers using the students' own experience or giving them the experience through case study drawing on a range of particular teaching techniques. In this category of description the psychology lecturers appeared to utilise the student experience more substantively and flexibly than the social work lecturers. Lecturers in this category of description would be easily recognized, as the primary characteristic is drawing upon the students' personal experiences.

The following sections and respective categories of description are almost exclusive to the social work lecturers and so to familiarize the reader with the settings and context of the observations, excerpts from the grand tour observations (Spradley, 1980) are set out below.

The learning and teaching environment

Notable aspects of the social work teaching sessions were: Every session was uncomfortable due to the number of students and the size of the teaching space. Sometimes there weren't enough chairs and windows and doors had to remain wide open to help air circulation. Most of the lecturers used power-point, handouts, role play and small group exercises, as teaching aids at some stage during the session. The sessions themselves were billed on the timetable as a mix of seminars, lectures or workshops. The students generally appeared attentive, either taking notes avidly or very quickly settling into groups as requested and getting on with the tasks and activities. Most of the sessions were timetabled as 2-3 hours and lasted a whole morning or afternoon with an informal break of 10 minutes at some stage and most of the sessions seemed to take place on a Friday afternoon or Monday morning. In general the lecturer's behaviour was very informal, moving around, chatting, listening attentively, and sitting on the desk to present. Sometimes the language used by the lecturers was very valuing of the students and warm 'I'd like to invite you to think about' (S2), thanking students individually for their contributions (S7 and S4). Generally the atmosphere felt relaxed and informal, sometimes it felt quite challenging for the students as they discussed their own views and tried out being different people, (social worker, service user, observer/feedback) There was also a sense of purpose and pace present and students were encouraged to keep moving forward in their activities.

4. '**Drawing on professional practice experience**'

This category of description is characterised by the lecturers drawing on their own considerable professional practice experience and on the students' placement experiences. The lecturers also manufactured practice scenarios such as, bringing in actual 'service users' to work with the students or asking the students to reflect upon their placements. Relating learning to professional experience, either that of the lecturer's professional experience or that of students**,** was described at length with detailed examples of how and

why the lecturers did this. The social work lecturers saw this as an essential component of their practice because when students went out into practice situations they would need to recognise the relevance of what they had learnt.

The following lecturer described how she tried to give examples the students might come across related to social work practice:

> *Not all of them may choose to practice Social Work but the vast majority will. It is supposed to be a more vocational course so one tries to give examples from a sort of setting that are likely to meet* (S3)

In a session observed with this lecturer, the topic was the law and the implications of the freedom of information (FIO) act for social workers. In drawing inferences (4) she asked 'Has anyone experienced a service user request for information? [on this topic]. Yes? There followed much confusion around FIO and DPA, (Data Protection Act), she said '3rd party information cannot be included when releasing information' (S3). In using the same stimuli as the work setting (6) she said - 'Have any of you found issues in the field in relation to freedom and access to information? The replies came: 'Yes, we had a form to fill out every time a child enters care'. Another student volunteered a very real example from her recent practice where she was shocked at the implications of not being able to access information (S3). Encouraging the students to critique the situation (8) the lecturer asked 'Are the mechanisms in use too stringent? You will have to bear this in mind when writing, that it could be used in the future. She asked 'what other situations will require you to record and why?' Yes, another implication is that most recording is electronic so the out of hours service cannot now access records (S3).

'What about when it's injurious to the individual? E.g. children not knowing of previous rejection/impaired cognitive function. Police and court records do not have to be made available in those cases it doesn't apply' (S3) and here she's pointing out when something is not applicable (9)

Highlighting when something does not apply to a situation (9) within a practice situation was also observed in a psychology lecture when the lecture was explaining to students about 'special needs' and as an educational psychologist to only use 'a statement of special needs' for complex special needs (P3)

As part of the course the social work students are also introduced to people (service users) they might work with on placements or in practice:

> *You have to use a lot of case studies and they have service users and practitioners coming in to talk to students about the real life really which helps them to make sense of the knowledge they are gaining in relation to how you actually use that in practice* (S1*)*

> *In the communication unit people are going to be actually working with service users so you know straight from the old PowerPoint presentations to an actual real life situation* (S5)

And here the lecturer is talking about when the students return from their placements and how she describes theories as practical tools for practice.

> *Getting people to see that theories are actually very practical things and not some great frightening massive thing out in the distance somewhere. Its making it real making theory real for people and showing how it applies and how bits of theory apply, you don't have to take the whole thing but use bits of it to explain something that happened* [from their professional experience during placements](S5).

Assessments are related to professional practice by asking the social work students to: undertake role play, write up incidents reflectively, write letters as advocates for service users and incorporate feedback received from a variety of sources, so the assessment is used as an extension of professional practice and incorporates activities that will be required in their professional role.

> *I try to give them examples of how things are used in practice. Also although we're working within prescriptive limits of what we can set for assignments to try and think about assignments, scenarios etc that they could meet in practice* (S3).

They write four of those, they are 1000 words and they are based on a piece of practice that they have undertaken and linking it to the appropriate legislation, relevant theory and reflection on what they did well, what they didn't do so well, what they've learnt from the experience and so on, so during the preparation for the practice they get to practice doing that with a little role playing and they write it up. So the two things are continually linked (S5).

On level 3 law for example they write a letter as an advocate I mean there are all sorts of different things (S7)

They will write a reflective assignment that incorporates the theory that they've learnt and how that applies to what they have learnt from actually doing things and so incorporating the feedback that they've had from peers, their own reflections and feedback that they will have from the service user or carer that they spoke to (S5).

The above lecturer talked further about how she used her own professional experience when asked about dealing with difficult cases and personal dilemmas

My personal experience comes in when we are talking about all sorts of things like when people ask you questions like how do you value somebody as an individual non judgmentally when they are a paedophile, a convicted paedophile, how do you work with that kind of thing, how do you reconcile your personal values with you know the work that you have to do on professional values and then you know you draw on the experiences that you've had and say how you've managed it (S5)

In a different observation this lecturer drew on her own professional experience from residential care and "NIMBY" (Not in my back yard) problems with neighbours. She provided tangible other contexts by encouraging the students to act out case studies, (S7) using the technique of generalising to other contexts (11) and in pointing out many examples for the same situation (7) she said 'Remember all the different interventions you have just used, each community will require different interventions' (S7).

Another feature of this category of description is how lecturers made the learning explicit. In this study they told the students why they were learning about a particular area and how this related to other areas covered in the course. The rationale was to help the students gain an overview or 'helicopter' approach.

The following two quotations depict the different ways the lecturers try to help the students 'see the point'

> *I get them to share their experiences of where suicide had been a threat or a reality in their practice not in their personal lives so it's that mixture of here's a helicopter or wider view now what do you think what's it like how does it play out for you?*(S4).

> *You need to know about housing policy in general, you need to know about asylum seekers because some of you will be working for example there's a project in S………city* (S7).

In an observation session another lecturer said – 'This is what we're doing and this is why-[being explicit] Can each group discuss examples of social/cognitive development or fear management in play' (S5) and in this way encouraging meta-cognitive approaches (12).

And during the interview, this lecturer said we need to be *"much more explicit because every piece of work that they do they are using material for their placement"*(S1*)*

When asked about how they went about planning a session the social work lecturers talked about themselves managing the teaching and thinking about what students had learnt already, and balancing debate with reflection and getting them from here to there, engaging the students in a process. Rather in contrast to the categories of description that focus on content, as discussed in some of the earlier categories of description.

Lecturers within this category of description also seemed more mindful of student comprehension and engagement, for example what type of learning activities would help the students to understand. A variety of creative methods were cited, such as quizzes, collage, video of self, T.V programmes, simulations and so on.

In thinking about challenging prejudice and making effective practice interventions this lecturer used footage from a soap:

> *We started with an extract from East Enders actually, a video extract where it was a stag and hen night and we were looking at well, what I asked the students to do was to watch that extract and look at ways in which the men were explaining their behaviour and explaining or telling the guy who was*

> *getting married giving him advice about how to manage the ball and chain and all that kind of stuff* (S2).

This social work lecturer challenges the concept of lecture = presentation by PowerPoint. In teaching students about children in society, legislation and the role of the social worker he said:

> *I like to mix methods, blended learning as it is called now, I like to think about using artwork, video, direct lecturing whatever…so one of things we do is a big collage in the lecture room and I ask people to bring stuff in and they build a collage of how children appear in our society* (S6).

During a teaching observation session this lecturer referred to practice situations constantly, in reminding the students what they had been working on, using hugging (1) He said - 'In the past several weeks I've talked about 'drift' we've talked about initial and full care assessments. Remember the Children Act; where possible make decisions in partnership with parents' (S6). And in preparing the students for appearing in court in a child abuse case he pointed out the principles of what the judge would be looking for – by using the bridging technique (2) – 'In general terms, provide them with the route map. The judges want the social workers expert opinion; it is your research, talk through the chronology of the case, what is your professional judgment' (S6).

In general during observations the social work lecturers used different practice situations: "In many cases you get CAFCASS (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service) officers involved in divorce, adoption, care orders and you will have to have a plan of care in all these cases" (S6 session), so trying to give the students, many examples for the same situation (7).

In encouraging students to be confident (Self efficacy – 10) he said 'You should be strong now regarding the nature of significant harm, I bet you can. Who can remind me who is 'exparti', making application in secret, if you get this right the rest will follow' (S6).

In the interview the above lecturer also cited other creative teaching strategies:

> *For instance, I gave them a whole portfolio of stuff putting either side of the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) debate and actually said right you are*

now the department of health. You have to decide what your policy is going to be over the next 10 years (S6).

Summary – Drawing on professional practice experience

In this category of description the lecturers use their experience from professional practice to inform and animate their teaching practice. They also draw on the students' actual or potential experience that they might encounter when in the field.

Other features of this category of description are: lecturers demonstrating a focus on the learning process itself not the content and often adopting creative non – formal teaching methods. Lecturers in this category of description would also try to be explicit with students about why they were teaching them something in particular and how it related to practice or previous learning.

5. Challenging behaviours and attitudes

This category of description was held exclusively by the social work lecturers who voiced expectations around student behaviour and attitudes. The emotive nature of the course was described in different ways by the lecturers. Sometimes it was about offering the students support alongside radically challenging their values and sometimes it was about placing the students in very personally challenging situations.

> *We have very high expectations about the conduct and behaviour of our students you know they have got to have the right value base* (S2)

> *Of course in social work, punctuality, reliability, you know, time management all of those things we are looking for evidence of that as potential suitability for the professional side* (S2)

> *So actually turning up on time, letting people know where you are, managing your diary, not changing appointments at short notice, you know, all the things as workers we take for granted you know its really new for them...* (S1)

During a teaching observation the students were reminded about responding professionally at all times 'Remember as a social worker the community will see itself differently to the way you see it, you will come across lots and lots of different 'communities' and conflicts – she outlined many examples (7).

The lecturers also often referred to expectations of themselves and the need to be sensitive and supportive towards the students, *A safe learning environment, I think is really important* (S5).

This social work lecturer explained how she considers and takes account of the students' emotional needs and sensitivities during teaching

> *I'm very keen that they are not scared of theory so one of the things that I sort of make sure I do in every week is help them understand how theory is another way of explaining and because actually what the students our students find difficult in practice is relating theory to practice* (S2)

One of the lecturers discussed how she saw the development of the personal and the professional as inextricable and that 'superficial' signs of learning were not acceptable to entering professional practice. The responsibility for this she commented firmly lay with the educator/lecturer:

> *I think that's one of the crucial tasks of social work educators to help students develop a fully integrated personal and professional persona* (S2).

> *Social work students who don't engage in that sort of deep learning and who do that sort of superficial stuff, pay lip service to the right kind of theme, you know they are not going to be effective social workers* (S2)

In one observation the reality of the students' practice experience was all too apparent. In discussing the implications of the freedom of information act the students said "We have to share all information with other agencies including the hospital, so even when the hospital tells us, we have to create a file, even though the child is in no danger"

Another student said "I had a situation last week where because of the legal requirements I think a child was left even though she was abused" (S3 session). The students were finding many examples for the same situation (7)

In another observation the student said they got called out on an emergency re: section 136 and they knew what it was because of the lecture last week about the Mental Health Act (S3). This demonstrates that the student had recognized the relevance of the previous

lecture – hugging (1) and highlights the harsh reality the students were dealing with in practice situations.

Knowing that the students were constantly in the practice field, the lecturers challenged the beliefs and assumptions of the students, such as examining stereotypes:

> *So lots of kind of stuff about gender, lots of stuff about biological and natural assumptions, sort of that psychoanalytic stuff about attachment and I showed them that and also an extract from Tricia, its like a Jerry Springer (yes) or Oprah Winfrey (yes) British version, you know not terribly sophisticated but what I'm trying to get the students to do is see how everyday explanations of behaviour and attitudes and interactions and all the rest of it are based if you like on some kind of disciplinary perspective it might not be terribly well informed but social workers need to think about their own common sense assumptions and try and be a bit more rigorous than Tricia or Jerry Springer might be and you know think about where their own explanations are coming from and be very clear about that* (S2.)

In the observation session this lecturer began by explaining that she was going to challenge ideas and assumptions and in so doing she encouraged the students to adopt a meta-cognitive approach (12) she explained why reflection was important and why it can be difficult. 'The point of this exercise is to explore your pre-conceptions' (S2).

Towards the end of the session she warned 'So what happens when there is a clash of values?' The dangerous social workers are those who are not aware' (S2) inferring the importance of the exercise to professional practice (4).

The social work lecturers seemed to have a strong sense of awareness of what they expected of students and a very keen sense of professional responsibility. They were very aware that these students were soon going to be released into the world of 'service users' and their {i.e. the lecturer's} ultimate responsibility lay in ensuring that the students were capable of delivering a professional service. Methods included examining and exposing the students' own behaviour:

> *We film that over and over again and we then look at the tapes and analyse it and see how actually what they do might not have been terribly helpful because all they've done is ask a load of nosey questions and not really listened to what*

the person was saying and that's a really powerful way of helping students think (S2).

The following quotation depicts how future situations were presented by placing the students in similar situations to prospective service users, 'do unto others….'

> *We keep on saying to them no well you've got to learn how to do it here and practise and develop your skills in a safe place where you are not going to damage anybody before we let you out and do it with service users. And its entirely consistent that in the training of social workers that they have some experience of what it feels like to be filmed revealing perhaps intimate or personal details so we are quite hard on them because actually social workers expect and require service users to reveal stuff about their own lives so its entirely consistent in their training that they've go some experience of what that might feel like and in training they have the power they have much more power because they can choose how much or how little to reveal* (S2)

In a teaching session on managing a child abuse court case the lecturer asked the students to act out the scenario 'When in court, feet towards the judge and turn to face the court. Remember inter-agency co-operation is so important; social workers have a 'bundle' for each case that is every piece of recording and paperwork. 'As a social worker you will have to take lead responsibility, your case will need to demonstrate objective evidenced based practice. You should have a senior there; you should not be there on your own' (S6).

The lecturer was offering here the same stimuli as in a work setting (6) but the prospect sounded quite challenging for the students. In generalizing to other contexts (11) the lecturer said "When you are in court show the barristers you are the expert" (S6).

Summary – Challenging behaviours and attitudes

Lecturer behaviour found in this category of description would focus on changing and challenging the attitudes and values of students to help them reach the required professional standard. They would have a strong sense of awareness of what they expected of the students and have a keen sense of professional responsibility. They would be aware that that these students were soon to be released into the world of 'service users' and their [the lecturer's] ultimate responsibility lay in ensuring that the students were capable of delivering a professional service. Lecturers in this category would demonstrate: high

expectations of the students in terms of their behaviour, assessing qualities such as; reliability, punctuality, and commitment. The students would be deemed unlikely to pass the course unless they had demonstrated these qualities. Other features included being sensitive to students' emotional needs and challenging them with emotive situations that they were likely to meet in the field.

6. Focus on transfer

This final category of description on the continuum is characterized by lecturers who would have a conviction that transfer of learning is the main point of teaching;

> *Everything we do needs to be either directly or indirectly fairly readily transferable to working as a social worker. So yeah! That's a strong expectation* (S4)

> *This has to be transferable or even the more generic stuff like IT skills equally have to be demonstrated in practice and then the impact of the practice experience has to be re-demonstrated in the following level on the academic units* (S4.)

This same lecturer concluded by saying that this was where the effort of the lecturers was really focused because students basically would not pass the course if they could not demonstrate learning transfer:

> *So there are lots of ways in which we would encourage that transfer because it's essential you can't get through our degree without it so we invest I think heavily in terms of time and energy in doing our best to ensure that that happens and if it doesn't people don't pass* (S4).

In an observation session with the above lecturer she started by saying 'What is Social work? Intervening where people interact with their environments. It is differentiated between psychology and social work, social workers adapt and apply the methods of psychologists. She set the context with 'Social systems and individuals are surrounded by social systems/networks'(S4) so showing the students the underlying principles of social work, bridging (2) and in drawing inferences (4) she said 'You need to apply sophisticated communication skills that you are learning for these working situations (S4).

She outlined her expectation that the students would demonstrate transfer of learning between contexts:

The other way is really everything we do is re-examined and regurgitated in the practice setting quite explicitly so if they've learned something on human development the expectation is that some of that material and some of that understanding will reappear in their write-ups of the work they are doing in their placements (S4).

The following comments illustrate how the lecturers attempted to 'focus on transfer' including the use of backward and forward reaching transfer techniques:

So it was ping-ponging back and forth from the general topic of parenting to parenting when your child has a severe disability to, what does that mean in social work and what about the professional side of that and wanting to explore that further as a practitioner (S4)
I've gone out onto the placement where they brought them all together and done a supervision session I've done it to try and help them link previous theory to practice but in a way we could probably do a lot more of that (S2)

This lecturer also thought that there was more that they could and should be doing to help learning transfer and acknowledges how very difficult it really was:

All of that really is about what can they transfer, you know what do they know, what do they need to know all those sorts of things really and they do that in their practice analysis that they have to write, often it needs to be teased out and I wonder if that's what we need to be doing more of really getting them to think more about their you know what they already have that amounts to transferable skills really (S1).

This lecturer referred to developing a consciousness of how they [the students] were learning and she didn't assume that transfer would simply occur on its own. She seemed to be referring to attempting to inculcate a meta-cognitive awareness in students.

We don't expect them to come in and be able to do it by themselves just like that. What we hope to do is provide people with the tools and capability to transfer (S7) instead of that people will realise that they can always take a step back and analyse a situation and then decide what else they need to know to do in there what they can build on and what sort of actions they can take so right through it's not just about the content of the knowledge but it's about them developing a consciousness of how they are learning and how they are transferring their skills and how they are developing their skills... am I making sense?(S7).

In an observation of this lecturer's teaching she said 'I'm encouraging you to have a questioning approach. Listening like a social worker, actually practise this' (S7) so telling

the students why she was teaching them to think in a certain way – encouraging meta-cognition (12).

Another social work lecturer referred to job prospects and the students' ability to transfer and apply learning:

> *I've been in agencies I can tell you that a lot of places absolutely prefer students coming from here because they know that they will be able to in general roll up their sleeves as well as write an assignment. Yeah so its really, really important that transfer of skills* (S5).

Summary – Focus on transfer

A pre-requisite for this category of description is that the lecturer is aware of and articulates seeing learning transfer as a valuable, indeed essential, outcome of the learning process and that where transfer does not occur, learning has little point. There is also an acknowledgement from the lecturers that this isn't always easy to bring into teaching practice and that ideally evidence of transfer should be apparent. Using meta-cognitive teaching approaches are also often apparent in their practice.

Synopsis

The grand tour observations (Spradley, 1980) focused upon the general characteristics of the learning and teaching environment. The differences between the social work lesson observations and the psychology lesson observations were that, in general the social work sessions were: physically uncomfortable for students; were timetabled at unpopular times, i.e. Mon a.m or Fri p.m; they lasted for 2-3 hours in duration and the lecturers generally adopted an informal and relaxed style; the students appeared to actively participate. The psychology lesson observations, in general were: physically comfortable; the sessions were timetabled at much more popular times over the week; the sessions all lasted about 50 minutes; the lecturers style varied much more, some quite formal and 'stiff' and others joking and laughing and informal. Students seemed generally engaged but were more passive than the social work students, quickly regressing to chatter once they had completed a task. This comparison is placed here to provide an insight into other factors possibly affecting the learning and teaching environment and so influencing the overall

outcomes. In fact it would appear that the social work teaching sessions were disadvantaged by their environment and the duration of contact time but the students seemed to be more willing to participate than the psychology students.

The continuum depicted six categories of description of teaching related to the practice of teaching for transfer. Lecturers in the 'teach as taught' category would be recognized by their aspiration to teach as they were taught, adopting an instructional style and focusing on content. Students are viewed as lacking in motivation and instrumentalist so the lecturers seek to control the student learning experience. Lecturers in the 'Boring and Dry' category, try to entertain the students in the hope of engaging them in otherwise boring material, sometimes they employ quite extreme tactics, such as pretending to be an animal or advocating radical behaviour. Drawing on the students' personal experience or manufacturing experience is the key to identifying lecturers in the third category of description. To be found in the fourth category of description the lecturer would need previous professional practice experience as a pre-requisite and an insight into the student practice experience. Lecturers in the fifth category could be identified by ascertaining their professional expectations and standards; if these pertain to challenging the students' behavioural or attitudinal attributes then they are likely to be found in this category. The final category of 'focus on transfer' and application is apparent when asking lecturers what they see as the main point of teaching is. If their response is a conviction that learning is a demonstrable application or change in behaviour or attitude then they belong in this final category.

In the interim, I made the observation that from their own testimonies, there was a distinction between the psychology and the social worker lecturers' conceptions of teaching. At least in part conceptions are born out of experience and a possible explanation for the differences in the lecturers' original conceptions might be to do with their own backgrounds?

Lecturer Backgrounds

All of the psychology lecturers apart from one had come straight through the educational system and most of them said that they taught the students in similar ways to the way they had been taught. The picture they all painted was similar regardless of age. Either they had recently entered academe or had just stayed on as a student to become a lecturer.

Three of the psychology lecturers discussed how they had worked their way straight through the education system, from undergraduate to post graduate study and then on to do their PhDs. They had no other experience and then had secured full – time teaching posts in higher education on completion of their doctoral studies.

> *I've just come straight through the system so I did my undergraduate degree, PhD straight after that and went straight into my first teaching post and I have no formal teaching qualification* (P1).

Two of the psychology lecturers had worked part–time in education whilst studying, either in teaching or research and had acquired significant teaching experience subsequent to their doctoral studies.

> *I did my Masters at the University of … in Social Statistics and then I did my PhD at the University of … in social stats …and as my research funding dried up after the third year, I started teaching part time… and as I was completing my PhD a post became available… which I started as a full time lecturer . So this is my 13th year* (P7)

From the evidence in their testimonies the psychology lecturers have little alternative experience apart from their own experience of education from the point of view of the learner.

By contrast all the social work lecturers had previous extensive and varied vocational experience apart from one who had been a mature 'access' student who had gone on to do a PhD in sociology.

> *I was a mature student and did an access course first and then from that got onto … University's undergraduate programme in Sociology where I was doing sociology and industrial relations that was the degree … I won a*

> *scholarship from the University to do a PhD so that gave me funding for three years so I started my PhD in 93 (S2).*

Most of them had many years of professional practice experience

... I'm a qualified social worker. Qualified in 1980. With a lot of relevant experience before and since in the statutory sector and the voluntary ... Sector. (S7)

Some had achieved significant specialist expertise in areas such as child protection and the law and children with disabilities and others senior management positions.

> *I teach, train and work in the court all around child protection and dangerous offender management. I teach group work, but its mostly childcare, child protection and childcare law that's my area of expertise. I'm a qualified social worker, qualified back in the early 80's, I've worked for probation, NSPCC, education, social services both as a practitioner and as a manager (S6).*

> *I specialised in the area of family law, children within the legal system, but I'd also worked as a social worker dealing with disabled children, co-ordinating approaches with social services etc so had some insight into working with social workers (S3).*

Another social work lecturer had trained and practised in the U.S.A prior to working in the U.K. She worked part time in a psychiatric hospital for two years and then got an internship in units for mainly adolescents and young people and worked there for 5 years. After this she did a masters degree in counselling psychology whilst still working at the unit. In the U.K she worked as a psychologist for the health service and was a counsellor in a well woman's centre, also working as a citizen's advocate with older people and teaching alongside most of this. She then worked as a training officer and freelance trainer for about 9 years and came back to the U.K in November 93 (S4).

From observations of their teaching it was clear that this wealth of work experience informed the social workers' teaching practice giving them many examples and insights into the contexts the students would be entering as practicing social workers. The social work lecturer who had not practiced professionally focused on drawing on the students' personal experiences and challenging their values and attitudes.

Chapter Five – What the Students Said!

Introduction

This chapter explores the student data and contrasts this with the data from the lecturers. Outcomes not directly related to the research question are also uncovered and add an interesting dimension to the main findings. The student data was laid out in a similar way to the lecturer data and a number of initial themes emerged. In reviewing the data it appeared to fall into three strands. The first was: the students' experience of learning and teaching and this is aligned to the continuum of categories of description described in chapter four. The second was how the students themselves approached learning and the third was the outcomes of learning identified by the students themselves.

The Student Sample

As discussed in chapter three the psychology students consisted of three focus groups (seventeen students) and the social work students consisted of two focus groups and two individual interviews (eleven students). All students were at level three of their course. It is interesting to note the diversity of the student cohorts, for example, nearly all of the psychology students had either worked or traveled prior to studying for their degree and some were mature single parent students. Equally some of the social work students had started university straight from further education colleges and some were access students from deprived backgrounds [their words].

In examining the first strand it became evident quite quickly that there were some close similarities between the categories of description continuum that emerged from the lecturer interviews and the students' experience of teaching practice.

Table 5.1 Continuum of lecturers categories of description

1.Teaching as taught	2.Boring and Dry	3.Drawing on the student personal experience	4.Teaching from professional practice experience	5. Challenging behaviours and attitudes	6.Focus on transfer

Excerpts from the original third stage analysis (found at Appendix Eleven) are used to support and explain the assignment of the data to each category. In the same way as lecturers were assigned codes in an attempt to provide anonymity so have the students, hence: psy = psychology and sw = social work, (int) indicates interview and (fg) indicates focus group. The assignment of numbers simply indicates the sequence of data collection.

Strand One – Student Experiences of Learning and Teaching

1. Teaching as taught

There was little evidence in the student data that teachers were teaching as they were taught. When students spoke about the lecturers' teaching, it was more in terms of how they could not teach. So a more appropriate descriptor for what the students said about their teaching here is in fact 'They do not know how to teach'. The only two elements that resonate in their description with that of the lecturers are the emphasis on content and the relaying of information.

Here the students describe the difficulty they had understanding some of the lecturers.

One said

"You can imagine him sitting down and doing his lecture plan literally from a text book. Just sort of its all theory, theory, theory, there's no examples" (psy fg 3)

Discussing the same lecturer in another focus group one student said,
"Oh God! It was the pits cos cognitive is prob the hardest I'd say. Obviously he knew it and he just didn't grasp the fact that we didn't know it!! Very confusing at times" (psy fg 2).

One of the social work students described a new part-time lecturer, *"One teacher I have this year actually reads it word for word - what's on her hand out which isn't very helpful cos we can just sort of read the handout and not go to class"* (sw int 1).

In the following quotation a psychology student sums up this part of the discussion with resignation,

> *There's relatively few lecturers who actually bother to teach and explain, you know not spoon feed you but point out why they are doing something (mmhhmm) and not just give you a list of references to go away and find yourself which you could do anyway. You don't need to turn up to pick up a list of references and I just think that there are a lot of teachers who don't know how to teach and have teaching jobs and lecturers aren't taught how to teach as well* (psy fg 3).

Other students also talked about how lecturers 'scared' them into doing preparatory reading.

> *She said... if you turn up and I find out* [that you have not done the preparatory reading] *... I'll chuck you out. She knows though if you haven't read it... and she'd stand around the room and she'd like if anybody admitted to not having read the seminar paper she'd be like - out you go - and it scared them so much that everybody was reading the paper weren't they?* (psy fg 2).

In these quotations there is no direct evidence that the students' experience of the lecturers' teaching is what the lecturers themselves experienced as learners, although one student did say "*There are some here who are definitely more used to the old style of university*"(psy fg 3).

However the student comments do relate to the characteristics of the 'teaching as taught' category of description in terms of teaching as content and teaching using traditional methods of simply relating information. There is also evidence of one lecturer controlling the students by scaring them which is also a feature of this category of description. The majority of the above quotations are from the psychology students, which reflects the emphasis in the findings from the lecturer interviews i.e. more psychology lecturers adopted a traditional style of teaching.

2. Boring and dry

Students often expressed frustration when talking about their learning experiences.They indicated that they found the material quite boring and dry and did not have the opportunity to apply their learning.

Then there's another lecturer who completely just doesn't explain it properly he will just... like he is reading from a text book or something, no humour, just really dull and boring and you just don't, I don't learn anything, like after I walk out, let alone two weeks later (psy fg 3)

Two students complained about essays in particular finding the questions vague and ambiguous: "*the essay writing is really ...not very applied to the real world*" (psy fg 2)and "*Such vague essay questions that you've got to try and apply*"(psy fg 2.)

The students seem to be asking to be shown how their learning can be applied to a wider context and to develop the wider skills of critical thinking:

[The questions seem to demand]...*regurgitation whereas if you are encouraging pupils to think more about applying things to the real world you are encouraging them to think for themselves rather than come out of Uni just being able to dictate this theory, that theory and this and that but not really about how it works in the wider context* (psy fg 2).

The use of lectures and books covering theories hold no interest for them, '*there's no hands on, it's all lecture based there's no attraction* (psy fg 1).

It's not how you actually use psychology it's like... knowledge... where if you could actually do something that actually uses psychology it would be slightly more useful I think. Psychology is such a theory based course (psy fg 2).

[If we were]...*to watch somebody be assessed for something you know what I mean actually see how it works not like learning it from a book or a lecture* (psy fg 2).

[I think that if] *you've got something in real life to relate it to that sort of thing –say we got a video to see, do you know what I mean, unless you see that person with a learning disability... how they react... you can't get that whole understanding of it, that situation* (psy fg 1).

The psychology students, speaking of the emphasis in lectures on cognition, used the term 'dry' to describe how their lecturers taught, though some tried to overcome this by entertaining them, joking with them and this they said helped them to remember the content of the lectures.

There was one lecturer who stands out, she always used humour in her lectures and its so when you think like that she's joking around all the time but you come out of there knowing that you have learnt it and you know two weeks later you still remember it because of those jokes and things (psy fg 3).

There are several elements of the 'boring and dry' category of description reflected in the students' espoused experiences and views. The students acknowledged that some of the lecturers did try to relate to them through making jokes or trying to entertain and this relieved the boredom somewhat. Their main frustration however lay in the lack of applied learning and the dry and repetitive content, confirming that the lecturers' perceptions of the student response to their teaching were correct.

3**. Drawing on the student personal experience**

None of the psychology students refer to their psychology lecturers actually asking the students about their personal experiences, building this into the curriculum or encouraging them to relate it to their learning, but many described how their learning had helped them understand something about themselves.

The only thing I can think of is I've suffered from depression before I studied psychology so once I did study it, I had a greater understanding, for you can't always understand what a disorder will be like, but you just have the empathy there for knowing that it can't be nice to have any kind of abnormality (psy fg 2).

Another student in the same group said,

I have got depression I have a panic disorder as well which affects me really badly and I am it's great fun! It's made me understand I'm not going completely stark raving crazy, there is a reason and there are things and I will get better (psy fg 2).

Some students spoke also of understanding how to help others, such as family and friends

For me my boyfriend had a psychotic episode recently so I hadn't actually learned things from the course about that but it really made me read loads about schizophrenia because that's what I thought he had (psy fg 2).

I know that another thing to take away is the understanding of basic drugs that's quite useful and I've found various drugs around the house which I

wouldn't have known what they were but I've started to recognise their real names and understanding how they work and what they do to your body, that has been quite educational about my family (psy fg 3).

Similarly the social work students did not recount lecturers drawing on the students' personal experiences in their teaching. There were no direct examples of this in the student data. However there were instances of the social work lecturers generating vicarious experiences by using simulations, case studies, scenarios and so on. As one of the students put it, 'it *was the way she'd say, you know this is your scenario, what would you do ...staging an atmosphere… this really helped* (sw fg 1). And another explained

> *Yes, they would give you a sheet with like this man who is 31 years old has learning disability wants to get a job and it gives a bit of a scenario about his life and you have to answer certain questions. Like what could you do to help him? What law would fit in with it? Things like that just makes you think about this* (sw int 1).

In a session about interpersonal communication students noted there was also some attention to using their personal experience

> [In practising listening skills the students had to think of scenarios]*We did the tape recordings, feedback was positive and also where you could do better we went away we'd done three tapes so that side of things was fantastic. And obviously getting your confidence going on the tape* (sw int 2).

It is difficult to see direct comparisons and examples from this category of description reflected in the students' articulated experience of teaching, but plainly the students do relate learning from and to their own personal experiences.

4. Drawing on professional practice experience
Of all the categories of description, this one resonated most in the student data. The social work students indicated how the tutors used their own professional experience to inform the teaching, giving examples and situations to help the students relate the experience to context.

> *There's nothing else for it, she was inventive, she gave us scenarios to work through. She gave us examples of things that she'd dealt with so there were all*

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sorts of things that she was introducing all the time, pieces of paper that we could read through or articles that she'd seen or whatever (sw int 2).

[Sharing her own experiences] *the lecturer was able to make it quite practical and she gave us the situation, the scenario, a load of things that had happened, and then we had to try and figure out which pieces of law we'd use, what the pattern would be, what was relevant and rather than just telling us, you know, about the pieces of law we actually had to try and think of it in a real life situation which we did which was good*(sw fg 1).

They spoke about guest lecturers coming in to talk about their work experiences,

You can see how it does work especially L... she worked with domestic abuse families you can definitely see how that would fit in because it's quite a specific area. And I know I don't have any experience with a lot of domestic violence so I've seen it from her point of view (sw int 1).

She used to give examples I think ...she actually works for CAFCASS so loads of examples of her cases (sw int 1).

Drawing on professional experience was not restricted to the social work lecturers. Students in psychology also noted and appreciated the fact that one of their psychology lecturers who did have some previous professional experience chose to share that with the students.

She'd worked in the forensic field, she really knew what she said about it... She could actually go I've done this with prisoners ...She did case studies, it makes such a difference when you know that what she is talking about, is actually with people and they'd done all this crazy scary stuff. And she can relate all her own experiences into the lessons. She can give you real life examples of what it is that she's talking about sort of thing (psy fg 2).

5. Challenging behaviours and attitudes

Many of the student quotations in this section align to the characteristics of this category of description where the lecturers talked about exposing the students to emotional situations.

The students also discussed their emotions. They give examples of when they felt truly challenged and how much being on the course meant to them. Students cite support from their tutors, inculcating a mutually supportive environment. They also discuss their values and understand why it is so important to examine and challenge their own values and attitudes. Only the social work students talked about these aspects of learning.

One student observed that "*You start looking in yourself*" (sw fg 2). Others spoke of the anxiety they experienced when they did not understand something and how this some times made them feel like an imposter.

> *And you sort of think ... shit maybe I shouldn't be here ... I don't know what everyone is talking about again. It's been interesting to see how upset I've got over it haven't I ?* (sw fg 2).

> *I wanted to run away, I just wanted to go and lock myself in the ladies toilet to be honest, phone me husband and say come and get me by the back door because I'm not stepping out I'm not facing none of these people, I'm not doing none of this again* (sw int 2).

Then the anticipation of receiving grades added to the anxiety "*Waiting three weeks to get that result and when I get it, I'm like shaking and physically sick looking for that mark*" (sw fg 2). But on receiving good results, this was replaced by a sense of achievement "*So it's really, really good and sometimes I do feel quite proud of myself*"(sw fg 1).

The students also voiced appreciation for lecturers, who were supportive of them, "*I really received massive, massive support, I mean people who say... 'We'll do whatever we can to help you let us know how we can help you*"(sw fg 1 *).*

They also discussed how they looked after each other building a culture of mutual support

> *... if we don't understand anything we talk to each other as well and then someone's bound to explain it, and I'll sit down and explain it and someone else will come and sit down and explain it as well. They help you and keep you going. If you feel like giving up and they'll say no don't give up keep going!* (sw int 2).

Reflecting what the lecturers said about challenging the students' values, students noted that:

> *We learned a lot about treating people with respect and sort of using your own values looking at your own values and thinking ok that one doesn't fit in this situation - look at what he would do and try not to put my values on to them so not tell them like oh you must do this just because I do it that way. That's one thing we did learn was how to look at our own selves and how we would do things and not put it onto other people* (sw int 1).

This quotation and the following reflect the student's sensitivity and awareness of the service user perspective that the lecturers stressed was so important.

> *We are going into their lives and we are trying to empower or assist them.*
> *You've got to take into account, you've got to respect them. You've got to not*
> *come over as more powerful than them and you've got to have an*
> *understanding of what they are trying to tell you, so if you've had that yourself,*
> *you've been yourself in that situation* [you can understand]
> *If you can make them feel as an equal person to you they are more willing to*
> *open up to you, more willing to give you, you know* (sw fg 2).

6. Focus on transfer

The students recalled teaching sessions where lecturers tried to explain what or how to transfer learning. *"We had to link assignments to our practice"* (sw fg 1). Often lecturers referred to the transferable skills they were trying to teach the students as a tool box of interventions,*"They also kept referring to their invisible tool box of interventions*!"(sw int 2); *"Your tool box, they talk about us having a tool box"*(swfg2)

> *They're talking about us having a tool box, a tool box of interventions social*
> *workers go around with, you know it's invisible? Which I was thinking that's*
> *quite funny, I sort of think to myself oh that's something I can put in my tool*
> *box now ... you know, that I'm going to remember I'm going to try and use*
> *again on other families* (sw fg 1).

> *This little tool box that I'm supposedly carrying around with me but ... practice*
> *on this placement thing... and I think that's a tool! I can put it in my tool box!*
> (sw fg 2).

Going a little further the following student recalls a strategy and theory that helped her support service users.

> *Our practice teacher talked to me about solution focus therapy and also has a*
> *task centred approach which I've used quite a lot with people, you are just sort*
> *of aware that you know, somebody can come to you with loads and loads of*
> *problems and you're completely overwhelmed with it, but having that theory in*
> *the back of your head can be helpful* (sw fg 1)

In this next quotation, a student recounts a teaching session where a fellow student related how, having learnt about the mental health act the previous week, she had to apply it directly to her practice on placement the following day.

> *I remember sitting in one of the sessions with ...who teaches law and somebody*
> *actually said to her actually you know last week we did section 136 of the*

mental health act, she said they were on practice placement the next day and she used it, you know …? It's like wow that was fairly good then! (sw fg 1).

This comment is supported by a teaching session observation in the learning as changing behaviours/attitudes category of description.

The student accounts of examples of learning transfer concur with the lecturer category of description, especially in reference to transferable skills and the tool box metaphor. The reader may recall how one of the lecturers described how she wanted the students to stand back and analyse a situation and then decide which strategies would be the most effective to deploy.

Strand Two - Student Approaches to Learning

Student perceptions of their approaches to learning
When the students discussed their approaches to learning in some cases it was possible to recognize that these approaches reflected the lecturers' categories of description but in others they appeared to learn in spite of the methods of teaching. The outcomes of learning as outlined in the next section seem to bear little resemblance to lecturers' espoused experience of teaching.

The students presented many examples of their cognitive approach to learning. At first it appeared that there was a significant range of approaches but exploring relationships between them pointed to a dichotomy of experience, though this was not necessarily exclusive. One way of characterizing this dichotomy is to say that instrumental approaches which the students highlighted, were associated with surface learning, memory techniques and boredom whereas independent approaches are associated with deep learning, personal interest and motivation, as discussed in chapter 2 (Ramsden,1992).

Cognitive approaches to learning
The memorisers
The following psychology students referred to their learning as systematic repetition, memorizing and learning by heart as the following students from the focus groups note:

I write everything out so I've got load and loads of notes, I break it down into loads of little points, like on little index cards - then they are stuck literally all over the bedroom because then I just see it and it goes in (psy fg 2).

I think I'm more just kind of reading it, reading it, keep reading it! And then I just try and memorise it. I didn't use diagrams or anything (psy fg 1).

Then I'd learn each point until I've learned that off by heart then I'll go on to the next one then I'll repeat the first and second one then I'll do the first again (psy fg1).

The instrumentalists

The above comments were all from psychology students. This was also the case for those who adopted an instrumental approach to learning. Only psychology students took this instrumentalist approach.

Some people purely do just turn up to get attendance because it's attendance based … you know lectures you can miss any lecture you want, but with seminars, that's where they take your attendance (psy fg 2*).*

I think also now we know what they are like, we can predict what sort of answers they want as well. Sometimes I feel I'm not writing an essay on what I'm interested in and what I think, I'm writing what they think to try to get a better mark (psy fg 2*).*

Both of these quotations are supported by the lecturers' comments referred to in the category of description 'teaching as taught' regarding the students' choice of the 'easiest' assessment question and making attendance part of the assessment to ensure students attend teaching sessions.

It's all about student interest

The psychology students also highlighted how their approach to learning was all about being interested. If the learning was perceived as boring then they took a surface approach but if it was perceived as interesting then they took a deep approach. This suggests that there are not types of learners but that different approaches to learning are adopted depending on other factors, such as student interest and motivation.

The following students said that they just reproduced what was in front of them rather than give it some thought and analyses.

If something interests me I can work on it for ages and really enjoy it (yeah) because if I find something boring then I just regurgitate stuff from books and think, oh that will do and just hand it in like that. (psy fg 3).

Because I really can't be bothered and yeah if I'm really just not bothered I will regurgitate what I've read but I find that if you know, took a personal interest or it catches something that I find that I think is quite interesting and haven't really thought about before then um yeah I sort of put a bit more effort into it (psy fg 2).

Conversely the following students described a holistic approach, taking their time, reading and thinking.

… if you are interested or you enjoy it a bit more you sort of think what you know about it more and you look at it from different angles. I think you sort of take different sides into consideration and you approach it more as a whole thing, rather than just you know like an obstacle to overcome. You take it on a bit more um you give it more time (psy fg 1*).*

And you do more reading around it because you find the subject interesting anyway rather that just doing the bare minimum to get you through it (just to get it done) if its something that interests you then you will read more (yeah) (mmm) because you find it interesting to read not because you have to. (psy fg 1).

All the students above described clearly how they make a conscious choice about how they approached learning. Deep approaches were evident, for example, in their descriptions of approaching it as a whole, looking from different angles, and reading around the subject.

The social work students did not describe their approaches to learning in the same way as the psychology students but they did discuss how they choose the focus of assignments and select relevant theories, concepts or information.

I think they did something similar but we got to choose our own policy look at one side of policy and apply it to our own experiences, how have we used this and look at the whole background and theory side of it and all, but when we handed it in just after Christmas we had to look at one of our placements or work placement the policies behind that work place and the theories behind that work place as well so that's probably one like that (sw int 1*).*

We've got to look at a case study, we have to define one ourselves and like analyse it ourselves and everything, can't think of any now, sort of look at a certain theory and analyse it sort of thing then we get to choose which theory

we want to do put our own experiences in to see how we've used it or things like that that's how most of it's usually done (sw int 1).

Necessity is the mother of independent learning!

The following two students from the two different courses illustrate independent learning approaches. They indicate that they took this initiative because their interest in the subject was not covered by their course. The social work student does acknowledge she uses skills acquired from the course, whereas the psychology student appears completely disengaged.

> *I'm going from wanting to work with children to wanting to work with adults with disability or mental health and we don't really cover that a lot on my course. I'm going to actually I've bought a few books and I've got a few books that have been recommended to me as well so I'll go out and look at them, read about any legislation I can find and that's how I'll learn afterwards, sort of use what I've learned here and apply …(sw int 1).*

> *I'll spend all day thinking and not actually doing anything, um so I kind of study philosophy on my own and get my own books and stuff but I don't look at psychology anymore because everything I've looked at they have either destroyed here*[or] *like made it so boring* (psy fg 3).

The above cognitive approaches to learning showed significant differences between the groups of students, except when it came to adopting independent approaches. However when it came to practical approaches to learning, these were evident in both groups.

Practical approaches

These practical approaches fell into two major groups, last minute comers and conscientious planners.

The last minute.comers

> *I just couldn't really be bothered and I think that's why my grades, I think I did best in the first and then went down and thought not more of this!! It's not just keeping your interest... so I leave it until the latest possible moment which is what we are here for isn't it?*(psy fg 2).

> *I think I sort of... a lot of what you said* [responding to a fellow student in the focus group] *sounds like how I am as well I. I leave a lot of work until the last minute. I feel like I work better last minute as well under pressure (mm)* (psy fg 2).

> *Normally I'm there the day before, got all my books already a few weeks before hand and just sit down and write it the night before it's due in* (sw int 1*).*

The conscientious planners

The conscientious planners from psychology said that leaving things until the last minute would cause them to panic.

> *I can't leave things to the last minute because I get panicky so I'm always setting myself ,targets for each day so I'll say 500 words today, 500 words tomorrow all the way up until I've got it done and then I start on the next thing and that's how I do it* (psy fg 2).

> *I have to be quite well prepared I can't leave things until the last day and stuff like that and you get a bit panicky when you know work has got to be in and stuff* (psy fg 2*).*

The social work students were conscientious in a different sense. They referred to getting all of their assignments completed well in advance of the deadline and attending all lectures and seminars. By contrast with the psychology students they appeared to take pleasure in their studies and one of them, speaking for others in the   focus group commented that the course **"***life changing. I must admit, we are very motivated, very conscientious students not blowing our own trumpets"* (sw fg 2)

Strand Three - Outcomes of Learning Identified by the Students

Asked what they had learnt from their course, what was useful and what transferable, the students noted a number of specific skills they had learnt which they could use in the future and some that were useful for their own personal development. Not all the skills acquired were enjoyable to learn but students valued having acquired them nevertheless.

Acquisition and identification of skills during the course of study

The psychology students discussed the different skills they had learnt **-** of research, information literacy and reading texts - and how they could adapt them. The following two comments from a focus group first emphasize research skills

> *Research... especially like with the project you've got to research things in serious detail, really learn where to look for information* (psy fg 2).

You have absolutely no appreciation of what it takes to do psychological research or anything like that and the practical skills that you gain in terms of conducting research I think are very valuable (psy fg 2).

One student reported how she could transfer her skills to conduct market research

It's like my boyfriend does market research he's a marketing manager and he comes home say if I did a piece of research like this, what would happen? And then I know I can then think yeah if you ask those kind of questions you're going to get this kind of effect …(psy fg 2).

This second set of quotations refers to the skills they had acquired of critical evaluation and information synthesis. Students described the way they approached a problem now was different from before; they could see things from different perspectives.

I think they focus a lot on how to critically evaluate things and I think in a lot of jobs you need to be able to do that, not exactly like that but it does call for stuff like that and just to be analytical and things like that (psy fg 1).

Again it's like seeing both sides different views - not just mine I've got quite strong views and you've got to look at the other views and then decide whether or not you agree with it, not just one view in psychology you're looking all around it as opposed to just one view (psy fg 2).

Thirdly, in relating to reading texts they described some 'deep' holistic approaches that they would use in the future

Skills to use in the future I think I've been able to read a book in a particular way and things like that are really useful to me connecting me together that's developed that side (psy fg 2).

Just with regards to reading critical reading not just taking for granted what's written in the book and you sort of think I'd be able to criticise things or be able to read/appreciate different points of view that might not necessarily be congruent with your own ... sort of thing (psy fg 2).

The psychology students also referred to skills they had acquired but really had not enjoyed. They said that if the usefulness of the 'stats units' had been pointed out to them at the time then it may have helped motivate them to learn.

The stats are important I think because when I realised when I went to a job fair that the government would take me on as a statistician because I had done

psychology, that I realised how much we do know above the general population. (Absolutely) Now I don't think anyone tells us that enough for us to appreciate how much we have learnt here (psy fg 3*).*

The social work students also described a range of skills they had acquired but these were different from those articulated by the psychology students and had more to do with their own personal growth and the applied nature of the work that they would eventually do.   .

Some examples below highlight how they responded to certain situations in terms of analysing a situation whilst also participating in it, in other words meta-cognitive abilities.

> *There's lots of people out there who think they could do it but it's how you're thinking or reacting in a situation all the time you're always thinking. You know you can go to a party you're still thinking you know what does that mean what that man's just said, why*? (sw int 2).

> *You are actually able to explain and give details of whatever you are discussing without having to think and that it just automatically flows out and you think ... blooming hell where did I get all that from!! Where has that all been stored, you know!! So that's personally how I feel that's how I demonstrate that I have learned* (sw, fg 2*).*

These students referred a lot to increasing their personal confidence and identified how they had progressed and developed over the duration of the course and had come to really appreciate their achievements.

> [I looked at] *Understand Social Work' by Neil Thompson and I read it and I thought I ain't got a clue what this bloke is going on about!! And I sat there all summer, I kept going over it,*[thinking] *oh my God what the hell is he on about, I really don't understand this!! I can pick that book up now and know what he's talking about and that is the big difference*!(sw fg 2.)

> *Confidence, I think your confidence grows terribly I mean I suppose I've always been quite a confident person but I suppose it's how to channel that confidence and how perhaps in a meeting I might approach an issue* (sw int 2).

> *Some of it is based on our past experiences of ourselves and, if you like, our transferable skills. I mean I think if we acknowledge our transferable skills we are able to use the fear really and you know and, you know, what you've been taught when it finally comes to it, it does make sense* (sw fg 2).

The acquisition of communication and interpersonal skills was also high on their list of positives.

> *I think the communication probably because I felt the first essay I ever did I failed on that one so that one I will take with me to the grave definitely, but it's most important and I would say the listening skills and the actual communicating skill is the most important one that you could do really and it's in the counselling* (sw int 2).

> *When you think of all the communication stuff we've done. Yes. It's all communication, counselling, and attachment I think it's heightened our own skills and our awareness* (sw fg 2).

Applied to practice

Only the social work students gave examples of applying or transferring what they had learnt into a professional situation;

> *I was part of a mental health team on placement and clearly there were a lot of attachment issues and there's a lot of new research out which I actually found really exciting and when they first mentioned it I thought 'oooh! I know what they are talking about' and that was really exciting. And I did draw a lot of that … one particular child was presenting ADHD off the scale but upon further investigation it became quite clear that it was an attachment issue and discussions with the team kind of validated my thoughts* (sw fg 2).

> *Our practice teacher talked to me about solution focus therapy and also has a task centred approach which I've used quite a lot with people. You are just sort of aware that you know, somebody can come to you with loads and loads of problems and you're completely overwhelmed with it but having that theory in the back of your head can be helpful* (sw fg 1).

> *I could relate and I knew I'd learnt it because I could relate some of the stuff that I remembered from the past to what the children were doing so it was kind of nice to be able to think that makes me know that I did learn it because if I could relate it to something actually practical* (sw fg 1).

The social work students identified when and how they used what they had they learnt and they articulated real pleasure in noting when this occurred, what I have termed here 'the light bulb moments'.

Those light bulb moments

Then all of a sudden you know, It's such a complex...,Ah the epiphany moment .. oooh (sw fg2)

And you know and what you've been taught when it finally does make sense it's just a 'Eureka' kind of moment, you know... that you are able to use it all, it is just fantastic! (sw fg 1)

If there's a discussion going on or I'm watching a documentary or something and these words come up you know and they're like what I call posh words and I'm like WOW I know what that means now!(sw fg 2)

Summary

In the first strand of student comments noted in this chapter, students' recollections of their learning and teaching experiences reflected the categories of description held by the lecturers to some extent. In the second strand, their accounts of how they approached learning reflected a range of different cognitive approaches. The psychology students approached learning through attempts to memorise content or by tackling assessments to match what they thought the lecturer wanted. However, if they were interested, engaged or motivated by what they were learning then they could and did adopt deep approaches to learning. For the social work students, and possibly due to the nature of the learning tasks they had to undertake, they had no alternative but to adopt a deep approach. If either group were not interested in what they were being taught or if they felt it was being taught badly they became interested in something for themselves and were quite capable of independent learning. Different practical approaches to learning were taken by both groups of students, some waiting until the last minute saying they preferred to work under pressure and others saying that they liked to plan and do work on a regular basis.

In the final strand students identified a number of outcomes from their course. The psychology students recounted several complex research and study skills, clearly demonstrating how they could use these skills, not only during their course but subsequently and they gave examples of how they could apply the skills to different contexts. The social work students talked more in terms of growing in professional and intellectual confidence, their ability to communicate with people and having awareness and

ability to analyse a situation whilst in it, (Schon, 1995) might call this reflecting in and on action and others might call it meta-cognition (Case & Gunstone, 2002). These students offered many examples where they had used their learning or could see its relevance and sometimes described these occurrences as 'Epiphany' or 'Eureka' moments.

Despite differences in their learning experiences all the students demonstrated some ability or appreciation of how to transfer their learning or skills into different contexts. The main difference was in the social work students' ability to transfer and apply their professional skills, including reflecting in and on action or meta-cognition.

The diagram below attempts to represent a summary of the learning approaches taken by the students and the outcomes or different skills they felt they had acquired.

Table 5.2 Student learning approaches and outcomes

Approaches		Psy	SW	OUTCOMES		Psy	SW
Cognitive	Memorisers	x		Study skills	Research and information literacy skills	x	
	Instrumentalists	x			Critical Evaluation	x	
	Deep	x	x		Synthesizing information/ideas	x	
	Independent	x	x		Meta-cognition		x
Practical	Lastminute comers	x	x	Professional Skills	Communication		x
	Conscientious planners	x	x		Confidence		x
					Applied to practice		x

Chapter Six: Seeing the Point

Introduction

The title of this chapter reflects its intent to see how far this study has been able to understand teaching for transfer in a way that students can be enabled to see the point and enhance their learning. It discusses the analysis and findings of the study to draw out the main implications and indicate how far they address the key research questions posed in chapter one. It begins by briefly re-introducing the purpose of the study and stating the main findings. These are then compared with relevant theories and concepts of transfer highlighted in chapter two. The second part of this chapter discusses the implications arising and opportunities for future development including some possible applications. A short review of the methodology of the study concludes the chapter.

Restatement of the Purpose and Focus of the Study

This investigation was based upon the premise that there may be a link between lecturer conceptions and their practice and if this was the case, to identify which conceptions were more disposed to 'teaching for learning transfer'. The study first sought to elicit lecturers' conceptions of 'teaching for transfer' and then to observe whether in their teaching practice there was any relationship between their conceptions of transfer and their practice. The central proposition was that if 'teaching for transfer' is at the heart of teaching and learning, then lecturers would not only have conceptions of what this meant but they would show some evidence of this in their practice

In examining the literature and for the purpose of this study learning was defined as some demonstrable change in learners' behaviour underpinned by 'transferring' knowledge, skills or attitudes to a different situation in which the learning originally took place. In other words transferring learning from one context to another context, using metacognitive strategies.

For many, including policy makers, whose main agenda in the transfer of learning or transferable skills arena, is economic growth and a skilled knowledgeable workforce, the

assumption is that learning or acquiring skills and accreditation of these, is commensurate with being able to apply that learning into new contexts. This view is widely held (DfEE, 2000c; Lord Sandy Leitch, 2006) and for the most part has been left unchallenged.

Whilst the 'bo-peep' theory of transfer (leave them alone and they will come home) Perkins & Salomon (1988: p 23) remains a common and convenient assumption, then much time, energy and money will go to waste in the belief that education can solve the problems of the 'knowledge poor' and needs up-skilling workforce economy Coffield (2000). Some recent studies into life long learning or transferable skills, question the suggestion that current teaching practice promotes learning transfer from one context to another, or leads to real benefit for the workforce (Bennett et al, 2000; Coffield, 2000).

Yet there is a growing body of research, see for example the review of research in this area undertaken by Batterfield & Nelson (1989), that suggests learning transfer can occur. This research suggests that transfer is far from an automatic response and much can be done to help learners achieve transfer more effectively. However the field of research remains patchy, is sometimes contradictory, and lacks a strong theoretical base. While this continues to be the case it will inhibit opportunities to inform improved teaching practice.

Batterfield et al (1989) also suggest that 'disabled' or one could say limited, teaching practices lie at the heart of a failure to transfer, not at the door of the learner. Further they indicate that **"*The extent to which educational practices reflect current conceptions of transfer is unknown"*(p.28).* There is little educational research on this issue. In fact as Bennett et al (2000) state *"Given the centrality of transfer in theories of learning, and in the assumptions of employers and policy makers, it is surprisingly under-researched"* (p.177).

These authors stress that research into learning/skills transfer is urgent and one of their recommendations was for research into the differential impact of vocational and non-vocational courses, skills transfer and use – the issues examined in this study.

Using a comparative design of two courses with different orientations towards teaching for transfer, the intention was to explore how higher education teachers conceived of transfer and whether these conceptions influenced their practice. Three different sources of data were used: lecturers' conceptions of transfer, their observed practice and students' responses on the respective courses. Through phenomenographical analysis the study aimed to characterize lecturer conceptions to enable increased awareness of those that lead to teaching for transfer.

Main Findings

The main findings stated below address two of the questions posed at the beginning of this research: whether conceptions of transfer differ according to the perceived purpose/outcome of the teaching; and how these compare with what is currently known about learning for transfer.

Finding 1

The first main finding was that lecturers do appear to hold different conceptions of teaching for transfer. There was a marked difference between lecturers who taught on the different courses. This was not unexpected, due to their different aspirations and orientations. The social work lecturers clearly espoused their intent that, teaching for transfer was their main goal. The psychology course aimed to prepare graduates in a general way for further study or for entering a graduate career path. The social work course aimed to prepare graduates to enter into a professional career associated specifically with that field. One of the premises underlying this choice of courses was their difference: while the main objective of the social work course was to teach for transfer, preparing students to go directly into social work related practice, this would not be the main objective of the psychology course, as it had a more generic academic orientation, where transfer was not an imperative outcome.

This was borne out by the data and is evident in the matrix based upon the phenomenographical analysis of lecturer interviews in Figure 4:1, page 74. For example the only technique used exclusively by the psychology lecturers, was that of 'Assessment of pre-requisite declarative knowledge' – attempting to gauge what information has already

been understood and assimilated. This is also perhaps predictable as it is the only technique specific to assessing prior 'knowledge' rather than drawing upon experience, which was not as readily available to the psychology lecturers. Unlike the social work lecturers most of those teaching psychology had little experience in the field as practicing psychologists.

In terms of this first main finding it seems that lecturers teaching on different 'types' of courses at one institution did hold different conceptions of teaching for transfer and to an extent this was reflected in their practice. However it was limited in application. If, as is posited in this study, transfer is the key to learning, being able to apply this learning in any new context, engaging meta-cognitive approaches, is central to the learning process. The evidence from this study suggests that more could be done by lecturers in higher education in these subjects to enhance this process.

It is a common assumption that vocational courses should focus on learning transfer rather than all courses because they are preparing graduates to master specific skills and knowledge for specific professions. In this study where the focus of practice wasn't upon transfer some of the students expressed dissatisfaction with their learning and one possible explanation for this may have been that they could not see the point. Where lecturers did explain how learning could be applied there was greater satisfaction expressed by the students. This suggests that helping students understand how to transfer their knowledge from one context to another is an important factor in the learning experience.

Finding 2
The second main finding was that observations of the 'teaching for transfer' techniques occurred much more frequently in the middle two categories of description: 'drawing on the student personal experience' and 'teaching from professional practice experience'. This was true for both groups of lecturers, although the psychology lecturers focused more on the former category and the social work lecturers on the latter category. It may be that the characteristics of these two categories which both draw from human experiences encourage the use of a greater range of teaching for transfer techniques. The most popular techniques in the 'outlying' categories on both sides of the continuum were hugging – reference to

ground previously covered; bridging – generalizing from underlying principles; use of metaphors; and encouraging self efficacy – helping students believe in their own abilities.

What appears to be important within this finding is that lecturers seem to more naturally adopt more teaching for transfer techniques when they draw on some type of experience. Most of the lecturers did try to use the experience of the students or their own personal or professional experience, although this was not always recognized by the students.

Encouraging lecturers to use the students' or their own experience in teaching would seem to help lecturers naturally use more teaching for transfer techniques. The most commonly adopted techniques were: hugging, bridging, use of metaphors and encouraging self efficacy.

Finding 3

A third finding, stemming from the observations, was that the social work lecturers adopted more of the teaching for transfer techniques, namely bridging, encouraging self-efficacy, drawing inferences from professional experience and practice, generalizing to other contexts and encouragement of meta-cognition – helping students to understand why and how they learn. The three latter techniques, in particular, ask students to infer from other situations, generalize a situation to other situations or offer an explicit explanation of why they were being taught something in particular. This observational data lines up with the social work lecturers' intentions noted above in the first finding to teach for transfer and indicates that these conceptions did have some influence on their practice.

It seems that using more teaching for transfer techniques is in line with holding a conception to '*focus on transfer*' even though in practice this was difficult to accomplish. Developing meta-cognition strategies in particular, the social work lecturers said they did not find easy. Helping students transfer and learn meta-cognitive strategies was also identified as difficult by Marini & Genereux (1995).

Findings from Student Data

With reference to the student data there were four main findings, related to the lecturer categories of description from the first strand in chapter 5, 'teaching and learning experiences'. Not all the student data showed a correlation between the categories of description relating to teaching and learning conceived by the lecturers, though the match with psychology students was stronger. For example: their learning was focused upon content; they noted lecturers adopted a traditional style of teaching; and they found the content boring and dry. This reflects the first two categories of description, '*Teaching as taught' and 'Boring and dry'* and supports the observations made in the classroom.

The psychology students voiced dissatisfaction with their learning experiences to the extent for some of adopting instrumental approaches to learning – just doing what was required to pass, and for others actually taking control and deciding to teach themselves something of personal interest - independent approaches. They also said that when they could 'see the point', for example, of being taught the 'stats' unit and how they could use this later that they appreciated the usefulness of this even though they found it difficult.

The third category of description contrasted with the student data was the '*students' personal experience'.* This category of description from the lecturer data was not supported by the student testimonies. The social work students did recount the use of case studies and scenarios, and the psychology students indicated how they had applied some of their learning to personal situations, but in general neither group cited examples of the lecturers drawing on the student's experiences in their teaching. Examples of the lecturers trying to do this did seem apparent in the observations, but the students did not seem to remember or recognize when this was occurring. Perhaps this is an indication that using this technique on its own is not particularly effective in helping students transfer learning and therefore needs to be used in conjunction with other techniques, for example being explicit about why the lecturer is drawing upon student personal experience.

The fourth category of description '*drawing on professional practice experience'* was strongly supported by the comments from social work students in interviews. This *'and*

challenging behaviours and attitudes', the fifth category, were also evident in the classroom setting, along with examples of the teaching for transfer techniques 'using the same stimuli as a work setting' and 'offering many examples for the same situation'. This was only evident in the social work lecturer's teaching, and given that these techniques relate to work experience, it is not surprising to find them in those two particular categories of description.

One slightly surprising finding was that few examples of specific teaching for transfer techniques were observed in the classroom related to the specific category of description, of a '*focus on transfer'*, though both students and lecturers' recognized the concept in the interviews and focus groups. The students cited examples of how they had used the techniques of transfer that the lecturers used, such as "the intervention tool box" metaphor, and of how they had dealt with a situation in practice, derived directly from their course. The fact that only a few observations were made of teaching for transfer techniques from the lecturers belonging to this category of description reflects the social work lecturers' view that teaching for transfer is difficult. Yet the students definitely cited examples of thinking in and on action during practice situations, Schon (1995), i.e. deploying meta-cognitive strategies.

In summary, from an analysis of lecturers' conceptions, student feedback and observations in the classroom setting, there was some evidence from this research to suggest that the characteristics of conceptions of transfer, organized as categories of description, were apparent and that these influenced teaching practice to some extent. Students appeared to learn more effectively when they could 'see the point', though this was not the case for the psychology students. Drawing on some form of experience appeared to help lecturers adopt more teaching for transfer techniques and some were easier to adopt than others. Using the student experience on its own did not appear effective in supporting transfer of learning.

Relationship of Findings to Previous Research.
In exploring the significance of the findings in the research reported here, it is useful to revisit what others have said about teaching for transfer to see how these compare and

contribute to addressing the research questions. Several relevant studies were noted in Chapter 2. In fact part of the motivation for this study came from Trigwell et al (1994) who had undertaken considerable research into student conceptions of learning and teaching. These authors had concluded that it was not enough to research student conceptions if the aim was to improve student learning and that the intentions, conceptions and strategies of lecturers also needed to be studied (p.76). Other studies conducted into lecturer conceptions have adopted different aspects, such as: lecturers' conceptions of student learning (Bruce & Gerbner, 1995); conceptions of teaching held by lecturers (Samuelowicz & Bain, 1992); conceptions of growing and learning as a university teacher (Akerlind, 2003); and (Franz et al, 1996) who compared lecturer and student conceptions of learning. All these studies identified a range of conceptions and some of the results from these studies are strikingly similar even though the focus of the studies was quite different.

The findings in the study reported in this thesis reflect a similar pattern to that identified by several of the above authors. They build upon and extend previous research into conceptions of learning and teaching held by lecturers in higher education. The two tables below show the main conceptions of teaching for transfer first that the studies above identified and secondly, the research that this thesis identified.

Table 6:1 Comparison of research into lecturer conceptions – categories of description.

Samuelowicz and Bain (1992)	Teaching as imparting information	Transmitting knowledge	Facilitating understanding	Changing student conceptions	Supporting student learning
Bruce and Gerbner (1995)	Acquiring new knowledge	Absorbing, explaining and applying	Thinking and reasoning	Competent beginning professionals -changing personal attitudes	Learning as participation
Akerlind (2003)	Transmission focused		Student relations focused	Student engagement focused	Student learning focused
Franz et al (1996)	Memorisation	Understanding	Developing professional competence	Taking different perspectives	Change in attitudes, beliefs or behaviours

Table 6:2 Lecturers' conceptions of teaching for transfer, categories of description

1.Teaching as taught	2. Boring and Dry	3. Drawing on the student personal experience	4. Teaching from professional practice experience	5. Challenging behaviours and attitudes	6. Focus on transfer

One of the first observations in comparing tables 6.1 and 6.2 is that that there is some sense of progression across each of the categories produced by the different research. All the outcomes of the above research are qualitative in nature, so the similarities discussed between this study and other research are my own interpretation.

The first categories in table 6.1 show learning is conceived as content based or transmitted information and in table 6.2 the first category, teaching as taught was characterized by an information transmission perspective. In the second set of categories in table 6.1 learning has progressed to applying or understanding knowledge. Similarly in table 6.2 the lecturers appear aware the material is dry and boring and so attempt to aid student understanding by finding ways to interest and entertain the students. The third set of categories in table 6.1 identifies facilitating understanding and developing professional competence and in table 6.2 it can be seen that the lecturers are attempting to facilitate understanding by drawing upon the students' personal experience. The fourth set of categories in table 6.1 focuses upon developing competent beginning professionals and the ability to see different perspectives and in table 6.2 the category is characterized by drawing on the professional practice gained during student placements. The final set of categories in table 6.1 implies learner participation and involvement including changing attitudes and this is also very much reflected in table 6.2 as an outcome of this research. The final category produced by this research '*focus on transfer*' extends previous research and suggests that teaching for transfer is a previously undiscovered category of description that may support student learning, further than, or different to, the current ultimate categories of description that stop at student engagement or involvement ideologies. This takes phenomenographical analysis of conceptions of learning and teaching in higher education one step further.

Further Outcomes in Student Data
The student data in this study, from strands two and three in chapter 5 did produce some outcomes that were outside of the main investigation but which also appear to support findings from previous research.

There was strong evidence in my study that students took what has been termed an 'instrumental' approach to learning. This was apparent in the lecturer interviews where the psychology lecturers said students appeared to choose the easiest assignment question and in the student interviews where a psychology student said " *I'm writing what they think to get a better mark".* This is similar to the concept of 'learning to be what the lecturer expects' as identified by Franz et al (1996), implying a surface/instrumental approach.

Evidence of 'deep approaches' and independent learning similar to the category of 'learning as the object of study', also found by Franz et al (1996) were also found in both groups of students.

Secondly, the psychology students in this study gave examples of *'boring lectures'* and traditional teaching approaches and described their approaches to learning as memory and regurgitation. This parallels findings from the research on student conceptions of learning and teaching by Vermunt, (1996) and Ingerslev (2003) both of which showed that students changed their approach to learning according to *'their teachers' teaching and knowledge concept'* (Ingerslev, p.5). Both of these authors concluded that current traditional didactic teaching styles caused regression to a reproductive learning style.

Thirdly in relation to skill acquisition, psychology students in this study said that they had acquired research skills and the ability to critically evaluate and social work students cited, communication skills, meta-cognition skills and improved confidence. Although these are different 'types' of skills it could be argued that these differences reflect the objectives of the course curricula and orientation. The students indicated that they acquired these skills independent of the lecturer's intention to focus on transfer. The exception to the above was the social work student accounts of the meta-cognitive skills they had gained. This was an interesting point as one of the debates in the literature is whether the process of learning to transfer itself, is the best way to achieve transfer see page 18. The social work lecturers and students both offered examples of using meta-cognitive strategies. The lecturers said that they explained to the students why they were learning something in particular and helped them to 'see the point'- one of the main strategies in encouraging learning transfer identified by Marini et al (1995) the students noted that they drew directly from the teaching in the classroom to the practice setting.

In two other studies regarding student perception of learning and skills transfer similar perceived skill acquisition was reported. In essence the students on vocational courses felt they had improved their communication skills, interaction with others and applied knowledge, Burke et al (2005). Students on a distance learning course felt they had

improved their research and evaluation skills, communication and discipline specific skills (Thompson et al., 2003). All these are what some educationalists might term 'soft skills' in that they are quite nebulous and difficult to measure. Students in those studies were unaware of how they had acquired or 'transferred those skills, whereas the social work students in this study could identify at least when and how they were applying their learning.

Location in Literature Typology

From the analysis of the literature in chapter two, it was noted that research surrounding the learning transfer and skills debate was difficult to organise due to many factors including a lack of stated epistemological stance. A relational typology was developed to help me understand and place my own research into context. The typology had two dimensions, the **XY** representing the extrinsic value of skills/learning at one end, in other words learning is a fixed entity and a measurable asset, (**X**) and the other end representing learning and skills as being intrinsically valued and their meaning negotiated, co-constructed by the learner and interested stakeholder,(**Y**). This study was placed towards the **Y** end of this dimension proposing learning and skills as being socially constructed, locating it within a phenomenological perspective of the typology. At that time the uncertainty was where on the **AB** dimension to place this study. Now that the study is complete it can be placed towards the **B** end of the dimension where advocates suggest that learning and skills can be acquired out of context but that many strategies can be used to help learners transfer to other contexts, significantly the use of encouraging meta-cognitive approaches and being explicit with learners about why and what the learning is for, in other words helping them to 'see the point'. See Appendix Fourteen for where this study is now positioned on the typology.

Implications and Opportunities

The findings discussed in the previous section raise a number of implications for teaching and learning. The study has indicated that lecturers held a number of different conceptions of teaching for transfer, and these conceptions were reflected in their practice to some extent. While it is a common assumption underlying much teaching that transfer will

occur, the realization is much less frequent, as highlighted in finding 1. Much of the research as discussed in chapter two, on learning transfer also bears this out. Achieving transfer of learning from one context to another is in fact very difficult as Marini et al in Mckeough et al (1995) have pointed out.

The following bullet points firstly include general suggestions that may help to redress this situation and secondly offer associated ideas that staff developers of higher education lecturers may wish to consider:

- Teaching for transfer of learning should be adopted as one of the main goals of all higher education courses, not just the courses labeled as 'vocational'(finding 1, p.129);

  - It is important to help lecturers consider how their discipline/subject area and the associated 'teaching culture' relates (or not) to a 'teaching for transfer' approach. The teaching for transfer indicators could be used as a framework for a self and peer assessment tool in gauging how far their teaching helps students to transfer learning, this relates to the research sub-question 2.

- Lecturers may need to think about explaining the nature of pedagogy as well as content, so students have a clear idea of how and why they are teaching (that is helping students to see the point, p.133);

  - New lecturers should be enabled to understand the concept of meta-cognition and the key role this plays in students' ability to transfer and apply a range of enduring approaches to learning and for students to recognize when to invoke these strategies. Equally new lecturers need to understand the value of explaining the pedagogical rationale underpinning their teaching approaches, this relates to the research sub-question 4.

- Lecturers need to become aware (if they are not already) of the many different ways teaching for transfer can be designed into teaching and assessment strategies. The framework matrix and categories of description developed in this study could be helpful in this process in encouraging lecturers to identify, reflect upon and modify their practice (p.75). The teaching for transfer

technique criteria may also be useful in peer observations or as an aide memoir in planning teaching sessions (p.62);

- By highlighting constructivist approaches to facilitate learning new lecturers should be given opportunities to consider how they would incorporate drawing on their own experiences or alternatively the experiences of their students in their planning and delivery, including adopting some teaching for transfer techniques. In considering types of assessment to meet the requirements of learning outcomes lecturers should be enabled to consider how to build in opportunities for students to demonstrate learning transfer, that is testing for application of learning in a range of contexts not simply repeating facts or information, this relates to research sub-question 4. Examples of these types of assessment can be found at page 94, such as: writing letters, reflective accounts, applying theory to practice or a practical situation.

- This study has also suggested that the education and background of lecturers in higher education had an influence on their conceptions of teaching and learning transfer (p.104). More attention to pedagogy may be needed in teacher/lecturer training to emphasise the 'how' of teaching substantive subjects as much as the content. A simple device in such training would be to review what the current literature says about learning transfer and support trainees in identifying where their current practice relates to the literature (p.51).

- To establish the educational background of individual lecturers and enable lecturers to reflect upon their own learning experiences and whether this is reflected in their teaching practice. If their practice reflects the findings associated with the first two categories of description, it may be helpful for lecturers to review the typology on p.51 to identify their own epistemological stance. The typology may be a useful tool in provoking discussion in a lecturer training context, this relates to research sub-question 3.

- The responsibilities of learners also need to be explained and nurtured; learning and teaching is a two way process. If teaching is to be effective in terms of enhancing how students learn, learners need to be aware how they could benefit further from teacher practices. Equally lecturers should be aware that

didactic, traditional teaching approaches can cause student dissatisfaction which seems to lead to instrumental learning approaches or disengagement (Further outcomes in the student data, pp.136 and 137).

- To enable new lecturers to understand that deep and holistic approaches to learning are more likely to engage, interest and motivate students, this relates to research sub-question 4.

This study and others, see for example, Batterfield & Nelson (1989) have suggested that the failure to transfer should not be laid at the door of the learner. There was some evidence in this study, for example, to show that where lecturers expressly tried to connect with situations of practice and from experience, learners did engage and retain the understanding (Findings from the student data, p.133).

To understand more clearly *why failure to transfer seems so misunderstood in teaching and learning* Mckeough et al (1995: pp. 1-22) suggest that more research specifically into the nature of transfer of learning and skills is urgently needed.

Reflections on the Methodological Approach

In adopting a phenomenological stance and choosing to explore human conceptions of a phenomenon, this research adopted an interpretative approach. The methods of data collection, i.e., interviews, observations and focus groups and the different sources of data helped me to gain some rich insights into the line of inquiry. It was helpful to have chosen two courses and differences were evident in the different subject approaches. Had it been possible to gain access to two different institutions, this may have deepened the analysis or offered sharper comparisons.

Analysis of the data posed a real challenge. The initial 'laying out' of the data helped identification of the main themes and categories but finding coherence proved difficult and I tried a number of different approaches, such as broad themes and modeling before revisiting phenomenographical analysis which focuses more on representing variation and conceptions rather than aspiring to generalize. I thought computer assisted qualitative

analysis would help but in the end it was not as helpful as I had envisaged, although I had read through the transcripts many times before importing to NVIVO. I wonder if the software package made the process of analysis a little more mechanical. The package did enable me to explore the data but I seemed to wander about inductively, without finding a direction.

Another issue which may have restricted the development of a more grounded approach was in the formulation of the framework for observations termed 'the teaching for transfer techniques criteria' prior to undertaking the observations. I did this to help operationalise the research question and guide my observations. Observing without any pre-requisite observation criteria may have yielded alternative observations and explanations. However perhaps there were too many criteria and I found myself at times in danger of observing the criteria without perhaps really observing what was there!

In identifying the categories of description and attempting to incorporate the teaching for transfer framework observations, I produced a matrix to help me see where the observations linked to the characteristics of conceptions and which category of description they could be assigned to. Although this proved a valuable tool in helping me make sense of the data, it is appreciated that this type of representation can be difficult to comprehend.

A Final Word

This was a small study that sought to elicit lecturer conceptions of learning and teaching for transfer and whether these conceptions influenced lecturers' teaching for transfer practice. The participants in this study did have a range of conceptions and practices and there was some evidence that these conceptions influenced their practice to a degree. There was also some evidence that these conceptions had been influenced by the lecturers' personal experience of teaching and their professional experience. Their teaching practices in one particular course did appear to affect the student learning experience and the student accounts reflected this. On the basis of these findings and the data which supports it, it seems that there are several ways in which teachers can help learners understand when and

how they can apply learning more effectively, that is learning transfer. Conversely, as evidenced in the other course, opportunities may be being missed in other subjects. A major step forward would be for lecturers and educators to understand how and why to teach for transfer enhances the capacity of learners. The implications for further action indicate how this could be taken forward in higher education.

Further research, on a larger scale and across a number of institutions and courses may reveal additional insights to this study. However other research may also be needed that addresses issues such as the designing, delivering and assessing of transferable learning opportunities, or purposeful transfer intervention effects or to test for the most effective teaching for transfer techniques. Any of these may serve to enhance the outcomes of this research.

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Appendix One

Questions for tutors

Introductions and brief outline of the study
Professional experience
- How long have you been teaching? Background/vocational experience?
- Tell me a bit about you?

Understanding of learning
- What is your general understanding of student learning? Has your understanding ever changed? When/Why?

Teaching practice
- What teaching methods do you use? – presentations/PBL/peer led?
- How do you generally go about planning and delivering teaching (derived from Akerlind) What are you thinking about during this process?
- – Is it different in different units or across levels?

Expectations of learning process
- Do you expect students to be able to transfer their learning into: other contexts; practice?
- Why?
- If so how do you promote this through your teaching?
- What teaching methods in your view best facilitate learning transfer?

Prompts – examples/analogies/applications to other situations/what students know already/generalisation?
- Can you think of any examples where you have witnessed learning transfer?
- In yourself? In others? Why do you think this happened?

Concluding comments – thanks for time /transcript verification/participant obs – focus groups with students – negotiating access?

Appendix Two

Spradley's matrix adapted

	Space	Object	Act	Activity	Event	Time	Actor	Goal	Feeling
Space	1								
Object		2							
Act			3						
Activity				4					
Event					5				
Time						6			
Actor							7		
Goal								8	
Feeling									9

1. Note learning environment
2. Teaching aids
3. Teaching session observation
4. Student participation
5. Lecture/seminar/supervision?
6. Day, Date, Time
7. Teacher behavior – non-verbal, extralinguistic and spatial behaviours
8. Did teacher demonstrate TFT techniques?
9. How did the learning environment feel?

Appendix Three

Teaching for Transfer Indicators - Participant Observation Aide Memoir

Examples of:

- Hugging (before and now)

- Bridging (id underlying principles & generalize)

- Metaphors/Analogies

- Drawing inferences

- Integrate and re-integrate examples

- Use same stimuli as in work settings

- Use many diff e.gs for same situation

- Encourage multiple and critical applications

- Instruct when NOT applicable

- Encourage self belief/efficacy in learners to learn

- Generalise to other contexts

- Explicit explanation of how to generalize (Meta-cog/LtoL)

- Assessment of pre-requisite declarative knowledge

Shepherd

- Analyse

- Associate

- Assess

- Adapt

- Apply

- Appraise

Appendix Four

Framework for student focus groups/interviews

Student focus group questions

- Tell me a bit about you? Age, background, what sort of learner do you think you are? Gauge learner motivation/efficacy/perseverance/ concept v memory
- Tell me about the ways you are learning on your course?
- In what ways will what you learn on your course help you after university?
- How do you know when you have learnt something well?
- What teaching methods help you learn best?
- Can you think of examples where you could use what you have learnt in other situations?
- Can you remember how you learnt that made you think about other situations you could apply your learning in?
- What types of learning do you think will be useful to you when you go to work?
- Why?

Appendix Five

Seeing the point: Lecturers conceptions of learning and teaching for transfer and influences on their practice

Ethical Protocol

This internal research has adopted the following procedures and has:

- Informed all participants regarding the nature of the research prior to data collection and given them the opportunity to opt out of the research at any time. (see email to lecturers and students at appendix Six)

- Included all those parties that have a stake in the research in an open manner so that all views are represented, no deception will be required of the researcher.

- Gained permission from relevant parties in using any documentation, such as lecture notes.

- Explained the purpose of the research and the anticipated audiences, thereby including participants in the data selection by sharing responsibility with them for what is disclosed and alleviating any perceived pressure in this respect.

- Explained that due to the fact that this is a small case study it is likely that participants may recognize their own comments or comments of close colleagues, so codes will be assigned to all individuals or groups to provide anonymity but absolute confidentiality could not be guaranteed by the researcher.

- Maintained confidentiality as far as possible (see above statement) and negotiated any dissemination of data on the basis of relevance, accuracy and fairness

- Direct quotations have received explicit permission of the respondents.

- Issues in relation to power differentials did not arise through interviews with colleagues, as far as I am aware. In terms of students, I was not in a position to assess their work but the lecturers interviewed would be. However all students interviewed were in their final year, and by the time the research reaches the public domain all students will have left the university. Where specific names of lecturers have been used by students, these have been removed.

- In the case of external publication, content will be negotiated in relation to the criteria of relevance, accuracy and fairness and if this is not possible parties will have the right to reply appended to the publication.

- Deadlines have been openly shared and adhered to so that every opportunity to contribute to or change content has been afforded.

- All parties have been treated equitably and no-one party has had the right to veto another.

- In the event of a disagreement an independent arbiter will decide what is admissible for the public domain.

- The principle and spirit of trust shall remain paramount at all times according space for further negotiation, apology or correction.

- Lecturer participants will be invited to a presentation session of the findings, once the thesis is complete and most were very keen to attend. [2]

- The British Educational Research Association (BERA) guidelines have been used as a backcloth to this research and have been respected and adhered to, particularly in regard to the responsibility associated with the integrity and reputation of educational research.

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[2] Adapted from Simons, H. 1989, "Ethics of Case Study in Educational Research and Evaluation," in *Ethics of Educational Research*, R. G. Burgess, ed., Falmer Press, London, pp. 115-138.

Appendix Six

Dear…….

I am a doctoral student at the university and a full-time researcher at ……. University. The focus of my investigation is to explore lecturer conceptions in relation to teaching for transfer (by this I mean the transfer of learning from one context to another). I am undertaking a small comparative case study contrasting one course within a 'vocationally' orientated subject and one course with a more academically orientated subject. I am hoping to compare units of study at all levels of the undergraduate programme and I am particularly interested in level 3, as these students may be more likely to be thinking about what and how they transfer their learning, either into a job, professional training or further post-graduate study.

What would I like?
I would very much appreciate the opportunity to come and interview you about your views and methods of teaching (the interview will last no more than one hour, and will be audio-taped, with your permission). The likely question guideline is attached. If you wish/have the time I would very much appreciate you subsequently checking the transcript to ensure it is fully and fairly representative. If at all possible I would subsequently like to observe a teaching session of your choice.

Once I have my preliminary findings I would be very happy to share these with you, perhaps in a seminar setting?

I have signed and agreed with my supervisor an ethical protocol. I will undertake to anonymise responses but as you can appreciate with such a small study you may recognize something you have said or a comment of a close colleague.

I really hope you feel you can participate in this study, if so, please could contact me to indicate your agreement and I will contact you forthwith to arrange an interview at your convenience. I am planning to have completed all data collection by the end of this semester if at all possible.

Thank you so much, I know you will understand how important this is to me.

Most sincerely
Roz Collins

Appendix Seven – Example excerpt of participant observer recording sheet

Lecture
Memory

Spradley's matrix adapted

	Space	Object	Act	Activity	Event	Time	Actor	Goal	Feeling
Space	1								
Object		2							
Act			3						
Activity				4					
Event					5				
Time						6			
Actor							7		
Goal								8	
Feeling									9

1. Note learning environment
2. Teaching aids
3. Teaching session observation
4. Student participation
5. Lecture/seminar/supervision?
6. Day, Date, Time
7. Teacher behavior – non-verbal, extralinguistic and spatial behaviours
8. Did teacher demonstrate TFT techniques?
9. How did the learning environment feel?

Lecture Theatre
Power-point – words or models
~ level 2
Ve – Memory
Mostly white female (65 ish)
Lecture

Fri 14th March 2·00pm.

Smiley – interpersonal chatting beforehand – lots of extra-
linguistics – walking in & out of student body.

9. Comfortable / Familiar / Chatty

Started with what do you want to know – tell us about options.

Teaching for Transfer Indicators _ Participant Observation Sheet

Examples of:

Hugging (before and now)

Bridging (id underlying principles & generalize)

Demonstrating primacy & recency – building complexity of
experiment & underlying principles.

inner ear
voice
eye
+ Murphy thing

Metaphors/Analogies
first students to participate in memory experiment – students to write down
& another experiment – full participation by students.

Drawing inferences –
Getting students to work out differences – e.g. taping themselves to
remember for exams.

Integrate and re-integrate examples   memory)
Used self as example of poor example   working memory
Used personal e.g. of STM – 30 secs.   STM & LTM very distinctive

Use same stimuli as in work settings

Use many diff e.gs for same situation   walked to film silence of lambs.
Used real e.g. of brain surgery –
Gave examples of elaborative memory – self phone numbers.
Used e.gs

Encourage multiple and critical applications
Asked students to apply to own experience many times   Smoking &
Drawing on student conceptions of /central executive   Smokers.
                                                                     uses – working
Instruct when NOT applicable   memory — tasks.

Encourage self belief/efficacy in learners to learn
You know this already   — You know this 'Just wordy stuff'

Generalise to other contexts
Forward reaching e.g – went unh'l Jones forensic module.

Explicit explanation of how to generalize (Meta-cog/LtoL)
Explicit explanation of building on existing schema.

Assessment of pre-requisite declarative knowledge
\ linking to previous learning — Atkinson Shiffrin model of
Have you done this? Building on Simons experiments.   memory

Shepherd

Analyse Encouraging critical analysis of experiments r responses

Critical analysis of research thus far.

Associate Lots of association — personal egs.

Assess

Adapt

Apply

Appraise

— Overview of summary lecture
— Link to exam ?'s r other units. — You know. this already r
— Used humour r self depreciation constantly

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Spradley's matrix adapted

Lecture

	Space	Object	Act	Activity	Event	Time	Actor	Goal	Feeling
Space	1								
Object		2							
Act			3						
Activity				4					
Event					5				
Time						6			
Actor							7		
Goal								8	
Feeling									9

1. Note learning environment
2. Teaching aids
3. Teaching session observation
4. Student participation
5. Lecture/seminar/supervision?
6. Day, Date, Time
7. Teacher behavior – non-verbal, extralinguistic and spatial behaviours
8. Did teacher demonstrate TFT techniques?
9. How did the learning environment feel?

20 students

Majority white female.

20's .

Few males.

Black

"Pink Hair"

1 · Dark lecture theatre

2 · Power point / Handouts

3 · Lecture - level 2 BSc + PG . - Child Law

4 · Student's responding to questions / taking notes avidly

5 · lecture

6 · Mon 13/11/06/ 9·00 am

7 · Much movement - dialogue with the students - good open rel .

8 · Yes - lots of eye / role models .

9 · Formal but relaxed

Open ?s - "what is an expert" D,s

Some questions appointed for all cases

S'ts get trolleys to cart for all the paper-work (bundle)

In court "feet towards the judge" turn to court

look at audience .

Teaching for Transfer Indicators _ Participant Observation Sheet

We've talked about initial & core assessments

Examples of:

Hugging (before and now)
In park several weeks - I've talked about 'dnft' - children
'Have any of you given evidence in court 'sug'. 'Case study last week
Remember children not ' where possible make decision

Bridging (id underlying principles & generalize) *in partnership with parents -*
In general terms - the route map *[must be] Do you remember -*
Judges want s.w. expert opinion - research; chronology *5 ... if ... this year*

Metaphors/Analogies
Judge, Court Clerk, S.W. - 'Judge John Deea on the tele'
(Setting up a court) This is what it looks like 'you take the oath'

Drawing inferences
As you can see the whole thing is planned - let's do a quick recall

Integrate and re-integrate examples
— more difference with emotional abuse or neglect.
- Experts still only have opinions or these may differ-

Use same stimuli as in work settings
Introducing co-op so important - Dec - 'Bundle' = every bit of paperwork
'As a s.w. you will have to... will need objective evidence based practice

Use many diff e.gs for same situation
You get CAFCASS officers in many times - adoption/divorce/ss - 'What is your
plan for these children' - Cases can go to County court
Magis rules court slightly less formal - describes layout.

Encourage multiple and critical applications
You might have gone for protection order or for section 20 - Remember
this could happen as fast as an hour.

Instruct when NOT applicable
BE HONEST - NO ? DIDN'T R THAT - would encourage you to go to
court if you're not going to child care

Encourage self belief/efficacy in learners to learn
You should be strong now re 'significant harm' But you can
who can remind me who is 'expert', making eff or secret.

Generalise to other contexts *Some of you may have heard of 'bundle'*
Show the barristers ('If you get this right the rest will follow'
You are the expert

Explicit explanation of how to generalize (Meta-cog/LtoL) *Can you see how this cost?*
Outline learning outcomes & outset - What will it be like if you
were the parent' imagine really interesting

Assessment of pre-requisite declarative knowledge
Anyone come across CAFCASS officers? Voiced some negative
Try to see the court before - & went opinions from 'students.
to the cells once by mistake'

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13/11/00

Shepherd

Analyse

Associate
Shared lots of personal experiences
e.g. Judges can fine you if your
mobile phone goes off.

Assess

Adapt

Apply
Judges wary – European can bar you
much more than previously.

Appraise

* System seems to have integral oppressiveness to it.
Some countries have a less formalised system. BUT they have
found it doesn't expose some situations – so needs a balance.

personal example.   on Saturday
– I got one from Judge   – n to observe a child.
– If you have a judge who had restraint... can bar by the

" You should have a senior there – you should NOT
be in court on your own.'

Outlined legal options – Care order
Supervision order
Residence order
Family assistance order
No order

So that is an overview of the court system!
Questions volunteered from students to the end – How do you become
What is your view?   a magistrate?

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Appendix Eight

Initial analysis of lecturer interviews

Themes arising from the data

Lecturers' expectations of students' learning levels

All the lecturers were either teaching or had taught across all levels of undergraduate education. They articulated increasing expectations of the students as they progressed through the levels.

a) Level 1 Nuts and Bolts

From the interviews it is apparent that at level 1 lecturers from across the two subject areas appear to share similar views and expectations. Using terms such as basic, easy, bringing them up to the same level, the prime focus is on introducing the students to the subject. The psychology lecturers centred on key concepts and offered lots of examples or case studies with the intent of getting students familiar with the basic tenets of the subject. The following quotations indicate this intent:

At level 1 I would say I am much more kind of - here is the basic, this is what you need to know, I try to explain it with lots of examples always but really trying to make sure they've got the absolute nuts and bolts (P2)

Really all I'm expecting them to know in level 1 is what do we mean by abnormal psychology, what are the main schools of thought behind it and here's a couple of examples of psychological disorders (P3)

I get them to do personality questionnaires sometimes at level 1, sort of easy ones like levels of control which is a fairly straight forward one, and they find that quite interesting or I'll give them case studies. (P3)

Two Psychology participants below highlighted the adjustment problems students had in year one and the corresponding backlash on them as lecturers in terms of what they could and could not cover. However they did not elaborate on the nature of the problems the students were facing.

At level 1 um, because in the intake essentially there are wide variations... the first period of the teaching session is all about sort of like bringing everybody up to speed (P7)

Many of the students have great difficulty adjusting in the first year especially in our first year and that obviously is causing them problems. Not a lot of problems but it does cause problems for us and it causes problems for them but also in the groups, in the student

groups, it causes problems so they really have been having some serious teething problems this first year. (P6)

The Social Work lecturers, while sharing similar expectations about starting with basic principles of the discipline, seemed to highlight more the emotional aspect of teaching and learning. Or maybe it is HE in general to which they are referring when they made observations like: '*It is like children almost, the first year you are not too sure if they are going to stand up by themselves without wobbling over (S3)*; and

We are having to re formulate and re-pitch our level 1 stuff, um in a way that's much more fundamental of, I don't want to say remedial, but its like basic you know. That sounds really patronising but we are having to start off again with some basic principles about our expectations (S2).

I can introduce them to the development of social work as a discipline and as a profession, trace the history of it and introduce them to values and ethics, think about social divisions and the importance of class race and gender, all of those kind of things {but} at a fairly introductory level (S2)

b) Level 2: Skills, learning up a notch

At level 2 the language of the lecturers in the interviews changed to words like analysis, specialist, creativity, questioning, skills up a notch. All indicated that teaching at this level was geared towards students taking a little more responsibility for advancing their learning. Lecturers expected students to demonstrate or apply their learning, for example, through presentations, practice in communicating to people in 'difficult' groups, and improvements in their performance on assessments.

… in the middle year, the second year, one is hoping to see greater depth of analysis when they are dealing with assignments and the discussion in seminars, (S3)

… I expect there to be a high degree of students being able to think about how they communicate with people in particular groups, how they communicate creatively and then to a certain extent, practice doing it. (S4)

This psychology lecturer outlines her expectations but also voices her disappointment at the performance of students in assessment
…maybe going into depth on more particular issues and, um, they should really be starting to sort of question things a bit more and, I was about to say their skills should have gone up a notch, but having said that I'm marking their essays at the moment and they are absolutely appalling. (P6)

She also says *"at level 2…they've obviously learnt something about themselves, they have learnt that the are quite capable and nobody is going to chop their heads off and*

whatever else they imagine is going to happen when they stand up to speak (P6) perhaps observing that the students are beginning to demonstrate a greater level of confidence.

c) Level Three: **Much less Direction - Towards Independent Learners**

Most of the lecturers had high expectations of the students at level three. Sometimes this was manifest in their reference to the 'independent learner', giving them much less direction, raising the bar, enlightenment; at other times they spoke of being 'strict' and expecting a lot from them.

One Pyschology Lecturer said '*at level 3, yes, {teaching would be} much less directed. I do give a lecture but I wish I didn't have to and usually it just dissolves into a debate' (P2; Another commented 'I do expect a lot from them, the level 3s, in terms of supervision you know…because of the nature of the subject …(P5)* and a third observed that '*In the third year we should have the independent learner who is capable of undertaking independent research and getting far more to grips with um, the understanding (S3).*

A fourth commented that in the third year in her experience, the third years she had taught had come back *'with some kind of enlightenment (laughing) and they have been really good and so that's been quite interesting (P3).* And a Social Work Lecturer observed that at level 3, teaching was '*pretty much on a counselling basis so it will be those listening skills much more honed, much more specific linked to a kind of more of the therapeutic situation (S5).*

In addition to these observations on student independence and level of learning and understanding they expected at level 3, several lecturers commented that they were stricter at this stage on things like secondary sources of literature for instance. '*I find that unacceptable at third level, certainly when they are doing their project so I'll be a lot stricter at that point. (P6)'* The same lecturer went on to say that the strictness was important '*so they get a sense of the fact that the bar will be raised each year and they actually have to attempt to improve their level of ability or whatever you want to call it, performance (P6*
The independence and deeper understanding expected by the psychology lecturers is also reflected in the following social work lecturer's observation that
'*In the third year we should have the independent learner who is capable of undertaking independent research and getting far more to grips with um, the understanding (S3).*

However the social workers also voiced expectations around student behaviour and attitudes, an aspect which did not feature in the interviews with the psychology lecturers, when they said:

We have very high expectations about the conduct and behaviour of our students you know they have got to have the right value base (S2)

Of course in social work, punctuality, reliability, you know, time management all of those things we are looking for evidence of that as potential suitability for the professional side (S2)

…so actually turning up on time, letting people know where you are, managing your diary, not changing appointments at short notice, you know, all the things as workers we take for granted you know its really new for them without having to get to grips with.. ?} (S1)

The social work lecturers seemed to have a strong sense of awareness of what they expected of students and a very keen sense of professional responsibility. They were very aware that these students were soon going to be released into the world of 'service users' and their {i.e. the lecturer's} ultimate responsibility lay in ensuring that the students were capable of delivering a professional service. Their understanding of what it means being a third level student is perhaps best summed up by the following lecturer who observed,

in the morning and they've got to be up and go on placement at 8 o'clock the next day, you know. They're caught in a sort of twilight world between being sort of hey ho have fun, you know, university students and actually developing as professionals.(S4)

Lecturer views and understandings of learning and teaching

The views of the two subject groups appear to vary considerably and certainly it seems there is a stark contrast between how the two groups articulated their perspectives of learning and teaching. The psychology lecturers seemed to be focused upon external factors such as: structuring the content of the information; students getting the materials and resources and directing the student's thinking:

Not how they learn but what – that is important
I see myself as articulating the syllabus and providing the outline of the syllabus that is being covered by the course and so nearly all of my teaching will be initially lecture ..then to think about the things and direct their thinking rather than them listening more in the lectures. It's quite a traditional model and I'm relatively happy with that. I do expect students to be fairly independent in their learning in terms of their going out and finding material and to supplement the classes that I deliver (P1).

Two of the psychology lecturers discussed issues related to the students attitude to assessment *"therefore the choice of topic comes afterwards, which was the easiest question, which one am I going to find the easiest to write lots of stuff about, you know rather than being interested in psychological development..??*(P5)

The quote above seems to be suggesting that the students are motivated to take the easiest route and is related to the quote below saying that their [the students} main concern is the actual mark implying that the students take an instrumental approach to their learning

but for lots of them its just getting the mark at the end so if they, so that's the stick in some ways that they know that the exercise that they are doing is going to be assessed (P7)
Another psychology lecturer worried about student attendance is considering adopting an instrumental approach herself, to attendance, through assessment.
I have had concerns about attendance and if there is anything that I could do to change the assessment that means assessing them all constantly through so part of their assessment is to be coming to the seminars (P4)

Brick walls and learning resistance'
Some of the psychology lecturers, went further still, and expressed real concern discussing the problems they had with helping the students to learn

i*t caused me to dub a new term I don't know if it exists 'learning resistance' which I didn't actually know existed but I've actually experienced it in my students* (P6)

.....I know with some of them you know I can't its just going to be a brick wall for some of them regardless of what you try (P7)

And in some ways he didn't really see it as his responsibility to help students learn " *to be honest with you I don't think that much about the ways that they learn ...* (P7)

And in particular he felt that theories about learning and teaching were unnecessary to his practice of teaching
"Really, but there's a lot of hot air about how students learn and so on and I think there's in some ways too much emphasis on, or too much concentrating on the process of teaching and learning rather than getting on with it in some ways (P7).
Although he did articulate an awareness of different learning styles "*maybe this isn't what you want to know, but in terms of the way that I teach students, I know that its probably not the way that some of them would like to be taught or you know would be the situation where they would learn probably most effectively* (P7). He just doesn't see it as being his role to help students adapt to different learning styles or to vary his practice to accommodate different learning styles.

Teach as taught
Other psychology lecturers also referred to understanding how to teach from their own learning experiences "*So my teaching styles are based around my own experience as a student* (P1)

I think, well this is the way I learnt, this is the way that I know I can best deliver the material to them and so in some ways its tough on those people who don't learn in the

same ways that I did ...(P7) I just think more about what I think is an effective way of delivering the material to them(P7).

Sometimes it sounds as though the psychology lecturers based their teaching on their own experiences due to a lack of confidence or anything else for them to draw upon
"... and so it's been very difficult to adjust, at first I was very rigid, I was determined this is how I was going to do it... this is how I was taught (P5).

I *think I had a sort of an idea of how students would learn because from my own experience of how I would learn so you don't, you know, you kind of bring that with you, how I have learnt myself and this is what I would expect other people to do* (P3).

This lecturer used her own experience to inform decisions about her teaching, such as, types of assessment *"but I did find that I was drawing on a very personal experience of what worked for me especially when it came to deciding how to what forms of assessment to use*(P4)

Not what but how they learn said the social worker lecturers
The social work lecturers seem to focus much more on talking about how the students learn and the internal change in the students demonstrated through the learning process. One of the lecturers discusses how she sees the development of the personal and the professional as inextricable and that 'superficial' signs of learning were not acceptable to entering professional practice and essentially the responsibility lay with the educator/lecturer:

I think that's one of the crucial tasks of social work educators to help students develop a fully integrated personal and professional persona. (S2)…
social work students who don't engage in that sort of deep learning and who do that sort of superficial stuff pay lip service to the right kind of theme you know they are not going to be effective social workers (S2)

Learning can be scary:
Two of the social work lecturers explain how they carefully consider and take account of student emotional needs and sensitivities during teaching:

I'm very um keen that they are not scared of theory so one of the things that I sort of make sure I do in every week is help them understand how theory is another way of explaining and because actually what the students our students find difficult in practice is relating theory to practice (S2)

*A safe learning environment, I think is really imp*ortant.(S5)

Learning is: the social work lecturers used terms like; reflection, action, integration, describing the processes they believe the students use to learn.

I would expect the kind of action element to learning something about doing and reflecting and learning and then .. but I wouldn't say all students learn best that way some of them find it harder than others, don't they? So it's that mixture of opportunities to have something go in whether it's something you've done or read or maybe listened to, or an argument that you've participated in and then having an opportunity to reflect on that and integrate that into your view of the world (S4)

Also in supporting students to participate in that sort of learning it is seen as the responsibility of the lecturer to support and enable that learning process, not just ensure they cover the material "*so if they don't naturally reflect on what they've done then I would want to enable them to do that and so on* (S5)

Styles? Responsibilities?

The social work lecturers also referred to 'learning styles' and had some knowledge of the theories in relation to this and how to help students 'extend' or 'enhance' their abilities.

I'm very aware that everybody has his or her own individual learning style. That's not to say the people can't gain skills so that they you know they can use other approaches and other styles to enhance their repertoire. (S7)

Unlike the psychology lecturer who ignores learning styles both of these social work lecturers consider how they can help students adopt different styles "s*ort of different styles of learning …….that's on the one hand on which of course means that different people respond better to certain ways of teaching and learning than others and you'd want to encourage people to extend themselves in the areas they don't find so easy* (S5).

Lecturer background/experience - Comparisons

Straight from school to teaching

Interestingly all of the psychology lecturers apart from one had come straight through the educational system and most of them said that they taught the students in similar ways to the way they had been taught. The picture they all painted was very similar regardless of age, either they had recently entered academe,

I came into teaching straight from PhD and went into that straight from my under graduate degree. So very quickly into teaching. I was teaching by the time I was 25 (P2) (P2)

Ok this is my first proper job, full time in education. I was doing my PhD at the Uni of …… and whilst doing that I did some tutorials (P5)

I finished my undergraduate degree at the University of … I um started a course a Masters course in psychology and culture part time and then part time I was also research assistant on two projects. Now I'm here after just completing my doctorate (P4)

or they had been teaching quite a long time, but hadn't strayed outside of university teaching.

I did my Masters at the University of ... in Social Statistics and then I did my PhD at the University of ... in social stats ...and as my research funding dried up after the third year, I started teaching part time... and as I was completing my PhD a post became available... which I started as a full time lecturer . So this is my 13th year (P7)

The only psychology lecturer who did have vocational experience in both teaching at a primary level and forensic psychology still said …*I think I had a sort of an idea of how students would learn because from my own experience of how I would learn so you don't you know you kind of bring that with you, how I have learnt myself and this is what I would expect other people to do and that's probably a lot more independent than they are capable of...* (P3)

This quote implies that learning for this lecturer is about expectation of the way the students approach learning which is still in contrast to the way the social work lecturers described learning in terms of how they support students to demonstrate their learning,.

Teaching as entertainment
The other aspect mentioned by a few of the psychology lecturers, was that they wanted to entertain the students or give them some fun. One of the lecturers said "*I even pretended to be a horse last week to keep them interested*" (P7)

I have to have a bit of fun doing it as well, if I have a little bit of fun maybe they will find it interesting or something so I try to make these kind of presentations a bit you know an animation, a picture and whatever as much as you can do with a fixed slide really.(P6)

but its being an entertainer although I don't think I'm a particularly good entertainer but in terms of doing lectures, although a lot of the time the material is very dry I try to get the information across in hopefully a fairly light way(P7)

One of the social work lecturers also referred to entertainment and 'taking the audience with you' (S6) but the rest of the social work lecturers stressed that it was a serious business where students were expected to explore and expose their own values.

Straight from work to teaching
All of the social work lecturers had previous extensive and varied vocational experience apart from one who had been a mature 'access' student who had gone on to do a PhD in sociology.
I was a mature student and did an access course first and then from that got onto ... University's undergraduate programme in Sociology where I was doing sociology and industrial relations that was the degree. ... I won a scholarship from the University to do a PhD so that gave me funding for three years so I started my PhD in 93(S2).

Not only was their previous vocational experience very relevant and broad …
I specialised in the area of family law, children within the legal system, but I'd also worked as a social worker dealing with disabled children, co-ordinating approaches with social services etc so had some insight into working with social workers.(S3)

then went away and worked as a training officer and freelance trainer for about 9 years and then came back here in November 93 so quite a number of years.(S4)
I worked part time in a psychiatric hospital for the last two years then I went and got an internship a paid practice in units for mainly adolescence in young people and worked there for about 5 years and did a masters degree in counselling psychology alongside of still working at the unit. And then came over here and worked as a psychologist for the health service I was a counsellor in a well woman's and I've worked as a citizen's advocate with older people alongside my teaching as well so it's always been kind of a mixture.(S4)

…it was often notably senior experience in organisations, too.
After that I carried on in a similar job, local government reorganisation Southampton split off and Hampshire and I did a similar job for Southampton but I was in a much more strategic place in the organisation (S5)

well I'm a qualified social worker. Qualified in 1980. With a lot of relevant experience before and since in the statutory sector and the voluntary …. Sector.(S7)

I teach, train and work in the court all around child protection and dangerous offender management. I teach group work, but its mostly childcare, child protection and childcare law that's my area of expertise. I'm a qualified social worker, qualified back in the early 80's, I've worked for probation, NSPCC, education social services both as a practitioner and as a manager.(S6)

Some had come to social work in the first instance through their own personal experiences:
so it wasn't until I was a young mum really that I got involved in community work, I was doing a lot of community work and though I want to do something else and so I sort of had a similar background to a lot of the students that come onto our social work course, or used to come on anyway in the DipSW days um so I trained at …… University as a social worker and I became a I was a education welfare officer (S1)

Lecturer approaches to planning their teaching - Content versus Process?

The lecturers were asked what sorts of things they took into account or thought about when planning teaching sessions. Again it appears there are striking differences between the psychology and social work lecturers. In planning their teaching contact time the psychology lecturers talked about: content; syllabus; structure, information and assessment, often likening their approach to conceptions of their own previous learning experiences. The psychology lecturers said:

Like now I'll just pick up things an hour before I'm going in and just have a skim through ...syllabus and it's just what's in that chapter in the text book, basically (P2)

essentially ... I just go through the process of actually researching the area, collecting as much information as I can about the area and then trying to put it together in a coherent kind of story because that the way that I like to deliver (P7)

Major thing I think about is probably the content I'm led by the content that I want to get across by the syllabus ... (P1)

I've just written an optional unit called Culture and the Dialogical Self ...but I did find that I was drawing on a very personal experience of what worked for me (P4)

In contrast the social work lecturers didn't mention content or curriculum at all, only really discussed aspects of the learning process and/or how to engage the students in terms of the most effective delivery methods.

apart from thinking of a range of different um delivery methods I suppose the only other thing I think of is my own stuff like how I'm going to manage it how am I going to do this, what's the best way of delivering it (S2)

The social work lecturers also talked about themselves managing the teaching and thinking about what students had learnt already, and balancing debate with reflection and getting them from here to there, engaging the students in a process.

it's about balance, an opportunity to examine ideas and an opportunity to reflect on those or debate or sometimes participate in an activity ..... piece of film or whatever it is and being able to engage with that material. (S4)

Then I would try and think about what people have got that they are bringing to us I don't just mean individually I mean in terms of what they've done on the programme so far. (S7)

I also have some sort of systems approach, you know you want to get from here to there and be very aware of what your outcomes are going to be. (S6)

Descriptions of actual teaching practice

Lecturers were asked to describe the range of methods used in their teaching practice. Very commonly the psychology lecturers all seemed to adopt a standardised structure of small group discussion in seminars and usually expected the students to have read and thought about a particular paper or article they had directed them to, prior to the seminar so that they were prepared to discuss it in class. This is encapsulated in the following quote: *would be to ask them to have read a particular article or paper the week before and then I would normally I normally structure the questions these days so I normally*

know what I want them to explore and again I'll give them in small groups a set of questions which pertain to the article and get them to address those questions and discuss those questions in their smaller groups and then perhaps explore that in a larger group perhaps later on.(P1)

They also seemed to place quite a lot of emphasis on maintaining control of the students learning
they have a paper to read each week which they must read, I take a hard line if they haven't read what I've asked them (P2)

I don't want to let it go too active because personally I don't want to lose control of the session so I do try to maintain a structure (P5)

I'm trying to maintain something relaxed while also keeping them controlled and directed about it (P4)

It seemed, in the main, that lectures were delivered in a didactic style and the lecturers felt pressured into delivering as much material as they could get through.

anybody doing this kind of job its all about learning about how much material you can get through, the level at which you are working at (P7)

you know you've obviously seen a lecture and that's pretty standard format so I'ill give them the information … and I think that's very common with all of us that we do that. (P3)

Most lectures were delivered through PowerPoint, using colour etc in the presentation in order to maintain the student's attention.
I always use PowerPoint, I like to use lots of colours just because I think that if you have to sit and watch a presentation and its all the same blank colours, black and white or whatever … I haven't used much video yet but I will be showing a documentary on personality disorders when they come back from break. (P6)

Learning resources are a plenty

The social work lecturers on the other hand cited a range of and many different examples of their teaching practice, quizzes to explore student attitudes to poverty, …T.V soaps to examine societal stereotypes, video of self to analyse and reflect on personal behaviours, in-depth discussion about issues such as suicide. In the following quote the lecturer seems to be first of all establishing what the students level of understanding or knowledge is and then to relate to their own [the students} values regarding what may or may not be essential to **other** people**.**

first thing I did was start off with an opening quiz and got them to you know write down what they thought the answers were to those kind of things, and then give them the facts

and figures so that establishes how much you know it's a base line for how much they think they know because there is a lot of myth and um sort of anecdote about poverty(S2) and in this sort of poverty quiz it asks them to um to rank really what they view as necessities and which were are not really necessities but are quite desirable so its amazing how students actually think that its perfectly alright for people not to have a television or not to have a fridge or not to have a best set of clothes (S2)

After this the students are asked to keep a diary of their own spending for the week and at the next session the students collectively explore the differences between what was OK for them to spend money on compared to **other** (service user) people.

we started with an extract from East Enders actually, a video extract where it was a stag and hen night and we were looking at well what I asked the students to do was to watch that extract and look at ways in which the men were explaining their behaviour and explaining or telling the guy who was getting married giving him advice about how to manage the ball and chain and all that kind of stuff (S2

so lots of kind of stuff about gender, lots of stuff about biological and natural assumptions, sort of that psychoanalytic stuff about attachment and I showed them that and also an extract from Tricia I don't know if you know that um um don't know what her second name is its like a Jerry Springer (yes) or Oprah Winfrey (yes) kind of thing British version kind of you know not terribly sophisticated but what I'm trying to get with students to do is see how everyday explanations of behaviour and attitudes and interactions and all the rest o f it are based if you like on some kind of disciplinary perspective it might not be terribly well informed but social worker need to think about their own common sense assumptions and try and be a bit more vigorous than Tricia or Jerry Springer might be and you know think about where their own explanations are coming from and be very clear about that(S2)

we film that over and over again and we then look at the tapes and analyse it and see how actually what they do might not have been terribly helpful because all they've done is ask a load of nosey questions and not really listened to what the person was saying and that's a really powerful way of helping students think (S2)

Another major resource the social work lecturers have at their disposal are the 'real' people (service users) the students will be working with so whatever they are learning the reason they are learning it, it is very explicit and applicable.

sometimes for example if we are having service user input there might be a presentation from service users and an invitation to the students to examine the meaning of the person's experience with social services and so on. (S4)

Drawing on the student's experience and helping the students to generalise that experience or gain a 'helicopter view'

some experience and some tips for working in this very difficult area with getting them to share their experiences of where suicide had been a threat or a reality in their practice not in their personal lives so it's that mixture of here's a helicopter or wider view now what do you think what's it like how does it play out for you?(S4

Learning can be 'straight to plate'
Whereas the psychology lecturers seemed constrained by only having the use of
PowerPoint and trying to be creative with the presentation, the social work lecturers have
other learning resources directly at their disposal.
 *with the communication unit people are going to be actually working with service users
so you know straight from the old PowerPoint presentations to an actual real life
situation (S5)*

In assessments the social work students are asked to undertake role play, write up
incidents reflectively, and write letters as advocates for service users, for example.

*they write four of those, they are 1000 words and they are based on a piece of practice
that they have undertaken and linking it to the appropriate legislation, relevant theory
and reflection on what they did well, what they didn't do so well, what they've learnt
from the experience and so on, so during the preparation for the practice they get to
practice doing that with a little role playing and they write it up. So the two things are
continually linked. (S5)*

*On level 3 law for example they write a letter as a advocate I mean there are all sorts of
different things. (S7) …..*

So assessments can be activities that will be required in their vocational role. The use of
creative teaching strategies was also in evidence. This social work lecturer challenges the
concept of lecture = presentation by PowerPoint

*I like to mix methods, blended learning as it is called now, I like to think about using
artwork, video, direct lecturing whatever….so one of things we do is a big collage in the
lecture room and I ask people to bring stuff in and they build a collage of how children
appear in our society. (S6)*

*for instance, I gave them a whole portfolio of stuff putting either side of the MMR debate
and actually said right you are now the department of health. You have to decide what
your policy is going to be over the next 10 years. (S6)*

Focusing on the why and how

I was interested in whether lecturers ever thought about explaining to the students why
they were teaching them a particular aspect or using a particular method and if they
helped students to draw on their previous learning or make links to help them integrate
their understanding into the current learning experience.
There seem to be many more examples of social work lecturers doing this and trying
sometimes to relate it to social work practice

I sometimes tell them that they might not see the relevance while we are doing some theory but those pieces of jigsaw puzzle will hopefully gradually they will be able to see how they fit together. (S3)

but you need to know about housing policy in general, you need to know about asylum seekers because some of you will be working for example there's a project in Southampton(S7)

These social work lecturers actually use the word 'explicit' in attempting to transparently explain to students where the links are from previous learning or to assignments
to revisit some of the level 1 material and incorporate it into their understanding of a specific communication session so in those senses I sometimes make that expectation explicit which usually results in a flurry of activity while they try and find their notes from the past year (S4)

much more explicit because every piece of work that they do they are using material for their placement (S1)

A few of the psychology lecturers referred to being explicit with students and explaining why they were teaching something but they didn't actually give any specific examples of when they had done this and their comments almost seem to rise out of frustration that the students didn't understand so they felt they had to be explicit.

I think that possibly making them understand why are we actually teaching them this you know we are not doing this to torture you, we are actually trying to teach you something (P6)
They always say ' why are we doing psychology' and I'm thinking from my perspective as having been doing psychology for years I can see psychology applies to everything you could possible do so how could you not understand that it applies(P3)

Backward reaching teaching – social work lecturers

Getting the students to reach back to previous learning and using that to demonstrate relevance in the current learning situation was referred to on occasion only by the social work lecturers.

I've gone out onto the placement where they brought them all together and done a supervision session I've done it to try and help them link previous theory to practice but in a way we could probably do a lot more of that, (S2)

part of the requirement for the level 2 assignment is to revisit some of the level 1 material and incorporate it into their understanding of a specific communication session…so assessment is one way if people know they are expected to include some material from another unit or from previous study and the other way is really everything we do is re-examined and regurgitated in the practice setting quite explicitly so if they've learned

something on human development the expectation is that some of that material and some of that understanding will reappear in their write-ups of the work they are doing in their placements.(S4)

As another lecturer pointed out, by drawing on previous learning and experience this can build a student's confidence and validate their approach

actually when you point out to them how they've been using a particular model or a particular approach that gives them a sort of status you know this is real work (S7)

Forward Reaching Teaching – Social work lecturers

Again examples of how student learning might be taken and/or applied to other contexts or situations were mentioned only by the social work lecturers. The following quote depicts how future situations are presented by placing the students in similar situations to prospective service users, 'do unto others….'

we keep on saying to them no well you've got to learn how to do it here and practise and develop your skills in a safe place where you are not going to damage anybody before we let you out and do it with service issues. And its entirely consistent that in the training of social workers that they have some experience of what it feels like to be filmed revealing perhaps intimate or personal details so we are quite hard on them because actually social workers expect and require service users to reveal stuff about their own lives so its entirely consistent in their training that they've go some experience of what that might feel like and in training they have the power they have much more power because they can choose how much or how little to reveal (S2)

The following comments highlight the use of backward and forward reaching techniques in use
So it was ping-ponging back and forth from the general topic of parenting to parenting when your child has a severe disability to, what does that mean in social work and what about the professional side of that and wanting to explore that further as a practitioner(S4)
Oh yes!' and then they can take that forward because firstly it helps them be clear about what's been happening and what they've been doing in their lives and their work, also it gives them validity, credibility.(S7)
The above quote serves as another example of using this method to validate student experiences

Teaching – drawing upon examples

Both groups of lecturers did refer to using examples within their teaching either from the context they were using to illustrate a point or drawing from examples within the student experience.

Using examples related to social work practice
not all of them may choose to practice Social Work but the vast majority its though to be a more vocational course so one tries to give examples from a sort of setting that are likely to meet (S3) Try to give them examples of how things are used in practice. Also although we're working within um prescriptive limits of what we can set for assignments to try and think about assignments, scenarios etc that they could meet in practice. (S3)

Using little examples to demonstrate a systematic approach and to help build the big picture
giving some examples from my own experience of where I was using a staged model where you might be overlapping various stages, things might go wrong here, you might have to go back here, you might have to do this and giving some very basic every day examples of the different parts of the model so very small little examples, rather than the great big wonderful piece you know I did this wonderful piece of work just little examples of things that somebody might be doing (S7)

and getting people to see that theories are actually very practical things and not some great frightening massive thing out in the distance somewhere. Its making it real making theory real for people and showing how it applies and how bits of theory apply, you don't have to take the whole thing but use bits of it to explain something that happened or something you're just about to do.(S5)

they will write a reflective assignment that incorporates the theory that they've learnt and how that applies to what they have learnt from actually doing things and so incorporating the feedback that they've had from peers, their own reflections and feedback that they will have from the service user or carer that they spoke to (S5)

This psychology lecturer uses an example of a research instrument in the 'real world'
I probably would give examples of the kinds of area that we do, the way that I teach it at the moment is that students do an assessment before they actually start on their own projects, they do an assessment where they actually analyse the British crime survey(P7)

And when the subject of psychology is about 'dysfunctional' behaviours in people then examples/case studies are utilised.
Obviously where they don't have a particular type of experience I will use real examples so like in one of the seminar where I wanted them to understand the difficulty of diagnosing disorders I use two real life client example so that I could talk to them about these people and how they were treated and how they were actually diagnosed (P6)

Teaching drawing upon experience/s

Relating learning to professional experience either that of the lecturer's professional experience or that of the student's was described at great length with detailed examples of how and why the lecturers did this.

Then this lecturer talks about how she uses her own professional experience when asked about dealing with difficult cases and personal dilemmas

my personal experience comes in when we are talking about all sorts of things like when people ask you questions like how do you value somebody as an individual non judgementally when they are a paedophile, a convicted paedophile, how do you work with that kind of thing, how do you reconcile your personal values with you know the work that you have to do on professional values and then you know you draw on the experiences that you've had and say how you've managed it (S5)

Another social work lecturer talks about drawing on the actual experience of 'service users' in helping students learn
You have to use a lot of case studies and they have service users and practitioners coming in to talk to students about the real life really which helps them to make sense of the knowledge they are gaining in relation to how you actually use that in practice (S1)

This lecturer discusses how using a range of experience, the student's previous experience, the lecturers professional experience and typical 'service user' experience all help the students to stand back and look at and analyse scenarios through different eyes or perspectives not previously considered.

or kind of experience general experience and so they can see the value of what they are learning and see how it might be useful to them and also I think this is crucial if people can make sense of what they have been doing and experiencing up to now they perhaps have been going through a job going through life and not being able to or having the tools to stand back and look at life sociologically or from a social policy point of view, or thinking about values in an explicit conscious way.
So what I tend to use is a mixture might be some bits of my own experience, but more likely it would be case study type material and also their experience. So sometimes it's prepared case study that they look at and they have certain questions they've got to pull it apart sometimes it might be something they've brought with them obviously suitably anonymised (S7)

This lecturer actually asks students to bring in photo's of themselves as children so that they can relate to their own experience as a child and then to apply this 'sense' to children involved in social service cases in the media.
we talk about children quite coldly in a sense, you know this is childcare law this is child protection law, but actually when you get people to bring in pictures and you say to them look it would be great if you brought in some of your own stuff but if you want to then take something out of magazines and I think it makes it real. So you get this large collage with people, some of their own stuff in there, stuff from the media and they can look at it and actually they see children and they can reflect on their own childhoods and so forth so it makes it more holistic, it makes it more a real living thing (S6)

Two of the psychology lecturers also talked about using the student experience in some way, either from personal past experience or anticipated roles they might play.

So I try to, yeah, its again by making it practical and applicable to you know different roles that they may have when they leave.(P7)

I've always tried to you know bring in their own experiences so that they can give their own examples and I think that way integrating it into their own understanding a bit better(P6)

Both of these quotes however seem quite general whereas the social work lecturers cite many specific examples.

Teaching for transfer

Towards the end of each interview, each lecturer was asked if they expected students to transfer their learning into different situations/contexts. The social work lecturers said:

so everything we do needs to be either directly or indirectly fairly readily transferable to working as a social worker. So yeah! That's a strong expectation (S4)
this has to be transferable or even the more generic stuff like IT skills equally have to be demonstrated in practice and then the impact of the practice experience has to be re-demonstrated in the following level on the academic units. So I suppose, is that an answer to your question?(S4)

This same lecturer concluded by saying that this was where the effort of the lecturers was really focused because students basically wouldn't pass the course if they could not demonstrate learning transfer
So there are lots of ways in which we would encourage that transfer because it's essential you can't through our degree without it so we invest I think heavily in terms of time and energy in doing our best to ensure that that happens and if it doesn't people don't pass(S4)

Another social work lecturer referred to job prospects and ability to transfer
I've been in agencies I can tell you that a lot of places absolutely prefer students coming from here because they know that they will be able to in general roll up their sleeves as well as write an assignment. Yeah so its really really important that transfer of skills.(S5)

This lecturer still thinks there is much more that they could and should be doing to help learning transfer and acknowledges how very difficult it really is
all of that really is about what can they transfer, you know what do they know, what do they need to know all those sorts of things really and they do that in their practice analysis that they have to write to….
often it needs to be teased out and I wonder if that's what we need to be doing more of really getting them to think more about their you know what they already have that amounts to transferable skills really.(S1)

This lecturer refers to developing a consciousness of how they [the students] are learning and she doesn't assume that transfer will simply occur on its own. She seems to be referring to attempting to inculcate a meta-cognitive awareness in students.

We don't expect them to come in and be able to do it by themselves just like that. What we hope to do is provide people with the tools and capability to transfer (S7) instead of that people will realise that they can always take a step back and analyse a situation and then decide what else they need to know to do in there what they can build on and what sort of actions they can take so right through it's not just about the content of the knowledge but it's about them developing a consciousness of how they are learning and how they are transferring their skills and how they are developing their skills am I making …(S7)

The psychology lecturers responded with a general yes, they did expect students to transfer learning across units, they expected students to remember what they had previously learnt but they bemoaned the fact that there was little evidence of this in assignments.

Penny dropping Light Bulb Moments

The lecturers were asked if they could remember witnessing learning transfer and for any examples they could recollect. Often these situations were referred to as 'penny dropping' or 'light bulb' moments. The social work lecturers reported how the students found ways of telling them when they realised the 'point' of what they had been learning.

I was reading out the notes at a meeting today and it was minuted that the students wanted us to know that the penny had finally dropped and had realised what we'd been on about in their level 1 units and in the first half of level 2(S4)

look at what they've already got and then you see the penny dropping co's that's the good bit when they say 'Oh yes!' and then they can take that forward … (S7)

Interestingly all the other examples of witnessing learning transfer given by the social work lecturers were 'out in the field' in some way

And it did and those sort of light bulb moment were there all the time everyday in practice really yeah.(S1)

on court visits which I have at the end of the academic year are fascinating and its lovely to hear them enthused about things that I've told them about but they obviously either didn't grasp or didn't see the importance of and suddenly they will be telling me about it and of course that's lovely(S3)

Except from when you know when I've been practice teaching really and I've seen people they go 'right yeah that's what you mean, that's how it fits, that's how the theory fits with what I'm doing'(S5)

And one of the psychology lecturers talked about light bulb moments in the context of his lecture and seeing the student's eyes light up with understanding.

I suppose the light bulb moment where they should go 'bing oh that's what it means' so in some ways I try to make the lecture in some ways exciting in some ways by sort of keeping them maybe be through a lot of the lecture in the dark about what the ... taking them through the story about how we get to a certain point and then saying bing now do you see what we mean at the end bringing it out and then hopefully seeing that their eyes light up (P7)

Summary of lecturer interviews

In total fourteen interviews were conducted, seven with psychology lecturers and seven with social work lecturers, constituting the sum total employed by the institution to teach these subjects. Initial 'laying out' of the data, comparing and contrasting responses and looking into the data for similarities and differences, anomalies and seeming coincidences has resulted in a number of preliminary themes.

Narrative summary of themes arising from the interviews with lecturers

All lecturers described their different and increasing expectations of the student's ability to learn as they progress through the levels of their course. This ranged from an 'introductory basic' level at level 1 to being creative, specialist, analytic at level 2 through to independent researcher at level 3. The social work lecturers also stipulated expectations in relation to student behaviour and professional standards.

The psychology lecturers talked about student learning in terms of the curriculum, structure, content and complained about the general lack of interest and the student propensity to take the 'easiest route/assignment task. The social work lecturers described the student learning in terms of process, reflection, and different learning styles and stated that the students had to take a deep approach to learning encompassing changing their values if necessary.

In building up a picture of conceptions it was also interesting to explore the educational and vocational background experience of the lecturers. The findings appeared quite striking in this instance, all of the psychology lecturers apart from one had come straight through the educational system to doctoral study and then onto teaching. The social work lecturers apart from one had all had a variety of vocational roles and experience outside of their academic careers. Unsurprisingly then it seemed that all of the lecturers' teaching practice was influenced by previous experience, particularly in the case of the psychology lecturers who said over and over again that their own teaching was based upon their experience as students, the curriculum they had been exposed to and the culture of their learning environment. This was a particular frustration for the psychology lecturers as they expressed concern that the students they taught were lacking in motivation unlike their own recollection of learning in higher education.

In planning, teaching contact sessions, significant differences between the two groups were also apparent. The psychology lecturers were driven by the subject area and the amount of 'material' they had to get through and the social work lecturers seemed more

mindful of student comprehension and engagement, for example what type of learning activities would help the students to understand.

Perhaps predictably the psychology lecturers also described their teaching methods as 'traditional' lectures and seminars, discussing articles and critiquing theories and models. The social work lecturers appeared to be much more creative using a variety of methods, such as quizzes, collage, video of self and T.V programmes, etc.

Telling students why they are being taught about any particular area and how this perhaps relates to others areas covered in the course, in order to help them gain an overview or 'helicopter' approach, in some respects seems an obvious strategy for encouraging learning. Unfortunately the psychology lecturers only saw the need to be explicit about this with students from a deficit point of view, when they thought the students just didn't understand 'why' at all. The social work lecturers saw this as an essential component of their practice because when students went out into practice situations they would need to recognise the relevance of what they had learnt.

Building on this the social work lecturers took from previous student learning and brought it forward into current learning contexts as well as taking current learning and showing where and how this could be applied in other or future situations/contexts.

Both groups of lecturers used examples in their teaching to try and illustrate points or concepts, from the student's everyday lives, the media and so on. Both also drew upon previous experience either the students or their own but where they differed was the social work lecturer's ability to draw upon their own professional experience from their own or the 'service users' perspective.

When asked about teaching for transfer the psychology lecturers seemed to assume that I meant from one unit of learning on the course to the next and the student ability to remember previous learning. Whereas the social work lecturers immediately volunteered a lot of examples, voicing that it was essential to transfer to qualify as a social worker and was inherent in all teaching.

They were subsequently asked if they could give examples of when they had witnessed students transferring learning and this was often interpreted as a' light bulb moment' or seeing the 'penny drop'. Interestingly the social work lecturers gave examples from the student placement or the students themselves explicitly saying so and the psychology lecturers described it more in terms of 'eyes lighting up' during a teaching session.

Teaching session observations – Findings

In chapter 3 the use of different frameworks to aid observation of participants was discussed. Three different frameworks' were developed and taken along to each session. The first framework was developed from Spradley's discussion of grand and mini tour observations and making choices about what the observations should focus upon. At the beginning of each session, notes were taken in relation to nine different aspects adapted from Spradley's suggestions.

Spradley's matrix adapted:

Space	1	Note learning environment
Object	2	Teaching aids
Act	3	Teaching session
Activity	4	Student participation
Event	5	Lecture/seminar, etc
Time	6	Day/Date/Time
Actor	7	Lecturer behaviour – non-verbal, extralinguistic, spatial
Goal	8	TFT techniques demonstrated?
Feeling	9	How did learning environment feel?

In approaching the findings from this particular framework it did seem to produce a snap shot overview or 'grand tour' perspective of the sessions. Notable aspects of the social work teaching sessions were: the teaching environment – every session was uncomfortable due to the number of students and the size of the teaching space, sometimes there weren't enough chairs and windows and doors had to remain wide open to help air circulation. Most of the lecturers used power-point, handouts, role play and small group exercises, as teaching aids at some stage during the session. The sessions themselves were billed on the timetable as a mix of seminars, lectures or workshops. The students appeared to be very attentive, either taking notes avidly or very quickly settling into groups as requested and getting on with the tasks and activities. Most of the sessions were timetabled as 2-3 hours and lasted a whole morning or afternoon with an informal break of 10 minutes at some stage and most of the sessions seemed to take place on a Friday afternoon or Monday morning. In general the lecturer' behaviour was very informal, moving around, chatting, listening attentively, sitting on the desk to present. Sometimes the language used by the lecturers was very valuing of the students and warm 'like to invite you to think about' (S2), thanking students individually for their contributions (S7 and S4). Where 'teaching for transfer' techniques (TFT) were observed in general this was noted, use of examples, role play, use of student experience and application – all of these aspects were present. Generally the atmosphere felt relaxed and informal, sometimes it felt quite challenging for the students as they discussed their own views and tried out being different people, (social worker, service user,

observer/feedbacker) There was also sense of purpose and pace present and students were encouraged to keep moving forward in their activities.

In the psychology teaching sessions the teaching environments seemed different to the social work ones. The teaching sessions took place in tiered lecture theatres, a teaching laboratory – with P.C's or in modern rooms with no natural light, students all appeared to have enough space to work and be comfortable. All of the lecturers used power point and handouts but one (P5) also used video streaming, audio recordings and a white-board, another (P7) used a data projector and P.C.s for each student in using a particular software package. Most of the psychology lectures also mentioned that the lecture notes were available for students on 'Learnwise' the university's virtual learning environment (VLE).The teaching sessions were identified on the timetable as lectures or seminars. Students generally participated in all activities and took notes in lectures, a noticeable difference between the groups of students was that the social work students initiated and volunteered questions whereas the psychology students did as they were asked but seemed to lack the ability/interest? to ask their own questions. All of the teaching sessions were timetabled as an hour in duration and most finished within 50 minutes, the days and times of the day varied throughout the week. The psychology lecturers displayed more variable behaviours than the social work lecturers. In one lecture (P3) the lecturer stayed behind the lecturn and moved very little, speaking in a quiet tone, in another lecture (P2) the lecturer stayed on the stage but moved around and laughed and joked with the students. In the seminars two of the lecturers offered clear instructions and explanations and adopted quite formal communication styles and in another 2 seminars the lecturers were joking, gesticulating and smiling. Specific TFT techniques weren't really noted as something that occurred throughout the teaching session but were noted separately in the literature review observation framework. In general the atmosphere of the teaching sessions was quite relaxed and sometimes quite paced and focused but when left to their own devices the students quickly regressed into general conversations.

Appendix Nine

Anonymised excerpts from student transcripts

So tell me a bit about that because you all seem to agree on that one –

Such vague essay questions that you've got to try and apply cognitive is like ..

Why didn't you do cognitive behavioural therapy - I would have loved to do something like that

Yes … use cognition rather than just like .. memory .. applied – so dry

So sometimes the assessments don't help you understand where this stuff should be applied to or what

It's not how you actually use psychology it's like.. knowledge.. where if you could actually like do something that actually uses psychology it would be slightly more useful I think. Psychology is such a theory based course – if you actually want to go off and do something with it – then you've got to be able to use the knowledge you've learned and if you've just written down all you know – in essays –

I think as well with this course it might have helped if we could have gone and met some people who it affects like going with people with autism and things like that – if it could have been built into the course it would have really helped me

By encouraging people to think about how you can apply it – you know – you are encouraging them to think for themselves. With theory it's put there in front of you and when you are reading about theories or research – you don't really – you have to yet understand it and interpret it in your own way – there's no - … ?? regurgitation whereas if you are encouraging pupils to think more about applying things to the real world you are encouraging them to think for themselves rather than come out of Uni – just being able to dictate this theory – that theory – and this and that – but not really about how it works in the wider context.

That was really really interesting – so in terms of your course – tell me a bit about the ways that you do learn now. There are lectures, seminars, project supervision -

Used to have a thing about … ??? They'd usually give you some sort of a task –
(lots of laughter) that nobody ever used to do though

It was an hour a week or something for each subject and then

Yeah it was just like time to do your homework

*Do you think it would have been good if you'd had some sort of supervisor who
sat there and you had to come …*

Yeah …..in the classrooms … ??

Were they – oh

This is like a contract - ?? you knew at that time you .. ?? grades ..

What sort of methods do you think – do they use now ?

Don't really have individual essays – presentations – exams. I personally would
rather do everything? by?… myself. Like when you have to share your
responsibility with other people they can affect your grading – I understand
about ? sharing ? that in the real world you have to work with people – you
can't work on your own, but I think when it's affecting your marks and things
like that I think you should be able to do work by yourself and I think exams are
one of the worst forms of assessment because it's just testing from memory
isn't it at a specific time – and all you do is read from a book and write out –
personally I learn in parrot fashion – I mean – 2 months down the line I don't
remember any of what I've learned – do you know what I mean. Because you
are under so much stress to learn it at the time -

And also three hours I think is too long for an exam – by the end of it my hand
is .. and in the end I just want it to be over and I can't be bothered.

…. ?? essays always like half the length -

That's it you are doing really well on the first two don't you and the last two
your hand's struggling so much you just like – I can't – and your brain just gets –
ooohh -

Specially if you've got more … exam ????

I don't know how anyone could ??

Specially if you are doing three essays about three different subjects – you've

got to remember all three at the same time -

I always come out with really bad headaches – and have to take tablets

~We've got one like literally a month after our dissertation to do it – and then one the week after in the middle of … more spread out – can't see how I'm going to have … for the second one – at all

Only because last year – for our exams – I mean we had three in quite close succession and I only had the time to – like one week to revise for each one .. ?? … ok were good so…

It's like the last final thing – you don't want to come back and re-take them.. But we don't get our degree until the end – so it can be taken … ??

… so you do presentations, you do group work, you've got exams – are there any particular methods that any of the lecturers use that you think that's really helpful?

Yes I think like

Yeah it's like some lecturers who really get you involved in the lecture – try and get – and there's others who just sit there and just talk for 50 mins and you're just writing it down and you then come out and go – what have I just written – because you are not engaged in it – whereas if you are actually having to give answers or listening to other people giving answers – sometimes you take it more in because you've got to pay more attention.

I think the best method is just the method that's organised. Some or one lecturers in particular is very scatty and I can't follow ..

And we haven't got lecture notes so we have to write everything down and it's – you don't take anything in – I know when I come to revise for my exam I will not be looking at the notes that I wrote because ..

I've got like 5 pages for each lecture .. but God knows what are written in my notes – what was actually said ..

And it's always on the same sort of thing anyway – so maybe ??

Sounds like sometimes you find ways of compensating as well – for teaching methods that aren't helping maybe they are …

.. get to know what the tutors are going to be like so you start doing research for that lecturer – for that subject – already and I've got a pile of journals to

read – otherwise you'd get to the end of it and think what on earth have we done ?

I think also now we know what they are like, we can predict what sort of answers they want as well. Sometimes I feel I'm not writing an essay on what I'm interested in and what I think – I'm writing what they think to try to get a better mark

So you feel like you are being quite strategic about it almost?

Yeah

Turn back to your bear.. ?? so if that helped – because somehow I suppose that kind of tried to illustrate something – did .. ?? so if they say for example – I don't know … de de de de disorder .. you will see symptoms of this in such and such a .. I know I'm thinking about abnormalities or whatever … but .. do they use examples or apply it to real situations ?

I think some do -

There's videos as well that can make it seem more interesting to you what.. otherwise you are just hearing disorder, criteria symptoms, what they need for diagnosis and it does seem kind of dry, doesn't it? Whereas if you watch a video you can see how it does affect peoples' lives – or things like that

There was that autism lecture that one we did last year – it's like there are five or six different types of autism, but if you just sat there and learned about autism you wouldn't think .. ?? spectrum ..

Take you longer probably to sit there and learn those than to sit there and watch a video and take it in that way..

Yeah -

So some methods like the video really help in terms of making it real because you couldn't see the symptoms – the manifestations and different categories of whatever it is when somebody's talking about it. Can you think of any ways - while you've been here on the course – things that you have learned that will help you afterwards?

So you can see how you would choose that – or you might have to call on it

Yeah

…..Skills to use in the future – I think I've been able to read a book in a particular way and things like that – are really useful to me – connecting me together – that's developed that side …

What sort of cognitive abilities and skills you feel that you've developed and honed and you can kind of take that with you …

.. just with regards to reading – critical reading – not just taking for granted what's written in the book – and you sort of think I'd be able to criticise things or be able to read/appreciate different points of view that might not necessarily be congruent with your own .. sort of thing

How do you know when you've learned something really well?

I always know I've learned something really well if I can explain it to somebody who hasn't studies psychology or isn't familiar with the research – if I can say it out loud in a coherent way I know I've learnt it.

You kind of know then?

Yeah

If I can go home and tell someone that I've learned this today – one of the best ways I revise is I go home and I'll have pages and pages of notes and my mum will go – right – tell me about such and such – and if I can then tell her, if she understands it, then I know I've got it in my head

…When I'm revising for the exam – I pretend that I'm the teacher and I pretend that I'm giving a lecture about the subject that I am going to write about and if I know if I can get through without missing any of the major points, and explain it out loud to my 'bedroom' – then I know I know it and that's how I revise. Once I've gone through and learnt it I just keep practicing saying the whole essay out loud so that I know it pretty much and I'm not missing anything out. I put my toes on the bed and pretend they are the audience – pretend.. well today we are going to learn about … sounds crazy but it works for me !!

Do you do like a power point thing as well on it?
If I was doing a presentation I would do that and I would clip through the points to .. but if it's just from my revision notes it would just be me …

So saying it out loud

Yeah

Looking at notes and summarising what's there and then

I write everything out – so I've got load and loads and loads of notes – break it down into loads of little points – like on little index cards - then they are stuck literally all over the bedroom – co's then I just see it and it goes in – co's I'm constantly looking at it – I actually pick it up – read it – co's it's just there and I'm not.. then I'll go home with loads and loads of little notes and go boing!?? And If I can just keep.. ????

Anyone got any other methods that they use?

I just panic – I used to be really good in exams and these days I seem to be really rubbish at them. Just panic – like got to learn it – got to learn it – got to learn it – and I look at it again and again and it doesn't sink in. But I can't talk to anybody because everyone else is just really bored when I tell them about it – so

END OF ONE SIDE

Appendix Nine

Your tool box – They're talking about us having a tool box – a tool box of interventions social workers go around with you know – it's invisible?? – which I was thinking that's quite funny, I sort of think to myself oh that's something I can put in my tool box now ... you know, that I'm going to remember – I'm going to try and use again on other families .. or

So they kind of give you like a tangible, sort of mental

Haven't heard a tutor use tool box - that must be in the ...?? I haven't heard of any tutors …. I haven't heard it

…..talking about it and I read it in books

But I haven't heard ..But I can't say I've heard a tutor saying tool box

And I   - do ... this little tool box that I'm supposedly carrying around with me but ... practice on this placement thing .. and I think – that's a tool! I can put it in my tool box! You know!

I've heard ?? like key skills … but actually in the reading I have seen tool box or tools, you know

You know when you've been out on your placements and you're in a situation whatever that might be, are you aware that you are suddenly drawing on..

Definitely

This year more

Can you give me any examples?

Well I did a lot of work with attachment

Mine was attachment yeah

Which we studied here on the psychology unit in Year 2, haven't we? and it had in itself had a big impact on us anyway, but I was ... mental health team – clearly there were a lot of attachment issues and there's a lot of new research out which I actually found really exciting and when they first mentioned it I thought 'oooh! I know what they are talking about' and that was really exciting. And I did draw a lot of that ... one particular child was presenting ADHD off the scale but upon further investigation it became quite clear that it was an attachment issue and discussions with the team kind of validated my thoughts and led me to go off and explore that even further, so that was a

definite aspect of something I'd learned that I drew on, used and kind of then explored further upon. It was good.

I was in adoption and that was assessment based – prospective adopters and children – the children and the adopters you looked at attachment issues, because whatever their own attachment was as children the prospective adopters would be how they'd parent the child or they could have issues coming from that but I think the main thing within adoption that I would have said I'd done was a lot of counselling. Because you are actually listening to people, stories they are giving you, their life events, they are giving you details of their education, their employment, their past relationships, their present relationships and their family……

When you think of all the communication stuff we've done

Yes. It's all communication, counselling, and attachment

I think it's heightened our own skills and our awareness

Yes, definitely

And some of the stuff we've done around language and we've seen for ourselves the problems of jargon and that makes you much more aware of – you know you are going to put this different head on and think a bit more before you speak when you are in that role – I personally think very carefully about language I'm using..

Yes, definitely

…the choice of language and that's based on my learning, you know I wasn't as aware as that before. I knew people got isolated but I hadn't really specifically pinpointed in my mind that it was the use of words and the power of language and that kind of stuff so the reading I've done and the stuff I've been taught here is really, really ? like that to me and then doing practice you can really see… and having to feel ourselves when big words are thrown in to lectures and you sort of think .. shit maybe I shouldn't be here … I don't know what everyone is talking about again… but how does that make our service users feel? You know when we are coming…

It's been interesting to see how upset I've got over it haven't I?

Absolutely

Because you've got better vocabulary skills than what I have and you've seen me … 'What are they talking about? .. 'Oh I don't know what they're talking about!' 'What does that mean?' you know. ..I'm always saying to

her and what does that word mean? And what does that word mean? She explains it to me – so she's seen how it affects me and that's given her another understanding on how to deal with people. And I myself as my own personal experience find that that makes me much more aware when I'm dealing with people

It's really interesting because you – I think you are talking about empathy and I think you are saying that because you've had an experience within your own learning, that when it comes to somebody else, you are saying I'm not going to let that happen to them because I know how that feels

And there's a whole bunch of theory associated to that – because you are also using your knowledge of theory and… that alongside your empathetic.. but that's what I think this course is trying to teach us isn't it? It's this whole bunch of things and how to use this whole bunch of things at the same time

But as social workers we've got to go to these people – we are going into their lives and we are trying to empower or assist them – you know – get ?? it's their private lives and also you've got to take into account you've got to respect them – you've got to not come over as more powerful with them and you've got to have an understanding of what they are trying to tell you, so if you've had that yourself, you've been yourself in that situation

About power differentials

If you can make them feel as an equal person to you they are more willing to open up to you, more willing to give you, you know

.. some of it is based on our past experiences ourselves and, if you like, our transferable skills. I mean I think we … quite well if we acknowledge our transferable skills we are able to use the fear really and you know and what you've been taught when it finally does make sense it's just a 'Eureka' kind of moment, you know.. that you are able to use it all is just fantastic!

So how do you know though when you've learnt something really well, do you talk about being able to apply it in practice or is it assignment times in particular when you suddenly have got to put things together and you sort of .. say ooh I really get that, or I really – I mean are there particular times when you've felt like that, and if there are, what has it been about – what's helped you to get to that particular point?

I think for myself, personally, when I've been talking to other people and all of a sudden, I just subconsciously start going into stuff that I've learned which you don't automatically realise you've learned but you hold a conversation about something and you are actually holding a conversation .. you are actually able to explain and give details of whatever you are

discussing without having to think and that – it just automatically flows out and you think .. blooming hell where did I get all that from!! Where has that all been stored, you know!! So that's personally how I feel – that's how I demonstrate that I have learned

So it's in discussion with somebody else or something and suddenly all this stuff is just there

It's just there – it's in my brain and it all comes out – and obviously you think I just didn't realise…

For me I think it's about the feedback – you know – feedback on your essays and then feedback particularly in Year 2 – at the end of year 1 with that practice and then getting our placement, you get a lot of feedback then, don't you? And I started to think, well everyone thinks I've learned a lot – you know and that sort of … that's how it happened for me, I think. I had to think I need to look at the endings – I keep slating myself but other people are saying this – so maybe I'm learning more than I think I am and then you are little less harsh on yourself, don't you? And we discussed things and then we realised – then we laughed – shit where did we learn all this lot from!! It's amazing that we know it.

Tell you this funny thing for me is as well, going back obviously to words and things which I've got a real hang up about, but even when I'm listening to the news now at home – they say a word and I knows what that means but three ago I wouldn't have known what it meant. If there's a discussion going on or I'm watching a documentary or something and these words come up you know and they're like what I call posh words – and I'm like – I know what that means now!

And … ?? makes a lot more sense doesn't it

Yes definitely

… kind of … don't know what they're on about – suddenly you sit there thinking well actually I do know what they're on about – it's not flaming Greek???

When they started the course they recommended some suggested reading before we even came on the course and I went and bought – it's called, 'Understand Social Work' by Neil Thompson and I read it and I thought I aint got a clue what this blokes going on about!! And I sat there all summer – I kept going over it – oh my God what the hell is he on about, I really don't understand this!! I can pick that book up now and know what he's talking about – and that is the big difference!!

That's when you know that you know!! – yeah

And I can pick up one of these books now and I'm not like – Oh what do these words mean? What are they on about?... you know!!

And it .. you have to have the confidence anyway –
It's a complete reverse, you know – I've never wrote an essay until four years ago and it was like – oh my God – an essay I thought was like making a story like once upon a time .. I didn't realise an essay was researching something and then putting it into your own words! I thought an essay was like a story – once upon a time, you know, bla bla…

..but the Access was very valuable when teaching some of the basic skills and then the Gateway built on the … so real

It's been a really major impact and a lot of information for me to sort of take it all in and what I never got in my secondary education I'm sort of getting all sort of now, you know? So it's really, really good and sometimes I do feel quite proud of myself

I think you should as well! What about when you go into practice, you know obviously we all continue to learn hopefully, because we never stop, any of us. Are there any particular ways that you think might help you to keep..

.. on our practice learning we done professional development, we went to seminars every month and we got certificates for it! So we went to

..but I think basically the real definite mind set that we are slow learners??... and we have a hell of a lot to learn….

Where have you got that from then?

I don't know – I don't know where it comes from

Maybe because we have been learning all our lives and now we've reached the stage where we can reflect on our past life because our life – this has been very life changing for us – so you do almost reflect on this past life but realise how much you did actually learn during that period as well and then I expect you are learning from positive and adverse circumstances – and also we are both parents, so we've been actively encouraging our children to make the most out of the education system because we didn't. You know some of that kind of …. past mistakes – don't make the mistakes we did … but you suddenly find that you do buy into that – you genuinely do buy into that and I've identified how I want to go on learning after this

And also I think the lifelong learning part of it is actually starting with my Access course I learned stuff on that, obviously the essay writing – how to

read, how to take stuff from books and put it in my own words and over the time of the degree I'm also realising that every day I'm learning something different so you know it's always changing – there's always something to access, always something to learn. So it's a lifelong process, not just a three year process, so I think that's where I've probably got that perception from is – because obviously I'm doing it every day and like you can pick up a different book. I'll go to a shop and there'll be a new book out and I'll want to get that on a subject – I'm still learning – you know you're never just going to walk away as a social worker and think – well I've done my degree I'm in practice now I'm not going to look at no book now. It's going to be something that you're going to constantly going to keep updating, keep looking at different legislation, keep looking – so it's a lifelong process! So yeah that's probably where I've got that idea from..

Mmm interesting – you can look at my questions but I think you've answered them all even though I haven't asked them all – you've kind of

We do go on!

No you don't!!

There's a donkey sanctuary with a lot of donkeys with no hind legs on – talk … laughter …..

Anything you'd like to add in particular - you know – particularly just about your learning experience – about the way that you think maybe you've – you know if there have been any other ways that perhaps the lecturers have used that you wouldn't – that most people perhaps don't get in higher education? Are there any thoughts in particular that you have about

My only thoughts about my experience here is that the help and support that you need is there and there's a lot of people who kind of sit there going oh you've been given it – did you go and ask for it. There's a lot of people that would … whatever you call it that need to think that they can't be chasing you And I dunno but

Appendix Ten

Node – Theory to practice – anonymised

Document 'Psy - FOCUS GROUP Grp 2', 4 passages, 1739 characters.

Section 0, Paragraph 144, 398 characters.

For me my boyfriend had a psychotic episode recently so I hadn't actually learned things from the course about that but it really made me read loads about schizophrenia because that's what I thought he had and all that sort of thing because I've got deferred an essay to the summer anyway and so I can do the schizophrenia one now because I know loads about it so that's helped in that respect.

Section 0, Paragraph 145, 352 characters.

The only thing I can think of is I've suffered from depression before I studied psychology so once I did study it I just had a greater understanding for you can't always understand what a disorder will be like but you just have the empathy there for knowing that it can't be nice to have any kind of abnormality mental abnormality that sort of thing

Section 0, Paragraph 147, 707 characters.

I have got depression I have a panic disorder as well which affects me really badly and I am it's great fun!! It's made me understand I'm not going completely stark raving crazy there is a reason and there are things and I will get better. I think it really helps me to have coping strategies like I haven't done it here but when I did A level psychology and we did health psychology with that and we did a little bit about …?? control .. and it's made me sort of think that there are different ways of coping with situations I've been able to help my sister she's just split up with her boyfriend and stuff and I was able to really really reassure her and ..??? oh God why did we do psychology!!

Section 0, Paragraph 149, 282 characters.

When people say things sometimes you think 'oh that links in with that' … like reality tv shows sometimes since we've been here they've had those …simbardo?? … experiments on tv I actually understood what was going on! I don't think alot of people would have done that without

Document 'Psy -FOCUS GROUP - Grp 1', 2 passages, 738 characters.

Section 1.34, Paragraph 94, 306 characters.

think if you've got something in real life to relate it to that sort of thing - …?? actually got a video to see do you know what I mean unless you see that person with a learning disability .. how they react .. you know what I mean you can't get that whole understanding of it. That situation, yes.

Section 1.150, Paragraph 210, 432 characters.

My project is on practical autism   ??????? understanding of autism and how they interact with their autistic sibling…it's only a questionnaire and research ..??..one.. and one how they get on with their sibling - and just a questionnaire about what they understand which is really really interesting seeing the response we've got??? I think it's just made me realise how much there's just no support whatsoeverfor siblings at all

Document 'Psy- focus group 3', 1 passages, 373 characters.

Section 5, Paragraph 151, 373 characters.

Um I know that another thing to take away is the understanding of basic drugs that's quite useful and I've found various drugs around the house which I wouldn't have know what they were but I've started to recognise their real names and understanding how they work and what they do to your body, that has been quite educational about my family (oh yeah that's interesting)

Document 'SW-, 4 passages, 1314 characters.

Section 0, Paragraph 43, 266 characters.

That was the harder part for me especially putting theory into practice. Co's I had limited experience beforehand. Certain teachers were probably better than others especially if they had social work backgrounds themselves actually had been social workers recently.

Section 0, Paragraphs 68-69, 327 characters.

Yeah parents one side education and environment and the child on the other side sort of thing. Things like impacting the child's life I could use that one my first placement and we used that quite a lot. Psychology definitely and sociology because it impacts on the person itself. I can see quite a bit of that
In what ways

Section 0, Paragraph 74, 313 characters.

 said to my practice teacher was I did this sort of model thing with a mum who was in her 40's and I kept having things like yeah I'm telling her to do this and I'm like a few years

older than what her daughter was age is a big thing for me thinking ok they probably looking at me and think you are just a kid

Section 0, Paragraph 103, 408 characters.

No they are all trying to think of a question We've got to look at a case study we have to define one ourselves and like analyse it ourselves and everything can't think of any now sort of look at a certain theory and analyse it sort of thing then we get to choose which theory we want to do put our own experiences in to see how we've used it or things like that that's how most of it's usually done.

Document 'SW- 1', 5 passages, 1156 characters.

Section 0, Paragraph 47, 462 characters.

eah even like with law that we've studied the lecturer there she was able to make it quite practical and she gave us the situation the scenario a load of things that had happened, and then we had to try and figure out which pieces of law we'd use, what the pattern would be, what was relevant and rather than just telling us, you know, about the pieces of law we actually had to try and think of it in a real life situation which we did   and which was good

Section 0, Paragraph 67, 345 characters.

Our practice teacher talked to me about solution focus therapy and also has a task centred approach which I've used quite a lot with people you are just sort of aware that you know, somebody can come to you with loads and loads of problems and you're completely overwhelmed with it but having that theory in the back of your head can be helpful

Section 0, Paragraphs 91-93, 112 characters.

Ok but can you see how you are going to use what you have learned over the past three years?

Yeah (all three)

Section 0, Paragraph 209, 43 characters.

We had to link assignments to our practice

Section 0, Paragraphs 233-235, 194 characters.

or even like .. management or even working with adults ?? - it all does fit around that .. has to be very..

when you look at the service users feedback - they are all related to that kind of …

Document 'SW-, 1 passages, 443 characters.

Section 0, Paragraph 15, 443 characters.

Yeah obviously with your theories putting your theories into practice and they used to bang on in the first couple of years about theories to practice and you didn't really get the gist of it I think third year really jumped in and you could see where your theories were in doing your practice and what theories you were pulling on you weren't ever going on one sort of like the behavioural method and things like that you were drawing on

Document 'SW- 1', 2 passages, 675 characters.

Section 0, Paragraph 234, 225 characters.

Well that was like …. Role plan a lot wasn't it? Like one has to be the client and one has to be the social worker and you think about what you said to the client and why you said it based on what theory and that's how we got

Section 0, Paragraph 240, 450 characters.

But that got you thinking about … your theory and legislation in ?? … co's you're kind of taught it as a separate entity and then suddenly they say right now the two converge together and you think… you know you feel that kind of panic so they have kind of little workshops where you kind of tried to do that in a role play type of thing which gave sort of hints ready for that next bit, but I think actually doing it made that all the more clear.

Appendix Eleven

Student focus group findings and themes

Process of analysis

All transcripts were input to Nvivo and a process of analysis began. (Roz remember to compare themes of tutors against themes of students).

As themes began to appear relevant text was transferred to nodes. Initially 20 themes were generated and then printed off for further examination. Some themes appeared quite quickly to be specific to social work students and others to psychology students, for example student background and intentions after leaving university. Other themes such as experience of teaching presented interesting contrasts in experience. Themes such as type of learner; learner motivation and strategic or instrumental approaches to learning seemed more confused and sub categories were developed that seemed to better represent student comments. Interestingly themes such as student placements and learning is difficult were surprisingly merged as students expressing dissatisfaction. The theme of meta- cognition was merged with study skills as the researcher recognized that the different student groups had simply identified that they had acquired different skills. In this way the data began to 'speak' and patterns emerged in a very grounded way.

Each focus group or interview began with a little game to help the transcriber identify voices and to promote a more relaxed atmosphere.

Subsequently each participant was asked to say a little bit about their background and how they ended up at university studying their particular course.

The focus groups and interviews were coded in the order they were undertaken. So for psychology 3 focus groups were conducted: psy fg 1,2 and 3 and for social work 2 interviews and 2 focus groups were conducted sw int 1 and 2 and sw fg 1 and 2. Quotes from the transcripts are referenced accordingly. The transcriber often had difficulty identifying individual students and so it is not always possible to attribute quotes to individuals. In the spirit of representing group contributions the researcher has systematically attempted not to use multiple quotes from individuals where this has occurred this is made apparent in the reference at the end of the quote.

Student backgrounds and previous experience.

The psychology students offered a mixture of prior experience, from gap years to traveling to work experience.

I've kind of had gap years within my years. I've been off to Australia and worked for a children's company I just do things like taking opportunities (psy fg 2)

I'm 23 and from school I went to IBM and worked there for four years. Bit boring that's why I studied continually (psy fg 1)

Others had come as mature students via access courses

I been working .. went to college and .. that and carried on working and then I decided more to life and went to college to do an access course (psy fg 2)

I'm a bit different then because I'm 30 now ... I've got two children ... left 6th form pregnant with my eldest child and then I had a few years just with him and then my second child. Then I decided it was time to do something with life and so went back to college, did an access course (psy fg 1)

Nearly all of the others had studied psychology previously which had prompted their choice at university although they all voiced their experience of studying the subject as contrary to their expectations.

Went to 6th Form there and stayed on with all my mates there um did Psychology at A level which I really enjoyed and that's why I came on to do it here because it was the only one that I enjoyed and thought it would be interesting enough to study over three years (you were wrong, laughing) yeah I was very wrong yeah.(psy fg 1)

Um yeah I came straight from college as well to Uni. Id done Psychology at A level as well. Again it was the only subject I enjoyed as I didn't really like college very much but I have to say I thought this degree wasn't anything like what we had done at A level (yes) I found the A level more interesting (much more interesting) yeah that's why it kind of shattered my illusions of Psychology when we started here but I guess its just the difference in level really.(psy fg 1)

The social work students had either undertaken relevant work experience prior to starting the course or they considered themselves as having acquired life experience as mature students to equip them for this particular profession and working with service users.

I did a previous degree before coming here, in psychology, and I did a lot of support work before starting this course support work and ... with children I mean(sw fg 1)

did my A-levels and then went to Brazil for my gap year and then I worked with teenagers with behavioural problems, and then I worked with adults with Huntingdons Disease and care work generally.(sw fg 1)

I mean I've worked with children I've worked with adults I've worked nursing I did nursing as well, not as a qualified nurse but as a support worker.(sw int 2)

but we both experienced quite disadvantaged backgrounds I would say, which has made us bloody determined and motivated as adults to absolutely maximise the opportunities you know, reflecting on your life .. you realise that had you taken that path before things might have been very very different.(sw fg 2)

I never done no exams, no education at all. I didn't attend school, so, for the last sort of two years, so I'm basically doing a degree with no exam behind me. (sw fg 2)

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Student perceptions of their experience of teaching at university

A question that raised a very mixed response was about the students experience of teaching at university.
Many felt they had experienced poor teaching and cited numerous examples

I think the best method is just the method that's organised. Some or one lecturers in particular is very scatty and I can't follow ..
And we haven't got lecture notes so we have to write everything down and it's you don't take anything in(psy fg 2)

Oh God!!It was the pits cos cognitive is prob the hardest I'd say. Obviously he knew it and he just didn't grasp the fact that we didn't know it!! Very confusing at times (psy fg 2)

then there's another lecturer who I completely just doesn't explain it properly he will just its like he is reading from a text book or something, no humour just really dull and boring and you just don't, I don't learn anything like after I walk out let alone two weeks later (psy fg 3)

……… does it you can imagine him sitting down and doing his lecture plan literally from a text book. Just sort of its all theory theory theory (there's no examples)(psy fg 3)

there's relatively few lecturers who actually bother to teach and explain give and you know not spoon feed you but point out why they are doing something (mmhhmm) and not just give you a list of references to go away and find yourself which you could do anyway you don't need to turn up to pick up a list of references and I just think that there are a lot of teachers that don't know how to teach and have teaching jobs and lecturers aren't taught how to teach as well.(pys fg 3)

The social work course was not immune to criticism either

Or one teacher I've got this year who actually reads it word for word - what's on her hand out which isn't very helpful co's we can just sort of read the handout and not go to class(sw int 1)

I felt it was showing off (referring to a particular lecturer) I've got a big vocabulary.. I don't need people who use them words now if it's teaching and learning, say teaching and learning, don't use pedagogic or whatever it's called, co's I don't know that word and I'm sure none of the others did (sw fg 2)

Other aspects identified by students as constituting an important part of the teaching was the support received from lecturers – this experience is also variable but the social work students seemed to really appreciate the support they were offered. First of all, the psychology students:

Cos at uni you've got to ask for their help because you are not going to … sometimes it gives you the incentive to do it but at other times when you really don't understand something and they say oh not going to help you (psy fg 2)
and she'd like if anybody admitted to not having read the seminar paper she'd be like - out you go - and it scared them so much(psy fg 2)

Conversely the social work students said

The tutors have always made it perfectly clear since the day I walked in here they are accessible, their rooms are up there, their email addresses you can contact them any time and you will be given advice or whatever you need to discuss will be discussed with you and I can personally say from my own you know, self, I have used that and they have been very helpful. So it's not as if they are lecturers and we're not acceptable - they are very accessible (sw fg 2)

The psychology students never seemed to mention any particular teaching methods or approaches apart from standard lectures and seminars, although they did mention the sense of humour and approachability of one lecturer.

The social work students however cited all sorts: role plays, board blasts; scenarios; case studies, situation analysis

Board blasts were brilliant. Put up an idea up there like the contract of law and you'd have to think what does that mean to you. It was great because it stimulated enthusiasm within the groups (sw int 2)

Totally we did the tape recordings feedback was positive and also where you could do better we went away we'd done three tapes so you that side of things was fantastic. And obviously getting your confidence going on the tape (sw int 2)

Thinking um and the way she'd say, you know this is your scenario, what would you do ...staging an atmosphere.. really helped (sw fg 1)

So getting you to actually think what would you do in this situation(interviewer)

they give you a sheet with like this man who is 31 years old has learning disability wants to get a job and it gives a bit of a scenario about his life and you have to answer certain questions. Like what could you do to help him? What law would fit in with it? Things like that just makes you think about this.(sw int 1)

there's nothing else for it she was inventive she gave us scenarios to work through. She gave us examples of things that she'd dealt with so there were all sorts of things that she was introducing all the time pieces of paper extra pieces of paper that we could read through or articles that she'd seen or whatever. (sw int 2)

Theory to practice? Practice to theory? Student or Teacher experience?

For the psychology students they often expressed frustration when talking about their learning experiences as not having the opportunity to apply their learning and therefore finding it quite boring and dry.

yes cognition rather than just like .. memory .. applied so dry(Psy fg 2)

the essay writing is really … aren't very applied to the real world (psy fg 2)

Such vague essay questions that you've got to try and apply(psy fg 2)

It's not how you actually use psychology it's like.. knowledge.. where if you could actually like do something that actually uses psychology it would be slightly more useful I think. Psychology is such a theory based course(psy fg2)

and again it's all from my perspective again going from the learning I learned from a hands on point of view there's no hands on it's all lecture based there's no attraction(psy fg 1)

regurgitation whereas if you are encouraging pupils to think more about applying things to the real world you are encouraging them to think for themselves rather than come out of Uni just being able to dictate this theory that theory and this and that but not really about how it works in the wider context.(psy fg 2)

as opposed to sit here and say well this is what's supposed to happen this is what they do you know or to watch somebody be assessed for something you know what I mean actually see how it works not like learning it from a book or a lecture(psy fg 1)

think if you've got something in real life to relate it to that sort of thing –say we got a video to see do you know what I mean unless you see that person with a learning disability .. how they react .. you know what I mean you can't get that whole understanding of it. That situation, yes.(psy fg 1)

What the psychology students tried to do with the subject matter being taught was to relate it to their own personal experience in some way:

The only thing I can think of is I've suffered from depression before I studied psychology so once I did study it I just had a greater understanding for you can't always understand what a disorder will be like but you just have the empathy there for knowing that it can't be nice to have any kind of abnormality(psy fg 2)

I have got depression I have a panic disorder as well which affects me really badly and I am it's great fun!! It's made me understand I'm not going completely stark raving crazy there is a reason and there are things and I will get better.(psy fg 2)

Um I know that another thing to take away is the understanding of basic drugs that's quite useful and I've found various drugs around the house which I wouldn't have known what they were but I've started to recognise their real names and understanding how they work and what they do to your body, that has been quite educational about my family(psy fg 3)

For me my boyfriend had a psychotic episode recently so I hadn't actually learned things from the course about that but it really made me read loads about schizophrenia because that's what I thought he had (psy fg 2)

Whereas the social work students did discuss applying the theory to practice and the practice to the theory.

Theory to practice

I was part of a mental health team on placement and clearly there were a lot of attachment issues and there's a lot of new research out which I actually found really exciting and when they first mentioned it I thought 'oooh! I know what they are talking about' and that was really exciting. And I did draw a lot of that ... one particular child was presenting ADHD off the scale but upon further investigation it became quite clear that it was an attachment issue and discussions with the team kind of validated my thoughts(sw fg 2)

Our practice teacher talked to me about solution focus therapy and also has a task centred approach which I've used quite a lot with people you are just sort of aware that you know, somebody can come to you with loads and loads of problems and you're completely overwhelmed with it but having that theory in the back of your head can be helpful (sw fg 1)

We had to link assignments to our practice(sw fg 1)

Practice to theory

Yeah obviously with your theories putting your theories into practice and they used to bang on in the first couple of years about theories to practice and you didn't really get the gist of it I think third year really jumped in and you could see where your theories were in doing your practice and what theories you were pulling on (sw int 2)

the lecturer there she was able to make it quite practical and she gave us the situation the scenario a load of things that had happened, and then we had to try and figure out which pieces of law we'd use, what the pattern would be, what was relevant and rather than just telling us, you know, about the pieces of law we actually had to try and think of it in a real life situation which we did and which was good (sw fg 1)

Can the lecturers link theory to practice?

Allied quite closely to linking theory to practice is the lecturers' ability and previous professional experience in enabling students to see the relevance of subject matter. For the psychology students they cited only one lecturer who brought things to life for them:

because she'd worked in the forensic field she really knew what she said about it .. She could actually go I've done this with prisoners ...

 Did case studies makes such a difference whether you know that what she is talking about is actually with people and they'd done all this crazy scary stuff And she can relate all her own experiences into the lessons that are organised working in the prison and she can give you real life examples of what it is that she's talking about sort of thing (psy fg 2)

The social work students quickly offered examples from practice:

see how it does work especially Linda she worked with domestic abuse families you can definitely see how that would fit in because it's quite a specific area. And I know I don't have any experience with a lot of domestic violence so I've seen her point of view (sw int 1)

actually I remember sitting in one of the sessions with …. who teaches law and somebody actually said to her actually you know last week we did section 136 of the mental health act, or something, she said they were on practice placement the next day must have been level 2 and she said and I used it, you know …?? It's like wow that was fairly good then!!(sw fg 1)

They used to give examples I think ….. she actually works for CAFCAS so loads of examples of her cases (sw int 1)

Acquisition and identification of skills during the course of study

The psychology students discussed the many different skills they felt they had learnt and how they could adapt them.

Research .. especially like with .. project you've got like research things in serious details really learn where to look for information (psy fg 2)

you have absolutely no appreciation of what it takes to do psychological research or anything like that and the practical skills that you gain in terms of conducting research I think are very valuable (psy fg 2)

it's like my boyfriend does market research he's a marketing manager and he comes home say if I did a piece of research like this, what would happen? And then I know I

can then think yeah if you ask those kind of questions you're going to get this kind of effect ...(psy fg 2)

So the ability to understand and undertake research was something the psychology students definitely identified. They also referred to critical evaluation and synthesizing information.

I think they focus a lot on how to critically evaluate things and I think um in a lot of jobs you need to be able to do that not exactly like that but it does call for stuff like that and um just to be analytical and things like that.(psy fg 1)

Skills to use in the future I think I've been able to read a book in a particular way and things like that are really useful to me connecting me together that's developed that side (psy fg 2)

just with regards to reading critical reading not just taking for granted what's written in the book and you sort of think I'd be able to criticise things or be able to read/appreciate different points of view that might not necessarily be congruent with your own .. sort of thing (psy fg2)

Both groups of students described the way they approach a problem differently than before and trying to see things from different perspectives. Although the social work student shows she is transferring this ability to other contexts like social situations.

Again it's like seeing both sides different views - not just mine I've got quite strong views and you've got to look at the other views and then decide whether or not you agree with it not just one view in psychology you're looking all around it as opposed to just one view(psy fg 2)

There's lots of people out there who think they could do it but it's how you're thinking or reacting in a situation all the time you're always thinking. You know you can go to a party you're still thinking you know what does that mean that man's just said that why?(sw int 2)

you are actually able to explain and give details of whatever you are discussing without having to think and that it just automatically flows out and you think .. blooming hell where did I get all that from!! Where has that all been stored, you know!! So that's personally how I feel that's how I demonstrate that I have learned (sw fg2)

The social work students talked a lot about increasing personal confidence and communication skills and really delved into how proud they were of their development.

'Understand Social Work' by Neil Thompson and I read it and I thought I aint got a clue what this blokes going on about!! And I sat there all summer I kept going over it oh my

God what the hell is he on about, I really don't understand this!! I can pick that book up now and know what he's talking about and that is the big difference!!(sw fg 2)

Confidence I think your confidence grows terribly I mean I suppose I've always been quite a confident person but I suppose it's how to channel that confidence and how perhaps in a meeting I might approach an issue (sw int 2)

some of it is based on our past experiences ourselves and, if you like, our transferable skills. I mean I think if we acknowledge our transferable skills we are able to use the fear really and you know and what you've been taught when it finally comes to it, it does make sense (sw fg2)

I think the communication probably because I felt the first essay I ever did I failed on that one so that one I will take with me to the grave definitely but it's most important and I would say the listening skills and the actual communicating skill is the most important one that you could do really and it's in the counseling (sw int 2)

When you think of all the communication stuff we've done
Yes. It's all communication, counseling, and attachment

I think it's heightened our own skills and our awareness (sw fg2)

They also kept referring to their invisible tool box of interventions!

Your tool box they talk about us having a tool box
They're talking about us having a tool box a tool box of interventions social workers go around with you know it's invisible?? which I was thinking that's quite funny, I sort of think to myself oh that's something I can put in my tool box now … you know, that I'm going to remember I'm going to try and use again on other families
this little tool box that I'm supposedly carrying around with me but … practice on this placement thing .. and I think that's a tool! I can put it in my tool box! You know!(sw fg 2)

Things that were difficult!

Both sets of students admitted to struggling with very specific aspects of the course, for the psychology students it was the maths or stats as they called it. For the social work students some had really struggled on their work placements for different reasons. Yet both groups also acknowledged the utility and transferability of what they had learned but only in hindsight.

A psychology student said

I mean if someone said to me how much of it was going to be statistics (yeah oh) and stuff like that id have been like its not psychology its statistics (I hate it) I know I do and if

someone had said that to me I possibly wouldn't have done the course. I probably didn't know what I was letting myself in for you know?(psy fg 3)

But another responded:

The stats are important I think because when I realised that when I went to a job fair that um the government would take me on as a statistician because I had done psychology, that I realised how much we do know above the general population. (Absolutely) Now I don't think anyone tells us that enough for us to appreciate how much we have learnt here (psy fg3)

The social work students either didn't feel ready for their placements

But I knew for a fact I wasn't ready for my first placement and it was I think it started in April for 50 days (sw int 1)

I had the 8 weeks was meant to be sort of training it took someone 8 weeks to train to be what they were and then by the time I did that it was sort of .. over .. and I'd just settled in!! But yeah it was a lot harder not having a lot of background experience as well (sw int 1)

Or felt they hadn't been placed appropriately

getting them to do it themselves basically what you need is a lot of experience personal and sort of more professional experience with them than what I'd had I was only 22 .. so I was still quite young

I wouldn't have chosen either one of my placements really but .. and I don't feel that I got as much from them as I could have (sw fg1)

Either way their conclusions were positive in the end!

don't really regret my placements even though I didn't choose them ..there wasn't much choice but I'm quite glad I've done it now - got a lot of experience (sw fg 1)

I think for me it's I definitely learn by doing hands on, but I would have chosen a different placement. So I think, yes definitely helpful (sw fg 1)

but I got my second placement which was with adults and it made me sort of think ooh I quite like this! oh that's quite interesting and thinking maybe well I'd like to work in that area or maybe I'd like to do something with that type of service user (sw int 1).

How did the students approach learning?

The students presented with lots of examples regarding how they approached learning. At first it appeared that there was a vast range but actually relational linkages are apparent

that point to a dichotomy but not exclusivity of experience. Instrumental approaches could be associated with surface learning, memory techniques and boredom whereas strategic approaches could be associated with deep learning, independent study, personal interest and motivation.

The Memorisers - these psychology students referred to learning as repetition.
I write everything out so I've got load and loads of notes break it down into loads of little points like on little index cards - then they are stuck literally all over the bedroom co's then I just see it and it goes in (psy fg 2)

I think I'm more just kind of reading it reading it keep reading! And then just try and memorise it. I didn't use diagrams or anything (psy fg 1)

and then I'd learn each point until I've learned that off by heart then I'll go on to the next one then I'll repeat the first and second one then I'll do first (psy fg1)

The instrumentualists – were found only in the psychology subject students

Some people purely do just turn up to get attendance co's it's attendance based ... you know lectures you can miss any lecture you want, but with seminars, that's where they take your attendance (psy fg2)

I think also now we know what they are like, we can predict what sort of answers they want as well. Sometimes I feel I'm not writing an essay on what I'm interested in and what I think I'm writing what they think to try to get a better mark (psy fg 2)

Approaches to learning is all about student perception - these psychology students also highlight how their approach to learning is all about being interested. If the learning was perceived as boring then they took a surface approach but if it was perceived as interesting then they took a deep approach – this suggests that that there are not types of learners but that different approaches to learning are adopted dependant on other variables?

If something interests me and I can work on it for ages and really enjoy it (yeah) because if I find something boring then I just regurgitate stuff from books and think oh that will do and just hand it in like that (psy fg3)

Yeah it's more a sort of approach as well if its if it doesn't really interest me you know you just sort of take it on one level you just sort of approach it and think right well I've got to get 30% in stats I've got to get it done. But if you sort of if you are interested or you enjoy it a bit more you sort of do that but then you sort of think you know about it more and you look at it from different angles I think so you sort of take different sides into consideration and it just sort of, you approach it more as a whole thing rather than

just you know like an obstacle to overcome. You sort of take it on a bit more um you give it more time (psy fg1)

And you do more reading around it because you find the subject interesting anyway rather that just doing the bare minimum to get you through it (just to get it done) if its something that interests you then you will read more (yeah) (mmm) because you find it interesting to read not that you have to (psy fg1)

because I really cant be bothered and yeah if I'm really just not bothered I will regurgitate what I've read but I find that if you know took a personal interest or it catches something that I find you know I think is quite interesting and haven't really thought about before then um yeah I sort of put a bit more effort into it (psy fg 2)

The social work students didn't describe their approaches to learning in the same way as the psychology students but they did discuss how they had to choose the focus of assignments and select relevant theories, concepts or information which may imply that structure of assignments set can promote deep approaches to learning?

I think they did something similar but we got to choose our own policy look at one side of policy and apply it to our own experiences how have we used this and look at the whole background and theory side of it and all but when we handed it in just after Christmas we had to look at one of our placements or work placement the policies behind that work place and the theories behind that work place as well so that's probably one like that.(sw,int1)

No they are all trying to think of a question We've got to look at a case study we have to define one ourselves and like analyse it ourselves and everything can't think of any now sort of look at a certain theory and analyse it sort of thing then we get to choose which theory we want to do put our own experiences in to see how we've used it or things like that that's how most of it's usually done (sw int 1)

Necessity is the mother of independent learning! -the following 2 students from the two different courses illustrate independent learning approaches due to their interest in the subject not being covered by their course.

especially now co's I'm going from wanting to work with children to wanting to work with adults with disability or mental health and we don't really cover that a lot on my course. I'm going to actually I've bought a few books and I've got a few books that have been recommended to me as well so I'll go out and look at them read about any legislation I can find and that's how I'll learn afterwards sort of use what I've learned here and apply …(sw int 1)

I'll spend all day thinking and not actually doing anything um so I kind of study philosophy on my own and get my own books and stuff but I don't look at psychology anymore because everything I've looked at they have either destroyed here like make it so boring (psy fg 3)

Last minute.comers -these approaches were also found across both courses

I just couldn't really be bothered and I think that's why my grades I think I did best in the first and then went down and thought not more of this!! It's not just keeping your interest.. so I leave it until the latest possible moment which is what we are here for isn't it?(psy fg 2)

normally I'm there the day before got all my books already a few weeks before hand and just sit down and write it the night before it's due in (sw int 1)

I think I sort of a lot of what you said sounds like how I am as well I. I leave a lot of work until the last minute. I feel like I work better last minute as well under pressure (mm) (psy fg 2)

Equally the **Conscientious planners** – were also found in both courses

I cant leave things to the last minute because I get panicky so I'm always setting myself um targets for each day so ill say 500 words today, 500 words tomorrow all the way up until I've got it done and then I start on the next thing and that's how I do it (psy fg 2)

I have to be quite well prepared I cant leave things until the last day and stuff like that so and you get a bit panicky when you know work has got to be in and stuff (psy fg 2)

It's life changing. I must admit, we are very motivated, very conscientious students not blowing our own trumpets (sw fg 2)

To know that you know that you know

Students were asked how do you know when you have learnt something really well. This was often met with puzzlement and thought before responding, but in general they said if they could articulate it in their own words then they knew that they knew!

I always know I've learned something really well if I can explain it to somebody who hasn't studied psychology or isn't familiar with the research if I can say it out loud in a coherent way I know I've learnt it (psy fg 2)

I'll have pages and pages of notes and my mum will go right tell me about such and such and if I can then tell her, if she understands it, then I know I've got it in my head (psy fg 2)

I spend hours on the phone to my boyfriend just telling him what I've been learning and if he doesn't understand it then I've just got to do it again and he's just listening (psy fg 1)

I put my teddies on the bed and pretend they are the audience pretend.. well today we are going to learn about … sounds crazy but it works for me!!(psy fg 2)

I think when you can teach something to someone else and have them understand then you know that you've got it. (yeah) (Mmm) If you can turn it in a number of different ways to suit someone else then you know that you haven't just regurgitated it but you have processed it and actually put your own thoughts into it (psy fg 3)

when I've been talking to other people and all of a sudden, I just subconsciously start going into stuff that I've learned which you don't automatically realise you've learned but you hold a conversation about something and you are actually holding a conversation .. you are actually able to explain and give details of whatever you are discussing without having to think and that it just automatically flows out and you think .. blooming hell where did I get all that from!! Where has that all been stored, you know!! So that's personally how I feel that's how I demonstrate that I have learned (sw fg 2)

Backward reaching transfer - Others mentioned being able to relate it to a later experience

I could relate and I knew I'd learnt it because I could relate some of the stuff that I remembered from the past to what the children were doing so it was kind of nice to be able to think that makes me know that I did learn it because if I could relate it to something actually practical (sw fg 1)

but then in the summer I started noticing ways the people thought and things like that and I started to think oh you can actually relate it back to the lectures (psy fg 2)

Those **light bulb moments** – The social work students also referred to how they felt when they became aware of learning something.

Then all of a sudden you know
It's such a complex...
Ah the epiphany moment .. oooh (sw fg2)

and you know and what you've been taught when it finally does make sense it's just a 'Eureka' kind of moment, you know.. that you are able to use it all is just fantastic!(sw fg 1)

if there's a discussion going on or I'm watching a documentary or something and these words come up you know and they're like what I call posh words and I'm like WOW I know what that means now!(sw fg 2)

Only the social work students – talked about certain aspects of learning, such as: the emotions involved in the process; how they had supported each other and how the course had challenged their personal values.

Is learning – feeling?
You start looking in yourself (sw fg 2)

and you sort of think .. shit maybe I shouldn't be here … I don't know what everyone is talking about again It's been interesting to see how upset I've got over it haven't I ? (sw fg 2)

So it's really, really good and sometimes I do feel quite proud of myself? (sw fg 1)

I want to run away, I just wanted to go and lock myself in the ladies toilet to be honest phone me husband and say come and get me by the back door because I'm not stepping out I'm not facing none of these people, I'm not doing none of this again (sw int 2)

Waiting them three weeks to get that result and when I get it I'm like shaking and physically sick looking for that mark (sw fg 2)

Looking after each other - *Actually yes the other students especially this year co's there's a lot less of us. But definitely if we don't understand anything we talk to each other as well and then someone's bound to explain it and I'll sit down and explain it and someone else will come and sit down and explain it as well they help you and keep you going. If you feel like giving up and they'll say no don't give up keep going!(sw int 1)*

and really received massive, massive support I mean people who say.. 'We'll do whatever we can to help you let us know how we can help you'(sw fg 1)

And we've both sort of learned that…? I know how to sort of say, if she's panicking, '..No - well actually you've done this before …' And even in our personal lives I know I've had times when I've been really upset and … helped me and she's had troubles and I've been able to talk to her (sw fg 2)

And Valuing others - *We learned a lot about treating people with respect and sort of using your own values looking at your own values and thinking ok that one doesn't fit in this situation - look at what he would do and try not to put my values on to them so not tell them like oh you must do this just because I do it that way. That's one thing we did learn was how to look at our own selves and how we would do things and not put it onto other people (sw int 1)*

we are going into their lives and we are trying to empower or assist them you've got to take into account you've got to respect them you've got to not come over as more powerful with them and you've got to have an understanding of what they are trying to tell you, so if you've had that yourself, you've been yourself in that situation
If you can make them feel as an equal person to you they are more willing to open up to you, more willing to give you, you know (sw fg 2)

Life after University???? – none of the social work students specifically mentioned any aspirations after their course apart from getting a job as a social worker but the

psychology students nearly all talked about further study and/or travel on the condition that they had a break from studying before the next course.

Yeah if I do one I'll do it in forensic psychology I'm taking a year out next year co's (psy fg 2)

I'm taking a year out first of all to adjust my mind .. and then I'm going to try and get some work that's going to give me some experience in psychology .. and then I'm interested in doing a masters under …?? in counselling psychology which is another 4 years (psy fg 1)

in London which I/I've applied for any vacancies but I would like to go on and do masters -?? 2 years but at the moment I can't face doing any more (psy fg 1)

I was going to go on to do a masters but I think I've changed my mind probably going to go and see a bit of the world and get a job probably not related to anything I'm doing at the moment because I don't want to settle in a specific place at the moment (psy fg 1)

Not a lot with next year, a year off with my kids, school is starting for the eldest one so (psy fg 3)

Um er sort of take a bit of time out I think um just get some work to get some money up for um I'm planning to go travelling next year for at least a year um just you take a bit of time out really. I feel like although its not you an immense pressure I've been in some form of education since I've been 4 or 5 or whatever age it was so yeah just sort of take a step back from it all really and see. Maybe then do a masters (psy fg 3).

Summary of focus group findings

Both sets of students had very mixed previous experiences and backgrounds but the social work students all had previous relevant work experience prior to undertaking their course. In terms of the student experience of teaching both groups reported some negative experiences. The social work students praised the support offered by academic staff and also commented on the range and innovative teaching methods. The psychology students expressed their frustration at the lack of application to learning in their course. Examples drawn from lecturers practice to the teaching were cited by both the psychology and social work students. The groups both felt they had acquired skills from their courses but for the psychology students the emphasis was on research and critical evaluation type skills whereas for the social work students the emphasis was on building confidence and communication skills. Both groups gave examples of situation analysis and meta cognitive abilities they felt they had gained during their courses. Both groups struggled with specific aspects of their courses but both reflected that these areas would be very helpful to them in the future. When talking about their approaches to learning the

psychology students described themselves as: memorisers; instrumentalists and clearly demonstrated that learning is not a function of individual approaches or styles. Both courses also had individuals who identified themselves as independent learners; last minuters and conscientious planners. When the students were asked how they knew when they had learnt something it seemed the key was being able to interpret, translate and communicate ideas and sometimes incorporate relating the learning to previous experience and having the odd 'Eureka' moment. The social work students exclusively discussed: learning as feeling or emotion; learning as mutual student support and learning as respect and valuing others. The psychology students exclusively discussed their future aspirations in more detail usually referring to future post-graduate study.

Appendix Twelve

Learning as content focus on curriculum getting it across

Skills - reading,studying, analysing

Lect background - ed system to teaching

Diverse student pop

Diff to help students learn, not resp lects, teach as taught- start

To know is to articulate in own way

No theory to practice apart from own personal links-experience

Drawing from examples

Ex of teaching quite critical - boring not meeting expectations

Teaching methods seminars lectures

Penny dropping -light bulb

Approaches to learning - if interested deep approach adopted

Approaches to learning - memorisers and instrumentalists

Psychology Student – Blue
Psychology lecturers - Red

Difficult maths-stats but good retrospectively

Approaches to learning - last minuters and conscientious

Appendix Twelve

Learning as process -emotional support for students

SW expectations attitudes and behaviours

SW skills - comms and confidence

SW skills - analysis and tool kit-box

Prev rel work ex - extensive and senior

Learning as value and respect for others

Explicit explanations

learning as emotion

Using prof ex in teaching

Learning as supporting each other

Diverse student pop but rel ex

Learning transfer and tool kit

Facilitating learning planning here to there - lots of innovative ti

V Good student support

To know is to articulate in own way

drawing from examples esp practice

Backward and forward transfer egs

Complimentary re teaching

Lots of theory to practice - lecturer and student

Cited variety of teaching methods

Penny dropping - light bulb

**Social Work Students – Orange
Social Work Lecturers - Purple**

Difficult - placements but good in retrospect

Approaches to learning Last minuters-conscientious

Appendix Twelve

Learning as process -emotional support for students

Hugging

Bridging

SW expectations attitudes and behaviours

SW skills - comms and confidence

SW skills - analysis and tool kit-box

...e of sustained student engagement

Prev rel work ex - extensive and senior

Learning as value and respect for others

Explicit explanations

Drawing inferences focus on prof practice

learning as emotion

Using prof ex in teaching

Diverse student pop but rel ex

Learning as supporting each other

Learning transfer and tool kit

Facilitating learning planning here to there - lots of innovative ti

Many egs same situation

Generalise to other contextxs

V Good student support

To know is to articulate in own way

Encourage meta cog

drawing from examples esp practice

Backward and forward transfer egs

Encourage...

Complimentary re teaching

Lots of theory to practice - lecturer and student

Cited variety of teaching methods

...egrate egs - focus on prof practice

Same stimuli as work setting

Penny dropping - light bulb

Self efficacy

Instruct when Not applicable

Difficult - placements but good in retrospect

Approaches to learning Last minuters-conscientious

Social Work Students – Orange
Social Work Lecturers – Purple
Participant Observation - Yellow

Appendix Twelve

SW skills - comms and confidence

...s - reading,studying, analysing

SW skills - analysis and tool kit-box

Learning as value and respect for others

learning as emotion

Diverse student pop

Diverse student pop but rel ex

Learning as supporting each other

V Good student support

To know is to articulate in own way

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No theory to practice apart from own personal links-experience

Ex of teaching quite critical - boring not meeting expectations

Complimentary re teaching

Lots of theory to practice - lecturer and student

Teaching methods seminars lectures

Cited variety of teaching methods

Approaches to learning - if interested deep approach adopted

Approaches to learning - memorisers and instrumentalists

Difficult maths-stats but good retrospectively

Difficult - placements but good in retrospect

Approaches to learning - last minuters and conscientious

Approaches to learning Last minuters-conscientious

Psychology Students – Blue
Social Work Students - Orange

Appendix Thirteen

Framework 2 derived from the review of the literature
{Jones, 1996 219 /id} emphasise that the researcher needs to be clear about what they are observing: that the chosen index measures relate to the actual investigation and that the concepts can be operationalised in different ways to achieve 'multiple operationism' (25). Drawing on the findings and theories from empirical investigations into teaching for transfer the following criteria were developed as a framework for observation of examples in teaching practice of:

Criteria 1 - Hugging (before and now)
Most of the lecturers made use of referring to previous ground they felt they had covered, often, quite recently in the last lecture or previous week. The social work lecturers seem to be able to refer to specifics, in two cases they also referred to an issue covered by the media and in one case the student said that she had actually used what she learnt the previous week about section 136 of the Mental Health Act with a service user on placement during a recent shift.

Psychology lecturers	Social work lecturers
I did mention kindling in the lecture (P1)	remember in the first year an exercise we did. Let me re-cap very briefly – 10 statements (S2)
building on last weeks experiments (P2)	'We were talking this morning about old people and crisis' … Today NICE announced cost of certain types of medication (S4)
Linked to previous lecture – I will set context – we will explore later – (P3)	"This did have a mention in the lecture" kissing/kiss chase" Does this make sense compared to the lecture? (S5)
Linked to example referred this morning re ADHD (P5)	We've been talking about this already e.g. SW under going change, child law – encouraging agencies to share info And I've already said because of data protection act - ... Student said they got called out on an emergency re section 136 and they knew what it was because of lecture last week about Mental Health Act (S3)
'Remember before Easter' ANOVA within design and last week we highlighted differences 'remember homogeneity of variance tests' remember from the lecture (P7)	'In the past several weeks' I've talked about 'drift' we've talked about initial and care assessments 'Remember the Children Act – where possible make decision in partnership with parents

	Do you remember 5 cases of disproved cot death in the press this year (S6)

Criteria 2 - Bridging (identifying underlying principles & generalize)

All of the lecturers demonstrated in their practice, examples of bridging, that is, referring to context and/or the underlying principles or concepts. There was evidence in all the teaching sessions that the lecturers were trying very hard to 'relate' or connect the learning to a broader picture. The social work lecturers often tried to use the previous experience of students or pointed to expectations of them in future practice using very specific examples. The psychology lecturers also tried to 'flag' real situations

Psychology lecturers	Social work lecturers
'This demonstrates theory of primacy and recency' – the lecturer built up the complexity of the experiment and then referred to the underlying principles (P2)	What is S.W?' 'Intervening where people interact with their environments' It is differentiated between psychology and S.W and S.W adapt the methods of psychologists 'Social systems and individuals are surrounded by social systems/networks'- context was set with this (S4)
Video - interview psychologist and people with APD, cites experiment to test stimuli and response. MRI scan comparison between brains of patients and 'normal' brains - scan showed very different responses to emotive words – so concludes this fits with psycho-dynamic theory and failure to develop super ego (P5)	Hand out - asking students to refer specifically to their own experience Play as an adult - apply to now - how do adults play? What is the function of play? (S5)
"All children are capable of learning" (P3)	In general terms - the route map Judges want S.Ws expert opinion – it is your research, the chronology of the case – your professional judgment (S6)
What is DV? Dependant variable remember something we can't control 'So no difference in people and number of peanuts eaten' the significant difference depends on the nut type that is the dependant variable (P7)	Students were asked to discuss positive and negative experiences from their own experience of communities (S7)
"there's a name for this effect "conformity" (P1)	
"Generally you would expect anxiety to go down - sometimes takes quite a few times - can be combined with other therapies e.g. relaxation techniques" (P6)	

Criteria 3 - Metaphors/Analogies

Most of the lecturers used metaphors or analogies in small ways to help trigger the student understanding. There is quite an interesting range, many of the psychology lecturers used famous stories or characters

Psychology lecturers	
'People were called crackpots because their behaviour had changed due to lead poisoning' Huntingtons Chorea – like dancing choreography 'Mad as a hatter' (P1)	
'Remember Hannibal Lectar he showed no emotion and would be diagnosed as APD' (P5)	

Some lecturers used previous or the current experience of the students:

Psychology Lecturers	Social Work Lecturers
Asked students to participate in a memory experiment(P2)	Asked students to recall and discuss how they used play as a child to help management of fear as part of cognitive development e.g. 'Murder in the Dark' 'Hide and seek' 'What's the time Mr Wolf'(S5)

Some lecturers used role play and/or prospective occupational situations

Psychology Lecturers	Social Work Lecturers
Asked students to participate in a role play as client/therapist in the use of 'graded exposure therapy' (P6)	Asked students to participate in a potential occupational situation by playing out case studies involving community development scenarios (S7)
Explained the experiment may be relevant for a psychologist researching eating disorders – average weight of adults eating shelled versus unshelled peanuts (P7)	In discussing the implications of the 'freedom of information act' the lecturer cited a case where an adopted child has no right to medical history information of their biological parents. (S3)
	The lecturer used the television programme 'Judge John Deed' and the mock up of a court room for the students to understand their professional role in a court. (S6)

Criteria 4 - Drawing inferences

Asking students to draw inferences, make deductions was also practiced by most lecturers but the differences were that the social work lecturers mainly asked students to infer from professional experience or practice:

Psychology lecturers used external or	Social work lecturers used practice to draw

individual examples	out inferences
Asked students to use certain memory techniques and consider the most effective e.g revision for exams –eat chocolate and eat again just before exam (P2)	Different now kissing is banned in schools in case children become de-sensitized Examples of how toys can be used to adapt to different social environments e.g skipping rope What toys did the students remember to serve this purpose (S5)
Asked students from the other theories they had learnt what other ones could be applied to psychopaths – Freud displacement theory. (P5)	Has anyone experienced service user request for info? Yes much confusion around FIO and DPA 3rd party information cannot be included when releasing information (S3)
Offered a range of alternative explanations' regarding the outcomes of a research study comparing SN children with 'normal' children (P3)	Lots of this from each activity -'So what happens when there is a clash?' The dangerous social workers are those who are not aware (S2)
	You need to apply sophisticated communication skills that you are learning for these working situations (S4)

Criteria 5 - Integrate and re-integrate examples

Both sets of lecturers attempted to integrate examples into what they were trying to explain to students drawing upon their own personal experience or examples in the literature but it seemed that the social work lecturers often took it one stage further by offering practice examples or asking the students for their practice examples:

Psychology Lecturers	Social work lecturers
Used self as an example – short and long term memory loss (P2)	Used many e.gs to demonstrate theory - gave explicit explanation of definition 'In real words' used case examples of 'crisis of individual' 'Where is the crisis point in this case - pick out the elements - where would intervention be required?' (Small group activity) (S4)
Used a handout to illustrate the type of criminal activities associated with APD – damage to property, promiscuity – what was the experience of the students? what criminal activities did they associate(P5)	Regarding Freedom of Information Act: Tutor e.g. My child accident, you know they're asking questions - maternity services, A & E Student requested own copy of medical notes and was surprised to see opinions and assumptions (S3)
Gave examples of both sides, disadvantages and advantages of specific special needs education (P3)	Your interventions will need to focus on under privileged communities can you imagine even being welcome in a middle class community? Some communities have

	community action teams (S7)
	Examples from your own experience and development as a child and play . (S5) used examples from her own childhood about games that used to exclude other children "You can't play because..."
	Students asking questions using practice examples eg child in care (S2)

Criteria 6 - Use same stimuli as in work settings

This criteria can be differentiated from practice settings in that the students are being asked to apply or understand something in a particular situation in a particular occupational role.

In the case of the psychologists only two of them referred to actual situations. P5 asked the students to devise a checklist of criteria for diagnosing APD and what methods they might use as a psychologist to assess the patient against the criteria and P6 asked the students to role play being therapists and take the client through the process of graded exposure treatment for someone who was phobic about flying – she too participated in this exercise and supported the students.

Virtually all of the social work lecturers outlined particular instances where the students should be applying this bit of 'knowledge' and often provided detailed accounts of when and how:

When in court, feet towards the judge and turn to the court
Inter-agency cooperation so important S.W have a 'bundle' for each case that is every piece of recording and paperwork
'As a S.W you will have to' It will need to demonstrate objective evidenced based practice
You should have a senior there, you should not be there on your own (S6)

Remember as a S.W the community will see itself differently to the way you see it
Lots and lots of e.g. of different 'communities' and conflicts - 'another job I did' Community Dispute Service (S7)

'Have any of you found issues in the field in relation to Freedom and access to Information? Yes form to fill out now every time a child enters care. Another student volunteered a very real example from her practice in the last few days where she was shocked at the implications of not being able to (S3)

Asked group to identify in the case the different stages 'steady state' 'attempt to restore' 'problem has no solution' 'CRISIS' mother dies SS called in. 'So in Paula's case for example' (S4)

Criteria 7 - Use many different examples for same situation

All of the lecturers drew upon as many different examples as they could to help the students 'see' the problem from different angles.

The psychology lecturers gave examples of : how to utilize 'elaborated' memory and how to help yourself remember complex information (P2 session); how psychopaths and

sociopaths are portrayed in the media (P5 session); of different stakeholder perspectives of special educational needs (P3 session).

The social work lecturers ALWAYS used different practice situations: "In many cases you get CAFCASS officers involved in divorce, adoption, care orders and you will have to have a plan of care in all these cases"(S6 session); Remember all the different interventions you have just used and each community will require different interventions"(S7 session); In discussing the implications of the freedom of information act the students said "We have to share all information with other agencies including the hospital, so even when the hospital tells us, we have to create a file, even though the child is in no danger" – "I had a situation last week where because of the legal requirements I think a child was left even though she was abused" (S3 session)

Criteria 8 - Encourage multiple and critical applications

Similarly with asking students to think about the many and different ways theories and understandings can be applied, the psychology lecturers drew from the student experience and the social work lecturers drew from different practice scenarios.

Psychology lecturers	Social work lecturers
Neurochemical abnormality - students realised both cognitive and behavioural explanations for abnormality (P5)	
Link to own experience, link to T.V prog, peadophiles - relate to themselves - 'do I possess any of these characteristics?' on checklist handout. How many criteria would you need to meet for diagnosis? Did any of you think about categorizing criteria?' Social norms/ impulsivity = 3 major categories for diagnosis (P5)	Are the mechanisms in use too stringent? You will have to bear in mind when writing that it could be used in the future. Any other changes in recording? What other situations will require to record and why? Yes most recording is electronic so out of hours service cannot now access records (S3)
Asked students to apply to their own experience - drawing on student understanding of 'central executive' part of the memory (P2)	Lots of e.gs of communities - local community, community of interest, virtual community, e.gs of perspectives of use and abuse of word community - questioned underlying messages - all imply 'good' and 'local control' (S7)

Criteria 9 - Instruct when NOT applicable

The literature suggests that this is very important in helping students transfer learning but it is difficult perhaps for lecturers to point out when something is not applicable as in most cases its probably obvious to the lecturers. Consequently not many examples of lecturers doing this was observed and it seemed that both groups of lecturers attempted it on occasion:

Psychology lecturers	Social work lecturers

Made it clear it was not applicable to Freud and displacement theory (P5)	Remember an intervention that worked in one community won't necessarily work in another (S7)
Only use a statement for complex needs (P3)	What about when its injurious to the individual? e.g. children not knowing of previous rejection/impaired cognitive function -Police and court records do not have to be made available in those cases it doesn't apply (S3)

Criteria 10 - Encourage self belief/efficacy in learners to learn

Nearly all of the lecturers found ways of encouraging the students and helping them to believe in their own abilities

Psychology lecturers	Social work lecturers
Well done you all got it right Correct well done You know this (P1)	You've been thinking very creatively and that consultation must involve everyone 'Good Point' 'Interesting point' 'You - I was going to say that, sure' Encouraged students to summarise the session to each other 'I've heard some really good ideas' (S7)
"You know this already" "Just wordy stuff"(P2)	You should be strong now regarding the nature of significant harm' 'Bet you can' Who can remind me who is 'exparti' making application in secret If you get this right the rest will follow (S6)
Students discuss and question each other, lecturer careful not to say when students were wrong (P5)	Lecturer gave her own example and stated she was 'much sadder' than the rest of the students – so building up their self esteem (S5)
Encouraged students to 'have a go' (P7)	Practice being a real S.W in role play (S4)

Criteria 11 - Generalise to other contexts

Examples of this are virtually exclusive to the social work lecturers:

"Have you ever got to that crisis point?' 'Have you experienced that in yourself or colleagues?'Think about a crisis you've experienced it is a process not a single point"
(S4)

Students discussing their own examples - fear - big scary house
Adults doing bungee jumps is a way of experiencing fear in a controlled environment (S5)

Different professions are trained in different ways to record information so this leads to resistance to share
Students saying everything lecturer said is so true in practice (S3)

Drawing on her own professional experience in residential care NIMBY
Provided tangible other contexts by students acting out case study(S7)

"When you are in court show the barristers you are the expert" (S6)

Criteria 12 - Explicit explanation of how to generalize (Encourage Meta-cognitive approach Show the students how to learn to learn)
Again nearly all lecturers demonstrated examples of trying to help the students understand why and how to learn

Psychology Lecturers	Social work lecturers
Explained how she was building on the students existing schema (P2)	Explained why reflection was important and why it can be difficult 'The point of this exercise is to explore pre-conceptions'(S2)
Explicitly said 'Now a critical thinking question' Is psychopath an emotive term?(P5)	That's how I'd like you to think about it' I'm asking you to do this because the idea is you work through the beginning stages of the model (S4)
Explained process of how to become an educational psychologist and why this lecture was important (P3)	This is what we're doing and this is why-each group to discuss examples of social/cognitive development or fear management in play (S5)
What's important is your ability to interpret the meaning of the results - reinforced this many times 'The point of what we're doing today...'(P7)	I'm encouraging you to have a questioning approach. Listening like a S.W actually practice this (S7)

Criteria 13 - Assessment of pre-requisite declarative knowledge
In the main it seemed that the psychology lecturers seemed to check the most with students, regularly trying to gauge where the student understanding was:

Started lecture with 'what do you want to know' what do you know already? Tell us about the assessment (P2)

Asked/checked what students could remember which theories are relevant?(P5)

Asked students intentions - how would they use this info today? Did they want to teach? Did they want to become an educational psychologist?(P3)

Lots of checking of understanding - at each stage 'everyone ok?' Everyone keeping up?' 'Does everyone understand?' 'Anybody unclear?(P7)

Summary of observations from the criteria elicited from the literature

Most of the lecturers made use of **hugging** referring to previous ground they felt they had covered, usually in the last lecture or previous week. All of the lecturers demonstrated in their practice, examples of **bridging,** that is, referring to the context and/or the underlying principles or concepts. There was evidence in all the teaching sessions that the lecturers were trying very hard to 'relate' or connect the learning to a wider context. The social work lecturers pointed to expectations of future practice using very specific examples. The psychology lecturers also tried to 'flag' real situations.

Most of the lecturers used **metaphors or analogies** in small ways, it seemed, to help 'trigger' the student understanding. Many of the psychology lecturers used famous stories or characters. The literature suggests that the criteria of i**nstructing when NOT applicable** is very important in helping students transfer learning and both groups of lecturers were observed attempting it on occasion.

Nearly all of the lecturers found ways of encouraging **self belief/efficacy** in the students and helping them to believe in their own abilities and nearly all lecturers demonstrated examples of trying to help the students understand why and how to learn – **encouraging meta-cognitive approaches.**

Something the psychology lecturers seemed to do much more than the social work lecturers was **assessing pre-requisite declarative knowledge** regularly trying to gauge where the student understanding was at.

Where the most apparent difference lay was in the following criteria and all of these are where the social work lecturers harnessed the particular teaching method/observation criteria and used it directly to refer to practice situations.

Use same stimuli as in work settings this criteria is where the students are being asked to apply or understand something in a particular situation in a particular occupational role. In the case of the psychologists only two of them referred to actual situations. Virtually all of the social work lecturers outlined particular instances where the students should be applying this bit of 'knowledge' and often provided detailed accounts of when and how.

Asking students to **draw inferences**, make deductions was also practiced by most lecturers but the differences were that the social work lecturers mainly asked students to infer from professional experience or practice.

Both sets of lecturers attempted to **integrate examples** into what they were trying to explain to students drawing upon their own personal experience or examples in the literature but it seemed that the social work lecturers often took it one stage further by offering practice examples or asking the students for their own practice examples.

Similarly when asking students to think about the many and different ways, theories and understandings can be applied, the psychology lecturers drew from the student experience and the social work lecturers drew from different practice scenarios.

In the case of **generalising to other contexts** this criteria was observed exclusively in social work lecturers.

So at this stage a question might be whether it's about using different methods in different subject/vocational areas or harnessing the method by anchoring it in practice where this is possible?

Shepherd's taxonomy (reference) of the six A's of teaching practice that encourages transfer of learning are: analyse; associate; assess; adapt; apply; and appraise. This was part of the framework used in the observations but as explained in chapter three this was not found to be very helpful in this instance and consequently little data was ascribed to those particular criteria

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Appendix Fourteen

Epistemological Typology

A
In Context Transfer
/Situated Learning Theory

2

Competency
Chi et al

Wolf, et al

Reboy
Gill et al   HEQC

Claxton

Dunne

Harvey et al

Attewell

Attewell   Attewell
Holmes   Barnett

X
Extrinsic Value

Positivist
Quantifiable

DfEE   AGR

Hattie et al   Butzkamm

Brown et
al

Social
Constructivism

Y
Phenomenological
existential
/Intrinsic Value

HEQC

Bennett et al   Tait, et al

Whitson

Thomas

Batterfield
et al

Solomon et
al

Pressley

Gibbs et al
Otter

Hodgkinson

Rawson

Steinburg
Payne

HEFCE

Lauder et al

Tolly   Collins

Shepherd

Bridges

Perkins.D

Lissenburgh
et al

Q.C.A

Out of Context Transfer
/Meta-Cognitive Theory

B

3

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