

# Interactive reflective dialogue to support learning on role-emerging placements – It's all about sensemaking!

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Occupational Therapy at Otago Polytechnic, Dunedin, New Zealand

2021

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# ABSTRACT

Role-emerging fieldwork placements prepare occupational therapy students for a continually changing healthcare environment by providing unique learning opportunities and challenges. The demand for reflection and a deeper application of core occupational therapy theory to inform practice is heightened by the role-development and self-directed nature of these placements. Moreover, the off-site clinical supervision inherent in role-emerging placements presents the practice-problem of how to support students' learning between weekly face-to-face supervision sessions. There is a paucity of research evidence to guide current methods of supporting learning on these placements, especially outside of clinical supervision sessions. This study considers and explores the practice of daily reflective dialogue between the student and off-site supervisor to support learning and reflection on role-emerging placements.

Interpretive description methodology guided the inductive thematic analysis of the on-line daily dialogue between three students and their respective off-site supervisors, which was supported by a process of member checking through the DAViT questionnaire. The dialogue-as-data provided an in-depth and continuous window into the nature and process of learning on these school-based role-emerging placements. Sensemaking appeared central to learning through this interactive reflective dialogue and was seen to develop through the collaboration between student and supervisor. Themes fell into three categories of sensemaking corresponding to 'theory-driven sensemaking,' 'developing sensemaking skills,' and 'personal and professional growth.'

Theory is required to justify and inform practice on role-emerging placements, the supervisors' input within the interactive dialogue guided theory-driven sensemaking, assisting students to bridge the theory-practice gap and to develop an occupational therapy perspective. Interactive dialogue appears particularly useful to build conceptual knowledge, with the dialogue comprising a strong theoretical focus. Furthermore, interactive dialogue addresses procedural knowledge, a dimension of learning which is not usually possible to attend to on role-emerging placements. This tool therefore adds to the long-arm supervisors' bow by enabling close mentoring and coaching of reflective inquiry along the occupational therapy process, and thus facilitating students' reflective skills. Student agency, participation and intent ranged within the dialoguing; students who engaged more within the dialogue process and approached reflective dialogue to make meaning rather than document, tended to make sense of the placement and their role sooner and more comprehensively. The dialogue involved open and honest reflection which appeared to trigger deeper learning, and growth on a personal and professional level. Ultimately role-emerging placements provide the opportunity for learning which requires deeper deliberation and reflection, providing the press for personal and professional growth; while interactive dialogue supports this deeper reflective process and outcome, thereby facilitating successful sensemaking, which can involve transformational learning.

The idea of sensemaking may assist students, supervisors, and educators in conceptualising and facilitating learning on these placements. Interactive dialogue appears to provide an effective learning tool during role-emerging placements, conducive to the constructivist and reflective learning requirements of role-emerging placements. Educators and supervisors are encouraged to use reflective dialogue to support learning and reflection on role-emerging placements: a useful means to overcome the constraints of off-site and infrequent clinical supervision.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you, thank you, thank you... we don't work, live or function alone and there has been significant impact on my family while taking on this study. Thank you, Roger, Noah, and Lola, for your patience during my prolonged preoccupation and engrossment. A huge thank you to my supervisors, Jackie Herkt and Rita Robinson, for the support, guidance, encouragement and the laughs along the way.

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study involves a qualitative exploration of the interactive reflective dialogue<sup>1</sup> between occupational therapy students and their supervisors during role-emerging placements in mainstream schools in New Zealand. An explanation of this study's genesis from a personal viewpoint begins to position the researcher within the research, revealing the researchers' interest in the topic of student learning and role-emerging placements and explaining how the study came about. Background information to the study introduces the use of fieldwork placements in occupational therapy education; the need to modernise fieldwork and the movement towards role-emerging placements; reflection and reflective practice; and the current occupational therapy practices in mainstream New Zealand schools. The concepts of non-traditional placements, role-emerging placements, reflection and reflective practice are explained within this discussion. Thereafter the specific context of these school-based role-emerging placements is outlined including the purpose and structure of these placements; the adoption and practice of reflective dialogue on these placements, and the fit of these placements with a role-emerging paradigm. An exploration of the study's clinical relevance and the research question completes this chapter.

## The genesis of the research project

My occupational therapy career has mainly been as a clinician and in management. Early interest in clinical reasoning and experience in providing supervision to junior staff and students on placement inspired me to teach students and to enter the world of academia, spurring commencement of this research study. My involvement in fieldwork<sup>2</sup> education and lecturing students in occupational therapy has heightened this passion in student learning, especially to develop clinical reasoning and reflective practice in students and to enable students to comprehend and apply theory in practice situations.

In addition, my interest in role-emerging placements evolved over time. In my final year of undergraduate study, the relatively new concepts of occupational therapy in health promotion and the idea of occupational therapy expanding to support social change and having a community or population target excited and challenged my understanding of occupational therapy. My final placement, termed a 'community-based placement,' provided practical exposure to these concepts. In hindsight, I recognize that this placement was role-emerging. A passion for the contribution to society that role-emerging placements can make was realized through this community-based placement and influenced my first post-graduation role where I worked in a voluntary capacity to establish a community income-generating project with parents of disabled children from an impoverished rural area of South Africa.

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<sup>1</sup> This study uses the terms interactive reflective dialogue predominantly to describe the written dialogue between student and supervisor. Other terms used include interactive dialogue, reflective writing, and reflective logs. The terms 'dialogue' and 'interactive' denote the feedback and exchange within the reflective writing process. This refers to the contribution from the supervisor and or peers, and the exchange of writing between them.

<sup>2</sup> Terms used to describe the occupational therapy students' fieldwork placements: "fieldwork," "placement," "practicum," "practice placement," "practice education," "fieldwork placement," "clinical education," "work-based learning," and "traditional placement." While the WFOT uses the terms "practice education" and "practice placement," the literature and this study describe fieldwork using any of these terms seemingly interchangeably. This study predominantly uses the terms 'placement' or 'fieldwork.'

Currently, and in the last three years, I have performed the role of 'long-arm' supervisor<sup>3</sup> on student role-emerging placements, which has further enhanced this interest in, and knowledge and assumptions regarding, the learning that occurs during role-emerging placements and the challenges and benefits of these specific placements. The choice to study student learning on role-emerging placements therefore aligns with my interests in developing professional reasoning and reflective practice in students, and in particular, during role-emerging placements. Data availability of historically collected interactive reflective dialogue while students were on role-emerging placements from the Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy presented a fortuitous research opportunity, which began this research journey.

## Background Information

The use of fieldwork placements in occupational therapy education, the call to modernise placements, and the current occupational therapy practices in New Zealand mainstream schools are discussed providing the background context to this study.

### *Fieldwork placements in occupational therapy education*

Fieldwork placements are considered an essential part of preparing occupational therapy and health care students to enter the profession (Bonello, 2001). Fieldwork is a means for students to learn to apply academic knowledge and theory in actual practice settings or situations and socialise them into the profession (Boniface et al., 2014, Seymour et al., 2012). Students develop the concept of potential future roles and occupational therapy practice through placement (Thomas et al., 2005), with future practice areas often being linked to placement settings (Lloyd et al., 2015; Rodger et al., 2007). The World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT, 2016) recognises the importance of fieldwork placements in occupational therapy education. For 60 years it has stipulated that each occupational therapy student has to complete a minimum of 1000 hours of fieldwork education before being eligible to enter into the profession (World Federation of Occupational Therapists, 2012). While this position has recently been revised to include some flexibility by enabling some national governance around this guideline in terms of hours (World Federation of Occupational Therapists, 2016), the concept of the importance of fieldwork in occupational therapy education remains unchanged.

Students are traditionally placed in fieldwork healthcare settings with an established occupational therapy service and an on-site occupational therapy supervisor to mentor them. The traditional placement is defined by a one-to-one apprenticeship model of supervision, which refers to the ratio of student to supervising occupational therapist on such placements (Overton et al., 2009). Traditional placements enable the student to learn core clinical and professional skills from the supervisor who imparts her expertise (Bonello, 2001). This supports Heath's (1996) suggestion that the apprenticeship model is supervisor-centred and -driven, as supervisors determine the learning content and method. Rodger et al., (2009) expand this and explain that the apprenticeship model involves the student 'shadowing' the supervisor, alluding to learning through demonstration and observation; techniques that Hanson & Deluliis, (2015) agree typify the apprenticeship model and the traditional placement.

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<sup>3</sup> Supervisors on role-emerging placements: The "off-site" occupational therapy supervisor in the literature is denoted as the "long-arm" supervisor, "off-site" supervisor, or "clinical supervisor." In this study, the occupational therapy supervisors are generally referred to as the 'off-site' or 'long-arm' supervisors to convey that they are not physically in the placement setting.

## *Modernisation of fieldwork placements*

### ***Drivers of change***

Thomas et al. express that fieldwork provides opportunities for students to develop the skills and competencies to “meet the challenges of contemporary practice” (Thomas et al., 2005 p. 78). While Rodger et al., (2007) and Overton et al., (2009) add to this by suggesting that fieldwork is key to preparing students not only for current, but also for future health care settings. Significant changes to the health care context and systems over the past 25 years have greatly affected the delivery and type of student placements, driven by factors outside of and within the occupational therapy profession (Knightbridge, 2014). Healthcare reform to ensure person-centred practice (Jesus et al., 2016) and to encompass broader views of health, well-being, disability and engagement beyond the medical model as endorsed by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health in 2001 by the WHO (resolution WHA 54.21), are examples of external drivers which have strongly influenced occupational therapy services and placements (Clarke, de Visser, et al., 2014a). Simultaneously, internally, the profession has seen growth into new areas of practice, broadening the occupational therapy scope of practice (Overton et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2005; Wood, 2005). Moreover, occupational therapy has undergone significant philosophical changes largely steered by Townsend and Polatajko (2007), and Wilcock (2006), which advocate for a community or societal focus in addition to working with individuals. These works reflect the profession’s return to occupation and embrace concepts such as occupational wellness, occupational justice (Wilcock & Townsend, 2000), occupational science (Yerxa, 1993), enablement, and inclusivity (Townsend & Polatajko, 2007; Wilcock, 2006). On a practical level, the profession has also experienced a worldwide shortage of traditional fieldwork placements for occupational therapy students, Hunter & Volkert (2017) suggest that this shortage has forced the profession to consider alternative fieldwork settings and approaches.

These drivers and the objective to provide real opportunities that prepare students for the current and future healthcare environments in which they will seek employment has seen significant changes to the delivery and type of fieldwork placements (Fisher & Savin-Baden, 2002; Thew et al., 2018). The World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT) recognised the need for such changes resulting in fieldwork education guidelines broadening the settings for student placements by no longer categorising placements by clinical area, and no longer specifying the need for an on-site occupational therapy supervisor (Hocking & Ness, 2004).

### ***New, non-traditional fieldwork placements***

The result has been an ever-increasing emergence of new, alternative, or non-traditional placements internationally and in New Zealand (Campbell-Rempel, 2018; Fisher & Savin-Baden, 2002; Overton et al., 2009; Thew et al., 2011; Wood, 2005) which reflects the growth in occupational therapy's scope and practice settings (Fisher & Savin-baden, 2002; Thomas et al., 2005). Students worldwide are now being offered placements in a range of sectors, including public, independent, and voluntary sectors, such as in social services and private practices, not just in hospitals and healthcare settings (Fisher & Savin-Baden, 2002). In particular, and relevant to this study, role-emerging placements (REP) are now a commonly-used example of non-traditional placements<sup>4</sup> in occupational therapy education (Clarke, de Visser et al., 2014a; Overton et al., 2009; Wood,

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<sup>4</sup> The literature has various terms to describe non-traditional placements, including: ‘a-typical,’ ‘expanded,’ ‘independent community placement,’ ‘service-learning,’ ‘project placement.’ This study uses the term non-traditional placements as an umbrella term for all placements that are not in a clinical or health setting and do not adhere to an apprenticeship model of supervision.

2005). Fieldwork placements provided within New Zealand by both of the occupational therapy education schools offer role-emerging placements as a fieldwork option to their second and third-year students.

Characteristics of non-traditional placements are that they either involve a change in the supervisory model by not adhering to the one-to-one apprenticeship model (Clarke, de Visser, et al., 2014a) or that the placement setting is non-clinical (Overton et al., 2009), outside of the health sector (Wood, 2005). Examples of non-traditional placements include project-based, community-based, and role-emerging placements (Overton et al., 2009). Non-traditional placements tend to adopt a collaborative supervision model (Overton et al., 2009). Philosophically non-traditional placements tend to adopt health promotion principles, illness prevention, and a community health rather than a medical model, individual, or impairment focus (Clarke, de Visser, et al., 2014a; Overton et al., 2009). Therefore it appears that the establishment of non-traditional placements entails a departure to one or more of the following factors: the setting, the supervision model, and the philosophical approach of traditional placements.

### ***Role-emerging placements***

Role-emerging placements are categorised as non-traditional placements, thus entailing alternate placement settings (Wood, 2005), adopting different supervision models (Overton et al., 2009), and aligning to the philosophical underpinnings of non-traditional placements. Additionally, role-emerging placements position occupational therapy students in a placement setting without an occupational therapist in employment and without an established role for occupational therapy in that setting (Clarke, De Visser, et al., 2014a). The distinctive component of this type of non-traditional placements is in the name, they are role-emerging, as they lack an established occupational therapy service, and the placement involves creating, promoting, implementing, and realising this role or perspective in that setting (Bossers et al., 1997; Overton et al., 2009). Practically not having an on-site clinical supervisor would suggest that learning through demonstration and observation, commonly used techniques in traditional apprenticeship models, is not possible (Bossers et al., 1997). Therefore role-emerging placements embrace alternate supervision structures and models. The student is provided with an 'on-site' supervisor from a different profession (Overton et al., 2009) while receiving less regular off-site supervision from an occupational therapist known as the 'long-arm' or 'off-site' supervisor (Boniface et al., 2012). As the concept of role-emerging placements relates to the lack of an established occupational therapy service, it relies on occupational therapy being novel in that practice setting. Consequently, Warren (2014) proposes a limit of four placements in that setting, after which it is no longer role-emerging. This does not; however, seem to be an accepted limitation in what constitutes role-emerging placements. Instead, the same setting's repeated use as a role-emerging placement appears commonplace (Campbell-Rempel, 2018).

### ***More focus on reflective practice***

Furthermore, to equip students for the challenging and ever-changing health care contexts, students need to develop reflective practice skills enabling them to grow and adapt (Hanson et al., 2011). Occupational Therapy educators cannot provide all the skills and technical knowledge needed by a student for every situation. Consequently, and more importantly, students need to develop reflective practice skills to deal with new situations and make sense of and learn from those situations (Tryssenaar, 1994). The focus on reflection and use of reflective writing and /or dialogue as a means to develop reflection and reflective practices in students is now commonplace in occupational therapy and healthcare education (Boud, 2003; Hanson et al., 2011; Mann, 2016).

A definition of reflection and reflective practice provides further explanation of these terms. A useful definition of reflection is: “those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences to lead to new understandings and appreciations” (Boud et al., 1985 p. 19). Key aspects to this definition include that it has a purpose (to gain understanding); that there is both a cognitive and emotional component; and that it requires active and deliberate engagement. Reflective practice then, as captured by the pioneering works of Schon (1983, 1987), is demonstrated by the reflective practitioner that engages readily and habitually on their ongoing practice experience to learn from it and further uses reflection to inform and improve practice. As reflection is inherent in learning from experience (Moon, 2007), so is reflective practice inherent in the process of learning from practice experience (Boud, 2003; Hanson et al., 2011).

A background into current practices and the service delivery model of occupational therapy in mainstream schools is provided to enable understanding of this within the New Zealand context.

### ***School-based occupational therapy in New Zealand***

The 1989 Education Act Amendment and the Special Education Act 2000 supports all children, including those with disabilities, in mainstream schools in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 1989; Ministry of Education, 1996). Inclusion and inclusive practices are, however, complex (Simmons Carlsson, 2008). The current occupational therapy services model in New Zealand mainstream schools provided through a range of initiatives accessed exclusively on a referral basis usually involves working within an interdisciplinary team for children with moderate physical or learning needs (Simmons Carlsson, 2008; Simmons Carlsson et al., 2007). This practice involves one-on-one intervention with a child with identified learning needs, and much of this intervention occurs outside of the classroom, termed “pull-out therapy” (Ericksen, 2010). This model can therefore be considered mainly as a tertiary service having an impairment focus with an individual child target with specific learning needs and an emphasis on accommodation through equipment provision or environmental modifications (Kramer-Roy et al., 2020; Simmons Carlsson et al., 2007).

There is a recognized need to grow the occupational therapy role in mainstream schools in New Zealand with a philosophy that embraces best practice concepts of enablement, inclusion, universal design for learning, collaboration, and partnerships (Simmons Carlsson, 2008; Kennedy et al., 2018; Kramer-Roy et al., 2020; Missiuna et al., 2012). These concepts are in keeping with trends worldwide, including the vision for occupational therapy services in schools outlined in the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (2016).

## **Context of this Study**

The specific context of this study includes an outline of the school-based role-emerging placements, the structure, objectives, and practices used to support the occupational therapy students learning on these placements with particular examination of the interactive reflective dialogue used to support students learning and forming the data for this study.

### ***The student placement***

The Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy introduced role-emerging placements in mainstream schools in 2015 with the objective of addressing potential learning barriers in lower decile schools. A six-week role-emerging placement in mainstream schools was established for second-year occupational therapy students.

There are now three lower decile<sup>5</sup> primary schools which host these occupational therapy student fieldwork placements using a role-emerging model; these are based in the North and South Islands of New Zealand.

### ***Purpose of the placement***

Within New Zealand, children from lower socio-economic backgrounds face barriers to learning and are at risk of under-achieving educationally (NZPPTA/Te Wehengarua, 2013). These children often commence school from a disadvantaged position with limited participation in school-readiness activities. Furthermore, educational, behavioural, and emotional issues are over-represented within lower decile schools (PPTA, 2013). The Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy's stated purpose for these school-based placements is to provide a service that reduces these potential and actual learning barriers in lower decile schools as children enter and advance through school.

### ***Structure of the placement***

Occupational therapy students are required to be on-site and predominantly classroom-based during school hours. Each student is allocated to a specific classroom, and the primary teacher in that classroom provides induction and on-site<sup>6</sup> and day-to-day supervision. Two 'long-arm' supervisors are attached to the Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy providing the clinical supervision for the placement. A collaborative supervision model is in place using a 4-to-1 approach, meaning that the long-arm supervisors each supervise four students. Students meet face-to-face with their long-arm supervisors weekly for clinical supervision. Students are consistently paired with at least one other occupational therapy student enabling peer support and peer learning opportunities (Bossers et al., 1997).

The role-emerging paradigm is promoted in this school-based placement setting by embracing more of a primary-care focus, having a group target (the whole class), and incorporating ideas associated with health promotion, rather than being exclusively impairment-focused and a tertiary-level service; supporting recommendations of current and best practice models of school-based occupational therapy (Kennedy et al., 2018; Kramer-Roy et al., 2020; WFOT, 2016). Classroom emersion affords collaboration, knowledge translation, and universal design for learning (Kennedy et al., 2018; Kramer-Roy et al., 2020; Missiuna et al., 2012; Simmons Carlsson et al., 2007). 'Knowledge translation' involves co-operative and collaborative working between teacher and occupational therapist (or student) with both professions bringing expertise to overcome learning barriers, which enables a practical classroom solution (Missiuna et al., 2012). While in addition, 'universal design for learning' provides a solution that not only addresses an individual's learning needs but promotes better learning for all pupils<sup>7</sup> in the classroom (Kennedy et al., 2018; Missiuna et al., 2012). Occupational therapy students on these school-based role-emerging placements provide services across the support-continuum, using a tier-based approach as advocated by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists, (2016). This entails providing support at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of intervention (WFOT), (2016). While the occupational therapy students collaborate with the classroom teacher to identify 'focus school pupils', as seen within the data of this

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<sup>5</sup> Deciles are a measure of the socio-economic position of a school's student community relative to other schools throughout New Zealand and are used as a basis for state funding to overcome learning barriers for students from lower socio-economic communities (Ministry of Education, 2021).

<sup>6</sup> In role-emerging placements the 'on-site supervisor' is a non-occupational therapist that works in the setting providing day to day non-clinical supervision to the student. In this study, the on-site supervisor is the teacher in the classroom.

<sup>7</sup> This study uses different terms to differentiate between school pupils and occupational therapy students on placement. The occupational therapy students on placement are referred to as the 'student' or 'student participant' or 'student from participant pair 1, 2, or 3'. The school children are referred to as pupils or 'pupil A- G.'

study, these school children do not necessarily meet the current referral criteria for occupational therapy services. Therefore the role-emerging paradigm is applied through full and consistent classroom emersion over a six-week period enabling close collaboration with the teacher; an emphasis on primary and secondary intervention levels; and a class-wide as well as individual focus and implementation (Kennedy et al., 2018; Missiuna et al., 2012). These factors distinguish this placement model from traditional school-based occupational therapy practices and the current service delivery model in mainstream New Zealand schools.

### ***The learning model***

A multi-faceted model has been adopted by the Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy to support learning on these school-based role-emerging placements. This involves preparation material and in-class content prior to the placement, combined with weekly face-to-face supervision sessions and daily online interactive reflective dialoguing during the course of the placement.

### ***Preparation for placement***

Students are in their second or third year of study when participating in these role-emerging school-based placements. Specific preparation prior to the commencement of the placement includes the provision of preparatory material covering background information which is shared through a private online system, 'Slack'. In addition, a two-day intensive classroom learning opportunity with the clinical supervisor supplements this learning before the placement. This preparation aims to support students to enter their placement with an occupational focus within the context of a tiered model of service delivery (Kennedy et al., 2018; Missiuna et al., 2012) aligning with the role-emerging paradigm and philosophy (Clarke, De Visser, et al., 2014a; Overton et al., 2009). A detailed learning contract provides each student with supporting documentation outlining weekly tasks. This learning contract directly links with the fieldwork assessment and the five competencies specified by the Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand (Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand, 2018). Students follow a slow and staged occupational therapy process outlined prior to the commencement of the placement which roughly divides the placement into three phases of two-week blocks: observation and relationship building; planning and implementation; further implementation and review and exit planning.

### ***Interactive reflective dialogue on placement***

The use of on-line interactive reflective dialogue was adopted as a learning and teaching model to support students during the school-based role-emerging placements. This was in response to growth in the number of schools involved in these placements, and student numbers on these placements, which meant that an additional supervisor was appointed, resulting in two supervisors providing learning support across the three schools to 8-10 occupational therapy students. The impracticality of regular on-site visits from the clinical supervisors forced consideration of other methods to support student learning between weekly face-to-face supervision sessions. The Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy considered the affordances of interactive dialogue as a possible solution, enabling regular convenient contact between students and supervisors. Moreover the interactive reflective dialogue was conducive to the occupational therapy departments' philosophical values of promoting reflection and reflective practice on fieldwork placement. The result was the implementation of the interactive reflective dialogue through an internal platform, Slack.com, to support students learning on these school-based role-emerging placements.

Students are introduced to the theoretical concept, and practical requirements, of interactive reflective dialogue during the in-class preparation days. The educators and supervisors reinforce the importance of reflection and reflective practice when introducing this requirement. The perceived work demand associated with daily reflective writing is justified to the students by comparing this to the demand of writing clinical client notes

when on traditional placements, which is not required on these school-based placements. It is highlighted to students that while the interactive reflective dialogue assists to inform their placement evaluation, the dialogue is not assessed or marked as such.

The students on role-emerging placements are required to contribute daily written reflections while their respective supervisor responds within a 24-hour timeframe, providing feedback and inviting further dialogue. Students are also encouraged to provide written feedback or to dialogue with each other on the Slack platform. On occasion, the supervisors will comment on students that are not allocated to them, enabling dialogue to be multi-directional rather than two-way. The students are instructed to write their daily reflective moments under the following headings: Celebrations, Dilemmas and Desires (Robinson, 2013). In addition students engage in one-on-one or group supervision once a week, for a minimum of one hour. The format of the face to face supervision varying depending on the collective and individual learning needs of the student.

## Relevance to practice

Thew et al. (2018) state that the profession as a whole benefits from role-emerging placements, as the placements can be a means to grow and promote the profession. These role-emerging placements promote a new model of practice of occupational therapy in mainstream schools in New Zealand adopting best practice values of inclusion, immersion, collaboration and health promotion (Simmons Carlsson, 2008; Kennedy et al., 2018; Kramer-Roy et al., 2020; Missiuna et al., 2012; World Federation of Occupational Therapist (WFOT), 2016). As this study involves role-emerging fieldwork placements in mainstream New Zealand schools, these placements and evidencing thereof might assist in bringing about the changes needed within the profession in service delivery and approach, as referred to by Simmons Carlsson (2008). These placements will potentially positively impact the service users, including individual pupils, classes, teachers, and families, by promoting inclusive and full participation for all pupils, and thereby promoting the occupational therapy profession and scope of practice in mainstream schools within New Zealand. Interest and collaboration between the Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy and the key stakeholders of the school community were instrumental in introducing these placements. Research such as this study is pivotal to support prospective recommendations of new occupational therapy school-based practice models made to the Ministry of Education.

The profession is challenged to consider and provide optimal fieldwork learning opportunities for students that prepare them for the current and future healthcare environments (Fisher & Savin-Baden, 2002). The prevalence of role-emerging placements continues to grow increasingly (Clarke, de Visser, et al., 2014a). Therefore ensuring and optimising the learning opportunities afforded by role-emerging placements is essential. To this end, a more comprehensive understanding of the unique learning opportunities that role-emerging placements provide is required (Clarke, de Visser, et al., 2014a; Dancza et al., 2013). Notably learning on these placements is described as 'more challenging,' (Warren, 2014); fundamentally different to the type of learning on traditional placements (Dancza et al., 2019); and requiring greater levels of autonomy and reflection from the student (Warren, 2014). Therefore research is required to understand, and determine best practices to facilitate, the specific learning opportunities provided by role-emerging placements. Both are relatively under-researched topics (Clarke, de Visser et al., 2014a; Dancza et al., 2019; Overton et al., 2009). This study is positioned to provide deeper insights into the nature of learning and the process of learning throughout the student role-emerging placement as it is

captured daily through the written dialogue. This will add further insight into understanding and therefore promoting and optimising learning and reflection on role-emerging placements.

The Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy adopted the practice of interactive reflective dialogue to support student learning during the role-emerging placement five years ago. This study involves a close examination and 'evidencing' of a practice model involving interactive reflective dialogue to support learning between weekly face-to-face supervision sessions on role-emerging placements. Thorne (2008) suggests that health researchers need to explore existing practices to explain and improve their professional practice. Moreover, there are limited studies in occupational therapy education that explore the role of dialoguing as a learning tool (Hanson et al., 2011), despite appreciating, focussing on and requiring demonstration of reflection and reflective practice skills in students (Wong et al., 2016). No other research was found that explored the use of interactive reflective dialogue to support learning specifically on role-emerging placements. Green (2009, p. i23) states: "If we want more evidence-based practice, we need more practice-based evidence." Therefore, this research is needed to validate existing practice (Leeman & Sandelowski, 2012), in this case, the practice of interactive reflective dialoguing during role-emerging placements.

In conclusion, the focus of this research study will benefit healthcare educators, occupational therapy students, clinical supervisors, and clinicians to improve understanding of, and therefore better facilitate, occupational therapy students' learning during role-emerging placements. The medium of interactive reflective dialoguing as a learning tool on role-emerging placements is explored to consider its use in overcoming the constraints of off-site and less regular face-to-face supervision. Moreover the merits of interactive reflective dialogue to address and optimize the specific learning and reflective requirements of role-emerging placements will be explored.

## The research topic and question

This research study explores interactive reflective dialogue throughout the occupational therapy students' 6-week role-emerging placement. Accepting the premise that the written dialogue is the documentation, articulation, and representation of the student's thoughts and learning (Moon, 2007), the dialogue documents learning spanning across the role-emerging placement. Three second-year occupational therapy students and their respective supervisors made up the participants and contributed approximately 30,000 words of interactive reflective dialogue, which formed the data for this study. The purpose of the research was to better understand student learning on these school-based role emerging placements and explore e-based interactive reflective dialogue as a teaching tool to support learning during these placements.

The researcher considered various questions and sub-questions to explore and seek to understand learning on this placement through the dialogue data. The research question and sub-questions, which were conducive to written data, fitted with inductive and qualitative research methodology, and the research purpose, emerged as:

### **"How does interactive reflective dialogue facilitate learning on role-emerging placement?"**

Sub questions:

- What is the role of interactive reflective dialogue specifically within the role-emerging context?
- What are the unique learning opportunities that role-emerging placements provide? How does interactive reflective dialoguing support this?
- What factors influence learning and reflection through interactive reflective dialogue on role-emerging placement?

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study considers two broad concepts: the nature of learning on role-emerging placements, and the use of reflective dialogue as a learning tool on these placements. This chapter is divided into three sections: section 1 discusses literature and concepts associated with role-emerging placements; while section 2 considers literature that focusses on the role of reflection in healthcare education; and section 3 brings these concepts together and places the study in the literature. Ultimately the theoretical scaffolding for the study is provided by demonstrating its need, rationale, and outlining its objectives (Thorne, 2008).

### Section 1: Role-Emerging Placements

An overview of the literature on role-emerging placements is provided, including briefly describing the use of these placements and summaries of studies published on role-emerging placements to date. The discussion portrays both sides of the debate on the use and usefulness of these placements and practical considerations in the implementation of role-emerging placements. This is followed by a discussion focusing on studies that have explored student learning on role-emerging placements, the analysis highlights current understanding and themes from these studies which are associated with the outcomes, process and or nature of learning on role-emerging placements.

Role-emerging placements are well established in occupational therapy education in New Zealand and worldwide (Campbell-Rempel, 2018; Overton et al., 2009; Thew et al., 2011; Wood, 2005). Bossers et al. (1997) describe the purpose of role-emerging placements as exploring and developing the potential occupational therapy role in a placement setting. Thew et al., (2018) however, discuss these placements' objectives as preparing students for employment in broadened, current, and projected new potential occupational therapy roles of the future. These placements provide students with the opportunity to work in health promotion, community-based contexts, use a strong occupational-focus, and with societal goals away from traditional placement confines (Bossers et al., 1997; Clarke, de Visser, et al., 2014a). Furthermore, role-emerging placements enable the occupational therapy profession to remain current (Clarke, de Visser, et al., 2014a, Overton et al., 2009) and to evolve, modernise and respond to health reforms by providing unique learning opportunities for students that better prepare them to become “therapists of tomorrow” (Clarke, de Visser, et al., 2014a p. 14).

#### *The literature on role-emerging placements*

Several studies have been conducted on role-emerging placements employing various methodologies and using different means of gathering data (Campbell-Rempel, 2018; Clarke, de Visser, et al., 2014a). Research has involved interviews, questionnaires, rating scales, verbal reports, focus groups, nominal group technique and placement debriefing sessions, and short reports from students (Campbell-Rempel, 2018; Clarke, de Visser, et al., 2014a). Clarke, de Visser, et al. (2014a) conducted an overview of the literature on role-emerging placements, unsurprisingly they observe that most studies have adopted a qualitative study design however they criticized some studies for being opinion pieces regarding the necessity and value of these placements. There are two quantitative studies on the subject: Gat and Ratzon (2014) and Knightbridge (2014). Knightbridge's study involves deductive content analysis categorizing learning based on reflective journals into three pre-determined areas of learning. While Gat and Ratzon's (2014) study compared learning on traditional

and non-traditional placements and found that non-traditional placements resulted in students scoring significantly higher in self-efficacy, personal responsibility and personal skills. Several of these were found on role-emerging placements including Clarke (2012), Dancza (2013), Warren (2014) and Campbell-Rempel (2018). Two textbooks have been published, namely: *'Role emerging occupational therapy: Maximising occupation-focused practice'* edited by Thew et al., in 2011 and *'Implementing occupation-centred practice: a practical guide for occupational therapy practice learning'* by Dancza in 2018. Research studies have considered various topics or aspects of role-emerging placements (Campbell-Rempel, 2018; Clarke, de Visser, et al., 2014a) these include:

- a focus on supervision structures and models (Boniface et al., 2012; Edwards & Thew, 2011; Thomson & Thompson (2009); Thomas et al., 2007);
- the preparation required (Thew et al., 2011; Thew et al., 2008);
- the student's perspective and experience of these placements (Clarke et al., 2012, 2014b; Campbell-Rempel, 2018; Thomson & Thompson, 2009);
- the need for role-emerging placements (Fisher & Savin-Baden, 2002; Wood, 2005);
- the use, prevalence, and type of role-emerging placements (Overton et al., 2009);
- supervisors perspectives of role-emerging placements (Boniface et al., 2012; Thomson & Thompson, 2009);
- factors influencing the success of, and the outcome of role-emerging placements (Bossers et al., 1997; Clarke, Martin, et al, 2014b; Dancza et al., 2013; Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009; Thew, Edwards, & Baptiste, 2011; Thew et al., 2008, 2018);
- and the influence on career choices and skills (Campbell-Rempel, 2018; Clarke et al., 2015; Knightbridge, 2014; Thew et al., 2018).

### ***The debate about role-emerging placements***

Despite the prevalence of role-emerging placements, there is debate within the profession on the use and usefulness of these placements (Clarke, de Visser, et al., 2014a; Cooper and Raine, 2009; Fisher & Savin-Baden, 2002; Hunter & Volkert, 2017). Concerns raised include risk and liability (Prigg & Mackenzie, 2002; Thomson & Thompson, 2009); the lack of an on-site clinical supervisor; the difficulty of role construction for students (Fisher & Savin-Baden, 2002); and the associated role or identity confusion (Thomas et al., 2005). Furthermore, Wood (2005) raises an ethical issue around lack of continuity of the service, explaining the withdrawal of the occupational therapy service at the end of the placement leaves a gap for the service user and provider. Thew et al. (2008) provides a counter-argument suggesting that the expectation on students should be to develop an occupational therapy perspective rather than service-development which alleviates this concern and reduced service-users expectations. While Cooper and Raine (2009) raise concerns for the student, observing that the increased challenge due to these placements' role-emerging nature compounded by not having an on-site clinical supervisor can understandably lead to feelings of being overwhelmed and isolated in the student. Overton et al. (2009) suggest that there is a perception among clinicians that these placements are inferior to traditional placements as learning opportunities, and Wood (2005) suggests they are provided mainly because of placement shortages. However, Fisher & Savin-Baden (2002) explain that most of these concerns are voiced by people not involved in these placements, and there is a lack of evidence to support such criticism. In fact, the literature, including some more recent studies closely investigating the learning on these placements, suggests that role-emerging placements should be considered a valued learning opportunity that compliments and adds to traditional placements (Clarke, Martin et al., 2014b & 15; Dancza et al., 2013; Knightbridge, 2014; Thew et al., 2011). Certain studies go further to suggest that role-emerging placements provide a preferential learning

opportunity compared with traditional placements, involving 'unique' and rich opportunities for students (Bossers et al., 1997; Dancza et al., 2019; Thew et al., 2018) thus better preparing the students who experience role-emerging placements for the future.

### *Practical Considerations*

It is widely acknowledged that these placements require careful planning, preparation, and infrastructure of administration, proving very demanding on academic time, resource and personnel and requiring specialised skill on the part of the clinical supervisor (Boniface et al., 2012; Thew et al., 2011). Cooper & Raine (2009) question whether this administrative load is sustainable in the long-term. Thew et al. (2008) highlight the importance of communication; clarity of the purpose and boundaries of the placement; and role clarification between on-site and off-site personal and the students. Studies suggest student preparation prior to placement is key to the success of these placements, including covering specific applicable academic content, and preparing the students' for the self-directed nature and requirements of the role-emerging placement (Bossers et al., 1997; Thew et al., 2011).

The suitability of all students to attend these placements and deliberation on when in their training role-emerging placements are more ideal is contemplated in the literature by sourcing the opinions of students, academics and therapists (Bossers et al., 1997; Thomas et al., 2005; Wood, 2005). Most students in Bossers et al.'s (1997) study felt that role-emerging placement were more ideal as a last or final year placement as prior experience and academic knowledge was felt to assist with the placement. Thomas & Rodger's (2011) explain that because students need to be autonomous learners those with limited life experience or confidence may well struggle with this level of autonomy. Some occupational therapy schools have based student selection for role-emerging placements on age and or academic level, however (Clarke, de Visser, et al., 2014a) explains there is a lack of evidence to support the concept of selecting students on the basis of age, academic ability or year of study. Moreover Cooper and Raine, (2009) highlight the ethical quandary in this debate in considering the provision of inequitable learning opportunities for students. Key and desirable attributes that students should have to thrive on these placements are discussed in the literature; such as confidence, being reflective, coping skills, taking initiative and being active in their own learning (Bossers et al., 1999; Thew et al., 2008; Wood, 2005). Thew et al. (2008) reviewed a model of practice of providing project-based, role-emerging placements across a full cohort of students in various placement settings. Thew et al. discuss desirable attributes of the "clinical scholar" as involving an inquiring, reflective and analytical approach to learning and suggest that their problem-based programme and the use of role-emerging placements afforded the development of these attributes (Thew et al., 2008 p. 349). Other studies support this concept, suggesting these placements not only demand but also promote and nurture these attributes and skills (Bossers et al., 1997; Warren, 2014). Therefore, a better approach would be an inclusive one, enabling all students to grow in these desirable areas, including those who do not already possess these dispositions and skills (Bossers et al., 1997).

Educators, supervisors and service providers are cautioned that while these placements provide rich and unique learning opportunities that they also "present challenges and require careful negotiation and structured guidance" (Dancza et al., 2019 p. 567). The ongoing debate of the usefulness and complexities with the implementation, of these placements suggests there is a need for research to consider the overall value and effectiveness of role-emerging placements. Overton et al. (2009) and Wood (2005) call for research to explore and understand learning and the learning benefits associated with role-emerging placements. Despite many studies on role-emerging placements over the last 25 years, limited studies closely explore the learning process

or seek to understand how learning occurs on role-emerging placements (Dancza et al., 2013; Wood, 2005; Overton et al., 2009).

### ***Exploration of learning on role-emerging placements***

Clarke, de Visser, et al. (2014a) conducted a review of the literature role-emerging placements including their use, rationale, strengths and limitations. They conclude that there is a scarcity of research that comprehensively explores learning on role-emerging placements. More recently Mattila & Dolhi (2016) explain that while studies on role-emerging placements have given rise to well-supported outcomes such as, for example increased confidence and professional skills in students, understanding how and why these skills are enhanced on these placements is needed.

Most of the studies that have explored student learning on role-emerging placements arise from post-placement reviews completed by the designated placement supervisor. These studies are criticised for being researcher-driven; failing to capture the learning process or nature of learning over the duration of the placement; involving one student cohort; involving one placement; and /or involving very small numbers of participants (Clarke, de Visser et al., 2014a; Dancza et al., 2013). Regardless of these criticisms, the following studies provide insight into the learning outcomes, process and the nature of learning on role-emerging placements.

While performed over 20 years ago, the study by Bossers et al. (1997) is worth discussing as it introduces many themes and concepts regarding the outcomes, nature, and process of learning on role-emerging placements. Their research entailed a qualitative study based on post-placement semi-structured interviews of 11 students. The findings were categorised in terms of outcome, process, and benefits to the profession. Firstly the placements were found to be growth-inducing for students (outcome) and students learned to view the clients as people. An important concept that Bossers et al. introduces is in the discussion of the influence of the placement context on student learning. The attributes of the placement setting, including the role-development nature of the placement, the occupational focus, together with the supportive environment and the collaborative supervision style, are all considered to significantly and positively impact on the students learning (Bossers et al., 1997).

#### ***The role-development nature***

By definition, these placements are role-emerging, without an established existing occupational therapy role in the setting. Bossers et al. describe that the role-construction component was key to learning and needs to be considered in itself as an objective and outcome of these placements. Fieldhouse and Fedden (2009) add to Bossers et al. (1997)'s consideration of the role-construction process on learning. Fieldhouse & Fedden's (2009) study also explored learning on role-emerging placements; data was based on the clinical long-arm supervisors' journal entries during face-to-face supervision sessions which recorded the student learning over the course of the placement. Their study was based on two student participants' learning experiences in their second year of study during a 7-week placement at a care home. Supervision journal notes were shared amongst the fieldwork supervisors and students, enabling collaboration and verification of themes over the course of the placement. Fieldhouse and Fedden (2009) explain that deeper learning occurs as a result of having to construct the occupational therapy role which involves having to apply and understand learning more deeply. Both Fieldhouse and Fedden (2009) and Bossers et al., (1997) describe placement setting environments which were considered occupationally-rich and to be supportive and nurturing. Similarly both studies discussed that these factors within the environmental contexts, together with the role-emerging nature of the placements facilitated

student learning. However, these studies found that it was hard to separate these factors and impossible to tease out the respective influence of each on student learning (Bossers et al., 1997; Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009).

Dancza et al.'s (2013) qualitative study contributes further to this exploration of the influence of the role-emerging nature on learning. Student interviews before, midway, and at the end of the role-emerging placements enabled the tracking of progress and learning over time, enabling thorough insight into the nature and process of learning (Dancza et al., 2013). The other advantage of Dancza's design was that it involved a larger number of students and more than one student cohort, comprising two universities: one based in the UK and one in Ireland. A theme from the findings of this study refers to the construction of the occupational therapy role or perspective and is termed "Realising and using the occupational therapy perspective" (Dancza et al., 2013 p. 324). Dancza et al. discuss that the students required support from their supervisors to maintain this focus and to construct this perspective. They conclude that the placement involves using occupational therapy theory to justify and to guide the students' practice as part of this role-construction (Dancza et al., 2013). This aligns with a finding from Fieldhouse & Feddon, namely their theme, "Linking theory with practice," (Fieldhouse & Feddon, 2009 p. 305) which describes how the students needed to apply models from occupational therapy theory to the practice context to guide their practice in the absence of an on-site supervisor.

Clarke has published several papers (Clarke, Martin et al., 2014b, 2015) based on her doctoral thesis findings. Her research involved an interpretive phenomenological analysis based on the experience of five occupational therapy students' role-emerging placements. Semi-structured interviews were conducted at two intervals following the placement: at one month post-placement, and six months after completion of the occupational therapy course. The study aimed not only to better understand the students experience on the placement, and therefore the nature of learning, but also how this influenced professional practice once qualified. Clarke. Martin et al. (2014b p. 19) describe that in traditional placements, students tend to "fall uncritically into existing practices, routines and the ways of thinking" by following the clinical occupational therapy supervisor and the already prescribed procedures of doing occupational therapy. Clarke et al. explain that in contrast to traditional placements, the role-emerging placement requires the student to work out what occupational therapy could look like in that setting and its meaning. They therefore conclude that learning during role-emerging placements enables more significant ontological development than traditional placements; assisting students to consider the 'why' and 'how' as well as the 'what' (Clarke. Martin et al. 2014b).

These studies reveal that fundamental to learning on role-emerging placements is the construction and development of an occupational therapy role or perspective (Bossers et al., 1997; Dancza et al., 2013; Fieldhouse and Fedden, 2009). A more recent study from Dancza et al. (2019) involving action research to explore student learning on role-emerging placements in schools adds to these insights. Dancza et al. (2019) conclude that role development requires the exploration, interpretation and construction of knowledge or theory to inform, form and justify practice, which entails a greater level of understanding and application of theory, leading to deeper and even transformational learning.

### ***The self-directed nature***

Another common theme related to the nature of these placements and strongly impacting on the learning opportunities provided by role-emerging placements, is the self-directed nature of the placements (Bossers et al., 1999). Absence of an on-site clinical supervisor means that unlike traditional placements, the students' role and practice are not role-modelled, presented, or imposed on them (Bossers et al., 1997) necessitating autonomous problem-solving and a more active, autonomous approach to learning (Clarke, Martin et al., 2014b; Bossers et al., 1997). This absence of an onsite clinical supervisor forces students to problem solve and develop

their own ideas (Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009). Clarke et al. consider that the self-directed nature of the placement enhances the students' self-awareness and stimulates a re-appraisal not only of self but of the profession, growing and affirming the students' belief in the value of the profession and greatly contributing to the development of students' professional identity (Clarke, Martin, et al., 2014b).

Bossers et al. (1997) describe that student found the lack of an on-site clinical supervisor and a non-established role in the setting as liberating and empowering, a finding supported by Clarke, Martin, et al. (2014b). Less structure and the freedom to be self-directed are conducive to feeling less inhibited than when being observed by an on-site clinician (Bossers et al., 1997). Knightbridge's (2014) study also explores learning on role-emerging placements and adds further insight into learning on role-emerging placements. This was achieved through content analysis of 14 students' written reflections while on role-emerging, project-based placements. Knightbridge (2014) discusses that these placements provide rich experiential learning opportunities afforded by the freedom and autonomy for exploration. Warren (2014) discusses that the perceived freedom on these placements encourages creativity and innovation in the students which she found greatly contributes to the students' learning and application of theory to practice. Clarke et al. (2014b) explain that the result of the experience of 'freedom and autonomy' enhances individuality and the students' formation of their own professional identity.

### ***The experiential, real, authentic and problem-based nature***

Fieldhouse and Fedden (2009) found that developing the occupational therapy role or perspective results in deeper learning because learning is motivated by a genuine intent by the student to resolve the puzzle of their role within that setting. Learning largely involved realising the occupational therapy role in that setting, which had to be personally found and constructed rather than taught, explained, or modelled (Bossers et al., 1997; Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009). Students are required to develop and apply occupation meaningfully to the practice context to enhance the wellbeing of the service users, which Dancza et al. (2013) explain provides the real authentic situation for learning. Students are required to contribute meaningfully to the placement by providing a new perspective or role within their placement setting, this provides the students with the opportunity to embed their learning in an "authentic activity" (Dancza et al., 2013 p. 433). This involves students needing to adopt a problem solving and knowledge-construction approach to make sense of the placement and their role. Moreover, the authentic problem transforms theoretical knowledge into a "useable, useful and tangible outcome" (Dancza, 2013 p. 433). Similarly Clarke et al. explain that it is the realness, authenticity and active experience of using occupations in an applied manner that brings the occupational therapy philosophy to life for students on these placements; which students referred to as "real occupational therapy" (Clarke, Martin et al., 2014b p. 225).

Dancza et al.'s study support these findings that self-directed learning and autonomy is both demanded and enhanced by the placement's role-emerging nature (Dancza et al., 2013). The lack of an onsite-supervisor compounds the lack of an established occupational therapy role, increasing the uncertainty for students on these placements (Bossers et al., 1999). While challenging for the student (Cooper & Raine, 2009), Knightbridge (2014) explains that it is this uncertainty which is the catalyst for learning. Therefore the studies concur that the self-directed nature of these placements, adds to the uncertainty, freedom and authenticity of the experience, all of which appears key to students learning.

### ***A collaborative supervision model***

Role-emerging placements usually involve students going on placement in pairs using the collaborative model (Fieldhouse & Feddon, 2009; Boniface et al., 2012). A collaborative supervision model depicts not only the ratio

of greater than one student per supervisor, but also the supervision style or approach. A collaborative supervisory approach places responsibility for learning mainly on the students, while the supervisor acts as a facilitator (Hunter & Volkert, 2017) and guides student exploration and problem-solving (Hanson et al., 2019). Bossers et al. (1997) introduced the idea of the collaborative model of supervision being inherent to the nature of role-emerging placements and vital in affecting students' learning. The constraints of being off-site and having irregular face-to face supervision sessions promotes this approach in supervision (Bossers et al. 1999). Hanson and Deluliis (2015) explain that a collaborative supervision model uses feedback, modelling professional behaviour, and encourages student ownership, autonomy, teamwork, or peer-assisted learning. Bossers et al. (1997) discuss that the supervisor becomes less directive over time and transitions from a collaborative to a consultative style within supervision through the course of the placement. They suggest that supervisors' consultative or collaborative style in supervision has a key impact on student learning on these placements, demonstrating adult-education principles, and promoting student autonomy and responsibility for learning (Bossers et al., 1997).

Warren's (2014) study focuses on student learning on role-emerging placements in relation to the students' professional identity and professional development. This qualitative study explored learning from the perspective of the occupational therapists, the students and the on-site supervisor. The study included an interpretative phenomenological analysis of five OT students before, during and after placement. Warren (2014) explains that the collaborative model was conducive to students working together, problem-solving and reflecting together on work undertaken. This finding is supported by Dancza et al. (2013) who comment that peer support was useful to enable students to share experiences, debrief and support each other as well as problem-solve, reason, and reflect together. The students found that peer-support enabled immediate feedback and allowed them to work through things together which facilitated their self-confidence (Dancza et al., 2013).

Peer support and peer learning are important objectives and processes associated with a collaborative model (Hanson et al., 2019; Wilske, 2016). Within the collaborative model of supervision, students are also often required to adopt a team-based approach to learning, and students need to communicate effectively with each other as part of their learning (Bartholomai & Fitzgerald, 2007). In her study, Boniface et al. (2012) describes peer-assisted learning as involving co-operative and collaborative learning among students enabling them to share ideas and support each other. Fisher & Savin-Baden, (2002) conclude that the collaborative model facilitates student autonomy, ownership, communication, teamwork, and peer learning.

### ***Personal growth and personal skill development***

The concept of learning involving a personal journey and personal growth for students on role-emerging placements is well supported by the literature (Warren, 2014; Clarke, Martin, et al., 2014b). Well-documented outcomes of role-emerging placements related to this are increased confidence, autonomy, and communication skills (Clarke et al., 2014b; Knightbridge 2014; Thew et al., 2008 & 2018; Warren, 2014) as well as increased self-awareness in students (Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009). Warren (2014) found that personal growth was enhanced by supported reflexivity, suggesting the important role of supervisors in this learning and development, as well as that of reflection. Personal growth in the student is demonstrated by Clarke's theme titled 'growing up' (Clarke, Martin, et al., 2014b p. 224) through the course of the placement, a finding supported by Warren (2014). This concept of learning on role-emerging placements involving personal growth is well captured in the study by Thew et al. who capture this in the following statement: "the REP had a personal, almost emotional impact: which is instrumental to self-belief, confidence, and therefore, enhances self-promotion" (Thew et al., 2018 p. 201).

The role-development nature, and lack of on-site clinical supervisor, increases the 'uncertainties' for the student; and many students experience the placement as an emotional journey (Galvaan, 2006; Warren, 2014). Role-emerging placements are considered more challenging than traditional placements (Campbell-Rempell, 2018). Students commonly find these placements to be a "steep learning curve" and emotionally challenging (Dancza et al., 2013, p. 430). Within Knightbridges' (2014) category of personal growth, concepts associated with these placements' emotional challenges were discussed, such as self-discovery, perseverance, and the positive feelings associated with achievement and success toward the end of the placement. Findings that students had significant fear and anxiety of the unknown at the start of the placement are not uncommon (Linnane & Warren, 2017; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016). Concepts such as 'the emotional toll' of the placement, 'out there on my own' and the placement being 'experienced as a test' also suggest that these placements involve more of a challenge to students in comparison to traditional placements (Clarke, Martin et al., 2014b). Dancza et al.'s (2013) theme of 'emotional extremes' also support these findings. Students experienced an array or "roller coaster" of emotions throughout the placement (Dancza et al., 2013, p. 432). Furthermore, Galvaan (2006) explains that the learning in role-emerging placement can involve "emotional volatility" (Galvaan, 2006 p. 90), which is associated with the potential internal conflict when personal values and beliefs are confronted by the placement context. Warren (2014) suggests that supervisors are tasked with containing the students' emotion and intensity of the placement experience. The sense of satisfaction and pride from the student, after what appears to be an emotionally challenging placement, is a common finding (Clarke, Martin et al., 2014b; Dancza et al., 2013; Knightbridge, 2014) and results in students' growing self-confidence (Clarke, Martin et al., 2014b; Warren, 2014).

### ***Professional growth and skill development***

Professional skills development is also a well-documented outcome of role-emerging placements. It includes the skills of working within a team, resource and time management skills, professional communication skills, collaboration, clinical reasoning, and evidence-based practice (Boniface et al., 2012; Clarke et al., 2014; Dancza et al., 2013; Knightbridge, 2014) developing client-centeredness and viewing the client as a person (Bossers et al., 1997; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016); client-centred goal-setting (Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009); and cultural awareness (Galvaan, 2006; Knightbridge, 2014; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016). Some authors argue that role-emerging placements tend to involve developing professional skills above clinical skills (Overton et al., 2009).

Knightbridge's (2014) quantitative content analysis of student learning journals found that 57% of the meaning units aligned to the content area of entry-level competency and included learning themes or concepts of the occupational therapy process; communication and partnership'; and professional practice behaviours and responsibilities. Warren (2014) explores the complex concept of professionalism in detail, including its definition, enactment, assessment and teaching. Her findings suggest that students developed in their professional behaviours and professionalism through the role-emerging placement experience.

Fieldhouse & Fedden (2009) reported that the students developed therapeutic use of self and advanced in the professional skills of observation and assessment. While Bossers & colleagues (1997) found that students benefitted and learned about the occupational therapy process, developed professional communication skills, partnerships, and professionalism. They describe that this included students becoming more autonomous and forming professional identities. Professional communication and collaboration are commonly found themes associated with learning on role-emerging placements, which is supported by findings from Dancza et al., (2013) and Knightbridge (2014), who also discusses the importance of forming relationships and learning to work with others.

### ***Fostering an understanding of occupational therapy core philosophy***

Role-emerging placements involve returning to an occupation-focus and, therefore, entail a return to traditional, core occupational therapy philosophy (Clarke, Martin et al., 2014b). Students are required to realise and use meaningful occupation to facilitate service users' health and well-being during role-emerging placements (Thew et al., 2018). Clarke, Martin et al (2014b) discuss how students developed a personal and meaningful understanding of the therapeutic use of occupation in their setting, resulting in a belief in occupational therapy and the profession's value. Similarly, Fieldhouse & Feddon (2009) found that students developed skills in using occupation for therapeutic means through activity analysis and occupational adaptation.

Other common themes arising from the literature on role-emerging placements include seeing the client as a person (Bossers et al., 1997; Fieldhouse & Feddon, 2009) and realising the core value of client-centeredness in occupational therapy (Mattila & Dolhi, 2016; Overton et al., 2009). Mattila & Dolhi, (2016) explore learning and specifically transformative experiences on role-emerging placements. Their research involved interviews post-placement with the researcher who was the faculty mentor for the placements. Interviews were supplemented with extracts from the five participating students' learning journals. Coding and thematic analysis resulted in the following themes: fear and anxiety of the unknown; clinical reasoning and self-reflection; personal and professional growth; and further understanding of occupational therapy.

### ***Developing professional identity***

The role-emerging and occupationally rich environment drives students to develop awareness of using occupations therapeutically and of seeing themselves as occupational beings (Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009). Fieldhouse and Fedden's (2009) suggest that knowing oneself as an occupational being is a precursor to understanding the value of occupation as a therapeutic medium. Clarke et al. explains students professional identity developed as a result of the opportunity to plan and deliver "authentic occupational interventions" (Clarke, Martin, et al., 2014b p. 225). The experience and success of these interventions resulted in students' recognition of the value of occupation and the unique and beneficial contribution that occupational therapy affords to service users. This entailed re-appraisal of the profession for the students, instrumental to developing their professional identity. They conclude that role-emerging placements provide an opportunity for students to re-evaluate their thinking and beliefs about the profession, to consolidate and build a professional identity and for personal and professional change (Clarke, Martin et al., 2014b).

Warren's study (2014) found that the role-emerging placements facilitate students' professional identity based on the philosophical underpinnings of occupational therapy. This resulted from being able and required to apply occupational therapy theory, particularly core values of the profession to the practice setting. A sense of identity was found not only in the application of the professions core theory and values to the practice setting, but in its performance, the doing and enacting of occupational therapy, through occupation. As this performance was positively received in the setting, this further strengthened the students' convictions and confidence in these values and in themselves. Moreover, she attributes the autonomy to be innovative and creative in developing ideas and applying theory, which she terms "outside of the box" practice (Warren, 2014 p. 155), as essential to enhancing this identity development.

Literature therefore suggests that role-emerging placements result in an improved understanding of the occupational therapy role, the development of a professional identity and the enhancement of a belief in the profession (Clarke, Martin et al., 2014b; Thew et al., 2018). Moreover, Thew et al. found that students reported

that role-emerging placements provide the “passion and the ‘why’ you do occupational therapy” (Thew et al., 2018 p. 201).

### ***Impact on future careers***

Thew et al. (2018) explored the impact of role-emerging placements on students’ subsequent employability and career path. They found that students that participated in role-emerging placements developed additional service development and entrepreneurship skills (Thew et al., 2018). Campbell (2018) retrospectively explored recent graduates’ experiences of role-emerging placements including what they learned that was different from traditional placements and how learning was experienced. The impact of this experience on current practice and career trajectory was also explored. Campbell’s findings suggest that students’ participation in role-emerging placements has an influence on subsequent career choice, job search and transition to practice. Students who experience role-emerging placements are more likely to secure positions in non-traditional roles, thereby expanding the profession (Thew et al., 2018). Role-emerging placements benefit the profession by growing it in new areas of practice and promoting the occupational therapy profile (Clarke, de Visser et al., 2014a; Bossers et al., 1997; Thew et al., 2008; Thew et al., 2011; Thomas et al., 2005) as well as better equipping students for the future and adding to students’ employability (Thew et al., 2018).

### ***The reflective nature***

The idea that students require a critical and reflective approach to learning is suggested in most of these studies that have explored learning on role-emerging placements. Students perceive that more reflection is required compared to the amount and type of reflection they had experienced in their previous placements (Clarke 2014a; Dancza et al., 2013; Warren, 2014). This is further addressed in section 2 and 3 of this chapter.

In reviewing the literature that has explored learning on role-emerging placements, it can be concluded that role-emerging placements provide unique and different learning opportunities to students (Bossers et al., 1997; Clarke et al., 2014; Dancza et al., 2019, 2013; Knightbridge, 2014; Thew et al., 2008, 2018); and should be considered an asset to the curriculum (Fisher & Savin-Baden, 2002; Overton et al., 2009, Hunter & Volkert, 2018). This literature highlights the nature and process of learning on role-emerging placements, as well as the learning outcomes on role-emerging placements. The inherent constraints and nature of the placements appear to provide these placements’ unique learning opportunities (Bossers et al., 1997). Noticeably, some of the themes are interchangeably the nature, the objective and the outcome of learning on the placement (Bossers et al., 1997) and many of these factors are interdependent and overlapping.

Section 2 entails discussion of literature that contributes to understanding of the role of reflection and reflective practice in occupational therapy education. This includes a closer examination of interactive reflective dialogue to enhance learning during fieldwork, as well as exploring factors which impact on students learning to become reflective, and the relationship between reflection, performance and engagement and reflective practice.

## **Section 2: Reflective practice and reflective writing**

Internationally and across disciplines, health care educators are aware that they need to prepare students for the complexities, uncertainties, variation, and changeability of the practice contexts (Fisher & Savin-Baden, 2002; Mann, 2016;) and the specificity and uniqueness of each client (Jesus et al., 2016). Reasoning and reflective skills are essential to occupational therapy education to ensure graduates can practice proficiently in a continually changing healthcare environment (Overton et al., 2009).

Schon (1983, 1987) suggests that the expert professional uses more than “technical rationality” (Schon, 1983, p.21) to competently perform their practice, as the practice situation is often messy, confusing and

unpredictable and therefore not resolved using prescriptive solutions. He argues it is in the working through of troubling and unusual situations that reflection is required. Mann (2016) explains that the concept of reflective practice and reflection has grown in emphasis in health care over the past 20 years. Reflection is considered essential in health care education, and students are now required to demonstrate reflection and reflective practice skills (Mann, 2016). Occupational therapy educational programmes focus on and require students to demonstrate their reflective skills (Wong et al., 2016).

While it is widely accepted that healthcare professionals and students need to develop reflective practice skills, there is little evidence to support specific techniques that foster reflection and reflective practice (Mann et al., 2009). Wilson (2013) identifies reflective writing as commonly used to facilitate reflective practice, but limited studies have been completed on its effectivity. Similarly Lucas (2001) reports a lack of substantive research about the importance, and use, of reflective writing in healthcare education. Part of this difficulty is perhaps because of the complexity in the relationship between reflection and learning. Reflection is regarded as essential to learning (Mann, 2016). Mann et al. (2009) share Schon's viewpoint regarding the importance, complexity, and difficulty of preparing students to become reflective practitioners (Schon 1983, 1987). Moon explains that the difficulty with teaching reflective practice relates to the tacit and complicated idea of what reflective practice is and the subsequent different subjective ideas and abilities of educators to teach this skill (Moon, 2007). The other complexity is quality, depth, measurement, and assessment of reflection and reflective practice (Boud, 2003; Mann, 2016; Moon, 2007).

When students are required to reflect in the healthcare setting as part of reflective practice, many will produce superficial or descriptive accounts (Mann et al., 2009). Further, there will be various orientations to reflective practice (Mann et al., 2009; Moon, 2007). Few students might produce reflections that constitute critical or deeper reflection (Moon, 2007). Moon (2007) states that the challenge in education is to facilitate learning from superficial to deep, which she feels is possible through reflection. Moon (1999) conceptualises reflection as a staged learning progression, from observation and noticing to transformational learning. She postulates that reflection becomes increasingly needed in each progressive stage of learning. While Boud proposes the challenge is to develop deep critical reflections in students (Boud, 2003). In answer to the question of depth of reflection, Boud (2003) argues that critical reflection (deeper, more analytic reflection) is only possible through interaction or feedback from others and results from feedback that challenges and confronts former perspectives.

### *Interactive reflective dialoguing*

Writing reflections and interactive dialogue is commonplace in occupational therapy and healthcare education to teach reflective practice (Hanson et al., 2011; Boud, 2003). The World Federation of Occupational Therapists' (WFOT, 2016) and the New Zealand Occupational Therapy Board (2018) require practitioners to utilize and demonstrate reflective practice as part of their competencies for practice. Reflective writing is a well-known method of developing reflective practice (Boud, 2003) and promoting clinical reasoning in occupational therapy students (Hanson et al., 2011).

Several authors argue that learning through reflection is more effective when accompanied by feedback (Boud, 2003), introducing terms like 'interactive reflection' or 'collaborative reflection' (Hanson et al., 2011; Tryssenaar, 1994). Interactive reflective writing involves the students' written reflections and subsequent written feedback in an exchange between student and supervisor. Interactive dialogue ensures students reflect on their knowledge and practice during fieldwork placement and allows collaboration, guidance, and feedback with supervisors (Hanson et al., 2011). The interactive reflective dialogue while on student placement enables the

supervisor's guidance and expertise to be shared, allowing the generation of other and new possibilities that individual reflection is unlikely to foster (Tryssenaar, 1994; Hanson et al., 2011; Boud, 2003). Online dialoguing has the benefit of being accommodating, flexible, timely, and convenient, enabling written conversations to be current, responsive, and relevant to the students' daily contexts (Tan et al., 2010; Vissers et al., 2017).

Within the occupational therapy profession, Tryssenaar's (1994) study explores the written student journals that supported occupational therapy learning on a mental health course paper. The interactive journals were retrospectively analysed using qualitative analysis. Tryssenaar notes that the feedback from educators in particular, the interactive component, affected the student learning considerably. She explains that what may have been an isolated thought on the students' part, through interactive dialogue, becomes a conversation, which invites deeper understanding and can assist in a change and recognition of other alternative viewpoints (Tryssenaar, 1994). This is supported by Hanson et al.'s (2011) article which discusses interactive reflective writing to support learning during occupational therapy student fieldwork placements. Interactive reflective writing ensures students reflect on their knowledge and practice while dialoguing with supervisors (Hanson et al., 2011). Students take the initiative to expand and construct their knowledge and benefit from their supervisors' feedback about their reflections. Dialogue enables them to receive feedback, gain clinical direction, advice, and support, such as identifying when they are stuck and deciding on options going forward to overcome this (Hanson et al., 2011). The feedback enables discussion and collaboration, which students expressed were highly valued (Hanson et al., 2011). Tryssenaar (1994) also describe that the journals enabled insight into the mental health placement, allowing the educators to make changes to the course in response to the students' learning needs. Moreover, interaction enabled educators or supervisors to share their experience, knowledge and reflections of mental health practice issues, often affirming and universalising the students' experience and feelings.

### ***Factors that foster or inhibit reflection***

Schön (1983) suggests that learners achieve an understanding of reflection by experiencing it personally; while Mann et al. (2009) add that guidance and a supportive environment are also required. Mann et al. (2009) argue that healthcare educators need to be aware of the conditions which foster the reflective capacity, enabling them to incorporate this into the curriculum. They conducted a systematic review exploring the current teaching reflective practice methods in healthcare education and the conditions that were effective in fostering reflective practice in students. Their findings support the use of portfolio and journal writing accompanied by a supportive trainer or mentor to develop reflective skills; however, they also argue that the conditions for facilitating learning through reflection need to be better understood (Mann et al., 2009).

Craig-Duchesne et al. (2018) explored the use of journals in occupational therapy fieldwork; students' preferences around this use; and the factors affecting this. Several factors appeared to impact students' engagement with reflective writing including the frequency; the written structure or template; and the time available to reflect (Craig-Duchesne et al., 2018). Similarly, Mann et al. (2009) found that a supportive environment (both emotionally and intellectually), real authentic context, mentoring, group discussion, and sufficient time for reflection were all key to students' success to reflect and become reflective. Craig-Duchesne et al. (2018) add that in addition to these factors, other considerations which affect the use and success of reflective journals in occupational therapy student education, include the supervisor's feedback and even attitude. De Beer and Mårtensson (2015) explain that the nature of written and face-to-face feedback to students is either confirmative (validating) or corrective. Corrective feedback can be perceived as critical or negative; however, their findings suggest that this is most useful in developing clinical reasoning (de Beer & Mårtensson, 2015). Wilson (2013) argues that further understanding is needed to unpack the relationship

between teaching reflective practice and students becoming more reflective. She cautions that rules and procedures, too much direction, can negatively impact students' reflectivity. It would seem there is more to be discovered in both the teaching methods and use of reflective writing to teach, and in the development of, reflection and reflective practice in health care students (Wilson, 2013).

### *Reflection, participation, and agency*

Mann (2016) provides a commentary on the impact of reflection on learning and concludes that further exploration to understand the relationship between student reflection, learning and practice is required. Larsen et al.'s (2016) exploratory study involves the daily reflective writing of third year medical students over the course of their neurology rotation practice placement. At the end of each week students submitted their reflections for written feedback. Educators provided feedback which focussed on assisting students to recognise any missed learning opportunities or to use their reflection to develop more specific actions in the practice setting. Qualitative analysis of this interactive reflective writing supports the idea that reflection plays an important role in experiential learning (Larsen et al., 2016). Moreover, reflective practice contributes to students' clinical reasoning and self-awareness skills and their ability to respond well to feedback (Geraci & Hanson, 2014). Schon (1983) describes two types of reflection: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Reflection-on-action, involves puzzling through complexities and reflecting after the event. He introduced the term reflection-in-action to describe the professional's decision-making, thoughts, and in-the-moment reflections, which direct day-to-day actions. Reflection-on-action occurs after the pressure to act in the situation's immediacy and is useful to uncover more in-depth thoughts, insights, and reflections (Schon 1983, 1987).

Larsen et al. (2016) discuss the influence of reflection-on-action (reflection after the event, such as during student reflective writing) and reflection-in-action, which he describes as moment-to-moment self-regulatory changes and thoughts. Larsen et al. speculate that the daily requirement (frequency and timing) of the written reflection assisted with students' situational awareness and self-monitoring, increasing their reflection-in-action. Larsen et al. (2016) suggest that since the student knows of the daily written requirement, they might participate and observe more closely to discuss this in the written reflection; this concept is supported by Pack (2014). The requirement to document details about an event or situation demands taking notice of this event, contributing to increased participation in-the-moment (Pack, 2014). This supports Schon's (1983) belief that by reflecting on the situation "reflection-on-action," even the more passive student becomes more engaged in the situation.

Larsen attributes situational awareness to the tightly associated feedback loop between considering and planning action, action, and reflection-on-action, which the timeliness of daily reflections promotes, ensuring relevance to the daily practice or action (Larsen et al., 2016). The reflective dialogue contributes to self-awareness and self-regulation in students and to enhance their practice confidence and in-the-moment decisions (Larsen et al., 2016). Schon (1983, 1987) describes that reflection-in-action is inherent in expert clinicians who are able to weigh up complex ideas particular to that context and situation; theories and discipline-specific knowledge; and reflection from previous experience; all within the present moment to guide immediate action. Further studies are needed to explore the relationship between these two types of reflection, reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, to enhance the understanding of learning through reflection (Mann, 2016; Larsen et al., 2016). This will also assist understanding the relationship between reflection and participation (Mann, 2016; Larsen et al., 2016).

## Section 3: Positioning this study in the literature

This section places this study within the literature to demonstrate how it addresses gaps in current knowledge about the nature of learning during role-emerging placements and learning through interactive reflective writing during these placements.

Written dialogue entries occur almost daily across the placement duration, providing an ongoing student learning account. The interactive reflective dialogue forms the data of this study, affording a thorough and intimate examination of the specific and unique nature, and process, of learning on these placements. This addresses the relative scarcity of research focussing on learning on role-emerging placements, and the design issue of many studies that fail to capture learning across the placement duration (Dancza et al., 2013). This study is therefore well-positioned to contribute to the debate of the usefulness and benefits of role-emerging placements, and particularly adding to the literature that explicitly explores the nature and process of learning during role-emerging placements. The study may also shed insights into learning specifically on school-based role-emerging placements, adding to ideas contributed by Dancza et al. (2019, 2013), Galvaan (2006) and Knightbridge (2014).

Secondly, while reflection is considered essential to and inherent in role-emerging placements (Bossers et al., 1997; Dancza et al., 2013), the specific exploration of the role of reflection on these placements appears under investigated. Reflection in the context of role-emerging placements has been described to influence learning in various ways: being associated with the role constructive nature of the placements (Bossers et al., 1997); requiring more reflection because of increased uncertainty and more autonomous decision-making (Knightbridge, 2014); the emotional aspect and the intensity of the placements requiring more reflection (Warren, 2014); and, the time-consuming aspect of learning through reflection on these placements (Dancza et al., 2013).

The placements' role-emerging nature stimulates critical thinking (Dancza et al., 2013). Bossers et al., (1997) describe that reflection is inherent in role-creation as students have to go beyond what is currently seen and what constitutes the current practices and approaches adopted within that setting, and move toward potential concepts of what practice might or could look like in that setting. The constructive nature of role development involves reflective imagining and constructing ideas and practices. This involves reflecting on and exploring theory that befits the current setting and can justify, guide and inform occupational therapy practice (Dancza et al., 2019). Role construction therefore involves deliberate reflection and conscious thinking about occupational therapy practice and theory. This requires more reflection and leads to a much deeper understanding of the theory that informs and constructs this practice (Dancza et al., 2019).

The placement is less structured and less predictable, therefore there is more need for a reflective and questioning disposition and a problem-solving approach (Bossers et al., 1997). Warren (2014) found that students on role-emerging placements are forced to reflect more on their performance, increasing their self-awareness. She explains that the placement experience enhances reflective practice skills or what is described as a journey towards becoming "reflexive practitioners," and pivotal to this is the support of their supervisors. This self-reflection and reflexive practice assists students to make sense of their identities as occupational therapists especially in the absence of on-site role-models to socialise them into the profession and to demonstrate occupational therapy practice (Warren, 2014). Warren found that the students and occupational therapy off-site supervisors described the placements as challenging at times. The students in this study

reported that the use of reflection, as well as discussion with supervisors and student peers, were useful to manage this challenge. Reflection, aided by diary-use, facilitated the personal journeys and personal growth that students experienced on these placements (Warren, 2014).

Bossers et al. (1997) highlight the impact of delayed feedback on reflection. The delayed feedback means that students had to learn to become more autonomous and solve problems or work through day-to-day practice issues more independently (Bossers et al., 1997). Dancza et al. (2013) support this idea explaining that the placement promoted independent thinking. Similarly, Clarke, Martin et al. (2014b) discuss that the autonomy required by role-emerging placement means that students have to work it out for themselves, suggesting that this puzzling through or reflection seems key to students' learning. Warren (2014) also considers that because of the relative infrequency of supervision, the supervisors adopt different approaches within supervision sessions. Warren found that supervisors were useful in facilitating a more reflective stance, by asking more questions of the student, encouraging students to reflect on actions and explain their thinking, resulting in student reflectivity for some students. Reflection was used to guide students retrospectively and prospectively when planning interventions, alluding to the revolving nature of reflective practice and practice or doing (Warren, 2014).

Warren (2014) notes considerable time and support was required to facilitate this level of reasoning and reflexivity in students. Many role-emerging placements allocate reflective time expressly for students to reflect on role construction (Bossers et al., 1997; Dancza et al., 2013; Knightbridge, 2014). Students require assistance with maintaining and developing this focus and found this challenging (Dancza et al., 2013). Interestingly, Dancza's (2013) study describes that the students found the slower pace and additional time to reflect, as opposed to 'doing' with clients, challenging.

Warren found that higher levels of reflection were demanded by the role-emerging placements compared to traditional placements. She attributes this to the autonomous decision-making and responsibility felt by students on role-emerging placements. The lack of an on-site supervisor forces students away from relying on others, enhancing the demand on reflection and professional reasoning. This is heightened by the absence of an established role together with enhanced awareness of the client and service needs, creating an environment that requires complex problem-solving, reflection and purposeful application of theory to guide action (Warren, 2014). Therefore role-emerging placements both demand and develop critical or deeper reflection (Dancza et al., 2013).

This research study based on the students learning through interactive reflective dialogue during their role-emerging placement at the Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy closely examines the role of reflection in learning during role-emerging placements. While the literature on role-emerging placements suggests that reflection is key to learning on role-emerging placements this study will consider how reflection, and more particularly interactive reflective dialogue influences learning in more detail on these placements. This study may also contribute to understanding of student reflection in relation to its influence on learning and practice on student placements in general.

Finally, this study also explores a potentially useful practice model, interactive dialogue, to support learning on role-emerging placement. Dancza et al. (2016) argue that students require additional learning support between face-to-face supervision sessions; this study provides insight into the practice of daily reflective dialogue adopted to provide such support. Literature suggests interactive dialogue is fundamental to assisting deeper understanding and more in-depth or critical reflections (Larsen et al., 2016; Pack, 2014; Tryssenaar, 1994).

However there is a scarcity of research to support the use of interactive reflective dialogue during occupational therapy fieldwork placements (Hanson et al., 2011); especially lacking is literature exploring interactive dialogue on role-emerging placements. Studies on interactive reflective dialogue to support student learning during traditional student placements suggest that the dialoguing ensures students reflect on their knowledge and practice during fieldwork placement and allows collaboration, guidance, and feedback with supervisors (Hanson et al., 2011). Hanson et al. (2011) explain that interactive reflective dialoguing employs a constructivist learning approach. This is supported by Tryssenaar's findings which noted that educators commonly used strategies of questioning or challenging the student within the dialogue, stimulating further deliberation and ideas on the subject matter. Hanson explains the reflective inquiry process involves the collaboration of ideas within the dialogue, she argues this collaboration and feedback is vital to shaping students' learning and facilitates the development of clinical reasoning skills. Within the constructivist approach students are encouraged to develop and question, and the onus of learning is on the student, as they are required to be 'active learners' and encouraged to develop a critical and reflective attitude toward current practice (Hanson et al., 2011).

The supervisor's role in providing timely, constructive, and supportive written feedback appears key to enhance learning and depth of reflection (Boud, 2003; Pack, 2014). Pack's study (2014) explored online reflective interactive journaling between undergraduate social work students and their supervisors during their fieldwork placements, similarly to this study. Pack found that online dialogue with supervisors enhanced practice confidence in the students. She reflects that the interactive dialoguing provided a safe platform for students to debrief, while the supportive and affirming feedback within the dialogue assisted the student to critically reflect on the practices within that setting. Pack (2014) also notes that the supervisors' questions and way of questioning assisted with this development toward a more critical orientation and deeper reflections in the student. Thoresen & Norbye's (2021) recent action-research study in health care education supports the use of interactive dialogue in the training of midwifery students. They found that the process of writing and subsequent dialogue from educators enhanced the students learning. In particular the students progressed in their integration of theory and practice knowledge (Thoresen & Norbye, 2021). Similarly, Tryssenaar (1994) concludes that the use of interactive journals provides the opportunity to develop students' reflectiveness and advocates for its use in occupational therapy education to promote reflection and reflective practice skills. This is supported by Hanson et al. (2011) who describe interactive reflective dialogue as facilitating the link between practice and theory, improving observational and reflective skills, including the development of the ability to think on the spot. In conclusion, interactive reflective dialogue facilitates the development of a critical, reflective mind-set (Larsen et al., 2016) and fosters lifelong learners in health care students (Lucas, 2001).

This study seeks to understand the use of interactive reflective dialogue to support learning, reflection and reflective practice on fieldwork placement, and in particular on role-emerging placement. This study may contribute insights into gaps in current knowledge regarding considerations of frequency of dialogue, supervisors' strategies and attitude within the interactive dialogue, and illuminate other factors affecting student learning and reflection through interactive reflective writing. A recent study by Dancza et al. (2019) calls for research to 'evidence' current practice models that effectively and efficiently support students' learning during role-emerging placements. It would seem that this study using the interactive reflective dialogue from Otago Polytechnic occupational therapy students and their supervisors may assist to provide such research as it explores current practice, providing qualitative 'evidence'<sup>8</sup> of, interactive reflective dialoguing as a learning tool

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<sup>8</sup> Thorne (2008, 2016) acknowledges the shortfalls of qualitative methods to 'evidence' practice but simultaneously discusses the importance of qualitative methods to provide insightful understandings of the clinical practice world and issues. The term 'evidencing the practice' suggests that despite issues of generalisability and constraints in this providing

during role-emerging placements, a practice which appears not to have been explored in the context of role-emerging placements.

### ***Objectives of this study***

This study aims to explore three main concepts or objectives addressing gaps in the understanding of the literature and adding to current knowledge in the following areas:

1. To explore and provide 'evidence' on the current practice of interactive reflective dialoguing as a model to support learning on role-emerging placements.
2. To contribute to the understanding of the role of reflection in student learning specifically on role-emerging placements.
3. To add to the understanding of the nature of learning, and learning process, involved during role-emerging placements in occupational therapy education.

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'true hard evidence,' qualitative research when well applied indeed has a place in evidencing practice by increasing understanding of current practices. Thorne argues for qualitative metasynthesis to assist to qualify qualitatively derived clinical knowledge (Thorne, 2009) as she argues that the "qualitative imperative" is inherent to nursing, a practice discipline where science and clinical judgement are interdependent (Thorne, 2009 p. 570), similarly to with occupational therapy.

# CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an outline of the research methodology, interpretive description (ID), and study methods applied in this research study. An overview of interpretive description explains the origin, general principles, and interpretive description's epistemological stance. The choice of methodology and its application to this study are outlined. The method is then described detailing the research procedures and documenting the participant selection, recruitment, data collection, and data analysis processes. Ethical considerations are also discussed. A section on rigour and trustworthiness follows including specific considerations about using written reflective dialogue as data. The Data Analysis and Verification Tool (DAViT) is detailed, providing information on this relatively unknown tool, which was used for member checking, and contributed to the analysis itself. A brief summary concludes this chapter.

## Section 1: Interpretive Description

The study involves a qualitative and inductive exploration of the reflective dialogue written over the course of a six-week role-emerging placement in mainstream primary schools. This will enable insights into learning on role-emerging placement and illuminate the role of reflective dialoguing in this learning process. A qualitative approach was adopted to fit the inquiry's nature, including the complex, subjective and tacit nature of learning and reflective practice and the school-based, role-emerging fieldwork placement context (Creswell, 1998). Health researchers often use qualitative methodologies because clinical problems suit thoughtful exploration and complicated issues of interest involve latent variables or concepts that are not easily measured through quantitative means (Colorafi & Evans, 2016).

Thorne, Kirkham, & MacDonald-Emes, (1997) developed interpretive description because of a perceived lack of fit between the nursing professions' clinical world and the philosophical worlds of the traditional qualitative research methods of grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology. Thorne (2016) explains that health researchers enter into research to answer clinical questions informing clinical practice and illuminating insights into practice contexts. She argues that the underpinning methodological research philosophies need to align with these clinical worlds. Interpretive description provides this philosophical fit to match the clinical context and research purpose for health researchers (Thorne, 2016).

Lincoln & Guba's (1985) naturalistic inquiry underpins interpretive description (Thorne, 2008). This paradigm provides a comprehensive rationale and philosophy for non-positivist inquiry. The data for this study comprised of reflective dialoguing produced for learning rather than for research purposes, upholding the naturalistic inquiry principle of reducing the research's impact on participants (Ballinger, 2006). This also aligns to naturalistic inquiry's concept of collecting the data in the everyday life setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Naturalistic inquiry's philosophical basis guides and unifies interpretive description research and methodology and distinguishes interpretive description from other qualitative methods (Thorne, 2008).

Interpretive description is inductive and has an experiential, relativist, and constructionist application to research (Thorne, 2016). Assumptions of interpretive description are understood and applied in the context of this study, its methods, and its findings. The "complex and messy world of human health and illness" requires an inductive approach to understand the clinical context (Thorne, 2008 p. 48). Thorne (2016) suggests that interpretation goes beyond description and into discipline-specific meaning, using and acknowledging the researcher's clinical expertise. She explains that such social constructionist epistemology is conducive to clinical relevance and discipline-specific advancement (Thorne, 2016). Therefore, the knower and the known interact

and affect each other (Thorne, 2016); this concept is applied to this research study in conceptualizing how students learn and produce written reflections and, to appreciate the researcher's contribution within the construction of themes and interpretation of the placement context.

A further fundamental assumption in interpretive description relates to ontology: valuing subjective and experiential knowledge as a source leading to multiple realities, individual perspectives, and personal meaning of an experience (McMullan, 2017; Thorne, 2016). Relativism recognises that each participant creates their own reality; or, in other words, there is a subjective truth. In contrast to this, it also simultaneously recognises a shared understanding of human commonalities (Thorne, 2008). This influences subjective reflective dialogue as a primary data source to represent the students' learning and experiential knowledge. The research is open to different individual and group meanings and recognises the complexity and subjectivity of learning through experience.

### *Fit to this study*

Interpretive description suits the study question and this study's intent, as the context is the fieldwork placement, the 'clinical world'. This study seeks to understand students learning through reflective writing during placement, and recommendations would likely serve to improve students' learning and supervisors' practices. The reflective data provides an opportunity to explore and examine current practice by 'evidencing' a current practice model involving interactive reflective dialogue, a teaching or learning tool not yet researched in the context of supporting role-emerging placements. Potentially this might benefit students, supervisors, educators, and academics interested in role-emerging placements and those with interest in reflective dialoguing. Thorne argues that the point of research for the health researcher is to improve or 'evidence' current clinical practice (Thorne, 2008). This study's purpose resonates with Thorne's belief that interpretive description is best suited to exploring the clinical application and context to enhance or better understand discipline-specific practice (Thorne, 2016).

There is precedent in using interpretive description to explore the student's practice and learning during fieldwork placement (Olsen et al., 2013; Rountree, 2016). Olsen et al. (2013) found that interpretive description was useful to explore the beliefs, experiences, and attitudes related to evidence-based practice while physiotherapy students were on placement. Similarly, Rountree's thesis (2016) used interpretive description to examine student midwives' experience during placements. Rountree explains that interpretive description is relevant to the applied clinical practice context and is concerned with clinical field experiences, including learning on placement (Rountree, 2016). Studies by Mejdahl et al., (2018), Rountree (2016), Olsen et al. (2013) and Shea et al., (2018) all use interpretive description to look to evidence, understand and improve current practices, which parallels this studies' objectives which aims to explore and improve current practices to support learning on role-emerging placement.

Hunt's (2009) criticism of interpretive description was based on a lack of guiding resources and a lack of studies using this methodology to support its' use. Thorne has since published two books (Thorne 2008, 2016) that guide researchers using this methodology, and its' use within studies and articles has grown substantially in the last ten years (Frenchman, 2018). Research studies in healthcare are attracted to ID's suitability to explore clinical phenomena. Moreover, its flexibility enables the use and combination of various techniques from other methods (Thorne, 2004) while still maintaining a guiding theoretical framework supporting researchers (Sarvimäki & Stenbock-Hult, 2016; Thorne, 2016).

## Section 2: Study Design and Method

This section comprises the steps and processes of the research. It begins by describing the theoretical forestructure (Thorne, 2016); thereafter is a description of the participants, data collection, storage, and data analysis used in the research.

### **2.1 Theoretical Forestructure:**

Thorne (2016) explains that the researcher needs to scaffold the study to set up the initial position from which the researcher will build their study plan. The theoretical forestructure is built through locating the study within the literature and theoretically (which is documented within the literature review), and positioning oneself within the research (Thorne, 2016).

#### **2.1.1 Positioning the researcher within the study**

Thorne (2016) advocates for transparency and openness when entering research, recommending acknowledging who you are in terms of exploring what one brings to the research. This involves reflexivity on what one represents and what one is trying to accomplish to explain the context, manage bias and reduce unintentional bias (Thorne, 2016).

The researchers experience with supervising and participating in role-emerging placements, and motivation to perform this research is outlined in the introduction chapter (See 'Genesis of the research project' page 7). It is acknowledged that I believe that role-emerging placements offer rich learning opportunities despite the challenges they pose and the 'administrative load' they require. It is further acknowledged that I value the role-emerging placement paradigm and embrace these philosophical changes in the profession and in my teaching and practice. Thorne recognises that the researcher has expertise or experience of the research topic enabling insightful interpretation and "capitalization" of and use of the researcher as an "instrument of the research" (Thorne, 2008 p. 69). Therefore, the data is interpreted within the clinical context, discipline, and time in which it is constructed.

Thorne et al., (1997) initially advised that an analytical schema or framework is needed as a basis for the analysis, in this case to analyse the written reflective data. Thorne has since reworded the term "analytical framework" as she has acknowledged that this has led to a deductive type of analysis, as discussed in the reflexive note below, and she now uses the term "theoretical forestructure" (Thorne, 2008). The theoretical forestructure identifies the researcher's underlying assumptions, expectations, and biases, but notes that the researcher must remain data-driven and not theory-driven in their analysis, ensuring an inductive rather than deductive approach (Brinkmann, 2014; Thorne, 2016). For detailed information on the application of this process within this study please see Appendices A to C.

#### *Reflexive memo<sup>9</sup>:*

*The concepts of "Reflecting to learn" and "Learning to Reflect" emerged from the pre-supposition interview (as noted within Appendix C) and I realised that in my submission for my thesis that I was proposing these concepts as possible outcomes within the study before beginning the actual study. I realised that this would have pre-empted my results and that I had hung onto these terms as they were 'catchy'. I was able to bracket these and not let them get into my early open coding and themes by being*

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<sup>9</sup> note details of reflexive memos and their use in this research study is discussed in section 2.5.1 of this chapter

*open to what the actual data was saying rather than searching out these concepts and finding data to support them. These expectations and aspirations were identified and bracketed during data analysis.*

### **2.1.2 A self-administered pre-suppositions interview**

A self-questioning exercise helped construct the theoretical forestructure for this study prior to commencing data collection and analysis. The exercise was like a pre-suppositions interview that might occur before data collection, whereby supervisors question the researcher to identify biases, assumptions, and understandings of the researcher (Frenchman, 2018). The purpose of this self-disclosure is to reduce unintentional bias in the research process through a declaration and reflexive exercise before data analysis (Mellor, 2016; Thorne, 2008). Denscombe, (2010) suggests bracketing off these presuppositions. Appendix C outlines the questions and answers that the researcher posed to herself to inform the theoretical forestructure guided by Thorne (2016).

## **2.2 Participants**

Sampling was purposive. Occupational therapy students participating in the school-based role-emerging placements during their year two fieldwork placement (FW2) from one year's cohort were invited to participate in the study. Of the eight (8) students that attended role-emerging placements in their fieldwork 2 placement, three (3) students agreed to allow access to their Slack<sup>10</sup> entries to be part of the research data. Ethical considerations involved in the consent and recruitment of participants, careful management of their confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity are documented in section 3 of this chapter.

The participants comprised of three students and their respective supervisors. Daily interactive reflective dialogue between the student participant and their appointed long-arm supervisor over the course of the 6-week placement was collected. Data was formed by extracting the dialogue from the Slack platform which pertained specifically to these three students and their corresponding two supervisors. A collaborative supervision model was employed, meaning that two supervisors provided supervision to the eight students on placement; two of the students in this study were supervised by one supervisor while the third student had the other supervisor. The data, therefore, comprised of three datasets relating to each participant pair:

- Participant Pair 1 (PP1): Student 1 and Supervisor<sup>11</sup> 1, Word count: 11,072
- Participant Pair 2 (PP2): Student 2 and Supervisor 1, Word count: 7,470
- Participant Pair 3 (PP3): Student 3 and Supervisor 2, Word count: 10,750

Appendix D provides sample extracts from PP1 of the dialogue data.

## **2.3 Data Collection and Management**

Written reflective daily entries from the three student participants and their respective supervisors were collected as data from the dialogue platform, Slack. There was no inclusion or exclusion of data with all three consenting student participants' entries, whether a full reflective log of great depth or a few words in reply to a supervisor, were included. Data also included a few generic group notices and reminders from supervisors to these students on placement.

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<sup>10</sup> Slack /Slack.com was the online platform used by the Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy for the interactive reflective dialogue between students and supervisors.

<sup>11</sup> Referring to the long-arm or off-site occupational therapy supervisor of the placement who contributed to the interactive reflective dialogue

Students were required to write daily reflective logs, and supervisors were required to respond within a 24-hour timeframe. Therefore many hours of data were yielded, and data captured the full span of the six-week placement. Approximately 35,000 words were initially pulled off the Slack database corresponding to these three participant pairs' entries. Sorting involved creating three separate participant pair data sets. Computer-generated jargon was removed. The dialogue was sense checked to ensure it accurately captured the correct order of entries and was specific to each pair. The second research supervisor performed additional content and sense-checking against the original Slack database.

Cleaning of the data ensured the privacy and anonymity of the occupational therapy students, supervisors, schools, teachers, and school pupils. In vivo dialogue quoted in the findings was corrected for obvious typing, grammatical and spelling errors and further cleaned to ensure absolute anonymity, reallocating letters to school pupils in the order that they are discussed within the findings chapter, removing names and some references to gender. When references to specific children are not explicit, for example, a student uses the term "these chaps" this is clarified and bracketed with: "(pupils)" to avoid confusion to the reader.

## **2.4 Data Analysis**

Data analysis followed the reflexive thematic analysis (TA) procedures outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006, 2013). The thematic analysis approach provides a "flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p78). While reflexive thematic analysis is stepped out in six phases, many of these steps and processes happened concurrently (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Thematic analysis is an "iterative and recursive process" (Terry et al., 2017 p. 22), with the researcher jumping to and from the phases as needed throughout the collection and analysis of the data. This fits well with interpretive description, which embraces multiple techniques but upholds an inductive but systematic approach to analysis which occurs in an unfolding manner, with many processes co-occur and informing each other (Thorne, 2016). In this study many processes occur throughout each phase, such as reflexive memoing, returning to the research question and analytical schema, and diagramming to assist with conceptualising and constructing codes and themes. Moreover, member checking through the DAViT tool (Clayton & Thorne, 2000) enabled verification with the participants and simultaneously provided further data, which stimulated further analysis of findings. This enabled a more iterative collection and analysis process, aligning with both Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis (2013) and Thorne's interpretive description (2016).

### **2.4.1 The phases of thematic analysis**

Braun and Clarke (2013) discuss six phases of thematic analysis from familiarisation with the data to the final writing up of the findings. While this is described in a linear manner the researcher moved forward and backwards through these phases throughout the analysis of the written data.

#### **Phase 1: Familiarisation**

Familiarisation involved multiple re-reading of the data sets. This phase also included making early notes and drawing comparisons, and writing familiarisation summaries for each data set (Terry et al., 2017). See familiarisation summaries for each participant pair's data in Appendices E-G, and a familiarisation summary across the datasets Appendix H.

#### **Phase 2: Early coding**

Open, inclusive, and extensive coding of all the data in relation to the research question occurred (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes are small meaning units that form the "most basic segment, or element, of the raw data" and enable the researcher to organise the data into these meaning units (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p88). Coding was performed manually and resulted in multiple codes being used throughout the data and across the three

data sets. The example below from PP1 demonstrates *inclusive coding* (Terry et al., 2017), where one sentence or phrase might result in multiple codes. For example, as seen in Figure 1 below, the phrase: ‘*a few children that have attention challenges*’ is coded into three initial codes, namely: *naming*, *behavioural issues*, and *performance difficulties*. Coding involved further refining of analytic questions and updating the analytic schema.

**Figure 1**

*Initial coding is open and inclusive*

Data from PP1	Codes
<p>"Dilemma.....There is a few children that have attention challenges(1) and got removed frequently and missed out on a lot of work (2), although my teacher told me that being the first week of school there is always 'holiday kinks' to iron out (3) and behaviour tends to improve for majority of children (3). One of the children 'magnetted' (as the teacher called it!)(3) to me and she is renowned for being quite 'touchy feely' (1). I spoke to the teacher about how I am able to handle this(4) and I now feel I am able to handle (5) her touching behaviour (1) should it occur again.",</p> <p>"Desire.....My desire is to continue to build a strong rapport with all of the children(4, 6) so I am able to engage well with not only my target children, but with the class as a whole."(7)</p>	<p>1 Naming; 1 Behavioural issues 1 performance difficulties</p> <p>2 Unfairness of exclusion as punishment; 2 ?Conflict in views with teacher; 2 Behavioural management</p> <p>3 Framing; 3 Contextual awareness; 3 "Teacher talk"</p> <p>4 Collaboration; 4 Rapport building 4 Onsite supervisor advice 4 Seeking advice 4 Agency, proactive</p> <p>5 Learning new skill; 5 Confidence 5 experiential learning</p> <p>6 Preparation for placement; 6 Goal-directed learning 6 Staged OT process; 6 rapport</p> <p>7 Universal design; 7 REP paradigm</p>

**Phase 3: Searching for themes**

After coding all three data sets, the researcher sorted and grouped the codes using mind maps, which helped form provisional themes (Braun et al., 2019).

To illustrate this using the above data and coding extract, the codes “naming” and “framing” became linked together and to other related codes to eventually form the theme: “Developing a theory-practice link.”

In order to add depth and move beyond “domain summaries” or surface level themes (Braun et al., 2019), the researcher also used Freeman’s (1996) ideas of representational and presentational analysis when considering written data. Freeman (1996) advocates that for more in-depth analysis written data needs to be considered in terms of a representational and presentational meaning. Not only “what is said?” (representational meaning) but into the presentational analysis such as “what is not said?” and “how is this said?” “why would this be said like that?” “why is she saying this?” “what might that mean?”. These questions assisted the researcher to move beyond the obvious manifest themes to more abstract and latent themes involving “implicit ideas” (Braun et al., 2019 p. 4). Appendix A details the analytical schema (questions posed to the data).

#### **Phase 4: Reviewing themes**

The data and familiarisation notes were shared with the researcher's primary supervisor, enabling debate and discussion of the provisional themes. Four guiding ideas assisted in the review, formation, and transformation of the themes:

- That the codes that made up the theme fitted and formed a pattern together to explain the theme
- That the themes worked across the datasets
- That the data sufficiently supported the theme
- That the theme answered the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Further clarification of these provisional themes was assisted by the process and outcome of the DAViT member checking tool which was developed and designed to verify findings from written data (Clayton & Thorne, 2000). Member checking through the DAViT involves presenting findings in a prescribed flow diagram format. The DAViT specifies neutrally written themes, and a diagrammatical representation of each theme depicting the full range of options from the data in relation to each theme and the inter-relationships of concepts within these themes. This process of capturing each theme within a flow diagram in itself assisted to further clarify and consolidate the themes of this study. This clarification process led to the theme "A more independent learning style is required," as the researcher promoted this to form a theme in itself rather than a sub-theme. The reasoning for this 'promotion' (Terry et al., 2017) was because of a realisation that this concept was core to learning rather than falling under one of the other themes as initially conceptualised. These were further debated and discussed with the researcher's two supervisors, until four provisional themes emerged which formed the headers for the DAViT questionnaire. The main headers (or provisional themes) reflected in the DAViT were: The development of an occupational therapy perspective; the development of clinical reasoning and reflective practice skills; a more independent learning style is required; and, the safety of the learning environment. Appendix L provides an example of the DAViT questionnaire showing the flow chart structure for two of these headers.

#### **Phase 5: Defining and naming themes**

Themes were further refined, driven by the need to capture the data's core story (Terry et al., 2017) and the feedback from the DAViT (Clayton & Thorne, 2000). Deliberations of a 'core concept' in relation to the research question, across the datasets and the provisional themes resulted in the emergence of the central theme: "sensemaking." This provided a core overall story, pulling the data together and answering the research question.

The 'story' and essence of each category and theme were then reconsidered and refined, including establishing inter-relationships and fit of each theme to the overall story (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Sub-themes were named and identified and further consolidated under each theme and category. Further sorting and consolidation of themes meant that some sub-themes were promoted or demoted (Terry et al., 2017). Diagramming, reflective memoing, and debate with supervisors assisted in these final changes. For example: 'The safety of the learning environment' is termed a safe platform and is discussed as being central to sensemaking and also in relation to *personal and professional growth* category and the *emotional openness and support* theme.

The DAViT feedback, while supporting the four provisional themes, also provided further rich insights and questions, adding to the analytic schema posed to the data. Thus, feedback from the participants was used as further data, influencing the final construction of themes. The DAViT tool, while a member checking tool, simultaneously formed part of the analysis itself and enabled iterative data collection as per Thorne's (2016)

methodology and Braun and Clarke's methods (2006, 2013). See appendix M which detail the DAViT's contribution to the analysis and analytic schema for more information on this.

### **Phase 6: Writing up themes, producing a report**

The final step of analysis includes the writing up of findings and producing the report (Terry et al., 2017). Analysis continued in the writing-up phase as the researcher articulated and consolidated themes further. This process involved rewording neutrally written themes from the DAViT questionnaire into more comprehensive and positive headers. For example, this included changing: 'A more independent learning style' to 'Student Agency'; and 'Enhancing clinical reasoning and reflective practice' to 'Becoming more reflective.' Using in vivo quotes to support and explain each theme supported this consolidation and final changes. In addition to in vivo quotes the idea of showcasing the dialogue process through learning stories, enabled a "compelling illustration" of the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006 p. 93) and the nature of learning through interactive reflective dialogue. Learning stories are extractions from each participant pairs' dialogue data, capturing their written discussion on a specific topic. The learning stories span over a few weeks of dialogue on that topic. For example, one learning story captures all the dialogue pertaining to the issue of toileting with a specific child, tracing dialogue which begins in week 1 and continues to the end of the placement. The idea to use learning stories to showcase the themes and convey each theme was useful to illustrate the extent and nature of dialoguing, collaboration and co-construction in the data. The learning stories were chosen to support and demonstrate each category and theme in a contextually meaningful way compared with isolated quotes. Furthermore, the use of learning stories supported the grounding of themes in the data. Appendix K reveals more of the researcher's comments, reflexive notes, and links to themes within the learning stories.

## **2.5 Strategies used to assist the analysis**

Various research strategies were used to assist the analysis process, including: memoing, bracketing, diagramming, reviewing the analytic schema and questioning, and theoretical sensitivity. These strategies were employed throughout the analysis, across these phases, to support and strengthen the thematic analysis.

### **2.5.1 Reflexive memoing and note-taking**

Glaser (1998, p83) explains, "Memos are the theorising write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding," providing a continuous process of documenting the researcher's thoughts during data analysis. The researcher used a separate notebook to write notes about decisions, ideas, questions, links, observations, hunches, and also to diagram while going through the analysis phases (Terry et al., 2017; Thorne, 2008). Memos were useful for consolidating and tracking analysis by recording researcher notes over time. Various memos are included as appendices and within this chapter and convey the researcher's decisions in analysing and constructing themes and thoughts about the emerging findings.

***Reflexive memo:** I was mindful to resist the urge to critique the reflection and to check my emotions when at times I was frustrated with the student for missing key theoretical aspects while reading the reflective dialogue. I was able to consciously put these thoughts and emotions aside (bracket); remembering my role as a researcher was to explore and understand, rather than to assess, mark, teach or evaluate.*

### **2.5.2 Bracketing**

Bracketing is a technique associated with phenomenological inquiry involving deliberately putting aside one's own beliefs about the phenomenon under investigation before and throughout the research process to ensure an open mind for analysis (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). An example of bracketing has been discussed above (in

section 2.1 of this chapter) included realising that the researcher had pre-empted two potential themes prior to the analysis, which were likely to have been retained because they sounded 'catchy' and might have been worked into the analytical schema in more of a deductive manner. These included the phrases 'reflecting to learn' and 'learning to reflect.' This realisation meant that the researcher deliberately removed, 'bracketed', these two phrases from the analytical schema, recognising that these may or may not "emerge" naturally from the data. This process entailed ensuring that the researcher looked at the data with an open-mind and employed inductive analysis, rather than adopting a deductive analysis and pre-empting results. This was essential to prevent researcher-driven, rather than data-driven, themes.

A further example of bracketing is mentioned in the above reflective memo (section 2.5.1) which involved bracketing my emotions and thoughts while reading the reflective dialogue to ensure I remained open to the dialogue and adopted a researcher rather than teacher attitude when reading the dialogue.

### ***2.5.3 Diagramming and thematic mapping***

Constant theme mapping and diagramming helped group ideas, construct themes, sort ideas, and work out inter-relationships between ideas (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Terry et al., 2017). Diagramming was also useful to highlight gaps or 'poorly fitted concepts' within themes. Diagramming supported the researcher's ideas toward more abstract and conceptual concepts and ideas throughout the analytic phases, including the concept of sensemaking (see Appendix J of different mind maps at various times in the analytic process).

### ***2.5.4 Refining the analytical schema***

Reflexive thematic analysis involves refining the analytical framework /schema as needed based on the data. For example, questions were added, reworded, and removed, and concepts were reframed as required, see appendices A and B. The researcher considered whether other concepts were omitted and whether the concepts were linked with the data. The researcher returned to the data to check that the analytical framework was complete and relevant. Diagramming, memoing, and returning to the data involved an ongoing, iterative, and evolving process. Questions included: "What is this saying about learning? How is this showing learning? What learning is occurring here? What learning potentially could occur here? How has the supervisor assisted learning here? How is the writing or feedback assisting learning here? What does /could this mean? What is happening here? Is this learning? How has the role-emerging context influenced this?" Etc. (Hunt, 2009; Thorne et al., 2004).

New questions developed toward the end of the analysis, becoming more detailed, focused, and less open. Feedback from the DAViT stimulated further changes to the analytical framework. Towards the final analysis stage, deductive reasoning confirmed themes and explained differences and ranges within themes. See appendix A for details on the analytical schema.

### ***2.5.5 Theoretical sensitivity***

Theoretical sensitivity entails becoming sensitive to the data by tuning in with knowledge to what the data is saying, enabling understanding of the underlying implications or relevance by researching and linking the findings to theory (Glaser, 1978). Following the finding that 'sensemaking' was core to learning through dialoguing while on role-emerging placement, the term was then researched, as per Glaser's (1978) concept of theoretical sensitivity. This research enabled further understanding and consolidated the use of this term in this study. The discussion chapter, rather than the literature review, defines and explains sensemaking, describing its fit in the study, since the concept was formed after, rather than anticipated prior to, the analysis.

## Section 3: Ethical Considerations

Ethics approval was gained from Otago Polytechnics Ethics Committee on 3 May 2018, reference number 767, see appendix S for a copy of the approval letter. Student confidentiality and informed consent have been considered, including ensuring students' anonymity and ensuring no perceived pressure, benefit, or bias by the students' to participate in the study. See Appendices P, Q, and R for copies of the invitation to participate in research, consent and information letters provided to the student participants.

As per the principle of non-maleficence, measures were implemented to ensure that student participants experienced as little as possible duress and negative consequence of participating, or in electing not to participate in this research. Retrospective data analysis of pre-written dialogue data afforded little interference with participants, other than for processes of consent and member checking. The researcher was mindful of the inherent power imbalance between students and educators from the occupational therapy school, which likely evoked pressure or perceived pressure on students to participate in the study. This was somewhat reduced by the timing of this research being undertaken a year after the students' placement completion. Moreover, member checking marked the first and only direct contact with the student participants by the researcher, and this occurred following student graduation into the occupational therapy degree. Member checking yielded two out of three student responses, which suggests participants were empowered to decline.

Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity are ensured by carefully worded documentation within the study to reduce traceability to specific participant students, long-arm supervisors, schools, school pupils, and teachers involved or discussed in the study. Data cleaning involved removing identifiers such as the schools' names, students' names, long-arm supervisors' names, and school teachers' names and at times reference to specific gender. Data storage was password protected on the computer, and a secure locked filing cabinet stored all notes and paperwork. At the end of the research the data will be retained by Otago Polytechnic in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed.

Consultation assists to uphold the principle of beneficence in research ethics, ensuring that the benefits of the research project outweigh the potential negative impacts. Consultation contributed to ensuring and establishing the usefulness, purpose and relevance of the fieldwork placements and this research study undertaken within this ethics application. This involved consultation with the lecturers from the Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy and with the placement supervisors, which ensured the researcher was well-informed of the purpose of these placements. Discussion explored how and why the interactive reflective dialogue was introduced on the placements; the content of the 'preloading' and preparation material provided to the students; and the nature of the face-to-face supervision sessions. These conversations enabled an appreciation of the context of these placements, especially required as the researcher was not involved with the placements. Member checking using the DAViT form invited consultation with all participants (students and supervisors) during the research analysis phase, assisting to prevent misrepresentation and to provide participants with a platform for feedback within the study. Verification through member checking enabling participants to express their perspective of what was important and also enabled a check of the accuracy of the authors' interpretations and findings.

The Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy has other research studies underway based on these school-based role-emerging placements, which are all associated with the same ethical application. The nature of these inquiries to date has included exploring behavioural issues at school and a scoping review of literature involved in school-based role-emerging placements. Consultation with the Ministry of Education in relation to the need for, and outcome of, these school-based occupational therapy placements was influential in bringing

about the placement and will continue as research is underway. Discussion, consultation, and collaboration between the Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy and Iris Pahau, former cultural advisor to the New Zealand Occupational Therapy Association, as well as with the Otago Polytechnic Kiatohutohu office occurred as part of the ethics application and best practice. This consultation involved deliberations on the purpose of these role-emerging placements in lower decile mainstream schools. Such conversations included the need to reduce the learning barriers at school especially for Maori and Pacific pupils. While school pupils' ethnicity was unknown as this data was not collected, it would seem that this information could have benefit for pupils who are Māori. This collaboration and the nature of the occupational therapy service provided by the student placements within the mainstream schools is with the intent to embrace the concepts of promoting, partnering, and protecting Maori in line with the Treaty of Waitangi (Ministry of Health, 2020).

## Section 4: Rigour and Trustworthiness

Four considerations of rigour and trustworthiness are outlined including the study's confirmability, credibility, transferability, and dependability together with Thorne's four evaluative criteria for trustworthiness. This is followed by introducing a further five criteria, deemed less concerned with 'repeatability and accuracy' of results and more focussed on issues of professional relevance and meaning, and concepts peculiar to research in the health care context (Thorne, 2016). These include: moral defensibility, clinical relevance, pragmatic obligation, contextual awareness, and probable truth. Thereafter the DAViT member checking tool is detailed providing more in-depth explanation of how this was used to support the analysis and verification of findings in this study. This is followed by a discussion of the considerations when using dialogue as data.

### 4.1 Evaluation standards in qualitative research

Validity standards in qualitative research are challenging because of the contradiction of incorporating rigour with subjectivity and creativity with scientific process (Finlay, 2006; Finlay & Ballinger, 2006). Various efforts, however, ensured this research's trustworthiness, as appropriate to the qualitative paradigm (Leininger, 1994) and this study's specific epistemological approach (Ballinger, 2006; Finlay, 2006; Thorne, 2008). Lincoln & Guba's (1985) influential work, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, provides the guidelines for considering this study's trustworthiness, as this underpins interpretive description's philosophy (Thorne, 2016). Naturalistic inquiry suggests considering the confirmability, credibility, transferability, and dependability of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These aspects are considered together with the four evaluation criteria proposed by Thorne (2016), namely epistemological integrity, interpretive authority, analytic logic, and representative credibility.

#### **Confirmability**

A study's confirmability is the measure to ensure the participants' data determines the findings instead of being manufactured by the researcher's biases, motivations, interests, or perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The 'unintended impact of the researcher' is minimised by detailing the researcher's reasoning, what Thorne terms the "*analytic logic*" (Thorne, 2016 p. 234). The analytic logic is specified within the theoretical forestructure (Thorne, 2016), reflexive memos and a detailed audit trail outlined in the research procedures. The rigorous and systematic coding and theme construction of Braun & Clarke's (2006) reflexive thematic analysis used in this study adds to the confirmability of the results. Moreover, confirmability is enhanced by the DAViT tool enabling member checking and verification of findings (Clayton & Thorne, 2000; Leininger, 1994).

#### **Credibility**

Credibility is the "truth value" or the confidence in the findings from the participants' perspective and within that context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility is associated with Thorne's concept of "*interpretive authority*" (Thorne, 2016 p. 235); the trustworthiness of the researcher's interpretations, and the use of strategies to

ensure that findings are based on 'some truth' external to the researcher's own biases and opinions. Strategies used to enhance credibility in this study include a prolonged familiarisation phase (Braun & Clarke 2006) providing lengthy engagement with the data (Finlay 2006, Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, the data was written without knowledge of the research question or for research purposes, enhancing its 'truth.' Finally, the frequency and consistence of the reflective dialogue entries which occurred almost daily over the course of the six-week placement, adds further to its credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Member checking ensured triangulation, an essential aspect of credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Clayton & Thorne, 2000). The DAViT member checking tool enabled participants to check whether the analysis and interpretations accurately accounted for their experience (Clayton & Thorne, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Furthermore, a team approach enhanced the findings' credibility, including the primary researcher defending and debating themes and findings with the research supervisors regularly throughout the analysis (Dierckx de Casterle et al., 2012).

### ***Transferability***

Transferability refers to how the research may be applicable beyond this context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability aligns with Thorne's concept of "*representative credibility*," which means that claims from this study need to fit with the nature of the data and research (Thorne, 2016 p. 234). The small number of participants within this study, comprising three participant pairs, detrimentally impacts this study's findings' transferability and generalizability. The qualitative design itself reduces the transferability and generalizability of the findings of this study. Furthermore, the structure, teaching, audience, and purpose of the written reflections will have influenced the content of the written reflective dialogue, the data (Moon, 2007). Claims of generalizability are specific to the people, context, situation, time, and place peculiar to the data. The background to the mainstream schools and the nature and objectives of the placements enable the reader to judge how applicable the findings are to other settings (Finlay, 2006). However, to safeguard and protect the student participants' anonymity and confidentiality, limited demographic information about the participants is provided, which remained unknown to the researcher herself.

### ***Dependability***

Dependability relates to the reliability, accuracy, and repeatability of results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability is closely linked to consistency (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The dependability of this study is managed by employing a team approach, using 'in vivo' quotes, and using extensive passages from the data to form the learning stories. The DAViT assists by enabling triangulation and verification as part of member checking the accuracy of the researchers' interpretations.

Related to dependability is congruency and what Thorne terms "*epistemological integrity*" (Thorne, 2016 p. 233). Epistemological integrity involves ensuring that there is coherence and fit between research design, aims, assumptions, and practices. The author has taken measures and actively questioned the 'fit' of the study design to this methodology and philosophy which addresses issues of congruency. See Appendix B which relates to ensuring the fit between the purpose and methods within the research.

## ***4.2 Meaningfulness of rigour in qualitative health research***

Further to the above-mentioned trustworthiness considerations, Thorne argues that the clinical nature of inquiry, and the objective to enhance discipline-specific knowledge means rigour and credibility should be more than "adherence to the methodological rules" and instead focus on the findings' meanings and clinical relevance (Thorne, 2008 p. 223). Similarly, Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis is more concerned with richness

and the ability to show the construction of themes rather than the accuracy and repeatability of the results (Braun et al., 2019). Researcher interpretation beyond the obvious summary of data and transcending surface level themes is more important than “consensus coding” or “correct analysis” (Braun et al., 2019 p. 5).

Thorne argues that the depth of involvement with the participants, together with the richness and clinical relevance of the analysis, means qualitative research can produce something worthy of documenting, regardless of the sample size (Thorne 2008, 2016). Therefore, Thorne advises four additional criteria specific to Interpretive Descriptive methodology that involves a more subtle appreciation of the study's clinical and social context when considering rigour (Thorne, 2016). Thorne advocates for considerations of “moral defensibility,” “clinical relevance,” “pragmatic obligation,” “contextual awareness,” and “probable truth” (Thorne 2016 p. 236) in health research. These five additional criteria were also applied to this study.

### ***Moral defensibility***

Firstly, moral defensibility includes having a compelling purpose and intent for the research to advance disciplinary practice and knowledge or meet a clinical need (Thorne, 2016). Moral defensibility also involves using procedures and methods which minimise human inconvenience and promote safety; principles of non-maleficence are outlined in the ethical considerations. This study aims to advance discipline-specific knowledge about current practice supporting the principle of beneficence, this is discussed under the headers clinical relevance, pragmatic obligation, contextual awareness, and probable truth.

### ***Clinical relevance***

Disciplinary or clinical relevance involves linking the research to disciplinary knowledge and or practice that the researcher aims to improve (Thorne, 2008, 2016). This research explores the practice of written interactive dialogue as a contributor to learning during role-emerging placement. It appears to be the first study of this kind, therefore enabling insight into a potentially viable practice model. The commitment of beneficence through moving beyond interesting illuminations to practical concepts that will enhance discipline-specific knowledge and practice drives this study. The findings and recommendations from this study will positively influence occupational therapy education and the profession, giving insight into students' learning through reflective dialogue on role-emerging placements. It is hoped that this insight that will ultimately enhance disciplinary knowledge and thus assist educators, students, and the profession.

### ***Pragmatic obligation, contextual awareness, and probable truth***

Qualitative research is criticized for lack of objectivity and scientific method (Finlay, 2006). Thorne (2008) recognises the limitations of taking findings from Interpretive Description as ‘evidence’ for practice or absolute ‘truth’ due to the “intricate blend of artistry and science” (Thorne, 2008 p 222).

Clinical relevance, contextual awareness, and probable truth are arguably more likely to be understood and meaningfully interpreted by someone who has “insider knowledge” (Carpenter & Suto, 2008, p. 28). Insider knowledge can add trustworthiness and authenticity to the process as it allows for an intimate understanding of the student experience and context (Patton, 2002). Patton summarised this as “closeness does not make bias and loss of perspective inevitable; distance is no guarantee of objectivity” (Patton, 2002 p. 49). However, “balance, fairness and completeness” (Patton, 2002 p. 51) within the research process and analysis of the data must be well considered. The primary and secondary research supervisors experience in these role-emerging placements and as long-arm supervisors provide insider knowledge and contextual awareness in this study. The second research supervisor is also a participant in the study, the long-arm supervisor of participant pair three. She was consciously excluded from the initial analytic phase to reduce unintentional bias in analysing and constructing themes. Later in the analysis phase she was involved as a participant in member checking was to

verify draft themes and researcher interpretations. She was also included in the research supervision sessions towards the end stage of analysis, which involved debating and challenging the final theme construction. In this way she was used as an “expert” participant /key informant (Thorne, 2016 p. 92) by checking and discussing themes during research supervision and through the DAViT tool. This enabled informed, “thoughtful” triangulation enhancing clinical meaningfulness (Thorne, 2016, p. 92). Notably, in terms of bias, the primary researcher is not affiliated with the Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy and has no connection to these school-based role-emerging placements or students from this study.

Thorne (2016) describes that this issue around probable truth is that findings can be taken to be hard evidence and used to inform practice if they are misrepresented. The manner in which the findings might be construed in a healthcare environment searching for evidence-based practice needs to guide the claims that are made. Relevant, discipline-specific interpretation and application has been used to safeguard this issue.

### ***4.3 Member checking: The Data Analysis and Verification Tool (DAViT)***

#### **Background of the DAViT**

Leininger (1994) argues that it is essential to return to the participants to check the researcher’s interpretations. Confirmability and verifiability are particularly problematic when using written data in research (Ross et al., 1994). This methodological issue was overcome by returning to the participants by email to confirm the analysis by presenting them with the spectrum of findings to check the researcher's interpretation of each participant's written reflections (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013; Clayton & Thorne, 2000). Clayton & Thorne (2000) developed a data analysis verification tool (DAViT) to enhance studies' trustworthiness when using written data. Following initial thematic analysis and before the final stage of writing up themes, the researcher developed a flow diagram questionnaire based on Clayton & Thorne’s DAViT tool. The DAViT verified the initial analysis of the participants’ diary data in Clayton and Thorne’s(2000) study in the same way as this study to ensure that inductive analysis was data-driven and accurate to the actual meaning and intent of each participant.

#### **The steps of the DAViT flow diagram**

The process of the DAViT tool follows four steps. The first step is to present each key topic or over-riding issue on a separate paper to each participant. Step 2 involves wording that issue, neutrally and collectively. Step 3 follows from the neutral statement of the issue to include all the various alternative views or different experiences captured in the data (capturing the range of options found in the data). Efforts to capture the emerging themes as neutral and general involved several changes to the flow diagrams, discussed and debated in supervision. Final versions of the flowcharts for each theme represented the study’s provisional key themes (at that time). They captured the variations and individual differences within each of these themes found in the data. An example of the DAViT flowchart is seen in Appendix L which has two photographs, capturing the supervisor’s responses to two of the four charts used.

#### ***Process of member checking***

The research supervisor approached participants for consent to participate in member checking. Note this person was also an educator at this school of occupational therapy and was involved as one of the long-arm supervisors in these role-emerging placements. Following consent, each participant was emailed a six-page document comprising the Davit questionnaire, together with a cover letter briefly explaining how to complete the DAViT questionnaire, and outlining the purpose and process of member checking at this stage. The

document included an example of a completed DAViT form. Each participant was also provided with the full cleaned written dialogue transcript from Slack, containing all and only the interactive dialogue data for that respective participant. This enabled participants to check the dialogue while completing the DAViT questionnaire.

#### **Reflexive memo notes:**

1. *I contemplated only sending extracts of the dialogue data that supported each theme as opposed to each participant pair's full dataset. After consideration, the latter was selected on the basis of trying to reduce researcher-influence on participants in terms of theme construction and researcher interpretations.*
2. *Students and supervisors were likely to have completed the DAViT forms based on their memory of the placement and current retrospective viewpoint rather than checking through the dialogue data for 'proof' to verify findings within the dataset. This issue illustrates the time-dependent nature of opinion and perspective. Arguably because verification occurred over a year post-placement, this might suggest the scope of confirmability beyond the specific dataset.*

#### **The use of the DAViT for member checking and analysis**

The returned DAViT flow diagrams confirmed that the student and supervisor participants agreed all four themes were core to the students learning. Two of the three students and both supervisors returned a completed DAViT questionnaire and provided comments in the optional comments sections. Participants supported the range of possible outcomes that the researcher found in the data. Comparisons between the students responses are seen in Appendices M and N, which illustrates that the DAViT captured the range that was seen in the data within each header. While Appendix O shows some of the links between what was verified within the DAViT and further theme construction.

The DAViT was useful to verify themes and enabled feedback and explanation from each participant. The DAViT might be criticised as only enabling a "yes" or "no" response using the strike-through key feature; however, the provision of a comment box meant that the participants explained their position and perspectives further, enabling a more in-depth understanding by the researcher on that topic. The process of using the DAViT proved to be useful, although time-consuming. While the DAViT presented another written-based data collection method, arguably, a focus group or interview would have enabled conversations of the themes and exploration of deeper meaning behind each theme. The opportunity to provide a comment under each header, however, enabled participant students and supervisors to explain and provide justification of their answers and perspectives. The concern with using the DAViT as a means of member checking was the lack of literature supporting its use beyond the study by Clayton & Thorne (2000).

#### **4.4 Considerations of written dialogue as data**

Using Moon's (2004) explanation that written reflections are a representation of the students' reflective thinking, this study assumes that reflective dialogue represents and 'evidences' students' learning. Based on this assumption, reflective dialogue as data will enable deeper insights into students learning during these placements (Boud, 2003). Freeman (1996) explores the analysis of written data, his study was in the context of using written data to determine the thinking and learning of student teachers. Freeman (1996) discusses two ways to consider written data. Firstly that it represents thoughts and feelings based on the premise that the written dialogue would give insight into the "inner worlds" of the student and supervisors and that the "words can represent thought" (Freeman, 1996 p. 732). Secondly, that the words themselves "present" meaning, the

language used says something about the writer, the social context and the time. This idea of the language itself being used as data has a basis in linguistics and structural and discourse analysis.

Freeman's concept of considering written data in two ways has influenced the dialogue analysis to include not only the content but also the manner in which the dialogue was written, with attention to words used, style and tone. This involved more interpretation and added depth to the analysis and the written content. Freeman (1996) advocates that for more in-depth analysis, written data needs to be considered in terms of a representational and presentational meaning. Not only "what is said?" (representational meaning) but into the presentational analysis such as "what is not said?" and "how is this said?" "why would this be said like that?" "why is she saying this?" "what might that mean?" These questions assisted the researcher to move beyond the obvious manifest themes to more abstract and latent themes involving "implicit ideas" (Braun et al., 2019 p. 4). For example, PP2 uses terms to describe one of the school pupils such as "serious health condition" and "high needs boy." These terms themselves suggest a lack of familiarity with medical terminology by this student, and the researcher inferred that the student had a lay-persons perspective and understanding of the health condition. This also suggested to the researcher that the student was basing her perspective and understanding on that of the teacher or teacher aids, which was further demonstrated with the following statement in response to the supervisor asking about what may be attributing to the changes in the child's behaviour: "I've asked the teacher aid but she isn't even sure", here attention to the word "even" suggests the student's high value of the teacher aids opinion. Similarly she states: "I looked over a list the physiology gave us for him." It is noted that the word physiotherapist is misspelt and perhaps unfamiliar but also that the student uses the word "us," denoting her alignment with the teacher and teacher aid rather than with the health professional (physiotherapist). This student has difficulty realising the occupational therapy perspective as seen in the data and verified by her through the DAViT tool. Presentational meaning (the manner of writing) therefore enhanced and confirmed representational meaning (the content).

Similarly the descriptions: PP2 "I managed to finally get hold of my teacher..." depict not only how time-poor the teachers are but also might suggest the power imbalance between the occupational therapy student and the teacher.

The study's primary data is guided written dialogue because of the entries' prescribed format, however, the format is sufficiently "open" and non-directive enabling open coding. Written reflections such as diaries can capture the moment (being daily) while also providing a picture (story) over time for each participant (Hewitt, 2017). Dialogue as data allows insight into the growth and development of students through their reflective writing over the course of the placement. Hewitt (2017) reviewed whether reflective diaries were useful as data for qualitative research and found they were a rich and dynamic data source. Hewitt (2017) argues that students are inclined to be more honest in reflective writing, allowing more intimacy and introspection than an interview (Hewitt, 2017). Hewitt (2017) also argues that reflective writing involves less researcher persuasion and memory bias than an interview. The reflective dialogue comprised the data for this study and was selected based on its potential authenticity, depth, volume, and availability.

It is well documented that the written reflections' context influences the outcome (Alaszewski, 2006; Mann et al., 2009; Moon, 2007). Moon describes that the way reflection is taught, discussed, the audience, and the writing structure or framework will influence the reflective process (Moon, 2007). The impact of the context of the reflective dialogue needed consideration in terms of how it facilitates learning and drives content. The written framework may have steered the student toward these open and honest reflections (Alaszewski, 2006; Moon, 2004). For example, the format framework 'Celebrations, Dilemmas, and Desires' (Robinson, 2013) were

likely to invite 'positive' achievements ("celebration"), while the header ("dilemma") is conducive to students discussing concerns or 'negative' issues. Robinsons' (2013) framework is likely to have strongly influenced what the student writes, and as a result, how the supervisor responds. For example, supervisors might congratulate the 'celebrations' and empathize, affirm, and validate the 'dilemmas' and support and guide the 'Desires.' A strengths-based and positive psychological model underpins and is implicit in the written framework itself (Robinson, 2013). This approach is likely to have contributed to the open and honest communication and supportive, trusting relationship between the supervisor and supervisee. Research on Robinsons' (2013) framework in supervision and its use in written reflective dialogue is required to explore and support these claims.

The dialogue would have been influenced by the manner in which it was introduced and explained. The written dialogue's purpose was to support learning throughout the placement. However, the dialogue also informed the students' assessment on placement. While the dialogue data in this study appears open and honest, its use in grading students' performance possibly affected the written content (Denscombe, 2014; Alaszewski, 2006). The literature argues against assessing reflective writing, with some literature suggesting that these opposed purposes are counter-productive (Boud, 2003; Moniz et al., 2015; Wilson, 2013).

## Section 5: Chapter summary

Thorne advises that interpretive description has a pragmatic slant aimed toward clinical practice application (Thorne, 2008). Chapter 3 outlines the methodology and research methods, and various appendices demonstrate these further. The reflective dialogue was analysed using inductive analysis guided by Braun & Clarke's (2006) reflexive thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involved constructing themes and categories through effortful work on the researcher's part and using techniques to uncover depth 'beyond the obvious' and ensures a rigorous and data-driven process (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Terry et al., 2017). While confirmability issues are problematic with written data (Ross et al., 1994), the DAViT as a member checking tool assisted to overcome this (Clayton & Thorne, 2000). The written data proved to be a rich data source that enabled insights into student learning through reflective interactive dialoguing across the entire student placement.

# CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Frequent, almost daily, written reflective dialoguing from students and their respective supervisors occurred throughout the six-week role-emerging placement. This dialoguing was captured on an online e-based system, Slack, forming approximately 30,000 words of data for this research study. Exploring this dialogue enabled insights into the students feelings, thoughts and experiences; and uncovered many rich mini-stories, learning stories of dialogue, contributed by both the student and the supervisor. Part 1 of this chapter will begin by sharing five dialogue stories that illustrate the students' learning journeys, conveying their learning on a specific issue or topic through the interactive dialogue, termed 'learning stories.' Part 2 of this chapter explores the themes and categories that emerge from the data in terms of their meaning and how they inter-relate to comprise the findings of this research study. These categories and themes are demonstrated by the learning stories and further supported through additional dialogue from the datasets.

## Part 1: Learning stories

Five learning stories drawn from the interactive reflective dialogue incorporate the students' and supervisors' voices and journeys through in vivo quotes. These stories capture one particular topic or issue from the dialogue conversation between student and supervisor. The learning stories help demonstrate the nature of reflective dialoguing, and detail specific dialogue content contributed by the student and supervisor across a timespan, capturing aspects of each student's learning journey.

### *Learning Story One*

This learning story involves the topic of toilet training with child 'a'<sup>12</sup> using excerpts from participant pair three's (PP3) dialogue dataset.

The occupational therapy student initially expresses that the child's incontinence can be managed with "regular reminders" from herself and the classroom teacher. She also refers to the handling of the issue with the child as "our little secret". The occupational therapy student uncovers that the young school pupil, 'child a' seems to enjoy her mother coming to "clean her up" after an incident.

Student entry day 2 (weeks 1 & 2<sup>13</sup>): "She has been known to hide and do numbers 2<sup>14</sup>s in her pants around lunchtime every day - which then her parent will come and clean her up. After lunch, my teacher asked if I would like to take her for a little play outside to build more of a relationship with her... I asked her about the toilet and she was honest and said she likes it when her mum comes at lunch. I feel that because there are two adults in the class between us both we can regularly remind and ask her as our little secret to go to toilet and see if that helps. As you could imagine she's getting bullied for it so it's

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<sup>12</sup> Each school pupil discussed within the learning stories and findings chapter has been re-allocated to a letter chronologically as they appear in this chapter to ensure anonymity.

<sup>13</sup> The data from each participant pair was divided into two week intervals to enable easier tracking (weeks 1 and 2 – brown, weeks 3 and 4 – green; and weeks 5 & 6 blue).

<sup>14</sup> Bowel movement

something her mum, teacher and I would like to focus around as her mum and teacher think it's behavioural."

The long-arm supervisor adds to the student's understanding of this issue by suggesting a theory of the mother possibly unintentionally reinforcing the problem behaviour, introducing behavioural theory and motivation to the context.

Supervisor response: "You have also uncovered how having mum come to assist the little girl with poo's clean-up is potentially rewarding. Think back to psychology in year one - operant conditioning. How do you think you could change the situation so the little girl knows mum is coming even without a toileting accident? What is a bigger motivator than seeing mum? Do you need to pair seeing mum up with another reward system? I think it is good to prompt her but what is her motivation if she puts poo's in the toilet but then doesn't get to see mum?"

The supervisor provides the theoretical framework of thinking about this from a behavioural framework naming "operant conditioning" and links it to the students' academic course content "psychology in year one". The supervisor then poses questions to the student to facilitate thinking about child 'a's incontinence issues, assisting consideration of the pupil's motivations, habits, and external reinforcement.

Toileting becomes a focus of intervention for this student working with child 'a' towards independence in toileting, which also entails collaboration with the teacher, staff, and mother. Further dialogue reveals more appreciation of the complexity of the situation in the school context. The student explains that the child was excluded from the school play production because of her incontinence and is able to frame this issue from an occupational therapy perspective by using the term 'social environment':

Student week 1 & 2: "Child 'a' cannot participate in the school production because she has accidents in her pants. This child does not understand why she is not allowed to do the production and when we was excited about the hair spray the teacher replied, "do not get excited you are not in the production" this little girl then asked me why. ... By taking away the production her social environment has been effected. All the kids know why she is not allowed to do the production which I (believe) has increased name calling."

The student learns about collaboration with others and at times becomes frustrated with the teacher and mother, who do not always appear on board with the intervention plan. However, she is able to gain an understanding of this from a broader perspective through the supervisor: "it is so hard isn't it, caught between respecting the teacher's culture of the classroom and your own values and worldview."... "It may not change the situation of this little girl tomorrow but it may plant a seed for your teacher to 'think otherwise' of what else is produced as a result of this way of handling the situation. This decision may have been decided between the family and the teacher so it is possible that we do not have the full picture. I think you are wise to realise that the teachers are full up with production. I think a joint conversation with your teacher and the special ed teacher is a great idea and wonderful evidence of being collaborative."

Student week 1 & 2: "Also when I talked to the parent of child 'a' about making sure she gives her the firm word when the accident happens... Her mum agreed and sounded so happy about the ideas - and then the child came out and [the mum] picked her up tickling her and laughing with her about taking poos in her pants"

Supervisor response: "It is so complex- the mum may have been trying to protect her child's self-esteem - unconditional love - however society is not so forgiving. There are really mixed social messages out there about - giving your child hang-ups if they connect toileting accidents with belief in self...it is complex. But that is why we are going to work on it together. However you uncovered a really important piece of data gathering today about the mum's reinforcement. Have you done behavioural approach in PP2<sup>15</sup> yet? If yes think about the concept of maladaptive reinforcement."

Student week 3 & 4: "Celebration: MY FOCUS CHILD POOPED IN THE TOILET !!! first time since she was 3 years old. I am so happy with her improvements within only a week. We turned on music and myself and her did a celebration dance and she got massive praises. There will be accidents along the way but to see her face when she knew she did something right was worth the long process to get where we are."

The student proactively opts to take her lunch break at a different time to oversee the child's toileting during the lunch break.

Student weeks 3 & 4: "Child ('a') pooped again today I have been taking my lunch at another time of day so I can take her at 1 pm but also I am gathering more rapport seeing the kids at playtime. I think I need to leave child 'a' on the toilet longer as I knocked on the door she must have jumped up quickly wiped but some fell on the stool."

The supervisor introduces measurement to record outcomes:

Supervisor: "for the child you are supporting with toileting what is your numbers, she had the program for 4 days and out of those four days her successes were 2 out of 4?"

Supervisor: "do you think there is a connection between your child getting embarrassed and her asking to go to the toilet today? What enabled this to occur today? Is there anything that you can put in place to enable it to occur on Monday? Wonderful milestone!"

Student response: "Yeah I do think there is some connection I feel that she is finding out her own cues that she thinks is important which is good. Yes I did I asked her questions what she is going to do at home to make sure she doesn't have an accident (I scaled that conversation to her ability) and gave her mum a sticker book to take home which she was happy about."

Further positive results follow, and the student invents a celebratory dance to do with pupil 'a' after success on the toilet. This suggests her confidence and spontaneity as well as rapport with this child.

Student weeks 3 & 4: "We still celebrated and now we sing "what time is it" "poop time " x2 "where do we go" "toilet oh oh " x2 she loves it ."

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<sup>15</sup> A subject called "Professional Practice 2" covered in year 2 of the occupational therapy degree

Later, we see enhanced reasoning and a deeper understanding, and increased conviction in her own reasoning in the dialogue conversations below regarding the impact of the change in the bathroom setting on toileting success and the interpretation of the child blushing.

Student week 5 & 6: "Child 'a' has been having a few more accidents in her pants than last week and I think it's because I have changed the physical environment from the office to the girls bathroom. When I pulled her aside today and asked what she had done her face went bright red - this is sad but also a positive as she is starting to know the feeling of getting embarrassed about what has happened and recognises that she isn't meant to do that. (if that makes sense)."

Supervisor response: "she is starting to understand the social messages and expectations of society, this is what actually makes us all go to the bathroom rather than in other places whenever possible. This is actually a huge developmental step."

## *Learning Story Two*

This learning story involves addressing significant behavioural issues in the classroom, the focus is on the entire class rather than any named child. Excerpts are from the dialogue dataset from participant pair 2 (PP2).

Student week 1 & 2: "My biggest dilemma was on my way to the class the teacher telling me 'oh you have the most challenging class to work with'"

Student week 1 & 2: "I want to research some ideas on behaviour and how I can maybe try adapt some routines within the classroom to potentially avoid so much disruption."

The supervisor frames and validates the student's thinking.

Supervisor week 1 & 2: "considering the children's routines and how this impacts on their occupational participation and/or disruption - this demonstrates an emerging focus on the occupational perspective central to your role in the classroom."

Supervisor week 1 & 2: "A strengths-based approach might be to consider making the assumption that children behave as they do because of a lack of information available to them, in a form they are able to process and integrate into life experiences, about how they are expected to behave in given situations. Social stories are one strategy for overcoming such challenges, originally they were developed for children with autism, however, they certainly have a wider application. Might be something worth looking into further. What do you think is motivating the behaviour of these children [?]"

There is no answer to this last question in the dialogue; however, the student subsequently discusses researching about and collaborating with the teacher on the 'social stories':

Student week 3 & 4: "I managed to finally get a hold of my teacher and talk to her about my intervention ideas of social stories which I spent the morning researching and relating to my class situations. Together we sat down and picked the children who might want to help create them and have them as a main target to use them on" .... "I want to write up some ideas of my stories so me and my teacher can both go over it. Then next week work with some kids to create them and keep them for the classroom".

Supervisor response: "it sounds like you're progressing your conversations and plans with your teacher well. The behavioural issues are a challenge and I appreciate they do impact on individual and class participation. Particularly while the school is undergoing a change in their philosophical approach to managing problem behaviour, keep reminding yourself this is not your responsibility to change. I realise this is an ongoing frustration. Remember to stay focused on what you can change and impact on in the classroom. I look forward to hearing how it goes with your social stories."

Consequently, the student implements these stories in the classroom with successful outcomes. In fact, the success means that other teachers begin to implement them in other classrooms within the school. The concept of social stories provided by the supervisor is enhanced and added to by the student:

Student week 3 & 4: "I've decided to create a board with 'Green choices and red choices' with visual aids" [photos]... I will integrate this in with my social stories I am starting next week so that they have the story reminder as well as the chart on the wall."

The student dialogue suggests the student's skilful interactive handling with the pupil, showing an ability to de-escalate and manage behavioural issues in this situation:

Student week 5 & 6: "my class dynamics have changed this week due to two children being moved into other classes. This has caused one child in particular to settle down so much as he was a cause for a lot of disruption. Child [x] had his mum in class today as she was helping out with the gymnastics but he was very anxious as she wanted to leave to get a coffee (at about 9 and we were meant to be leaving at 11). For a while he was distracted but then his anxiety started increasing as he has been let down by his mother before (teacher informed me about this later on) and he started acting out. A child took a toy car off him and he flipped out at him and tried to hit him then ran out of the classroom crying. I went and let my teacher know and she said to give him two minutes or so then go find him. He was sitting outside crying asking about his mum so I tried distracting him by letting him choose either 2 or 3 minutes to sit outside. We ended up setting a 2 minute timer on my 'special watch' and after that we would go inside and sit on the mat ready. This worked so well and he calmed. I tried it in the afternoon after his mum left- he ran outside when upset so I set my timer again and we collected seeds, counted them when the 2 minutes were up and we went inside. The DP [deputy principal] was very impressed as she thought he would pull his usual stunt of running away and hiding."

### *Learning Story Three*

This learning story explores the theory and use of environmental adaptation and involves child 'b\*.' Excerpts are from the dialogue dataset from participant pair 1 (PP1).

Student week 1 & 2: "A big celebration for me was being able to engage a child who has consistent attention issues (diagnosed ADHD) in several maths games today. I found shifting to another floor spot in the room and swapping dice and counter colours each game kept it exciting and changed things up each time, which seemed to help is engagement."

Supervisor response: "great therapeutic moments - well done using those small but effective environmental and occupational adaptations to engage the boy with ADHD in maths - are there any other children in your class who you think might benefit from similar therapeutic intervention?"

Student weeks 1 & 2: "Today I managed to have a good discussion with my teacher about my direction as an OT and how I am able to contribute to the class as a whole and individual students. Despite my own reservations about disrupting his collaborating with the students I was really pleased to have him really enjoy my input and he told me how he really appreciated my observations as they were not anything he would have really thought about. He is really keen to start working with me to try and change up current environmental factors to see if they may have an impact on engagement."

Further dialogue involves the supervisor linking this student to another within the dialogue, and refers to other learning opportunities outside of the dialogue such as through peer discussions.

Supervisor weeks 1 & 2: "Hi <@[student]>, as you and <@[student]> are both looking at environmental interventions, it might pay to have a more in-depth discussion about this together, if you haven't already. What are the occupational needs you've identified that you are aiming to address with the environmental adaptations? It is interesting how the mood of a small group of children can impact the rest of the class. What do you notice the children do that helps them regulate their emotions at other times? Social-emotional learning can be an important element of the role of an occupational therapist in the school setting and if this becomes a reoccurring theme it might be something worth looking into in more depth."

Consequent written dialogue reveals that the student introduces the "thinking spot" concept as one of her key interventions in the class, which is an example of environmental adaptations.

Student dialogue week 3 & 4: "Today was a great day! I had an amazing hour-long meeting with my teacher and we went through all my ideas and finally organised how I can work my interventions in with class life. My new concept for the thinking spot has been finalized and we decided it will be a class project that the children can all contribute to. My interventions and goals for my two focus children have been given a big tick and we are collaborating on the environmental modifications that are part of the intervention. My environmental intervention with the maths groups has been finalized and we will organize the room this Friday ready to initiate this intervention/change next week and my teacher is excited about my 'brain breaks' which we are going to try out between maths groups to give the kids a bit of time to 'shuffle off' before re-focusing on the next task."

We also see how she learns to appreciate the environmental context differently from the school teachers. This theoretical understanding and perspective mean she can pre-empt the bus environment's impact on the pupil's behaviour during an outing to the gym and create a less distressing environment for him on the way back from the outing.

Student week 5 & 6: "The bus ride to the gym trip was a highly distressing time for child 'b'. I spoke to both teachers prior to departure as I know he is really sensitive to noise and chaos and he was getting anxious and was 'acting out' with all the hype and noise. I knew the bus ride was going to be traumatic for him, but they both said "he will be ok". It got to the point whereas we got on the bus the teacher had to take over from me as he was hiding under seats, holding his head and when they got him up he began yelling "I hate gymnastics" which he continued to do the whole way. It had to be the loudest bus ride I have EVER been on. By the time we got to the gym place focus 'b' was quite tense, stressed and continued yelling all the way into the building. He was unable to participate despite the best efforts of the staff. I got a moment with (the teacher) and said to him that should (child 'b') like a break I packed pens and paper in my bag for him, as I know that as a calming tool he likes to write and create word

finds. (The teacher) wanted to persevere with (child 'b') for a while so I just left him with that message in case he wished to use the tools I brought. No more than 10 minutes later he came and found me and let me know (child 'b') was in a car outside, buckled in to feel safe and was wondering if I could be with him while he used the pens and paper I brought for him to use. He calmed quite quickly with the quiet, fresh air, sunshine and writing tools. We talked about what he was feeling and how we might be able to help with a 'relax kit' that he may be able to use on trips when he is feeling distressed or overwhelmed. My teachers really took on board how upsetting the bus was for him and I ended up being with him in the car of [another pupil's mum] where he was quiet, relaxed and happy on the way back to school."

### Learning Story Four

This learning story explores the topic of behavioural management in the classroom and behavioural theory to inform practice, specifically involving two school pupils, child 'c,' and child 'd.' Excerpts are from the dialogue dataset from participant pair 1 (PP1).

Student weeks 1 & 2: "He (child 'c') thrived off the *positive feedback*<sup>16</sup> from me and was chuffed I got to contribute to his 'behaviour book' which is sent home daily to keep his family in the loop of his behaviour. He could see I was proud of him and he explained how he is going to show me more 'good choice' behaviour tomorrow"

Supervisor weeks 1 & 2: "use of *positive reinforcement* to promote the child's participation can be a highly effective strategy for promoting *extrinsic motivation*; it also provides him with opportunities for success, and to develop his sense of competence and mastery over the tasks, which in turn are likely to promote his *intrinsic motivation*. Maybe ask <@[student]> what she's found out about the *ARC model as a framework* for thinking about motivation from an occupational perspective that could further reinforce your approach."

Subsequent dialogue reveals that the student incorporates theory in her own reasoning and plans, using the terms and theory that the supervisor discussed above.

Student weeks 1 & 2: "I plan on researching and applying my observations to CMOP-E and the 4QM and *the ARC framework* to form strong baselines so I can start my interventions over the coming week"

Student weeks 3 & 4: [My objective is to] "enable him to *self motivate* within his work. I have planted the seed of the intervention with him and he is really keen to try some *new ways of helping himself*."

This dialogue entry shows that the student understands the 'new' concept of intrinsic motivation and successfully applies and describes this in practice. A more authoritative and professional voice in her dialogue is noted explaining her intervention and revealing the conviction in her plan.

The student describes and applies the use of positive reinforcement and extrinsic motivation (the reward of a lucky dip and the use of 'smileys'). Moreover, she conveys how she was able to use the therapeutic use of self to act as a motivator for this child, in managing his behaviour, in the following entry:

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<sup>16</sup> Italics are used to track the emerging theoretical understanding of these particular terms and concepts in relation to this theory within the student's dialogue

Student week 3 & 4: “Today I got to experiment with my 'brain breaks' and they were a hit with the few I tried them on. I got left in the class with the 5 'challenging' children while the rest of the class went to Te Reo today and I read to them and then each got to lucky dip a brain break and they loved them. I also tried a new tack with one of my boys who has been out all week in the office. He was really disruptive this morning but once I had engaged him in helping me with one of the tasks for our 'thinking tent' I got to have a chat to him about choices. I asked if he wanted to use his smileys today and said 'not today' but he then said 'I promise I'll make good choices Whaea<sup>17</sup> [student name]....I'll even pinky promise" So I rolled with this and told him that when I saw him beginning to make unhelpful choices I would lift my pinky up as our 'secret code' so he is reminded of his promise and he knows he needs to make a better choice. Worked a treat all day! (must have to say thanks to <@[student]> for the inspiration of non-verbal prompting!)”

In a subsequent entry, the student reflects on the outcome of her interventions regarding behaviour management.

Student week 5 & 6: “Today was a busy day but another golden one with my focus chaps (school pupils, children 'c' and 'd'). Both of them achieved all of their tokens, and since child 'c' has had 3 smiley tokens for 2 days in a row, he got to lead the class in the afternoon waiata<sup>18</sup> and chose the animals in the song they sang about. It was such a proud moment to see how pleased he was with himself and his smile was ear to ear. He is well on the way to meeting the planned outcome with the GAS goal and if things keep on track it is looking like he will surpass expectations. I believe I have really done well with encouraging an intrinsic approach with the boys. They are finding pride and a sense of achievement within themselves this week (child 'd' with his focus on tasks and child 'c' with his positive behaviour choices) and that pride drives them to keep going. I could not be more happier with them”

The dialogue suggests her clinical focus and application of behaviour management in this intervention below, as she works to reduce external motivators (“prompting”) and to develop intrinsic motivation (“automaticity”) during the school child’s writing task:

Student week 5 & 6: “We are now strongly focusing on number of prompts during writing. We had a discussion about the prompting and how this is what we need to work on most as he is able to set great goals now but is really reliant on being prompted back to it when he is distracted....its almost like he began using me helping him achieve his goals as a distraction (if that makes sense..) I visually wrote the 'prompt limit' on his superhero chart and each time I had to redirect him back to his work (he is VERY EASILY distracted) I would erase one of the numbers on the chart. This worked well!! He managed to stay on task and completed his task without constant redirection/repeating of instruction from myself or the teacher. Hopefully this new tack is going to drive him toward the automaticity I am hoping to achieve /encourage with him before I go in terms of self-motivation within his work 😊”

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<sup>17</sup> Whaea – Maori word (noun) mother, aunt, aunty. In this context it is used as aunty placed before the students name, a sign of respect for someone older than oneself. From Te Aka Online Māori Dictionary (2003-2021) Te Ipukarea. John C Moorfield. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz>

<sup>18</sup> Waiata – a Maori word used here as a (noun) a song, chant or psalm. This is likely to have been a traditional chant or song that had significance to the Maori of that area (iwi) or that school. From Te Aka Online Māori Dictionary (2003-2021) Te Ipukarea. John C Moorfield. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz>

The student reflects on the pupil's progress and integrates theory "(Q4)"<sup>19</sup> in her description. The reflection reveals that she capably grades the intervention as the child progresses.

Student week 5 & 6: "Taking away the token chart and going with a 'prompt count down' really motivates him and he managed to use a lot of aspects of Q4 today! He was so proud of his efforts."

Student weeks 5 & 6: "Today child d managed to get through his writing with absolutely no prompting from me or the teacher! He also wrote 5 concepts in the story and equated over a page of great writing 😊. I was proud to see the self-initiated priming (Q3) and self-instruction (Q4) in his preparations such as moving to the focus zone, getting the wobble cushion and made sure he had all of what he needed so he was not tempted to use the excuse of needing something as a distraction! His use of visual cues such as the countdown chart (a whiteboard thing with numbers 1-5 on it) works a treat and he makes sure he has it in view so he can 'remind himself of what needs to happen'...in this case finishing his story on his own without getting distracted from his surroundings."

### *Learning Story Five*

This learning story involves child 'e' described as having a "serious health condition." Excerpts are from the dialogue dataset from participant pair 2 (PP2).

Student week 1& 2: "I have a student [child 'e'] who has had a lot of serious health conditions at birth which has resulted in a slight delay in his processing and interpretation and also poor motor skills. Normally child 'e' gets to do a smaller amount of work as he gets tired easily, but today I sat down with him and did a drawing. I asked him if he was going to draw a sun, which he did and we showed his teacher and teacher aid who was so amazed that he drew it with no help as he has never done this before. Also with the same child, we were threading a shoelace through holes to create a pattern. Usually his teacher aid has to hold it for him as one of his hands needs botox injections as it is very stiff and doesn't move well, but today he managed to thread the shoelace and hold it at the same time. Today was a very good day for Child 'e'" ...."I don't really have a desire for tomorrow, the teacher aid is away so I get told to watch child 'e' as he needs constant supervision in case of a seizure or something",

Supervisor response: "It's good to hear about Child 'e's day and the achievements he made. What skills and strategies did you use to facilitate his engagement and enable him to participate in so much today? It sounds like this was quite an achievement. How are you managing yourself and your own wellbeing with so many dilemmas you are faced with on a daily basis? It can be very challenging to maintain our own level of enthusiasm and energy in such situations, and managing our own health and fitness (think competency 4) is important for enabling us to practice professionally and with integrity. We need to look after ourselves in order to help look after others!"

The supervisor is seen to validate but also question the student in the above dialogue. No answer to these questions regarding child e's participation and strategies used by the student are recorded in subsequent dialogue.

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<sup>19</sup> Q4 (Q1, Q2 and Q3) relate to Greber & Rodger's (2007) four-quadrant model of facilitated learning, a client-centred way to teaching occupational therapy approaches to intervention.

Student week 3 & 4: "Dilemma: One dilemma was that the high needs boy [child e] was back after being sick for a week. He didn't listen all day and was running around everywhere causing some distraction. I spoke to his mum and she mentioned he has recently started being like that at home too, and was concerned because he has been having more seizures and sleeping a lot during class time."

Supervisor response: "What is the 'high needs' boy's mum attributing his change of behaviour to? How involved are his family with his day to day participation at school and are they a resource if needed?"

Student response week 3 & 4: "She's unsure about it. It could be due to recent surgeries or the fact his routine was disrupted from getting sick. I'm also unsure about the home life, I've asked his teacher aid but she isn't even sure. "

Student week 3 & 4: "I was sitting reading with the boy who has higher needs due to his stroke at birth, and generally I try to involve him by talking about what's happening in the pictures. He managed to point out that there were two cars in the picture and there were 7 in the next. Him pointing this out doesn't sound too amazing but this child really struggles with even writing his name and speaking can be a struggle for him too so it felt really cool to see his learning." ... "today was diabolical and I don't know how to describe it well. It wasn't a good day"

Supervisor response: "reading your posting I can see that it's been a really difficult day. I appreciate that the behavioural challenges you are faced with daily can be incredibly overwhelming and frustrating. Please remember to keep looking after yourself and to connect with the other OT students at your school for support"

Subsequent student entry week 3 & 4: "I'm a little concerned about child 'e' as he has been having more seizures during the day and night but his parents keep sending him to school. Apparently he was pale with blue lips this morning which was very concerning. Dilemma: As usual, a lot of issues. Today I went to find a child who hadn't been in class for about 15 mins and found him sliding around the boys' toilets on his stomach which was pretty gross, and also has the classroom trashed by two of the kids. Not a fun time. Desire: I want to go in tomorrow with a more positive approach and try to figure out a way I can work with some of these kids without getting frustrated with everything else going on."

Supervisor response: "good to hear you are being mindful about the approach you will start the day with today. It can be challenging to 'reset' our focus when we feel constantly overwhelmed by the events around us and yet that can be one of the most powerful tools in our therapeutic toolbox, as who else can hold the 'hope' for the clients /children we're working with. Have you done much research about the seizures to help you understand a little more about Child 'e'?"

Subsequent Student Log: "I was going to have a bit more of a look today so I can have more info. Also the office has offered me a copy of his care plan which I might try get today also ",

Subsequent Student Log: "Dilemma: I actually witnessed child 'e' having an absent seizure and it was scary to watch as he went so pale and his lips went purple halfway through a conversation with me and his teacher aid. After this all happened I did some research and also got a copy of his care plan for next time."

The student entry following having read through child e's seizure care plan as well as notes from the physiotherapist, uses medical terms such as "hemiparesis" for the first time and involves activities which attempt to address his hemiplegia, or "little hand."

Student week 3 & 4: "Celebration: today I spent all day with child 'e' (except his 2 hour nap) and we played some educational games on the iPad, practiced handwriting and number writing with play dough and a marble (he traces my letters with the marble). We also did a drawing together and both contributed to it which he loved. I looked over a list the physiology [physiotherapist] gave us for him about hemiparesis and some activities we could do to help strengthen his 'little hand' as he calls it, so we stayed in at lunch as he has woken from his nap 15 mins earlier and no teacher aids came to take over. We made some play dough snakes and I encouraged him to squish the play dough as hard as he can with his hands over and over. He struggled with making the snakes as he doesn't know how to put pressure onto the play dough to make it longer. I explained a few times but he wasn't really understanding but he had a great time overall."

Supervisor response: "Hi <[student]>, I agree it can be very scary to witness an absent seizure - good that you have accessed his care plan so you have a better understanding of how to approach the situation should it arise again. I like your activities for encouraging the use of his 'little hand' - have you identified any other activities that might appeal to his particular interests?"

Student week 5 & 6: "He [child e] has started some new medication and has been having regular seizures and his behaviour is completely different. I managed to get him to sit and listen for about 20 minutes and we practiced writing his name. He used to be able to write it properly and form all the letters but over the year he is less and less able to manage this. I sat with him and practiced letter formation for the letters in his name and after about 5 of my demonstrations he managed to form letters that looked somewhat similar- my teacher was really impressed because he hasn't been able to do this for a few months and for him to be able to write his name properly means he can participate in the class routine of writing their name on the whiteboard every morning."

The supervisor asks further questions and assists the student to link theory to the strategies that the student is using. The supervisor frames the purpose of the intervention from an occupational perspective.

Supervisor Response: "Hi <@[student]>, what were the strategies that you used to successfully support child 'e' to write his name? I see that you used demonstration, did you use any of the other 4QM strategies? or any multisensory strategies? or something else? Enabling him to write his name so he can participate in one of the important routines within the culture of your classroom sounds like a legitimate and valuable use of your time from an occupational perspective."

These questions are not answered within the dialogue.

Five learning stories were presented to demonstrate the dialoguing process, and showcase typical topics and content discussed between supervisor and student in the dialogue. This is intended to demonstrate the nature and process of learning through dialogue. Section 2 will introduce the themes from this study.

## Part 2: Constructing themes

Categories and themes are explained, their boundaries outlined and the inter-relationship between them is explored. These categories and themes emerged from the interactive reflective dialogue, as showcased by the learning stories, and further supported by additional data where relevant within this discussion of each theme. The study organises the emerging themes in the following manner: the central theme, *sensemaking*, is divided into three categories: *theory-driven sensemaking*; *developing sensemaking skills* and *personal and professional growth*. Each category has two or three inter-related themes, and each theme interacts and influences each other. This is outlined in the table below:

**Table 1**

### *Organisation of categories and themes*

Central Theme	<b>Sensemaking</b> <i>as a process and outcome and within a safe platform</i>		
Categories	<b>Theory-driven sensemaking</b>	<b>Developing sensemaking skills</b>	<b>Personal &amp; professional growth</b>
Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A theory-practice link</li> <li>• Developing an occupational therapy perspective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student agency: active engagement in dialoguing</li> <li>• Becoming more reflective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional openness &amp; support</li> <li>• Finding my professional voice and self</li> </ul>

## Central Theme: Sensemaking

This study's central theme is 'sensemaking,' which appears core to learning through this interactive dialogue. Sensemaking appears as a process and objective of the dialoguing and emerges through the co-construction, collaboration, and conversation between supervisor and student within the daily dialoguing.

### ***Sensemaking as a process***

The learning stories all showcase the dialoguing process as a collaboration and co-construction between student and supervisor. For example, in learning story 4, this collaboration is demonstrated in the dialogue exchange when the student introduces the concept of positive feedback, which the supervisor adds to and introduces the idea of intrinsic motivation. In turn, the student responds further, using the concept of intrinsic or self-motivation in the student's own reasoning and writing. The feedback and collaboration within the dialogue adds to the student's understanding, depth of that understanding and her ability to 'make sense' of the placement situation from a more professional and theoretical viewpoint.

Student PP1: "He thrived off the positive feedback from me..."

Supervisor PP1: "use of positive reinforcement to promote the child's participation can be a highly effective strategy for promoting extrinsic motivation; it also provides him with opportunities for success,

and to develop his sense of competence and mastery over the tasks, which in turn are likely to promote his intrinsic motivation. Maybe ask <@[student]> what she's found out about the ARC model as a framework for thinking about motivation from an occupational perspective that could further reinforce your approach."

Student PP1: "enable him to self motivate within his work. I have planted the seed of the intervention with him and he is really keen to try some new ways of helping himself".

This last statement shows that the dialogue interaction enables the student to progress in her understanding. The student develops a 'new' co-constructed concept of intrinsic motivation through the collaborative dialogue process, which she is then able to apply and describe in her own practice and reflective writing. This is further explored in the category, theory-driven sensemaking.

The second category of sensemaking relates to the development of sensemaking and reasoning skills which also appears to develop through the reflective dialogue process of engaging in collaborative reflective inquiry. Again the supervisor's feedback plays a vital role in developing the student's reasoning and 'sensemaking' skills. The process of engaging actively in reflective dialoguing can be considered to provide an example of 'how to' reason or make sense, by demonstrating sensemaking skills and the sensemaking process. The supervisor not only provides clinical guidance but also shares and debates ideas within a problem-solving approach, assisting to provide multiple perspectives or options for consideration. The use of questions not only challenges the student to consider these questions in relation to the specific issue being discussed, but also provides ideas of how to question by demonstrating a questioning and critical approach. In the above dialogue data example, the supervisor uses phrases and wording such as: "are likely to," "ask what she's found out about..." "could further reinforce your approach." These examples differ from a directive or prescriptive approach, which might indicate there is only one solution to the practice issue; instead the supervisor adopts more of a conversational and curious tone, inviting further thought and exploration, rather than just simply informing the student what to do. These concepts are further explored and substantiated by data when discussing the category, *developing sensemaking skills*. The development of sensemaking skills are illustrated by the student in learning story 3 when she anticipates the boy's behavioural fallout going on the bus trip to the gym, suggesting a sound understanding of his behaviour, behavioural triggers, and the impact of the physical and social environment on his behaviour.

The third category of sensemaking, *personal and professional growth* relates to the seemingly challenging and sometimes emotional aspect of learning on role-emerging placements. The process of sensemaking appears emotionally challenging at times and seems to involve a journey involving personal and professional growth, toward maturity, a 'coming of age professionally.' Dialoguing appears conducive to debriefing and emotional openness. The students appear to openly and honestly debrief and off-load, facilitating their concerns to be heard and validated. Moreover, the 'dilemmas,' issues, and concerns often appear to initiate and prompt deeper and personally meaningful sensemaking, resulting in personal and professional growth and the emergence of practice confidence, more autonomy and professional identity.

### ***A safe platform***

The context of the reflective inquiry through dialoguing, termed *a safe platform*, is the perceived safety of the dialogue platform. Dialoguing appears to be conducive to emotional debriefing and promotes students to pinpoint and articulate their real, honest and contextually relevant learning needs. This perceived safe forum for open disclosures and 'genuine working through' appears essential to enable the sensemaking process and

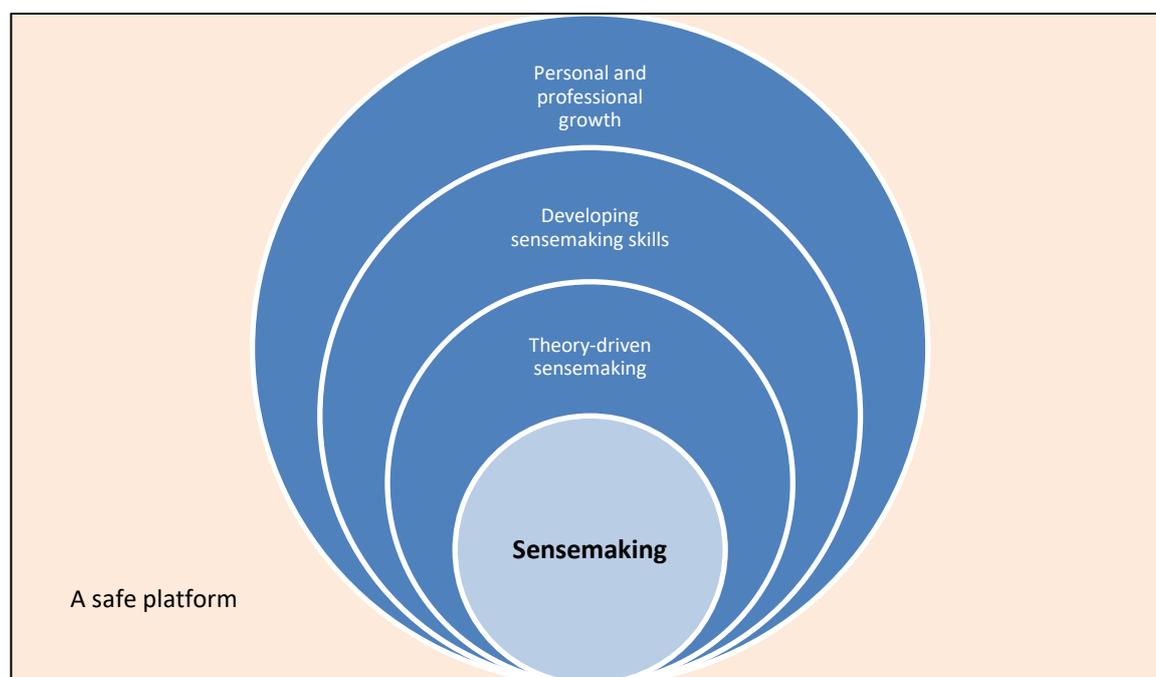
facilitates the opportunity of a sensemaking outcome. This is further discussed in relation to the category of *personal and professional growth* within the theme, emotional openness and support.

### ***Sensemaking as an outcome***

The dialogue process invites working through these real and individually relevant issues in a supportive and informative manner as seen in learning story 1 with the example of the student gaining understanding and an appreciation of her role with the child's incontinence issue. This, together with the more in-depth understanding of the context (*theory-driven sensemaking*) and the growth in the students reasoning (*developing sensemaking skills*) as described in the former two categories of sensemaking, appears to provide the opportunity for a sensemaking outcome. A sensemaking outcome is seen where the students experience *personal and professional growth*, resulting in a change in perspective and understanding, involving the development of more of a mature or professional perspective and practice confidence.

**Figure 2**

*Diagram highlighting the central theme, sensemaking, and the three categories of sensemaking within a safe platform*



Sensemaking emerged as a reason and motivation to engage in dialogue, forming part of the content, process and objective of the dialoguing. The theoretical and knowledge-based content of the dialogue influenced the first category, *theory-driven sensemaking*. While the second category, *developing sensemaking skills*, was apparent through the dialogue process which tracked and appeared to encourage student's sensemaking skills. The emergence of the sensemaking skills appeared to both depend on and influence the students' active participation, motivation, perseverance, reflective stance, and responsiveness to the dialogue's reflective inquiry. Thirdly, dialogue captured and promoted the *personal and professional growth* of students, providing an opportunity for a sensemaking outcome. Sensemaking appeared to be associated with an array of emotions. Sensemaking requires 'work' and dialoguing allows 'active working through' in a collaborative, scaffolded and guided manner: essential to this is *a safe platform for sensemaking*. Sensemaking as a central concept and these three categories of sensemaking within a safe platform is illustrated in the diagram Figure 2 above.

The extent to which sensemaking is a collaboration through dialogue varies significantly between students, and topics, and within students throughout the placement, changing over time. The students generally receive more guidance initially from their supervisors within the dialogue (seen in learning story 2 when the supervisor explains social stories in the first week of the placement). The development of their own reasoning skills and reflective practice skills through self-authorship is apparent in the dialogue toward the end of the placement (seen in the later entries of learning stories 1, 3, and 4). Thus, there is less supervisor guidance within the dialoguing towards the end of the student placement. For example, the student drives the sensemaking in the bus ride incident in learning story 3, with the supervisor only providing affirmation and congratulations rather than clinical direction.

In conclusion, three categories of sensemaking appear to emerge from the dialoguing data. The first one looked to understand facts and theories which provide explanation and meaning to the context, forming *theory-driven sensemaking*. Active participation and reflective skills are inherently part of, and progress with, sensemaking and dialoguing. These concepts form the second category of sensemaking, *developing sensemaking skills*. Finally a safe platform enables debriefing and emotional support within the dialoguing, and supports both *personal and professional growth*, creating the environment for successful and meaningful sensemaking.

These categories will all be discussed in turn separately although in reality they appear to interact and influence each other in a complex and scaffolded manner, facilitating the students' experiential learning and sensemaking on the placement.

## Theory-driven sensemaking

This category involves the dialogue content which facilitates students to form a clinically or professionally-based and relevant perspective and understanding of the placement context from this perspective. Sensemaking in the context of role emerging placements, and as facilitated through dialoguing in particular, appears to have a strong theoretical or conceptual basis to it as seen by the focus on theory within the learning stories. The data suggests that students need to comprehend, apply and enact relevant theory, including occupational therapy theory, to make sense of the placement and role.

Learning story 1 highlights the theory-driven category of sensemaking and showcases the collaborative process of sensemaking. The supervisor affirms the student's observations and reasoning to theorise why the child is deteriorating in her toilet training programme, helping the student to make further links and connections to behavioural theory and to draw on knowledge about child development.

Student PP3 week 5 & 6: "Child [a<sup>20</sup>] has been having a few more accidents in her pants than last week and I think it's because I have changed the physical environment from the office to the girls bathroom. When I pulled her aside today and asked what she had done her face went bright red - this is sad but also a positive as she is starting to know the feeling of getting embarrassed about what has happened and recognises that she isn't meant to do that."

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<sup>20</sup> Each school pupil discussed within these learning stories has been re-allocated to a letter chronologically as they appear in this chapter.

Supervisor response: “she is starting to understand the social messages and expectations of society, this is what actually makes us all go to the bathroom rather than in other places whenever possible. This is actually a huge developmental step.”

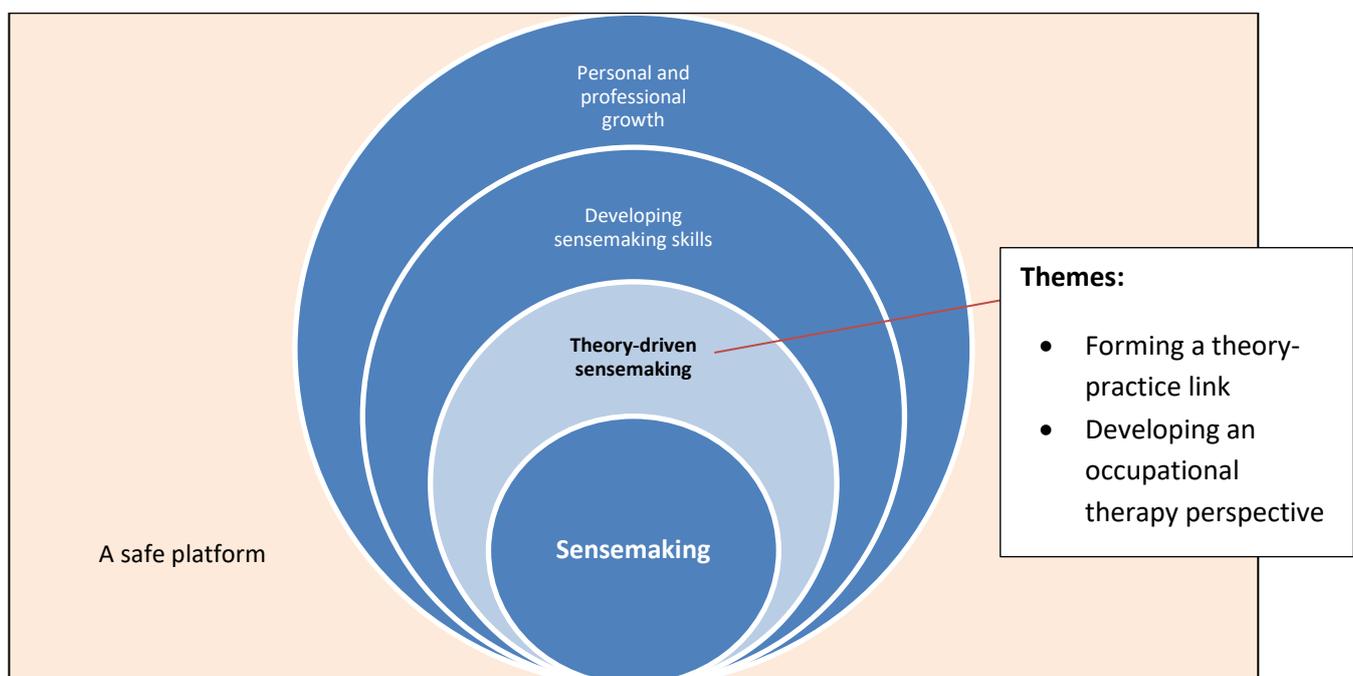
Supervisor question week 3 & 4: “do you think there is a connection between your child getting embarrassed and her asking to go to the toilet today? What enabled this to occur today?”

Student response: “Yeah I do think there is some connection I feel that she is finding out her own cues...”

The above dialogue from learning story 1 demonstrates how it is through collaboration and feedback within the reflective dialogue that the student builds a more complex and theoretical understanding of toileting issues. Dialoguing involves theory-driven sensemaking, which guides and explains toileting behaviours and approaches, enhancing the student’s knowledge and insight into the toileting issue. Both this learning story and the aforementioned example from learning story 3, illustrate how there is a collaboration between supervisor and student, which helps the student make sense of the practice situation by adding to their understanding of the situation, adding to the knowledge base and complexity or depth of their understanding. Theory-driven sensemaking is often reliant on the contributions and guidance from the supervisors’ feedback as seen in these examples. The dialoguing appears to enhance situational awareness, with the student emerging with a more complex and in-depth understanding of a situation. Theory-driven sensemaking enables the student to emerge from the interactive dialogue with specific and relevant knowledge or theory, and a different perspective resulting in more in-depth understanding of the issue: it makes sense! Two data-driven, inter-related themes make up the category of theory-driven sensemaking, namely: *forming a theory-practice link* and *developing an occupational therapy perspective* as depicted in Figure 3 below.

**Figure 3**

*Diagram highlighting the theory-driven category of sensemaking*



### *Forming a theory-practice link*

Developing a theory-practice link appears to evolve mainly through the feedback and guidance of the supervisor. Theory provides insight into and guides practices or the practice situation. Typically within the dialogue, the supervisor provides a link between the academic theory and the practice context. By naming a theory that explains the student's practice, the student can realise the relevant theoretical underpinnings of their actions (fitting a theory to action or context). This strategy is illustrated at the beginning of learning story 3 when the supervisor names "environmental adaptation" to explain the seemingly innate changes that the student made when playing maths games with one of the children to assist his participation and concentration. The supervisor provides a theory-practice link by using a theoretical term, "environmental adaptation," in her feedback to the student which has an occupational therapy specific meaning. As a result, the student uses this theory of environmental adaptations throughout her placement, implementing this theory in her practice by introducing a tepee and 'focus zone' to address behavioural issues in the classroom. The student's understanding of the impact of a changing environment grows. She describes how the changes in staffing impact behaviour in the classroom and anticipates the behavioural fallout in the outing to the gym, which conveys the depth of her reasoning and sensemaking of environmental adaptation to the practice context. Learning story 3 showcases the ability to apply theory in new or different contexts suggesting an in-depth understanding of the theory. This student made sense of that situation with limited framing /explaining from her supervisor and independently applied it to another situation. She was thereby showing ownership and the ability to perform as an occupational therapist while using theory to guide her practice.

Learning story 1 also conveys how the supervisor contributes to understanding the placement by naming "mal-adaptive reinforcement" to provide a theory that might explain what is reinforcing the child's incontinence at school, in that case, the mother arriving after the incident to clean her up. Dialogue provides an opportunity for supervisors to provide a theory-practice link, by suggesting an approach or theory that guides practice. The supervisor explains "operant conditioning" to explore the possible incontinence and as a means to manage toileting, thus suggesting a theory that will guide her practice and intervention. Similarly, in learning story 2, the supervisor recommends using a "strengths-based approach" and suggests social stories. In this case, the theory is applied in practice with no further dialoguing on the theory. In contrast, the student rather than the supervisor articulates the theory-practice link in learning story 4; the student uses theoretical language, terms and concepts to support her reasoning. This story suggests the importance of explicit articulation of theory in the process of understanding theory. Being able to demonstrate and present theory in her writing showcases the depth and integration of her understanding of this theory within her thinking and reasoning. The consolidation of theory and the occupational therapy perspective is demonstrated through its application across different situations and its articulation within the dialoguing.

Forming a link between the practice context and theoretical or academic knowledge appears instrumental to and inherent in making sense of the placement, that is, it is key to 'sensemaking.' Theory-driven sensemaking enables a theoretical and professional focus on the placement. The findings suggest that interactive dialogue, the collaborative interaction and supervisor feedback, appear pivotal to this theory informed sensemaking as demonstrated in the learning stories where supervisors often suggest theory to explain and /or guide practice. The student contribution involves researching, articulating, and or applying the theory in practice. The extent to which the student articulates theories and uses the academic language or concepts within the dialogue to explain their thinking varies significantly between students.

## *Developing an occupational therapy perspective*

Being able to make sense of the school placement using an occupational therapy perspective (as opposed to as a teacher or teacher aid) appears to be a significant part of the 'sensemaking' involved and required on this placement. The findings suggests that the interactive dialogue assists with this aspect of sensemaking through the written collaborative exchange, which helps co-construct the occupational therapy perspective and role, as highlighted in all the learning stories. The supervisor frequently provides and phrases suggestions regarding the potential occupational therapy role and / or perspective. For example, the feedback below points to an occupation and participation focus, which challenges the student to link their day to day experience to occupational therapy practice.

Supervisor feedback PP2 week 5 & 6: "This sounds like a great opportunity to advocate for your contributions as an occupational therapist and to promote positive practices associated with occupational wellbeing."

The following statement helps the student consider the pupils' 'role as a friend' and as a school 'student,' which provides an occupational focus (on the pupil's roles).

Supervisor PP2 week 5 & 6: "Good luck with introducing your red and green choices to the classroom - a great example of advocating for an occupational perspective in the classroom by encouraging the children to think about their role as a friend and a student."

The supervisor's feedback within the dialogue uses paraphrasing "it sounds like you..." to link student's practice more explicitly to relevant occupational therapy theory. By referring to the concepts of universal participation and enabling participation, core occupational therapy philosophy in a role-emerging context is linked to the practice context. The supervisors feedback also reflects on the student's evolving occupational therapy practice skills, "therapeutic use of self" being an occupational therapy specific term meaning to optimise the outcome of the encounter through the active and conscious use of oneself (in this case, by listening and emotionally being with the child).

Supervisor PP2 week 5 & 6: "it sounds like you are finding ways to support the participation of a wider range of children in the classroom and you are using your therapeutic use of self to 'be' with the children."

The findings from the data suggest that occupational therapy students appear to increase their ability to voice and articulate the occupational therapy role as a result of the feedback and collaboration through the dialoguing. For example, the student in learning story 3 reflects on the plan ahead to implement 'brain breaks' and make changes to the classroom environment. The student has an occupational therapy perspective as she uses environmental modification and fatigue management ('brain breaks') to assist with classroom learning. The student is therefore demonstrating a different approach or perspective to the teacher which aligns with occupational therapy philosophy.

Student PP1 weeks 3 & 4: "my teacher is excited about my 'brain breaks' which we are going to try out between maths groups to give the kids a bit of time to 'shuffle off' before re-focusing on the next task."

An occupational therapy perspective is evident once the student can link the practice context to occupational therapy theory. However, the student's confidence in articulating and consolidating their unique perspective and role appears complicated. The extent to which they can make sense of their role as occupational therapy

students in the school placement appears to fluctuate. The data shows significant variation between students and also within situations for each student. Some of the data suggest ambivalence and lack of clarity at times with the development of the occupational therapy perspective, for example seen below in the data from PP3. The data suggests that this student perceives that she is not always 'doing' occupational therapy, which appears frustrating for her, as suggested in this entry below.

PP3 student week 3 & 4: "but I feel the teachers think we are their helping hand - I am doing a lot of teacher aid jobs more than OT work."

This range and ambivalence were echoed within the member checking DAViT form. The member checking DAViT tool required students to verify whether their satisfaction with forming an occupational therapy perspective was high, changeable, or low. Student PP1 verified most statements affirming a 'high' satisfaction; while the student from PP2 mainly verified statements that indicated a mainly 'changeable' and occasionally 'low' satisfaction. See Appendix N which documents and compares the student's responses in relation to their perspective of the development of an occupational therapy perspective.

This is in contrast to the dialogue from PP1 who from early on in her placement appears to be able to voice an occupational therapy perspective. Her teacher recognises that she brings a different and valuable perspective to the classroom which is suggested in the following statement in the data.

PP1 week 1 & 2: "Today I managed to have a good discussion with my teacher about my direction as an OT and how I am able to contribute to the class as a whole and individual students. Despite my own reservations about disrupting his/her <sup>21</sup>collaborating with the students I was really pleased to have him/her really enjoy my input and he told me how he/she really appreciated my observations as they were not anything he would have really thought about. He/she is really keen to start working with me to try and change up current environmental factors to see if they may have an impact on engagement. He/she also told me how he/she really appreciated my input with the students [school pupils] and he/she (is) pleased with how well they have taken to working with me and how he/she is excited about having me in the class..."

The slowed staged progression of the occupational therapy process within the placement was apparent to the researcher through references of temporal tasks over the course of the placement corresponding to specific stages of the occupational therapy process. An occupational therapy perspective was likely to have been promoted because the placement followed the occupational therapy process. The placement appeared to involve three distinctive phases, as discussed in the reflective dialogue. These included: 1. Observation and rapport building; 2. Planning, collaboration and intervention 3. Intervention, review and handover; with each phase being approximately two weeks in duration.

Examples from week 1 and 2 from the dialogue:

PP3 student week 1: "to gather data to develop part of a baseline" ... "As it is early into my placement observing is my main tool"

PP2 supervisor week 1: "I encourage you to take the time to get to know the children and the class in your own time and to formulate your own clinical opinions based on your observations over time"

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<sup>21</sup> Both gender terms are used to ensure anonymity of the teacher

Examples from week 3 and 4 from the dialogue:

PP1 supervisor week 3: “Well done for taking the time to 'interview' and observe your students and to adjust your plan”

PP1 student week 3: “I had an amazing hour long meeting with my teacher and we went through all my ideas and finally organised how I can work my interventions in with class life. My new concept for the thinking spot has been finalized and we decided it will be a class project that the children can all contribute to. My interventions and goals for my two focus children have been given a big tick and we are collaborating on the environmental modifications that are part of the intervention.”

Examples from week 5 and 6 from the dialogue:

PP1 student at end of week 6: “Today I wrapped up my second week of intervention with E and the progress has been amazing 😊”

PP1 student week 5: “its mainly about the 'gap factor' (as I call it), and making sure there isn't a gap when I leave”

Appendix I provides further documentation of the staged occupational therapy process being recorded in the data. This staged process documented and guided through the dialogue appears to provide these students with a guideline of what to do, a chronological outline and guide in the placement, which follows the occupational therapy process and enables dialoguing and advice within each of these phases.

### ***Overlap of themes***

The theory-practice link appears to overlap and often include an occupational therapy perspective, as seen in the dialogue data. For example, in learning story 3, the concept of ‘environmental adaptation’ is arguably a core principle of occupational therapy theory. Therefore, the suggestion of ‘environmental adaptation’ provides an occupational therapy perspective and focus as well as linking theory to guide practice. Theory and relevant information assist the student to develop a more complex, in-depth, and critical perspective. For example, in learning story 1, the concepts of maladaptive reinforcement and social stigma greatly enhance the students' understanding of the toileting issue. Theoretical knowledge can therefore facilitate sensemaking, enabling students to gain a deeper understanding of the context and to develop situational awareness.

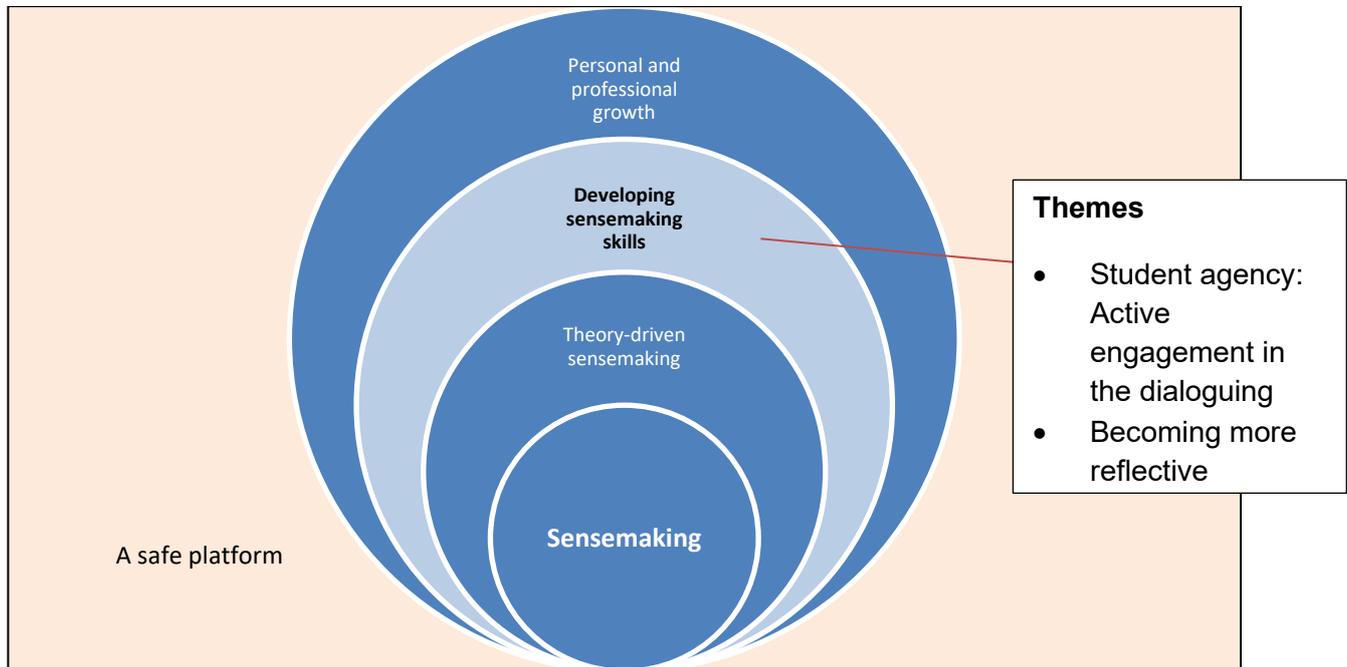
In addition to the contextual theoretical information discussed in the dialogue, making up theory-driven sensemaking, is the potential learning that occurs through the process of dialoguing and written collaboration itself. The interactive dialogue process appears to nurture and require reflective skills, self-directed thinking, encouraging students to voice their reasoning and become more confident. In this way it would appear that the process of reflective dialoguing appears to develop the students' sensemaking skills.

## **Developing sensemaking skills**

Engagement in the reflective inquiry process and reasoning through dialoguing involves the student practicing the process of reflection. The interactive dialogue provides a written demonstration, template, example, and practice opportunity for reflective reasoning. Engaging in reflective inquiry through dialogue facilitates students to become more reflective and adopt a critical lens, which is demonstrated and prompted by the supervisors' feedback. The more actively the student engages in the reflective dialogue, the more this reflective lens appears to develop. Two themes comprise the developing sensemaking skills, being: *Student agency: Active engagement in the dialoguing*; and *Becoming more reflective*. As seen below in Figure 4.

**Figure 4**

*Diagram highlighting the developing sensemaking skills category of sensemaking*



While all students were active in their sensemaking and sought to make sense of the placement, how this was sought through dialoguing was unique to each student, and the range in sensemaking skills and outcome of sensemaking was individual. It would seem students themselves are paramount to this process, including their level of participation and engagement in the dialoguing and sensemaking process and psychological factors such as their intent, drive, and purpose for dialoguing. These internal dispositional aspects of sensemaking appear to be inherent in, and simultaneously nurtured through, sensemaking.

### ***Student agency***

Agency is used to describe the student's active role within the dialogue and reflective inquiry. Agency includes taking ownership of one's learning and being self-directed by showing initiative, actively pursuing meaning, being directive, and striving towards independence in learning. In the context of reflective dialogue, this involves actively engaging in the inquiry process, initiating relevant learning issues, responding to dialogue feedback, seeking to make sense of the practice context through further engagement in dialoguing, and being proactive with researching topics to assist comprehension. These practices termed student agency, are apparent throughout the data and are demonstrated in all five learning stories. The following explanatory comment from the DAViT speaks to the perception of the importance of an active student contribution to learning:

Student PP1 "Self-directed learning and keen initiative was paramount on this placement."

The DAViT member checking tool verified that the concept of agency was perceived as critical for learning, appearing to resonate with the students in their comments and revealing agreement or the least range between student answers. Appendix M documents the student answers from member checking in relation to the concept of self-directed learning.

Agency is demonstrated in the learning stories when students engage in the reflective inquiry process by responding to feedback, further dialoguing, and using the dialogue to explore meaning. Engaging in reflective inquiry tasks through the dialogue requires effort and ownership with the student needing to initiate and engage in cognitive tasks of questioning further and exploring concepts deeper within the dialogue exchange. Students also demonstrate agency when taking the initiative to research topics and then apply that theory in practice and or articulate it in their dialoguing. The supervisor frequently explains, questions, and invites further dialogue. It is still, however, up to the student to fully participate in the reflective inquiry by seeking advice and clarity, formulating ideas, and responding proactively to the supervisors' feedback. Furthermore, engaging in research to seek clarity and understanding themselves to develop their own understanding and clinical perspective is also suggestive of the student's agency. Sensemaking through dialogue appears to be an active and effortful process. The comment below captures the effortful, active, and student-led nature of learning:

PP1 student week 3: "Desire: To chip away at my ever-growing work pile. Behaviour boards, PE lesson plans, Sensory tents, Thinking area development, idea wheels and tech work, research and readings.....",

While all the students demonstrated agency, differences were apparent between the students in the following three tasks associated with agency within the reflective dialoguing process: their response to feedback, their use of dialoguing to construct meaning, and the quickness to and participation in self-study or research. The concept of readiness to learn formed as a sub-theme of agency, assisting to demonstrate and explain these differences in student learning and their demonstration of agency seen within the dialogue.

### ***Active engagement in the dialoguing***

Differences were noted in the students' responsiveness to feedback within the dialogue data. Supervisor feedback within the dialogue invited further and deeper inquiry and response from the student; however, this was not always taken up by the student. For example, in learning story 2, no answer was provided in response to the supervisor's questions. Instead, the student in learning story 2 appeared to passively accept the suggestions of theory, (a strengths-based approach) and an intervention (social stories), from her supervisor. The student goes on to demonstrate agency by researching the social stories and implementing them in the classroom successfully. In this case, this student appeared to use the written dialoguing less actively as a sensemaking or meaning-making tool, demonstrated by limited collaborative dialoguing and less engagement in the written articulation of theory. There is also inconsistency in her response to feedback within the dialoguing in general. A further example is when the supervisor refers to play-based learning in the dialogue, she suggests that this concept will help the student to build occupational participation and invites further dialogue on this concept. Despite this direct request as seen below, the student does not discuss play-based learning again within the dialogue.

PP2 Supervisor week 1: "The use of play-based learning could present some great opportunities for building occupational participation and performance in a meaningful way for the children you're working with - I look forward to hearing more about this as the placement progresses."

The student from learning stories 3 and 4, by contrast, responds more consistently and readily to feedback. She collaborates and constructs meaning through the dialogue, building on to the supervisor's feedback and suggestions, using and expanding their advice or theories within the dialogue conversation. This is seen, for example, when discussing environmental adaptation or intrinsic motivation in learning stories 3 and 4, as discussed in '*theory-driven sensemaking.*'

Secondly, differences in the students' approach, likely intent, or purpose for dialoguing were apparent. Students appeared to be motivated to dialogue for different purposes: the intent to construct meaning and to problem-solve or make sense of the practice situation, or to document. The student in PP2 appears to inconsistently utilise the dialogue as a sensemaking tool; an interpretation which is verified in the DAViT tool by that respective student herself. The student verifies that the role-emerging placement, rather than the dialoguing itself, was instrumental to constructing the occupational therapy perspective, as seen in Appendix N. This suggests that the student may not always engage with dialoguing with the intent of collaborative sensemaking. A further comment from this student in her member checking DAViT form suggests this further:

Student PP2 DAViT comment: "it was very important for me to use this tool to communicate with my supervisor when I had an issue or if I needed some assistance on how best to deal with a behaviour I had not had experience with before."

This comment suggests that the student sees dialoguing as useful to gain specific answers and guidance, but not necessarily that of collaboratively constructing meaning or for sensemaking. Instead, she appears to ascribe to a more passive stance within the dialoguing of accepting the supervisor's guidance. This is seen in learning story 2 when she takes on the advice to use social stories in the classroom but does not engage in a discussion about the learning stories or the strengths-based approach or other theory within the dialogue.

By comparison, the student in PP1 writes more regularly, responds to supervisor questions and prompts, and provides lengthy accounts of her reasoning in the written dialogue. In learning story 3 the student's efforts to learn and construct meaning through dialogue is demonstrated by the active engagement and ownership of learning in the reflective dialoguing. Learning stories 3 and 4 highlight the active and effortful part that the student plays within the sensemaking and her part in the construction process of learning within the dialoguing. PP1 receives limited guidance, merely the words "environmental and occupational adjustments," and has more questions from her supervisor. She applies knowledge to new or different contexts, refines how it is implemented in its application to fit the child's progress in learning story 4, and articulates theory within her dialoguing, suggesting integration of her knowledge to the practice situation.

The student from PP3 demonstrates agency and intent to uncover meaning and make sense of the practice situation by actively pursuing answers through the dialogue. She appears to be frustrated or concerned about her learning and searches for answers and more information. She states week 1 & 2: "Am a bit worried I am not learning enough as an Occupational Therapy student in the school role in my second year compared to others in other roles." This student articulated an occupational therapy perspective in learning story 1, relating to the child's incontinence on the social aspect of her life at school. However, she continues to ask for more information from her supervisor in the dialogue but struggles to pinpoint her specific learning needs. We see her questioning her supervisor to seek answers within the dialogue in week 3 & 4: "could (I) learn more about different models or assessments to further my learning?" The supervisor replies: "What particularly do you want to learn more about?" Later she defines her learning needs in week 5 & 6: "do you have any behavioural models or reading I could have a look at or suggestions on a good one for me." This conversation suggests that despite the supervisor previously having dialogued about "operant conditioning" and "mal-adaptive reinforcement" concerning the behavioural frame of reference in relation to the toileting issue; the student may not have understood how this theory could be applied to other contexts. The student was unable to link behavioural theory principles to behavioural management in the classroom. However, this student's perseverance, intent and drive to make sense of the theory and the practice problem of behavioural issues in the classroom, meant that she eventually reached a deeper understanding. This assisted to resolve her confusion and frustration

providing a framework to guide her thinking and intervention when addressing behavioural difficulties in the classroom.

PP2 provides feedback in the DAViT form, which speaks to her motivation, values, interest, and preference to learn through writing, suggesting the influence of different learning styles on learning and engagement in dialoguing:

“I personally really do not enjoy writing down my reflections, especially not daily so I did struggle to feel motivated writing my reflections.”

In contrast, PP1 feedback in the Davit shares:

“I am a ‘writer’ when it comes to emotional processing anyway, I have been like it since I was young, so for effective and direct reflection SLACK was ideal. I could get my ideas/thoughts/concerns out... I find it easier to process words on a page logically, than thoughts at times. The visuality of SLACK helped me identify target learning points too. Tutor feedback meant I could revisit throughout my placement.”

These comments perhaps illustrate a difference in the student's intention and comfort with learning through reflective writing in terms of preference to write, and suggest different values about, and use of writing to unpack and construct meaning. The internal process of reflection that students performed in this study are not necessarily fully captured in the written reflection that they produce. Likely, another means of producing their internal reflection (such as speaking, drawing, making a video) might have resulted in a different representation of the reflection (Moon, 2007). This idea is possibly especially true for PP2, who admits that she is “not a writer” in her DAViT feedback.

Another task associated with student agency is in considering how quickly and frequently students responded to cues from the dialogue feedback to then engage in self-study or research. While all the students discuss researching topics or theories within the dialogue, this is notably more prevalent in PP1 as seen in learning stories 3 and 4.

PP1 student dialogue week 2: “I am researching and researching and enjoying all the resources that have been shared on slack. I am going to be applying my research to my target children and baselines”

This student from PP1 mentions engaging in research more frequently than the other students and uses the reflective dialogue more extensively than the other students. This student also uses discipline-specific terminology and discusses theories more readily within her own written reflective dialogue compared with the other students. This suggests that this student demonstrates more agency within the dialoguing and with engaging in research as seen in learning stories 3 and 4. In comparison, learning story 5 demonstrates a difference in agency and readiness to engage in self-study /research between these students. The student from learning story 5 does not initially research or inquire into child e’s health condition, referring to him as “high needs boy,” which suggests limited medical knowledge of his condition. Despite mounting concern about the school child’s wellness and prompts from the long-arm supervisor, and suggestions of reading a care plan from school staff, the student does not appear to engage in research or dialogue in a manner suggestive of having performed research by conveying an understanding of child e’s condition. It is the fright of witnessing a seizure which provides the impetus to research the child’s health condition rather than prompting from the dialogue.

## *Becoming more reflective*

The reflective dialogue enables a mentorship between student and supervisor, with the supervisor mentoring the student on the reflective process and 'how to reflect'. The dialoguing process means that students are simultaneously involved in, demonstrated or mentored about, and coached on 'how to reflect.' The result is students develop situational awareness through the provision of information, facts and academic knowledge and theory relevant to the setting (as described in theory-driven sensemaking), and simultaneously the dialoguing process develops the students' skills of reflection.

Learning stories 1 and 3 showcase the collaborative and co-constructive sensemaking process and the corresponding evolving students' reflective skills. The supervisors demonstrate a process of critical reflection through the dialogue, teaching students how to reason and reflect by providing a 'reasoning dialogue' on the specific contextual issues of toileting or environmental adaptation. The dialoguing involves the student in reasoning about professional decisions and considerations within the intervention process and demonstrates examples of 'how to reflect and reason'. Learning story 1 provides this mentoring through the discussion of issues from a broader perspective (the multiplicity of incontinence; the power imbalances between occupational therapy student and teacher relationship, the challenges of working collaboratively); from a theoretical perspective (the behavioural frame of reference); and, from a professional viewpoint (such as introducing baselines, measurement, collaboration and planning). This collaboration within the dialogue adds to the students' depth of understanding and the process is likely to enhance the student's sensemaking skills.

Further data examples showcase the mentoring process of 'how to reflect' through dialoguing. Supervisor strategies are bracketed in the dialogue below to illustrate some of these mentoring strategies within this interactive dialogue:

Supervisor PP2: [congratulate, affirm] "great to hear that you were able to share an idea with the teacher who was then able to take this on board and use it with the children. [Frames /teach] A good demonstration of a universal intervention, even though you may have had specific children you were targeting specifically. [Mentoring how to reflect] It sounds like this was a motivating strategy for Child W. [teach /frame or contextualise] When new strategies are introduced, it's not unusual for a honeymoon period of 'compliance' to occur whilst it's novel, followed by a period of 'testing the boundaries' to see if it will be used consistently or if it can be made easier, before it becomes more 'habitual' and accepted as the norm. If you come across this testing the boundaries phase, don't be thrown by it and trouble-shoot potential strategies to manage this in advance so it doesn't catch you out."

The supervisor words her feedback using a conversational tone, promoting dialogue, and suggesting that the student consider and reflect on these options. The tone is supportive and positive (affirming, congratulating) and invites collaboration and reflection. While the feedback is instructional and assists a clinical focus, the supervisor adopts a strengths-based and curious approach. Supervisor feedback promotes a reflective stance, showcasing how the student needs to consider, try-out, and observe further within their future practice (that is, how to reflect). The supervisor hints that theory and practice knowledge requires thoughtful interpretation, adjustment, and review in its application. Adjustments are required to ensure that the theory fits the specific requirements of that practice context; the same theory cannot be applied in the same manner to every situation. This alludes to the student's role in making the information work in her environment or for that specific child.

Following a question posed by a student on behavioural issues, the supervisor suggests some ideas to explain and to try out in practice to address the behavioural issues described. The supervisor techniques are placed in brackets to illustrate the supervisor's strategies and skills in assisting the student's learning. Feedback assists in forming a deeper, more complex understanding of the situation, and demonstrates and involves the process of reflective reasoning by critically appraising and reflecting on how ideas work in practice.

Student PP3 week 3: "When asked to do something she gets more angry and hides. I'm not sure why she gets so defensive when we ask questions like 'Child 'f<sup>22</sup>' can you please put your book away'. Does anyone have any suggestions?"

Supervisor response: [Frame, teach, demonstrates a reflective and analytical approach] "We often get angry when we are frustrated, and we get frustrated when we don't understand or feel not listened to. [Demonstrates a reflective and analytical approach, Questions used to invite closer observation and more discussion in the dialogue] Consider if it is transitioning from one task to the next which is frustrating her? [Guiding; demonstrates a reflective and analytical approach by suggesting to try-out and review techniques in practice, the word "perhaps" suggests this]. Perhaps she requires a stronger use of routine, warning her that one task is soon to end, before change, then some sort of rhythm or saying to help her transition into the next task. [Demonstrates a reflective and analytical approach, Questions used to invite deeper reflection and more discussion in the dialogue] Do you think she understands you? [Guiding, suggesting ideas again showing how to develop a reflective and analytical approach, inviting response] perhaps back away from the directing and try to engage in some rapport building tasks with her,"

The practice context means that the dialogue cannot anticipate and answer every situation that the student might come across on placement. Ultimately the student needs to adopt a reflective and critical perspective to appreciate and apply ideas and theories in practice. Adopting a lens that is analytical and reflective requires agency on the student's part. It is required to evaluate whether the theory, concepts, or ideas co-constructed through the dialogue will be successful in practice. By developing and adopting a critical and reflective approach, the student becomes more autonomous in their sensemaking skills. Learning stories 1 and 3 showcase the respective students becoming more confident and autonomous in their sensemaking skills. These students appear to have adopted an analytical and reflective stance. For example, in story 1 the student has already planned and put actions in place to help the child maintain her toileting habits over the weekend before the supervisor's prompt demonstrating agency and ownership. Moreover, she explains her reasoning that child 'a' is "finding her own cues," demonstrating the student participant's sensemaking, reasoning, and reflective skills. She also demonstrates awareness of her approach and communication style to suit the child, described below:

PP3 Supervisor weeks 5 & 6: "do you think there is a connection between your child getting embarrassed and her asking to go to the toilet today? What enabled this to occur today? Is there anything that you can put in place to enable it to occur on Monday? Wonderful milestone!"

Dialogue response student: "Yeah I do think there is some connection I feel that she is finding out her own cues that she thinks is important which is good. Yes I did I asked her questions what she is going to do at home to make sure she doesn't have an accident (I scaled that conversation to her ability) and gave her mum a sticker book to take home which she was happy about."

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<sup>22</sup> Letters of the alphabet are used to denote school pupils. These have been reallocated alphabetically in the order in which they are discussed in this chapter

The student demonstrates reasoning and analytical skills, having already attended to ideas of how to carry-over the successful toileting while at home at the weekend. The words “scaled that conversation to her ability” suggests her mindful handling skills and the ‘therapeutic use of self,’ an Occupational Therapy specific technique to maintain rapport and a therapeutic alliance with the child. She also demonstrates and articulates her reasoning about the different toilet environments and how she attributes this to changes in the child’s success.

Similarly, the student in learning story 3 demonstrated her reasoning by planning and anticipating behavioural issues for one of the children in her class before the gym trip without her supervisor's advice. This student was able to reason and critically reflect on the impact of the environment on the child. Interestingly, the school teachers did not initially appreciate the significance of this insight.

Student PP1 weeks 5 & 6: “The bus ride to the gym trip was a highly distressing time for focus a. I spoke to both teachers prior to departure as I know he is really sensitive to noise and chaos and he was getting anxious and was 'acting out' with all the hype and noise. I knew the bus ride was going to be traumatic for him, but they both said " he will be ok"... ..” He calmed quite quickly with the quiet, fresh air, sunshine and writing tools. We talked about what he was feeling and how we might be able to help with a 'relax kit' that he may be able to use on trips when he is feeling distressed or overwhelmed. My teachers really took on board how upsetting the bus was for him and I ended up being with him in the car of [another pupil's] mum where he was quiet, relaxed and happy on the way back to school.”

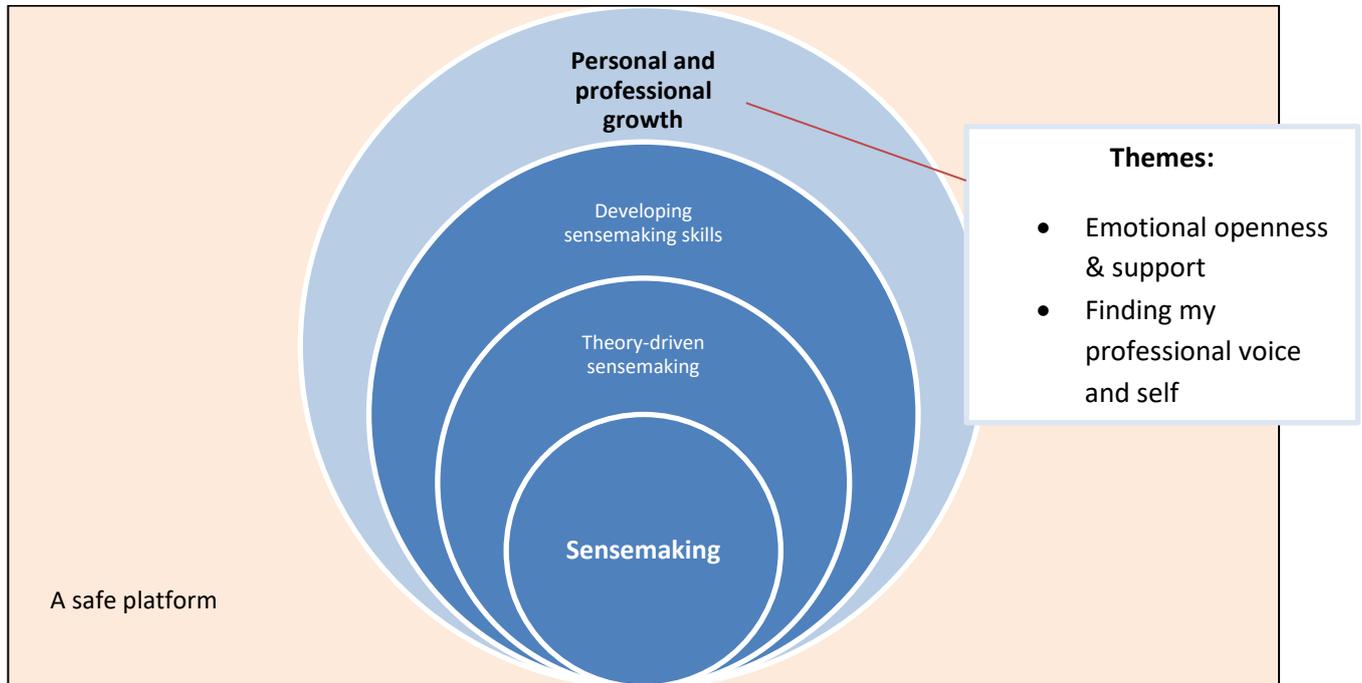
## Personal and professional growth

The process of sensemaking appears emotionally challenging at times and seems to involve a journey involving personal and professional growth, toward maturity, a ‘coming of age professionally.’ The dialoguing process seems conducive to debriefing and emotional openness. The students appear to debrief and off-load openly and honestly, facilitating their concerns to be heard and validated. Moreover, the ‘dilemmas,’ issues, and concerns often appear to initiate and prompt deeper and personally meaningful sensemaking, resulting in personal and professional growth and at times even personal transformational learning.

This category has two themes which appear to be inter-related and to be inter-dependent in terms of promoting student’s learning, development and growth through dialogue. These themes include emotional openness and support; and finding my professional voice and self. The theme emotional openness and support, relates to the honest debriefing within the dialoguing and genuine engagement in problem-solving on that issue, which is seen at times as the basis for the student’s growth and even transformational learning. It would seem that key to this is the safety of the platform which enables honest, genuine and open collaboration and sense seeking. The second theme, finding my professional voice and self, conveys this growth and change as students emerge with more practice confidence and begin to articulate and identify as a professional within the dialogue. Thus, suggesting this growth and even a transformation toward a more mature and professional identity. Figure 5 below demonstrates the category of personal and professional growth and its themes.

**Figure 5**

*Diagram highlighting personal and professional growth as a category of sensemaking*



Dialoguing was seen to afford open debriefing, moreover, these shared dilemmas, concerns, and issues were often the trigger for sensemaking. The dialogue data suggests sensemaking involved disclosing and working through personal, vulnerable and honest dilemmas, which resulted in genuine and deeper understanding, resulting in growth and development; and at times providing an opportunity for transformational learning. The following examples from the data capture this growth and transformation. Each example appears to enable a sensemaking outcome resulting from the students' specific 'dilemma:'

PP3 student week 1 'dilemma': "Am a bit worried I am not learning enough as an OT in the school role in my second year compared to others in other roles."

As discussed previously, this 'dilemma' helped the student gain a much more comprehensive understanding of the behavioural frame of reference and apply it to various contexts to understand toileting and manage behaviour in the classroom.

PP2 student week 4 'dilemma': "I actually witnessed child L having an absent seizure and it was scary to watch"

As previously discussed, this 'scary' event stimulates the student to research more about child e's condition and to access his school care plan.

Student: "today I spent all day with child 'e' (except his 2 hour nap) and we played some educational games on the iPad, practiced handwriting and number writing with play dough and a marble (he traces my letters with the marble). We also did a drawing together and both contributed to it which he loved. I looked over a list the physiotherapist gave us for him about hemiparesis and some activities we could do

to help strengthen his 'little hand' as he calls it. So we stayed in at lunch as he has woken from his nap 15 mins earlier and no teacher aids came to take over. We made some playdough snakes and I encouraged him to squish the play dough as hard as he can with his hands over and over. He struggled with making the snakes as he doesn't know how to put pressure onto the play dough to make it longer. I explained a few times but he wasn't really understanding, but he had a great time overall."

The above entry occurred following this student's research immediately after witnessing the child's seizure. This dialogue is the first to use the word 'hemiparesis' and discuss working on the child e's affected hand. These words and concepts show a more significant understanding of his condition and the occupational issues it presents for him, such as not having functional use of one hand. We also begin to see the student using activities outside of scholastic educational tasks of reading, writing, or letter formation. This increased understanding of her role as a health professional and in targeting occupational rather than scholastic tasks, suggests more of a professional understanding than previously. Before this entry, the occupational therapy student's focus appears more scholastic, as shown in the statement below.

PP2 dialogue week 1 & 2: "Next week I want to be able to spend some time with them either one on one or together with them and go through their handwriting, maths and reading".

This approach with child 'e' is arguably more congruent with occupational therapy and shows a divergence from the teacher or teacher aid's role or perspective where the focus has been on educational outcomes. Underlying this intervention are assumptions about neuroplasticity, that the "little" or affected hand can improve through movement and function. This approach is fundamental to occupational therapy intervention when working with people with neurological conditions. Significantly this shows more of a professional understanding and approach than seen before this entry with this child. Later again, we see the student collaborating with the mother from a professional standpoint, assisting her in understanding medications, side effects, and concepts such as sensory programmes. She advises the mother to seek more information from the outside occupational therapist. The entry conveys an increased understanding of her role and understanding of the occupational needs and health condition compared with the student's earlier dialogue entries referring to the child as "high needs boy" and describing her role as a babysitter when the teacher aid is away, as seen in the comment below.

PP2 week 1 & 2: "I don't really have a desire for tomorrow, the teacher aid is away so I get told to watch child 'e' as he needs constant supervision in case of a seizure or something."

Another example where the 'dilemma' sparks sensemaking involves the dialogue from PP1 when the occupational therapy student meets a school pupil's mother and realises that the mother is sceptical of her intervention with that child. The dilemma surrounding confused communication assists with the student's acute realisation of the importance of collaboration with family and whanau when working with a child, central to occupational therapy philosophy and values.

PP1 entry week 5 & 6: "I got to work a lot with my target boys today and had a really good chat with one of their mothers who is also a teacher and taught at [school name] prior to having her children (her eldest being my focus child). During our time together I got to establish the work I am doing with her son. I am glad I did as when I asked what she knew about what I was doing in class with her son she was sceptical but knew there was more to it all as the only reports she had were from her son. Focus e had told her that he has a 'focus zone' and that he was "put in a cubby in the corner". As proud of it as he was, I could understand why she felt concerned by this! So we had a great conversation about what I am doing, clearing up all confusion and reservations she had, especially around the focus zone! She was really supportive of my work not only with her son, but as a whole with the class and their environment. She was pleased that I was able to see the areas in her son that she herself thought he needed support

within the class, especially after I spoke to her about my goals for him. She was also speaking about the positive things her son has to say about me and how proud he feels in being able to 'focus on his work'. This has really shown me the importance of parent approval and contribution to how we form our goals and interventions. I have made sure that should she have any questions about my work with her son she is more than welcome to ask and I am happy to collaborate with her if she would like."

The ability to reflect openly is often the starting point for sensemaking as was the case for PP3 trying to pinpoint her learning needs and find theories that would assist her practice and help her to feel like she had learned something that was 'occupational therapy.' For PP2 we see that her research about child e's condition facilitates more of a professional perspective by demonstrating more of an understanding of his condition and developing more of an occupational therapy specific focus. For PP1 it was a realisation and full appreciation of the real value of working closely and in collaboration with whanau. These and the other examples suggest that sensemaking is often triggered by emotional stress or awareness of not knowing something or reflecting that something went wrong. This unease, confusion, or concern appears to stimulate genuine and deep learning, involving personal and professional growth as part of a sensemaking outcome.

These and further examples of personal growth toward maturity and professionalism are seen in the dialogue. At times, this professional perspective and maturity appears to involve a realisation that some issues are beyond their control and scope as an occupational therapy student and are complicated and, at times, impacted by the larger New Zealand context and school system constraints. This depth of reflection suggests learning goes beyond just situational awareness or theoretical knowledge to a more personal change and acceptance of a situation and a more professional perspective. The above mentioned dialogue examples of sensemaking stemming from dilemmas suggests this personal and professional change. This growth and maturation, and the emotional aspect of sensemaking, is further conveyed in these statements from the dialogue data:

PP3 week 3 & 4: "I think that on a professional level that the school environment is something we can improve to help this child rather than trying to change the home environment, as sad as it is. I think I struggle to turn a blind eye on these situations as I do not like seeing a child not get their full potential because of lack of rest or nutrition but I know that it is a part of my job and will learn along the way"

PP1 weeks 1 & 2: "Sometimes all you can do is reach for the higher powers at the school but the teacher and myself (she asked me to help her a lot this morning) really did try our best to help and engage him today. Hope he is feeling better soon, he really is a great kid."

PP2 dialogue week 3 & 4: "I want to go in tomorrow with a more positive approach and try (to) figure out a way I can work with some of these kids without getting frustrated with everything else going on."

Student dialogue PP3 week 5 & 6: "Tomorrow is a new day and I'm prepared to go in with a positive mind, and address it if it's needed." [referring to conflict with teacher]

PP1 dialogue student week 3 & 4: "I was able to establish a new baseline and goal for him around aspects I can make a difference in and aspects that are better suited to the 'ups and downs' of class culture and routine, rather than what I had planned on before."

### ***Emotional openness and support***

Students appear to be open and honest in their disclosures, using them as opportunities to debrief about the challenging circumstances that they are faced with or their emotions towards this. The open nature of reflections within the data suggests that Slack's reflective platform was considered safe and supportive; as supported by member checking through the DAViT. A feedback comment from the member checking tool, the

DAViT, captures this student's perception of the purpose and safety of using the dialoguing tool:

PP2 DAViT feedback: "I found SLACK a good tool to debrief."

It would seem that the sensemaking process and the placements themselves can be emotionally challenging at times, and the data shows a range in students' emotions being expressed: from pride and a sense of achievement (seen in learning story 4) to frustration, confusion, anxiety and exasperation. Some examples of the open nature and use of debriefing from the data include:

PP2 student "Today was diabolical"... "the whole day was so disruptive that it is hard to choose one dilemma to talk about"

PP2 student "there really wasn't anything that went well today."

PP2 student "I went and sat with the girl who it happened to and she was quiet and wouldn't talk which made me feel really upset for her..."

PP2 student: "I feel really stuck..."

PP2 supervisor "keep reminding yourself this is not your responsibility to change"

One of the supervisors on the placement reworded and verified the following statement in the formulation and use of the DAViT tool:

"Positive statements were mindfully used to support a safe climate." PP3 supervisor, DAViT

The supervisors appear to cultivate a safe climate through mindful feedback that assists students' sensemaking and provides the student with emotional support, empathy, validation, and affirmation. Where the supervisor provides emotional support, affirmation, and validation to the student it would seem to assist in the students' learning and well-being and guide them through their challenges. There are many examples throughout the dialogue across the data which illustrate the supervisors' positive and sensitive feedback, affirming and validating the students' feelings and learnings, and demonstrating genuine care for the emotional well-being of the students also appears evident within this dialogue. An example from learning story 5 demonstrates the use of affirmation and empathy within the supervisor's feedback: "It can be challenging to 'reset' our focus when we feel constantly overwhelmed by the events around us..." The sense of connection and support through the reflective dialogue appears to create a supportive learning community. The entry below, written at the end of the placement, hints at this student's subjective experience of a supportive community:

PP1 student week 6: "Today I celebrate me and my wonderful colleagues and all the amazing work we have done. A big thank you to you all for all the help, guidance, advice and laughs"

Therefore, it would appear that dialogue facilitates student growth by providing academic and theoretical guidance together with emotional support through careful, sensitive, clinically relevant and timely feedback and collaboration. The perceived safety of the dialoguing platform appears key to its success.

### ***Finding my professional voice and self***

Students express themselves in the written reflective dialogue by articulating and explaining their interpretation of theory and voicing their own ideas and beliefs. This articulation is well-demonstrated in learning stories 1, 3, and 4 and suggests that these students have developed the ability to voice their reasoning or sensemaking

within the dialoguing. These students show increased confidence and ability to voice their reasoning and sensemaking skills within the dialogue over the course of the placement. The student in learning story 3 demonstrates her 'professional voice' in writing and in the mindful manner in which she approaches the teachers with her concern for the boy's safety on the bus. Her written self-authorship is evidence of and represents her sensemaking and reasoning and appears to be a 'professional' voice. She engages in reflective practice (looking forward reflectively to anticipate the event with the boy in the bus) using an analytical mindset, which assists with her autonomy in sensemaking and decision making, arguably beyond expectations for second-year level.

The student in learning story 1 discusses how the child's incontinence results in her exclusion from the school production. She expresses this, articulating her voice, using terminology which demonstrates an occupational perspective. She is aware of the impact that this exclusion will have on the child in her social world, thus demonstrating a holistic awareness of the child's occupational well-being:

PP3: "By taking away the production her social environment has been affected."

Learning story 3 suggests that the teacher is aware that the student's perspective and observations are different. This remark suggests that she has found her own voice and perspective:

PP1 student week 1: "he told me how he really appreciated my observations as they were not anything he would have really thought about. He is really keen to start working with me to try and change up current environmental factors to see if they may have an impact on engagement"

Students '*finding their own professional voices*' is demonstrated within the dialogue when students articulate theory and their own professional ideas in the written reflections. Written articulations suggest that this occupational therapy theory and language have become incorporated into the students' understanding of the context. Story 4 demonstrates this well:

PP1 student week 6: "I was proud to see the self-initiated priming (Q3) and self-instruction (Q4) in his preparations such as moving to the focus zone..."

The student's use of language within the dialogue linking to the four-quadrant model of Greber (Q3 and Q4 above) shows an understanding of and application of this theory in her practice. This theory articulates her deeper understanding and showcases her voice in the written dialogue, conveying her sensemaking.

The explicit articulation of theory appears to represent, enable and consolidate understanding. Furthermore, the students appear to grow and evolve into more of a professional self over the course of the placement. This use of discipline-specific theory distinguishes the students' perspective and role from that of the teacher or teacher aid. Where articulation of theory occurs in the student's reasoning and reflection, it suggests that the student is thinking like a professional, an occupational therapist, and documents the students' development of a professional identity.

Practice confidence and the development of a professional-self and identity present themselves through the dialogue stories where students describe being able to make in-the-moment decisions and confidently use themselves therapeutically in practice. They thereby 'find their professional voice' in the dialoguing and 'their professional self' in the practice situation. Learning story 3 suggests that the student has the confidence to articulate her opinion to the teachers about her concern for the school pupil 'c' going on the bus trip. The student's confidence in her conviction is demonstrated by having pre-prepared an activity for the boy, calming him down. In learning story 4, the student again conveys her voice through the therapeutic use of self and

making in-the-moment decisions to 'roll with it' in her interaction with the boy in the classroom. She makes the impromptu decision to use a behavioural prompt, the 'pinkie promise.' Practice confidence is evident in the 'in-the-moment' decision-making. Confidence and a sense of pride in a job well done and ownership for that job are further conveyed in learning story 4:

PP1 student: "Today focus 'e' managed to get through his writing with absolutely no prompting from me or the teacher! He also wrote 5 concepts in the story and equated over a page of great writing 😊 I was proud to see the self-initiated priming (Q3) and self-instruction (Q4) in his preparations such as moving to the focus zone, getting the wobble cushion and made sure he had all of what he needed so he was not tempted to use the excuse of needing something as a distraction!"

Similarly, learning story 1 involves the student making up a celebratory song to reinforce using the toilet appropriately. This suggests an understanding of positive reinforcement theory and speaks to the confidence in this student to use her spontaneity and the development of 'therapeutic use of self' using herself as an agent of positive change or therapeutic outcome. Practice confidence appears to emerge during the placement. It is captured within the data in these examples of in-the-moment reasoning and 'therapeutic use of self.' There are more examples, especially towards the mid to end-stage of the placement for all three students. Confidence and articulation of the student's views and sensemaking within the student's writing are also progressively demonstrated over the placement course.

A successful sensemaking outcome might be considered as making sense of a situation, context or idea and this appears to involve growth and change in ones understanding or perspective. Dialoguing appears to support this growth within and across the three inter-related categories of sensemaking, providing the opportunity for growth and understanding in a scaffolded and guided manner. The students in learning stories 1, 3 and 4 appear to reach the outcome of sensemaking towards the end of these stories; these students have made sense of the specific practice situation, are able to articulate their role and relevant theory in relation to this with confidence and autonomy. Students become more reflective through the dialogue process and engage in dialogue with the intent of sensemaking, assisting them to realise, identify and openly dialogue about relevant practice issues that help them to link, apply, and use clinically relevant theory to guide their understanding and practice. This is seen with PP3 who realises she needs more information to make sense of the placement, and later is able to identify her specific learning need, which results in a deeper understanding and application of the behavioural frame of reference. A sensemaking outcome involves growth in the students' understanding of the practice issue and therefore results in students developing more confidence in their own practice, their professional voice and themselves as the professional person addressing that issue. This is seen with PP2 who develops more of a professional understanding of her role with 'high needs boy' and begins to align her practice with an occupational therapy, rather than a scholastic, focus. In this way, personal and/or professional growth enhances the students' professional identity and confidence in this identity. Dialoguing encourages students to voice and develop their reasoning, as seen in learning story 3 and 4. The student involved in these learning stories applies theory in different practice situations and articulates theory within the dialogue and within the classroom exerting her confidence as a 'professional' practicing in the classroom. For example, the student (PP1) uses a "pinkie promise" as a impromptu strategy to gain buy-in from a school pupil around his behaviour in the classroom. This is also seen when this student, PP1, had the practice confidence and ability to independently make sense of, anticipate, and address the behavioural fallout of the school pupil during the school outing to the gym and the bus ride. The significance of this placements role in personal and professional growth and development is denoted in PP1 student's proffered comment within the DAViT form: "This placement remains a key learning journey, skills of which I still apply today."

## Findings summary

This chapter has explained how and what learning is facilitated through reflective dialogue during students' school-based role-emerging placement. Overall, this study's findings suggest that students' learning is facilitated through collaboration through dialoguing to assist the student to make sense of the placement. While sensemaking through collaboration was evident across all dialogue datasets, the extent of collaboration for sensemaking and the outcome of sensemaking varied significantly between students and topics; and across the placement, progressing over the course of the placement. Three categories emerged from the central theme of *sensemaking* namely: *theory-driven sensemaking*; *developing sensemaking skills*; and *personal and professional growth*, and further themes were sorted into these categories.

Dialoguing affords *theory-driven sensemaking* which involves the two themes: *developing an occupational therapy perspective*, and *forming a theory-practice link*. These themes appear to assist with more in-depth, theoretical, as well as discipline-specific understanding of the practice context and to guide action therein. Theory-driven sensemaking therefore appears inherent in role-development, justifying and guiding action. While *developing sensemaking skills* involves the themes of *student agency: active engagement in dialoguing* and *becoming more reflective*. *Becoming more reflective* and adopting a critical, proactive and curious approach within the dialogue appears core to the process and outcome of sensemaking. Dialoguing provides a platform to demonstrate, mentor and coach reflective and reasoning skills. Students who actively engage within the dialogue emerge with enhanced reasoning and reflective practice skills, increased self-directing ability, and increased practice confidence. The supervisor's feedback assists with both these categories of sensemaking, guiding the theory-practice link and facilitating an occupational therapy focus while also demonstrating and mentoring reflective practice and socialising students into the profession.

The interactive dialoguing enables daily support to students with what appears to be an emotional journey. Dialogue seems conducive to emotional openness, and to increase students' awareness of and focus on their 'real' authentic learning needs as well as providing the support, close collaboration, and trusting relationship that nurtures this awareness and growth. The challenges and dilemmas associated with these role-emerging placements provide the impetus for sensemaking. The student journey documented within the dialogue appears to involve a personal and professional growth toward a more mature attitude and perspective akin with a professional outlook. This growth together with the more in-depth understanding from the theory-driven sensemaking and the student's development of sensemaking skills, suggests that reflective dialoguing in role-emerging placements provides an opportunity for personal and professional growth towards a professional identity.

Themes within and across these three categories appear to overlap and feed into each other, contributing and enhancing each other. The dialoguing process enhances the extent of sensemaking and the development of sensemaking skills. For example, the more engagement there is in the dialogue, the more sensemaking skills are enhanced and contribute to the theory-driven sensemaking. Moreover, the students' making sense of the placement and their role therein involves not only these two areas, *theory-driven sensemaking* and *developing sensemaking skills*, but also a *personal and professional growth*. A sensemaking outcome appears to entail growth and 'work' in all the categories of sensemaking, and such 'work' and 'working through' within the reflective inquiry results in deeper learning, and at times transformational learning, a fundamental change and maturation towards a professional identity and confidence. These themes were illustrated through learning stories from the dialogue and then described and further demonstrated by additional dialogue data which

explained how they appeared key to the process and task of sensemaking through reflective interactive dialoguing.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter explores the findings of this study and compares this with other previous research. The central theme, *sensemaking*, is analysed, exploring the concepts of sensemaking, collaboration, and co-construction in this placement and learning context. Billett's (2015) concept of readiness to learn is introduced early in the chapter as it provides a framework or theory to view learning on fieldwork placement and therefore from which to view the findings from this study. Categories and themes are explored in relation to the findings and duly discussed and compared with relevant literature. An exploration of the implication of these findings on practice situations follows. Finally, the limitations of the study as well as recommendations for further study are discussed.

### Sensemaking

The research findings from this study suggest that the central purpose of reflective dialoguing as a learning tool on role-emerging placements is that of sensemaking. The findings suggest that reflective dialogue is instrumental in facilitating the student to make sense of their placement through a collaborative and co-constructive process. This is well supported by the dialogue data and showcased within the learning stories. Students appear to strive to make sense of the placement and their role, which emerged as both a process and the desired outcome. 'Sensemaking' captures the essence of the students learning through the dialogue. While sensemaking is not a well-used term or commonly documented as a central feature of role-emerging placements in the literature, it is also not a surprising concept, aligning with the spirit of role-construction and fitting with the constructivist nature of interactive dialogue (Hanson et al., 2011).

The concept of sensemaking on these placements is supported by studies that explain the impetus and need for students to make sense of the placement is more remarkable because of the placement being role-emerging (Bossers et al., 1997; Dancza et al., 2013; Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009; Knightbridge, 2014). Research suggests that role-emerging placements involve exploring the 'unknown' compared with traditional placements because the students have no on-site clinical mentor to follow or established role to adopt, and instead, they need to construct this (Bossers et al., 1997). Similarly, Fieldhouse and Fedden (2009) explain that students' learning aims to resolve the puzzle of understanding the practice context and the potential occupational therapy role or perspective within that setting. Thus literature explains and supports the concept of sensemaking as a central focus on role-emerging placements, despite not necessarily adopting the term itself.

The emergence of sensemaking in my research study is understood to concur with Higgs and Jones's (2000) definition of clinical reasoning, which they define as: "a process of reflective inquiry, ... which seeks to promote a deep contextually relevant understanding of the clinical problem, in order to provide a sound basis for clinical intervention" (Higgs & Jones, 2000 p. 10). The term 'sensemaking' is selected above clinical or professional reasoning because sensemaking has less 'clinical' or medical model connotations. Further, sensemaking captures the problem-solving, emerging, and constructivist nature that fits the learning demonstrated within and through dialoguing within this study.

The dialogue as data demonstrates that sensemaking develops through collaboration between student and supervisor. Sensemaking evolves through collaboration as a co-construction in the dialogue, largely dependent on the supervisor's feedback and contribution within the dialogue. This collaborative inquiry process is well-evidenced in the data and findings of this study. The study suggests that sensemaking is both a part of, and facilitated through, the collaborative process of dialogue inquiry. The idea of collaboration is well-supported by

other studies on reflective dialoguing (Hanson et al., 2011; Rowe et al., 2012; Tryssenaar, 1994). Tryssenaar (1994) supports this finding, explaining that dialoguing enables the student and supervisor to puzzle over issues, add to each other's ideas, enabling the co-construction of ideas. Furthermore, studies on learning during role-emerging placements also support a collaborative and explorative approach to learning (Boniface et al., 2012; Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009; Warren 2014). Within the role-emerging context, much of the puzzling-over or working out content involved constructing the occupational therapy role (Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009). The findings from this study, as well as those from earlier research are therefore consistent in concluding that collaboration is a key part of the learning process.

### *Readiness to learn*

The concept of readiness to learn is one that the researcher considered from early data analysis when contemplating the differences in student approaches to reflective dialogue and learning through this medium. Readiness to learn influences the student's ability to engage productively (to be agentic) and to learn from practice experience (Billett, 2015). Learner readiness is influenced by what a student knows, does and values in the pursuit of learning (Billett, 2015). This therefore includes factors such as prior academic knowledge, former learning experiences, and general life experiences, which influences the extent and type of student engagement in the learning process, the amount and type of action and effort made in the learning process, and the motivation to learn.

The idea of readiness to learn assists in contemplating the significant range which was seen in the research findings in regards to how the students used dialogue and how they responded to feedback within the dialogue. These differences noted between the different dialogue sets are suggestive of differences in the students' readiness to learn, which resulted in a wide range of agency demonstrated within the dialogue. The dialogue data suggests that students that are proactive and responsive to feedback within the dialogue, engage readily in research, and participate in interactive dialogue with what appears to be the intent to construct meaning and to make sense; appear to benefit more from the dialogue process as a sensemaking tool.

Mann (2016) suggests that Billett's idea of readiness to learn is useful to understand learning through reflection. Billett (2015) notes that learner readiness impacts the student's ability to engage productively and to learn from practice experiences. The perceived relevance of this concept of learner readiness is reflected by the following statement proffered by a student within the DAViT form.

PP1 student comment: "Due to my life circumstance and experience I felt I was able to take initiative well and adapt my learning requirements to suit the placement experience, which ensured I got the most I could from the placement."

Billett's concept of learner readiness (2015) and Dancza et al.'s (2019) findings of learning on role-emerging placements provide an interesting theoretical framework to consider the contribution of reflective dialogue to learning on role-emerging placement. Billett (2015) uses the concept of learner readiness as a framework to understand learning on fieldwork placement in health care education, which he explains has three interdependent dimensions of knowledge: conceptual, dispositional and procedural. Billett (2015) proposes that these three dimensions of knowledge include what a student knows, facts and theory (conceptual), what they value (dispositional), and what they do (procedural); which all interact and influence what they are able and ready to learn in clinical practice, such as on fieldwork placement.

It is proposed that reflective dialogue assists in each of these in turn. Billett's concept of types of knowledge when considering readiness to learn will be applied to the findings as a framework or lens to assist

contemplation of these findings. The findings category of *theory-driven sensemaking* has a strong theoretical and knowledge base, readily aligning with Billett's (2015) category of the conceptual dimension of knowledge, which he describes as including knowledge, facts, and theory. A theoretical focus forms a key part of the content within the dialogue, as reflected in all the learning stories and appears to assist the student to make sense of the placement, by increasing their situational awareness and enabling a more in-depth and professional understanding of the practice context. Importantly conceptual knowledge, or theory, justifies and informs action much more overtly in role-emerging placements than in traditional placements (Dancza et al., 2019).

This study's themes *student agency: active engagement in dialoguing* can be considered to be congruent with Billett's (2015) concept of dispositional knowledge. Dispositional knowledge includes the students' motivations, interests, values, intentions, and attitudes that guide their thinking, actions, and, therefore, learning. It can be concluded therefore that dispositional readiness to learn in relation to learning through dialogue therefore includes the students' values and appreciation of dialoguing as a sensemaking tool, and attitude towards role-emerging placements as well as the student's overall motivation to learn. Billett (2015) explains that dispositional knowledge is associated with personal actions, conceptions, and individual preferences and how they direct their efforts to use and further develop that knowledge. Dispositional knowledge relates to the findings discussed as *active engagement in dialoguing* which describes differences in proactiveness and responsiveness to dialogue feedback; intent and motivation to learn and make meaning through dialogue; and the students' engagement in research and readiness to take action to research. The students in this study who appeared to value the reflective dialogue process and who actively responded to feedback as well as engaged with the intent to make sense, appeared to have a better sensemaking outcome; supporting the importance of values, intentionality and motivation, and personal actions as influencing learning (Billett, 2015).

A final dimension of Billett's (2015) theory of readiness to learn and types of knowledge required for students to learn from placement, is procedural knowledge. Procedural knowledge includes what we use or do to achieve goals through thinking and action (Billett, 2015). Procedural knowledge is concerned with how to do things, the process which Billett (2015) explains unlike conceptual knowledge is harder to state, is often implicit within the task and is easier to comprehend through demonstration.

Dancza et al. (2019) argue that procedural knowledge is less useful or applicable to students on role-emerging placements. Dancza et al. explain that the role-emerging nature of the placement means there is a lack of established procedures and occupational therapy processes, which students heavily rely on to 'know what to do' and 'how to it' on traditional placements. Moreover, the lack of an on-site supervisor to shadow and learn from demonstration and observation is not available on role-emerging placement. Therefore, this shifts the students to rely much more on conceptual knowledge (theory-driven knowledge) as opposed to procedural knowledge to guide their action (Dancza et al., 2019). However, in considering the role of reflective dialogue to support learning on these role-emerging placements, it can be argued that the process of frequent reflective dialoguing is conducive to mentoring, demonstration, and socializing into the profession, readily aligning with Billett's (2015) concept of procedural knowledge. The concept of procedural knowledge is demonstrated in three ways in the dialogue: firstly, dialoguing allows the mentoring of reflective inquiry and might be considered to provide a written procedural template of 'how to reflect and reason'. This relates to the study's theme: *becoming more reflective*. Secondly, the dialogue content guides and oversees the application of the occupational therapy process over the course of the placement, thus contributing to procedural knowledge in a more daily applicable step-by-step manner than other forms of supervision models explored on role-emerging placements. Thirdly, the process of learning through writing, of articulating theory and voicing one's learning and reflections in written dialogue, might comprise procedural knowledge, acknowledging the process of learning through writing

itself in the dialogue, voicing, recording, constructing meaning and sensemaking. The idea of learning through writing is supported by Moon's (2004) concept of secondary learning through the process of writing itself.

Therefore conceivably reflective dialogue provides a medium to assist in the development of procedural knowledge, an area of learner readiness otherwise not well supported in role-emerging placements. In this way interactive dialogue is seen to contribute significantly and differently to learning on these placements. Billett's (2015) concept of types of knowledge and readiness to learn provides a useful framework when exploring student learning on placement and is discussed further as relevant within the exploration of each category and theme in this chapter. It would appear that the range of sensemaking seen within the dialoguing between the three students can be largely understood by considering differences in these dimensions of learner readiness.

## Theory-driven sensemaking

The content of the written interactive dialogue had a significant focus on theory as seen across all the learning stories. The feedback often provided a link between the practice context and relevant theory, including sharing ideas of an occupational therapy perspective in that specific context. Supervisor feedback within dialoguing is paramount to sensemaking and deepens understanding and contextual awareness. This study found that the supervisors' feedback within reflective dialogue strongly assisted students to make sense of the placement, enabling them to gain a more complex appreciation of the school context. The theory-practice link and focus on developing an occupational therapy perspective, often provided or facilitated by the supervisor, helped students develop insight into their role from a broader and professional perspective. Relevant theoretical knowledge gained through the dialogue process enabled students to make sense of their role and the practice situation.

The concept of theory-driven sensemaking being key to learning on role-emerging placements concurs with other research studies that explored learning on role-emerging placements. Dancza et al.'s study (2019) used action-research to look at student learning on role-emerging school-based placements; they found that students on these placements need to use conceptual knowledge (theory) more explicitly, seeking out and fitting theory to the practice context. Dancza et al.'s (2019) recent findings explains that theory, comprising conceptual knowledge, is paramount to guide thinking, action and intervention on role-emerging placements. Role-emerging placements involve a more overt link to occupational therapy theory (Dancza et al., 2019; Dancza et al., 2016). This theory-practice link is necessitated to develop and justify the students' practice using theory, which is not as required on traditional placements where the occupational therapy role is already established (Dancza et al., 2019). Dancza explains: "using theory to prospectively guide students in what to do helps them to make sense of theory, rather than just applying theory intermittently as they had experienced in previous placements" (Dancza et al., 2019 p. 571).

This dialogue as data within this study strongly demonstrates the supervisors' critical role in developing students' understanding of the placement context by enhancing the depth of their reflection and providing different and more professionally relevant perspectives on the situation. This is supported by other studies on reflective dialogue. Larsen et al.'s (2016) study involved analysing the reflective dialogue of medical students on placement and while this did not involve a role-emerging context, it is one of the few studies that also explored daily reflective dialogue and its impact on student learning (Larsen et al., 2016; Mann, 2016). Larsen et al.'s (2016) study supports the research findings from my study that feedback is central to developing students' contextual awareness and more in-depth understanding. His findings suggest that the frequency of the reflective dialogue enables more insight into situational awareness and also guides students to reflect more deeply through the feedback. In comparison, Knightbridge's (2014) study involved an analysis of occupational therapy student's reflective writing during a role-emerging placement, but notably this process did not involve

interactive written feedback. Interestingly, Knightbridge (2014) found that students did not gain a critical appreciation of the context through reflection alone. These findings suggest the imperative role that feedback, particularly timely feedback, has in the development of deeper, critical reflection. Boud (2003) supports this idea of the essential role of feedback in forming a new understanding and developing the skills of critical reflection. Without feedback, views are unchallenged, and therefore re-evaluation enabling new learning and insights are less likely (Boud, 2003). Receiving feedback and working collaboratively in the reflective process “through a give and take with others and by confronting the challenges they pose” enables students to reflect critically (Boud, 2003 p. 14). Boud’s (2003) findings concur with this research study’s finding regarding the important role of the supervisor’s feedback within the dialoguing process to enhance the depth of reflection and to facilitate a better understanding of the placement context and situational awareness.

The dialogue-as-data in this research study suggests that theory-driven sensemaking provides the focus point, content, and academic knowledge-base for students as they try to make sense of the placement. Two themes from this study comprise the category of *theory-driven sensemaking*, addressing the students’ conceptual knowledge: firstly, *forming a theory-practice link*, and secondly, *developing an occupational therapy perspective*. The affordances of reflective dialogue appear useful to assist this process, particularly the supervisor’s feedback within the dialogue which provides clinical guidance, a theory-practice link and a link to occupational therapy theory. Students were required not only to understand theory and to apply it to the practice setting but also to explicitly use theory to guide their action and practice. It would seem that the absence of an established role and a mentor to observe in action, forces students to apply theory to inform action.

Dancza et al. (2016) explain that the role-emerging placement forces students to use theory to guide practice, but that this requires support. The issue of a “theory-practice gap” (Dancza et al., 2016 p. 7) on placements, where the student struggles to fit the academic theory from the classroom to the practice situation, is amplified in role-emerging placements as there is no established role. The need to explicitly use occupational therapy theory to guide intervention, as opposed to this being modelled, practiced, and explained, provides a challenge and an opportunity for students, which is different from traditional placements (Dancza et al., 2013). This concept of ‘theory to action’ fits with the sensemaking focus. Weick et al. describe sensemaking as the interplay between action and thinking: “the products of action and they are prods to action” (Weick et al., 2005 p. 419).

### ***The development of an occupational therapy perspective***

Much of the interactive dialoguing content in this study involved the construction of the occupational therapy perspective. The interactive dialoguing involved student and supervisor forming, questioning, exploring, and articulating the potential occupational therapy role and perspective in relation to the day to day school experiences. The dialogue captured how the occupational therapy perspective was sought, perceived, and explained in response to specific contextual situations such as the school pupils’ behaviour, scholastic learning, and emotional, occupational, and or social needs. In this way, it would seem that dialoguing was useful and conducive to supporting the development of the occupational therapy perspective and or role.

This written collaboration and articulation of the potential occupational therapy role and perspective appears key to the students’ learning, a finding well-supported by other studies on role-emerging placements ( Dancza et al., 2019). Early studies on role-emerging placements agree that forming the occupational therapy role or perspective within the placement context is paramount to learning on role-emerging placement (Bossers et al., 1997). However the dialogue data from this study suggests that while the focus on developing an occupational therapy perspective and role is central to the student’s learning; the success and extent of this appears to be situation and student-specific. For example some students were able to articulate the occupational therapy

perspective and their potential role within the reflective dialogue and or to the teacher in the classroom, while others appeared to be concerned that what they are doing was more akin to a teacher aide. This is also revealed by the DAViT feedback which reflected that students' ranged in their satisfaction with their consolidating of the occupational therapy perspective. Student PP2 feedback comment from the DAViT:

"The discussion of feeling like a teacher aide rather than an OT was a discussion that was had almost daily between myself and my peers and it was one we all struggled to differentiate with. I think especially in the more challenging classes we were seen as an easy pair of extra hands and when the children were being particularly naughty we felt obliged to help out rather than say it's not what we were there for. However, in these periods it was easy to use our OT perspectives and see where the needs were, I used behaviour based interventions."

This comment demonstrates the confusion and complexity of role development for the student. There is an apparent contradiction in this feedback: saying that it was not always possible to find the occupational therapy perspective when asked to manage difficult behaviour and then also saying in these cases it was easy to use an occupational therapy perspective. The comment suggests that this student did not consistently view what she was doing as occupational therapy. The concept of being "an extra pair of hands" is shared with the literature on role-emerging placements and might explain this potential for role confusion. This idea is supported by other studies on role-emerging placements, Bossers et al. (1997) describe that at times students found it hard to view what they were doing as occupational therapy. Perhaps part of this student's confusion and even occupational therapy as a profession is whether the adoption of frames of reference outside of the profession, such as the behavioural frame of reference from psychology, constitutes 'doing' occupational therapy. This sentiment is supported by Bossers et al., (1997) who eloquently suggest that role confusion in realising the occupational therapy perspective mirrors that within the occupational therapy profession itself. Furthermore, this comment hints at the power imbalance between the occupational therapy student and the classroom teacher. Campbell-Rempel's (2018) discussion that students on role-emerging placements struggle to say no alludes to this power imbalance. She suggests that this contributes to students' potential role confusion, safety and professional boundary issues on role-emerging placements (Campbell-Rempel, 2018).

The interactive dialogue demonstrated that the off-site supervisor provided support and guidance through the dialogue to assist in creating and /or maintaining an occupation therapy perspective and focus. This finding is echoed by Dancza et al. (2013) who discuss that realising and using an occupational therapy perspective is key to the students' learning, but achieving and maintaining the students' focus of this perspective was challenging and required support from the long-arm supervisor. The interactive dialogue documented a progression over time toward students' developing an occupational therapy perspective. Similarly, Dancza et al. (2013) describe that forming an occupational therapy perspective was a process and a progression over time and that toward the end of the placements, the students in Dancza's study were able to appreciate that they were "doing" occupational therapy. This emerging progression over time matches this study's findings and is verified and explained by the supervisor participant from PP3 in the following statements and explanations.

DAViT statement verified by Supervisor PP3: "The teacher /teacher aid role appeared to overshadow the OT perspective" Supervisor added comment: "it does at the start."

DAViT statement verified by Supervisor PP3: "The student found it hard to articulate the OT role" Supervisor added comment: "yes often at the start of their placement... It is a continuum depending on the skills of the student. Some students you try and get them to get it, after four weeks if they haven't got it, you tell them it and then get them to follow that perspective."

The dialogue from this research study documented a staged process along the occupational therapy process in which the interactive feedback provided clinical reasoning and problem-solving peculiar to those stages. Similarly, Dancza et al. (2013) describe that the necessary time was allocated for students to attend to the occupational therapy process tasks of observation, assessment, and planning stages. This model is supported by Robertson (2012) who suggests that it is useful to make the problem-solving process part of each step of the occupational therapy process, which enables students to think through each step to better plan ahead and to review their practice by evaluating performance and gaps. She discusses two stages of problem-solving along the occupational therapy process: Stage one is from referral to problem identification; and stage 2 is from goal setting to implementation (Robertson, 2012). The Otago Polytechnic occupational therapy school appears to have structured the placement into stages of problem-solving which are slowed down and documented within the reflective dialogue, enabling deliberation on and feedback about each phase within the occupational therapy process before action. This dialoguing allows students to be conscious of and advance their reasoning in each occupational therapy process stage. The statement that the reflective dialogue and feedback “assisted with safe and clinically sound practice” was verified by both students in the DAViT. The practice of slowing the occupational therapy process down into staged phases over the course of the placement, as seen in this study, is arguably the means of providing the structure for procedural knowledge (Billet, 2015). The dialoguing along a staged process appears likely to be an important part of assisting the students' sensemaking on these placements.

### ***Forming a theory-practice link***

Dialoguing appeared crucial in assisting students to form a link between the practice context and relevant theory. The findings suggest that the students rely strongly on the supervisor's guidance to assist with this link and that supervisor's assist by naming relevant theories that might explain the student's observations and guide their interventions.

This study's theme emerging from the dialogue data, *forming a theory-practice link* is consistent with many other studies on reflective dialogue (Hanson, 2012; Hanson et al., 2011; Tryssenaar, 1994). Hanson's study of interactive reflective dialogue during occupational therapy students' placements also found that the dialogue (and feedback) was instrumental in developing a link between theory and practice (Hanson et al., 2011), enhancing students' ability to apply theory to practice situations. Fieldhouse & Fedden (2009) also closely associate students linking theory to practice and the development of an occupational therapy perspective to supervisors' feedback on role-emerging placements.

As described in the findings of this study, dialoguing was pivotal in facilitating a deeper understanding of theory. Billett (2015) explains that conceptual knowledge is hierarchical, where 'factual knowledge' is the lowest level of knowledge and 'forming links and associations' being at the highest level. He explains that moving up in levels is increasing in the depth of knowledge. The dialogue data in this study, and in particular feedback from the supervisor, is instrumental to a student gaining depth in understanding. This development of depth of knowledge is seen regarding the students understanding of the behavioural frame of reference in the example provided by PP3, learning story 1. Initially the student is able to understand the behavioural theory only in relation to toileting ('factual knowledge'). However over time, through questions and answers within the dialoguing, she is able to eventually make 'links and associations' to other applications of this theory, for example, applying the behavioural theory to managing challenging behaviour in the classroom, demonstrating that dialoguing contributed to a more in-depth knowledge and understanding of theory.

## Developing sensemaking skills

This study shows that student agency and active, effortful participation in learning strongly influenced the outcome and success of sensemaking. More specifically, the students' intent, and the manner and purpose in which they engage in the dialogue, appeared to influence the usefulness of the interactive dialogue to facilitate learning. For example, students that appeared to, and via the DAViT reported to, use dialogue to construct meaning rather than to document, appeared more successful in their sensemaking outcome. This study suggests that learning for students who engage in dialogue with an intent or approach to construct and learn through dialogue is profoundly different to a student who perhaps documents the days' events because this is a compulsory requirement of the placement. Themes under this category emerged as *student agency: active engagement in dialoguing* and *becoming more reflective*.

### *Student agency: Active engagement in dialoguing*

Students in this study convey agency by taking initiative and ownership, being self-directed, and proactively responding to feedback as demonstrated within the learning stories. The student comment below from the DAViT captures the student's perception of the importance of being an active self-directed learner.

Student PP1 "Self-directed learning and keen initiative was paramount on this placement."

The findings strongly suggest that student agency and autonomy are key to learning, and are both required and promoted through these placements. The importance of student autonomy and self-directed learning on these placements is supported and explained by the supervisor's comment from the DAViT below.

PP3 supervisor: "In practice being able to lead themselves is important so getting an awareness of it during this placement will help them later in their career."

This sentiment is echoed by one of the student's (PP1) feedback from the DAViT in which she explains that becoming autonomous in her learning:

PP1 student: (becoming autonomous in learning was) "highly important to my learning as my intention post grad was to remain (and actually is) rural, which meant I needed to gain confidence in my sense of autonomy. This placement remains a key learning journey, skills of which I still apply today."

This student's comment (above) within the DAViT also speaks to the meaningfulness of the placement (values) and reflections for this student, relating to her dispositional readiness, intent, and motivation to learn (Billett, 2015). A finding well-supported by the data and this study's findings, discussed in the theme *Student agency: Active engagement in dialoguing*. The students' readiness to learn appears to affect the amount and type of engagement in dialoguing, thus the agency seen within the dialogue, relates to the extent of sensemaking as an outcome, as already discussed in this chapter. For example, students who were agentic within the dialogue by proactively responding to dialogue feedback to seek deeper meaning and engaging readily and extensively in research suggested within the dialogue tended to develop a deeper understanding of their role within the setting. The importance of student agency and autonomy in learning on role-emerging placements is congruent with that of many other studies which found that students need to be more autonomous learners in role-emerging placements (Bossers et al., 1997; Clarke, Martin et al., 2014b; Dancza et al., 2013; Knightbridge, 2014; Thew et al., 2011). Bossers et al. (1997) explains role-emerging placements require agency in students learning, necessitated by the absence of an on-site supervisor and the task of developing an occupational therapy role or perspective. Similarly, Dancza et al. (2013) describe that students need to take initiative and ownership in their learning to develop the occupational therapy role and to use theory to guide their actions in that setting.

Further, the practice of interactive reflective dialoguing can be considered as useful to promote this autonomy in students. Moon (2004) explains reflective learning and experiential learning both require less mediation (teaching /teacher involvement) and involves more self-managed learning, alluding to the student's increased role in this learning. Moon (2004) explains that reflective learning empowers the student to choose what to learn and what learning is meaningful from an event. Billett (2015) describes that active learning and making meaning from experience requires effort and conscious engagement from the student, strongly resonating with this study's findings. Studies on role-emerging placements also support this premise that reflective learning requires student agency, time and effort; reflective learning is thought to be inherent to these placements and requires effortful deliberation (Dancza et al., 2019). The idea that reflective learning is effortful and both requires and promotes student agency is supported by Hanson et al. (2011). They explain that interactive dialoguing means that the student needs to adopt a critical and reflective attitude toward the current practice and actively engage in reflective practice. Learning through reflective dialogue entails analysing the status quo, self-authorship, and the students' active construction of their own knowledge. Reflective dialoguing requires a constructivist and collaborative approach to learning, necessitating a more active learning style (Hanson et al., 2011).

The findings from my study suggest that sensemaking required an active, agentic and effortful participation within the dialogue on the students' part. The students' approach and intent when dialoguing influenced the outcome and success of sensemaking. For example, an active, curious and analytical approach within the dialogue, as seen in learning stories 1, 3 and 4 rather than using it for documentation, appeared to result in enhanced sensemaking as an outcome. The findings from this study suggest that the intent of the student when dialoguing influences the depth of the students' reflection and therefore the success of their sensemaking. PP3 actively tries to identify her own learning needs, initially she reveals her perception of not learning sufficient information or processes relating to occupational therapy. Thereafter she requests non-specific theoretical information but is unable to pinpoint how these relate to the placement context. Eventually she realises which theoretical information will guide her practice (the behavioural frame of reference). This continued perseverance and intent to make sense of the placement within the dialoguing assists to develop this students' depth in her understanding of this theory and its application in different contexts. This finding suggests that adopting a constructivist approach within the dialoguing itself is paramount, a finding supported by Sobral's (2000) findings. Sobral's study included over 100 medical students at the start of their clinical placements and involved exploring their reflections. Sobral,(2000) discussed that student's intent and motivation is a vital determinant of the success in learning through reflection. Those that viewed the reflective exercise as meaningful, actively engaged in the reflections and benefitted more from this learning exercise. Sobral (2000) concluded that students that make a greater effort at reflection have a more positive learning experience and that reflection in learning is related to readiness for self-regulated learning (a more autonomous learning style). Sobral's findings are congruent with the findings in this study and the feedback from the DAViT, where the students that were most active in the online dialoguing verified its usefulness in sensemaking more than those who were less active and who demonstrated less agency within the dialoguing process. Similarly Moon (2004) explains that reflective learning and reflective practice entails *intentional* reflection on the part of the professional to learn from experience for the purpose of informing action and future practice. Moon's (1999) idea of the 'approach to learning,' is similar to Billett's ideas of motivation and intentionality. Both link the students approach or intent to the outcome of learning in terms of quality and depth (Billett, 2015). Billett (2015) describes students who engage superficially as those who are motivated to meet compliance, while in contrast, deeper learning is associated with employing an effortful engagement and becoming committed to what is experienced. This explanation is similar to Fieldhouse & Fedden's (2009) descriptions of superficial and

deep learning, where the intent to pass a grade produces superficial learning while deeper learning is motivated by the learning experience itself.

The DAViT member checking tool revealed the most resonance and “high” agreement that agency involving a more independent learning style, and was vital to their learning. A comment from a student participant within the DAViT feedback further supports this sentiment:

PP2 student DAViT comment: “To participate in this type of placement [one] is required to be autonomous with your learning, you needed to be able to take the initiative with your interventions and also be able to lead your supervision like you would at a 3rd-year level placement.”

Member checking revealed vehement agreement that a more autonomous learning style was key to the students learning on this placement. However, careful interpretation and consideration of the DAViT feedback is required. The students verified that learning was largely self-directed and required active engagement and autonomy. However, this might not actually mean that students agreed that learning *specifically through dialoguing* on this placement required student agency. This distinction would explain how strongly the sentiment was felt, despite the data suggesting that students did not always engage actively in the process of written inquiry, as seen in learning stories 2 and 5. The choice not to respond to specific threads of dialogue suggests a lack of proactive agency within the dialoguing. The above student’s feedback comment from PP2’s DAViT form hints that agency is also associated with being proactive in supervision and in learning through practice on the placement itself, rather than in reflective dialoguing per se. This comment suggests the student’s perception of her active role in driving her learning within this placement, not necessarily through the dialoguing, but within the face-to-face supervision sessions and within the placement context itself.

### ***Becoming more reflective***

The findings of this study reveal that the supervisors’ contribution within interactive dialoguing mentors and promotes reflection and reflective practice skills. The dialogue involves and demonstrates the process of reflective inquiry, which appears to help students learn how to reflect and reason, supporting the theme *becoming more reflective*. The dialogue data showcases the supervisor using thoughtful questions, sharing viewpoints and debating ideas in the interactive dialoguing to encourage further reflection and provide alternative viewpoints from the students. This mentorship and reflective modelling enables students to adopt a more critical and reflective perspective, encouraging reflective practice skills and assists more autonomous sensemaking skills. The result being the development of a reflective disposition and sensemaking skills enabling more autonomous sensemaking, over the course of the placement students appear to reason within the dialoguing more deeply and independently, and more readily discuss incidences of in-the-moment reasoning skills.

Literature which explores interactive dialoguing on role-emerging placements was not found. However studies that explore interactive dialoguing on traditional placements support the finding that students’ reflective skills are enhanced by the dialoguing process (Hanson et al., 2011; Larsen et al., 2016; Tan et al., 2010; Tryssenaar, 1994). The exploration of the dialoguing in this study based on the Otago Polytechnic students learning during role-emerging placement revealed that the reflective interactive process involved mentorship and coaching. An essential part of learning to reflect in this study was the manner in which supervisors modelled reflectivity within the dialogue, which is supported by Tryssenaar’s (1994) study on interactive dialoguing. Hanson et al., (2011) agrees that interactive dialoguing appears to provide a demonstration and framework of how to reflect (or how to make sense) and mentors the reflective inquiry process. Rowe et al., (2012) explain that supervisors’ feedback encourages self-awareness of the student’s thinking processes to stimulate critical, independent

thinking. He explains that modelling and feedback through dialoguing exposes students' thinking to critical reflection. He notes that modelling is an important component of reflective interaction, as students often lack the confidence and understanding of how to structure reflective work. Supervisor feedback within the dialogue can assist by narrowing the scope of the process through scaffolding; the supervisor can help reduce frustration for the student and ultimately help them move towards self-directed learning (Rowe, 2012). Hanson et al. (2011) found that interactive dialoguing enhanced "critical reasoning" over the course of the placement and, similarly, Tryssenaar found a "critical orientation" (Tryssenaar, 1994 p. 700) developed in students through interactive reflective writing. These findings resonate with the findings of this study and the feedback from the member checking. The DAViT verified that the students experienced the dialogue as a learning tool that enabled and developed clinical reasoning and reflective practice skills; both students recorded their satisfaction and agreement with this as "high" in the DAViT tool.

The dialogue and findings from this study suggest that students emerged with deeper reflective skills, increased reflective reasoning, and more autonomous sensemaking skills. The DAViT verified that students felt that the reflective writing facilitated their thinking and practice and enabled: "a deeper level of learning/insight, developing my reasoning and advancing my thinking and enhancing my awareness of the complexities of the situation." While the development of reflective practice skills is likely to have been promoted by the dialoguing, there is also appreciation of the learning through the placement context itself, and recognition that role-emerging placements themselves stimulate clinical reasoning, reflection, and reflective practice skills. This concept is well-supported by studies on role-emerging placements (Dancza et al., 2013). The idea that reflection is believed to be vital to learning on role-emerging placements is supported by various studies and well described by Warren (2014).

## Personal and professional growth

The findings from the dialogue as data in this study suggest that learning appears to involve emotional growth and maturation towards a professional self. For example, students realize and learn to accept that some issues are beyond their control and scope as an occupational therapy student and are complicated and, at times, impacted by the larger New Zealand context and school system constraints. This finding appears to be similar to a category in Knightbridge's findings termed: "life's like that" which included: "reflections around perseverance through patience and understanding, adaptability, and keeping calm when things did not go according to plan" (Knightbridge 2014, p. 442) and supports the findings of emotional growth and resilience found in this study.

The dialogue demonstrates how students grow in their appreciation and use of core occupational therapy values, a finding well supported by studies on role-emerging placements. Billett (2015) describes that dispositional knowledge has an occupational specific component, which would include knowledge of occupational therapy specific values, norms, and practices. The professional growth theme within my research study can be considered as growth in Billett's dispositional knowledge of occupational therapy specific values and norms. For example, the reflective dialogue from PP1 discusses a conversation with a school pupil's mother which reveals there was a miscommunication and misunderstanding regarding implementing a 'quiet space' in class. This example facilitated growth in the student's appreciation of the occupational therapy core value of collaborative working with whanau (family) when developing intervention plans, which is captured within the dialogue.

While dialoguing appeared useful for debriefing and off-loading of emotional issues, and enabled supervisors to respond with empathy, validation, affirmation and support; growth and learning from these situations involved working through these issues. We see this idea of students needing to work through an issue in the dialogue

from the searching for information and direction in the dialogue data from PP3. The student's requests information on "assessments and models," and her supervisor responds by inquiring what specific assessment or model would assist her practice. This response places the onus of learning back on the student to identify their own specific learning needs. The response also suggests to the student that she needs to consider what will assist with a theory-practice link, rather than just to seek general theory. This idea of supporting students to become more autonomous in their learning, rather than providing all the answers for students within the dialogue, is likely to be key to their personal and professional growth. This concept is supported by Galvaan (2006) who explains that supervisors need to assist students to work through 'uncomfortable' learning on role-emerging placements. Learning to tolerate the "not knowing" (Galvaan, 2006 p. 108) and associated mixed emotions with these placements requires student resilience and careful coaching rather than rescuing on the supervisor's part. Weick et al., (2005) explain that sensemaking is also often associated with emotional changes: the resolution or outcome of sensemaking might bring calm, while the ambiguity that drives sensemaking is experienced as uncomfortable. This idea of emotions being associated with sensemaking resonates with the finding of this study. Students appear to experience pride and satisfaction toward the end of the placement, following sensemaking, but appear to experience confusion or frustration at times towards the beginning and sometimes middle of the placement, which stimulates sensemaking. The DAViT verifies that both students perceived the placement as "emotionally challenging and the dialogue was of great support" and resulted in "increased confidence."

### *Emotional openness and support*

The dialogue revealed that open and sometimes vulnerable disclosures were seen to trigger deeper learning and at times personal transformational learning. Interactive dialogue seemed to promote emotional openness, and to increase students' awareness of and focus on their 'real' genuine learning needs as well as providing the support, close collaboration, and the apparent trusting relationship that appears to nurture this awareness and growth. The dialogue as data suggest that students felt safe to openly and honestly work through their learning needs, which was essential to their growth and learning, this finding is supported by Pack (2014). Pack's study explored online reflective interactive journaling between undergraduate social work students and their supervisors during their fieldwork placements, similarly to this study. Like the reflective dialogue in this study, Pack (2014) was impressed by the students' level of honesty in their reflective dialogue.

It is postulated from the dialogue in my study that the supervisors' affirming and positive-based feedback within the dialogue is likely to have contributed to a safe learning environment. Member checking resulted in both students affirming that a trusting relationship developed with their supervisors and that this was facilitated through the dialogue. The interactive dialogue tangibly connects the supervisors, students and peers; creating a forum for open and honest communication which appears to be perceived as a supportive learning community. Pack found that establishing a trusting relationship between supervisor and supervisee through timely and sensitive feedback, encouraged students to be increasingly open and to write deep and critical reflections as a result (Pack, 2014). She explains that deeper learning involves engaging in learning to learn and make sense of the situation, rather than for assessment. She concludes that the "climate of safety" above all other variables establishes a context for deep learning (Pack, 2014 p. 411) supporting the finding that a sensemaking outcome was often triggered by a dilemma and a consequent genuine and purposeful reflective inquiry working through that dilemma.

### *Finding my professional voice*

This study found that forming an occupational therapy perspective or theory to guide action was essential to learning, furthermore, the explicit articulation thereof within the dialoguing enhanced and suggested a sensemaking outcome. This idea of articulation being key to learning is captured in this study's findings in the theme "finding my professional voice" and suggests the contribution that articulation, voicing, or writing has in learning. Weick et al., (2005) explains that articulation is inherent in the concept of sensemaking.

The concept of articulation being important to learning on role-emerging placements is supported by other role-emerging studies who found that explaining and voicing the potential occupational therapy perspective to colleagues outside of the profession was essential to consolidating this viewpoint (Bossers et al., 1997; Dancza, 2013). While Hanson et al. (2011) supports this idea of articulation being central to learning through interactive dialoguing during occupational therapy student placements. Hanson et al. explain this concept of articulation and the need to define or document by adopting the term 'self-authorship' which they define as:

"the ability to define their own beliefs, identity, and relationships. In contrast to accepting the status quo, self-authorship involves objective consideration of the variables affecting each situation and changes that might be made to positively impact therapy outcomes" (Hanson et al., 2011 p. 12).

Theory-driven sensemaking which included forming a theory-practice link and developing an occupational therapy perspective was a well supported finding in the dialogue-as-data of this study. The students who articulated the occupational therapy perspective in their written reflections, as especially showcased in learning stories 1, 3, and 4, consolidated the development of the occupational therapy perspective. The findings of this study suggest that where students could articulate their role by using occupational therapy language, concepts, and theory within the dialogue, there was less role confusion. These findings support the use of dialoguing to facilitate written articulation of theory, consolidating student learning. Understanding the declarative nature of conceptual knowledge (Billett, 2015) and sensemaking (Weick et al., 2005) explains why this was a large component of the written (stated) content of sensemaking within the dialoguing.

### *Finding my professional self*

This research study suggests that learning on role-emerging placement, as captured in reflective dialoguing, was associated with the development of a professional identity, practice confidence and more autonomy in sensemaking. A professional self was seen in the development of a more confident professional voice, explaining the practice context from an occupational therapy perspective such as seen in learning story 1, 3 and 4. Moreover the dialogue documented examples of students' increased practice confidence and ability to manage daily practice issues in a more proficient and professional manner. Practice confidence was seen in many examples towards the end of the placement, where students discussed the 'therapeutic use of self' or examples of managing challenging behaviours in the classroom effectively and efficiently, and explaining this from a professional perspective. The students' confidence and growing ability to reflect-in-action as they enact their role in the practice context is documented in their reflective dialogue and appears to grow during the placement. Students reported a sense of professional identity was formed through the placement through the DAViT feedback. PP1 student describes how positive outcomes further enhance the confidence of others in her, which is likely to increase her own confidence in the occupational therapy interventions and in her own enactment of the occupational therapy role.

PP1 DAViT comment: “Having supportive staff [teachers] and tutors [long-arm supervisor] supported my ability to be autonomous... my ‘give it a go attitude’ and evidence based interventions (which were effective) seemed to give staff the confidence in me...”

In reading the dialogue it was apparent that the interventions which were put in place by all the occupational therapy students had very positive outcomes, and are seen to make a positive contribution to the class which was acknowledged by the classroom teacher. This is demonstrated in the dialogue below:

PP1 student week 6: “I had a final meeting with my teacher today and talked about my time at (school name) and my contributions to the class as a whole. He/she was really positive and really values the work I have put in and was really open to my transitional ideas regarding how he/she can carry on with focus ‘e’ because he/she was excited about (the pupils’) progress and wanted to keep it up.”

The successful interventions and implementation of changes within the classroom are likely to have contributed to developing the students’ sense of pride, self-efficacy and forming a professional identity. This professional pride and identity formation is seen in learning story 1 after the success of the toileting programme, and in learning story 4 after successful implementation of environmental changes in the practice. Various studies discuss the emergence of a professional identity as an outcome of role-emerging placements (Clarke, Martin et al., 2014b; Dancza et al., 2019). Clarke et al., 2015 found that role-emerging placements encourage the emergence of an occupational therapy and professional identity. Clarke et al.’s (2014) explains that the autonomy and lack of direction meant that students need to work it out themselves, enabling them to form their own unique, authentic professional identity.

The process of dialoguing is likely to have assisted these positive outcomes and to aid students practice confidence. Interactive reflective dialogue allowed students to sense check and develop their plans through a collaborative and considered manner, giving them more confidence when in the actual practice context. Both students who returned the DAViT form verified that reflection-on-action (writing) enhanced reflection-in-action (doing in the classroom). They agreed that: “I improved in my ‘in-the-moment’ decision making while in the practice situation (while doing, with the client)” they also verified “the development of ‘therapeutic use of self’” and growth in their practice confidence. This finding that students developed in their therapeutic use of self over the course of the placement is supported by Fieldhouse & Fedden (2009)’s study. Larsen et al. (2016) found that students were more aware in the moment because of the cognisance of having to write something later, which he felt assisted with increased self-awareness of their thoughts and actions. This increase in consciousness in students assisted with modulating moment to moment actions (Larsen et al., 2016). Larsen postulates that the frequency of reflection-on-action is an important factor in increasing in-the-moment proficiency, recommending frequent reflections (daily) to assist with situational awareness and the ‘habit of mind’ or consciousness needed to change in-the-moment decision-making (Larsen et al., 2016).

### *A sensemaking outcome*

Learning as documented within the dialogue as data in this study appeared to involve a personal or professional transformation which is supported by various examples discussed in this chapter and within the findings. The idea that role-emerging placements provide an opportunity for transformational learning is well supported by recent literature on role-emerging placements (Dancza et al., 2019; Mattila and Dolhi, 2016). Students must think critically about their role, the value of occupational therapy in that context, and use theory to justify and guide their actions, which requires and facilitates deeper learning (Dancza et al., 2013). Dancza et al., (2019) explains that learning on role-emerging placements requires a focus on theory and inherently involves a much

deeper and applied understanding of that theory. She concludes that for this reason learning is deeper and can even be transformational on role-emerging placements (Dancza et al., 2019).

This study suggests that while the role-emerging placement provides the challenging and authentic environment or context which requires and stimulates sensemaking, it is the reflective dialoguing and feedback that appears to facilitate a sensemaking outcome and thereby supports transformational learning. Supervisor feedback provides more depth to the students' understanding and perspective, potentially facilitating transformational learning, which arguably is required to fully fulfil sensemaking on these complex placements and enables students to become more independent sense-makers. Mezirow, as cited in Brooks (2004), explains transformational learning is associated with a change and progression in perspective, which includes developing a perspective that is more inclusive, reflective, or differentiating (Mezirow, 1996 p. 163). Within this study, the interactive dialogue feedback challenges and transforms the students' perspectives by making the student consider ideas that are more inclusive (such as considering more broad and complex social contexts, for example in the case of learning story 1); more differentiating (by providing feedback that leads more specifically to occupational therapy or more of a profession viewpoint compared to the often more lay perspective); and/ or more reflective (by demonstrating how to reflect more critically).

In agreement with the findings of this study, Mattila and Dolhi, (2016) also conclude that self-reflection and clinical reasoning was enhanced through role-emerging placements and that these placements provide growth in students and the opportunity for transformational learning. Mattila and Dolhi (2016) found that students changed and progressed along Mezirow's transformative learning process (2000) which involves ten steps starting, the first being a disorienting dilemma, and culminating in a reintegration of a new perspective. Key steps in the process included uncomfortable emotional feelings (such as fear) associated with the dilemma; developing a critical view of the issue; exploring options; planning a course of action; acquiring new knowledge and skills; implementing and building confidence. These concepts can be applied to the example from the data where the student from PP3 is concerned about her learning; then forms a more focussed and critical view by realising she needs theory to drive her action; explores and asks about models and assessment but is still unsure which theory will guide her practice; she eventually is able to identify which theory will assist her to understand and manage the behavioural issues within the classroom; she plans to research this, seeks good sources for this information; performs research and acquires understanding and is then able to implement this in practice likely assisting her to have more confidence in managing the school pupils' behaviour. Perhaps this transformational shift is even more apparent in the example from PP2 where the student changes in her perspective from a scholastic and lay persons' perspective that appears to align with the teacher or teacher aid's role; to one which aligns more with an occupational therapy approach and health professionals' perspective and therefore identity.

## Implications for practice

Interactive reflective dialogue appears to provide a solution to the practice-problem of how to support learning on role-emerging placements between weekly face-to-face supervision sessions. This study showcases the practice of interactive reflective dialoguing to support this learning, a model of practice of supervision that is yet to be studied in the context of role-emerging placements. Supervisors and educators are encouraged to use reflective dialogue to facilitate learning on role-emerging placements. This is particularly recommended for

undergraduate students and/ or those not in a final placement, as was the case in this study, as interactive dialogue enables daily guidance and support.

In addition to 'evidencing' and supporting the practice of interactive reflective dialogue to facilitate student learning, reflection and reflective practice on role-emerging placements, there are four other important implications for practice. Firstly, the findings contribute a conceptual framework to understand learning through interactive reflective dialogue, enabling educators, supervisors and students to appreciate that this learning has a sensemaking focus and to understand these categories and aspects of sensemaking. Secondly, this research has demonstrated the usefulness and affordances of interactive reflective dialogue in addressing the theory-practice gap. Thirdly, interactive reflective dialoguing affords mentorship and coaching: addressing this vital component of learning or knowledge that is usually neglected on role-emerging placements. Finally, daily interactive reflective dialogue provides students with support through what is often experienced as a challenging placement. Practical suggestions for students to maximise their learning through interactive dialogue while on role-emerging placement are briefly outlined.

### ***The conceptual framework of sensemaking and its categories***

The outcome of this study suggests that core to learning through reflective dialogue during role-emerging placement is sensemaking, which occurs through collaboration between supervisor and student. Three categories of sensemaking emerged from the data, theory-driven sensemaking, developing sensemaking skills and personal and professional growth. This provides a conceptual framework to understand learning on role-emerging placement for supervisors, students and educators. Such a framework may help educators and supervisors to explain, demystify and provide more clarity to students by highlighting the different types or emphasis of learning on role-emerging placements, and to appreciate their role of feedback and collaboration in the pursuit of sensemaking.

The concept of sensemaking and its categories may guide educators, supervisors and students during and prior to placement, assisting to inform a checklist in preparation for role-emerging placements by appreciating and categorising the types of learning required and expected. This may also assist following the placement in considering outcomes and evaluating the learning gained.

### ***Addressing the theory-practice gap***

The importance of retaining a strong theoretical focus and application of theory to the practice situation within the dialogue is fundamental to the students' making sense of the placement. Dialogue affords supervisor feedback and interactive collaboration, both appear pivotal to more in-depth conceptual, theoretical knowledge and the student forming an occupational therapy perspective. Supervisors require a high level of understanding of relevant theory specific to that practice setting to maintain this theoretical focus and development within the dialogue. The long-arm supervisor using interactive reflective dialogue to support learning need to realise their important role in bridging the theory-practice gap by providing links to relevant theory, retaining a focus on relevant theory and on the potential occupational therapy role in that practice setting.

### ***Providing mentorship and coaching of reflective practice: developing sensemaking skills***

The supervisor needs to be cognisant of addressing students' procedural knowledge by documenting how to enact being reflective in the type of questioning, conversations, sharing and explanations provided within the dialogue. The manner and tone used by the supervisors within the dialogue appears important as it needs to provide this mentorship and coaching of reflective practice and the provision of a supportive, safe and affirming forum for open and genuine collaboration. Advice and education to supervisors on creating these conversations,

and adopting a collaborative and exploratory approach in their feedback, may also assist to invite this problem-solving collaborative spirit within the dialogue. Feedback is recommended that recognises and nourishes the developing sensemaking skills, or dispositional readiness, which appears pivotal to learning on these placements.

### ***Ensuring a trusting relationship and providing students with support***

Students appear to dialogue openly and honestly with their supervisors, using it often as a medium to debrief, and in return receive emotional and pastoral support. Role-emerging placements are known to be challenging and to evoke emotions in students; it would seem interactive reflective dialogue is an effective way to support the students emotionally by validating their experiences and providing empathetic responses thereby maintaining their general safety and well-being. Interactive reflective dialogue enables regular feedback from the supervisor to student. This presents an opportunity to provide strengths-based feedback, which could intentionally assist students to recognise and value areas of growth and learning such as in their professional and personal skills development. Interactive reflective dialogue in this way is likely to facilitate a trusting relationship between student and supervisor and to provide emotional support throughout the placement, potentially also assisting in early identification of placement concerns. Supervisor strategies and means of nurturing trust and openness within the supervision relationship should be understood and encouraged.

The written format of the dialogue in this study, involving the headers 'Celebrations, Dilemmas, and Desires;' is likely to have contributed to the open and honest dialogue. It is recommended to use this or other similar written structures to format interactive reflective dialogue. This format encouraged students towards, rather than away from, voicing challenges (with the header 'dilemmas'), which is likely to have been useful to assist students to voice and pinpoint their learning needs. The strengths-based ('celebrations') and action-oriented ('desires') headers are also likely to have assisted the effectivity of this written template for students' reflective entries. Further explorative study on this written format is recommended.

### ***Practical suggestions for students***

Students may benefit from realising that their learning is largely self-directed and that they will need to respond to supervisors' feedback and suggestions of theory within the dialogue by further researching this theory themselves.

A concept that may be useful to students and supervisors is to consider the declarative nature of theoretical knowledge and to encourage the student to write their understanding and application of theory to the practice situation, within the dialogue, including trying to express the occupational therapy perspective, especially in the later stages of the placement.

The idea that the intent of dialogue influences its usefulness as a learning tool is one which is worth explaining to students when introducing the task of reflective dialoguing. It may be prudent to explain that an approach to make sense and construct as well as to engage in 'back and forth' dialoguing and problem-solving, rather than to document the day, is likely in itself to assist the process and outcome of sensemaking.

The e-based dialogue can also be useful as a rich, written resource which students can review and refer back to, assisting their understanding, processing and recall of the theoretical information and of the reflective inquiry process.

## Recommendations for further study

- Further study to explore the nature and importance of the relationship between supervisor and supervisee in reflective dialoguing is recommended. Such study might consider the influence of a trusting supervision relationship on the quality, depth, and openness of reflections and reflective writing, this may include exploring the impact of the supervisor's attitude or written tone on the supervisory relationship. Studies which seek to more closely explore supervisor's specific skills and techniques that are deemed effective for student learning within interactive dialogue would provide practical direction and assist in the training and support of supervisors. Research which considers and identifies supervisors learning needs is also recommended.
- Further study is recommended to explore Robinsons' (2013) CDD framework or template for written dialogue. This study suggests that this framework may have contributed to the reflective dialogue's openness and effectivity, but further studies using this framework or comparing it to other frameworks would provide more insight into this framework as a template for supervision and reflective writing.
- Studies that look at the concept of sensemaking and explore dimensions thereof through dialoguing and/or role-emerging placements would add further to this study.
- Daniel, (2020) discusses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on educational institutions. The COVID corona virus epidemic occurred during the analysis phase of this research thesis. Interactive reflective dialoguing would seem to provide a viable alternative to on-site supervision when physical face-to-face contact between supervisor and supervisee is restricted, possibly for students and /or practitioners. Research on the use of interactive reflective dialoguing as an alternative to face to face supervision is recommended.
- Further studies that look at interactive reflective dialoguing on role-emerging placements would add to this study's findings. Particularly it is recommended to explore studies which involve more inter-peer interaction within the dialoguing. A study is recommended using dialogue as data that has been contributed by both inter-peer and supervisor interaction within the dialoguing. Such a practice model might be more efficient from an administrative or resource viewpoint. Moreover, student to student interactions within the dialogue arguably supports a collaborative supervision model that is less supervisor-dependent, stimulates peer-assisted learning, and therefore might be considered more 'true' to a role-emerging experience.

## Study Limitations

- This study involved a small number of consenting students /participants, comprising only three students and two supervisors from one cohort and one placement type (school-based). These factors significantly reduce the generalisability of the results and mean one participant could have easily skewed that result.

- The dialogue-data obtained from the total SLACK.com platform pertained only to that written by the three student participants and their respective supervisors' feedback, reducing the completeness of the dialogue-as-data.
- The data collection method prohibited the researcher from asking the student participants questions other than through the medium of the DAViT, which again was in a written format. The DAViT also had a prescribed manner of presenting findings, which lacked open-ended questioning as it entailed verifying statements as true or false only. Despite this limitation, participants were able to provide general comments in the DAViT, a useful and well-used function of the tool.
- Having access to the weekly face-to-face supervision session content would have provided a more complete and comprehensive exploration of students' learning on role-emerging placement and enable comparison between face-to-face dialoguing and written dialogue.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This study explores interactive reflective dialogue as a means to support learning on role-emerging placements. The dialogue-as-data resulted in intimate insights into the nature and process of learning through dialoguing on these placements. Key findings of this study are presented relating to learning through interactive reflective dialogue and the affordances of interactive reflective dialogue in supporting student learning while on role-emerging placement.

***Interactive reflective dialogue promotes sensemaking when supporting learning on role-emerging placements.*** Dialoguing on student placement is known to promote a constructivist and reflective stance. In the context of role-emerging placements specifically, the process of learning through dialoguing appears to have a sensemaking focus. The findings strongly support the practice of interactive reflective dialogue to facilitate learning on role-emerging placements, providing a sensemaking focus and a tool to support a sensemaking outcome. Sensemaking develops through the collaborative contributions of both the student and supervisor and is considered through three inter-dependent categories: theory-driven sensemaking, developing sensemaking skills, and personal and professional growth. The term sensemaking and these categories are new to role-emerging placements, providing a conceptual framework to understand and guide learning through dialogue. In practice this conceptual framework of sensemaking may assist to structure supervisors' feedback and/ or students' use of dialogue into the three categories of sensemaking, assisting with an inquiring disposition and an earnest focus on sensemaking to maximise learning through dialogue.

***Collaboration and feedback through reflective dialogue promotes a focus and depth in theoretical knowledge addressing the theory-practice gap, and guiding action on role-emerging placements.*** Feedback and collaboration within the dialogue closely guides and develops students' conceptual knowledge, or theory-driven sensemaking, which is particularly required on role-emerging placements to justify and guide action. Frequent and timely supervisor feedback and collaboration within the dialoguing appears key to assisting this link to theory and bridging the theory-practice gap. The student's articulation of theory further consolidates and records their understanding and enables the supervisor to scaffold feedback relevant to the practice situation and students needs. The importance of, and depth required, of theory to inform practice on role-emerging placements is well described in studies that look at learning on role-emerging placements; it would seem that interactive reflective dialoguing is an effective way to enable this depth and focus on theory.

***Frequent interactive dialogue affords mentorship and coaching of the reasoning process and develops students' reflectivity.*** This contributes to student's readiness to learn through procedural knowledge, an area of learning which is usually not accommodated on role-emerging placements. This study demonstrates that reflective dialogue enables mentoring and coaching of reflective practice, building procedural knowledge for students by providing written examples and conversations of the reflective process and demonstrations of 'how to' reflect as well as providing a more step-by-step guide of 'what to do' along the occupational therapy process. Off-site supervisors are usually unable to address procedural knowledge as they are unable to demonstrate practices or provide close mentorship during role-emerging placements; frequent interactive dialogue, however, overcomes this issue to a large extent. This suggests the significant and unique value in using interactive dialogue to support students' learning particularly on role-emerging placements.

***Interactive reflective dialogue enables emotional support in these challenging placements and appears to create a safe platform for students to realise, discuss and work through relevant learning issues resulting in personal and professional growth.*** Dialoguing is seen to be conducive to debriefing and allows ongoing emotional support through sensitive and affirmative responses from supervisors. Students appear to openly raise concerns within the dialogue, which is often the starting point of genuine and deeper sensemaking as well as personal and or professional growth. Therefore, it would appear that the safety of the dialoguing and a trusting relationship between student and supervisor is vital to the success of interactive dialogue. Moreover, genuine reflective inquiry through dialogue involves open discussion, collaboration and debate, allowing new insights to emerge. Therefore interactive reflective dialogue appears key to students learning, as well as personal and professional growth, and to facilitate depth in this learning.

***The learner intent when engaging in reflective interactive dialogue appears to affect the success and extent of a sensemaking outcome.*** Students on role-emerging placements are required to learn more independently and develop dispositional learner qualities such as becoming more agentic and self-directed, however this needs to be scaffolded and supported by the supervisor; daily dialoguing is well positioned to provide this scaffolding and support. Sensemaking through reflective inquiry is effortful, time-consuming and deliberate on the part of the student. Dispositional attributes in the manner that students approach reflective interactive dialogue, such as being proactive, responsive, self-directed, and having the intent to construct and understand, rather than document, appear to affect the potential success of student's sensemaking through dialogue. Supervisor feedback and contribution within the dialogue appears pivotal to the learning process. However, the amount of learning that transpires is individual and sits ultimately in the student's hands.

***Role-emerging placements provide the opportunity and impetus for deeper and transformational learning, while interactive dialogue supports and challenges students to reach this outcome.*** Role-emerging placements require purposeful reflection, being inherent to the role-construction process which provides the impetus and authentic situation for deeper exploration. Interactive reflective dialogue is well suited to support this process of reflection, assisting to develop a deeper understanding of the practice situation, and to facilitate the students' theoretical understanding which will justify and guide action on the placement through theory-driven sensemaking. Furthermore, in this process of reflective collaborative inquiry, interactive dialogue assists in the students' personal and professional growth. Dialogue collaboration and feedback has the potential to guide, develop and even change students' perspectives and understanding, which ultimately supports a sensemaking outcome. At times this appears to involve transformational learning. This model, the practice of daily interactive dialoguing, involves far more clinical supervisory guidance and support compared with other role-emerging placements, which is likely to be best suited to undergraduate students and /or students not in their final placement, as was the case in this study.

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## APPENDICES

## ***Appendix A: The Analytical Schema***

The analytical schema outlines the questions asked of the data and the way the data was analysed.

The actual research question itself was continually asked of the data during analysis

### **How does interactive reflective dialogue facilitate learning on role-emerging placements?**

The former research question which changed to be a sub-question was also consistently asked of the data, namely:

### **What is the role of reflective dialogue (RD) specifically within the REP context?**

Both questions were asked of the dialogue data throughout analysis.

### **Open coding /early analysis – Further questions posed to the data:**

- What is being said? What is this saying? What does /could this mean? Why is this being written about?
- What type of learning is happening here?
- What is helpful to this learning?
- How does this relate to learning through RD?
- How is this influenced by being on REP?
- How does the REP situation itself likely impact on the nature, process, content and depth of the students daily reflective logs?
- What is the role of reflective writing (and feedback - dialogue; e-based)?
- How do we see learning occur? When do we see learning happening?
- What is the student's main concern here?
- What has the student learnt? How has the reflective dialogue assisted this learning?
- What part does reflective writing have in reflection and learning?
- How is this log /dialogue useful to the student or not useful?
- What can we infer about the students learning in this log, how, why?

New questions developed toward the end of the analysis, becoming more detailed, focused, and less open.

Towards the final analysis stage, deductive reasoning confirmed themes and explained differences and ranges within themes. This deductive type thinking is better later in the analytic process. Feedback from the DAViT stimulated further changes to the analytical framework. Questions below and the above questions were also asked of the returned feedback from the DAViT form. Later questions were developed to check initial findings and ensure themes were supported across all datasets. Questions to check themes including to check that the core theme spanned across all the databases and was the core theme:

- What is the core role of learning through dialoguing on these placements? Sensemaking emerged as the answer. Further questions then included: when does sensemaking occur /not occur? Is this specific to role-emerging placements? How useful is dialoguing as a sensemaking tool? Is sensemaking the same as reasoning or reflection? What stimulates sensemaking, and what conditions are conducive to it?
- Does RD at its core involve sensemaking? Is sensemaking the core thing happening? How is sensemaking happening here? Is this peculiar to REP and or RD?

- What allows sensemaking to occur?
- Is this because of the REP?
- Do all students strive to make sense through dialoguing?
- How will I know when sensemaking has occurred?
- (How/) Is sensemaking co-constructed with feedback?
- What are the supervisor strategies used to facilitate learning? To support sensemaking? Other? (Consider a repertoire of tools /continuum of strategies)
- How has learning progressed over the course of the placement? What is the process or "evidence" of learning over time, that is the development of reasoning /critical reflective skills over the course of the placement (tracking change<sup>23</sup> and progress /development and growth /learning... tracking the learning process)...
- What is the impact of the Celebrations Dilemmas and Desires framework on learning and reflective practice?
- What is the impact of peers in the dialoguing and or sensemaking? If any? Note: this is not well featured in the data so not going to be able to comment on this much at all.
- How does the REP situation itself likely impact on the nature, process, content and depth of the students daily reflective logs?
- How does this student use the reflective dialoguing for learning? Is this the same for all students in the study?
- How does the supervisor's feedback contribute to learning? What strategies does the supervisor use, how effective is this?
- Why does she say this? What might this mean? What else could it mean? What is not said?\*
- How do different students use reflective dialoguing?
- How do supervisors respond to different learning needs?
- Is dialoguing user-friendly?
- What helps student maximise learning through dialoguing?
- What (skills) has the student learned? Does this help them to reason more independently? Or to voice their reasoning in the RD more confidently and or competently?

\*The presentational meaning considers the language used within the data (Freeman, 1996) was also analysed and involved further questions:

Not only "what is said" but

- "what is **not** said?"
- "how is this said?" "why would this be said like that?" and "what might that mean?"
- "What would influence this being said?" (... in that way?)

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<sup>23</sup> During phase 3 or 4 of data analysis, the datasets were divided into three colours to separate entries from the first two-weeks (brown), the middle two-weeks (green) and the final two-weeks (blue) to assist this analysis and provide a timeframe for entries within each dialogue dataset.

## Appendix B: Reflexive memo

### 1. Change to the main research question in the study:

Initially the main research question was:

*What is the role of reflective dialogue (RD) specifically within the REP context?*

However this was reworded to the following question:

*How does interactive reflective dialogue facilitate learning on role-emerging placement?*

*Memo: The "How" question seems more specific to the interactive reflective dialogue as a learning tool on these REP placements whereas the first question "What" could include roles outside of learning...(such as providing pastoral care or clinical oversight of the students interventions to ensure safety...) The second question "How" keeps a focus on the learning through dialoguing – more specific and narrow.*

### 2. Considerations of angle of inquiry and methodological fit

The dialogue-as-data is not a subjective account of the value of the reflective dialogue from the student or supervisors perspectives - although member checking might pose this question, it is an exploration of the actual written data and involves tracking and understanding this. Using retrospective written data (cold case) lends itself toward a *more critical or analytical approach* perhaps than understanding subjective meaning (which is more easily *experiential*). Content analysis while sharing a history with thematic analysis is not akin with reflexive thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2019)

*Memo: I need to explore openly and inductively! However as I was unable to question and probe the participants to gain deeper insight of their perspective. Using only words as data meant I needed to question and probe the written data itself to gain this depth which easily becomes more like a critical review. I found it hard not to evaluate or critique the reflective logs and at times the supervisors' responses – having marked reflections in my role as clinical educator with students.*

### 3. Change to the research sub-questions:

The sub-questions of:

*"Is reflective dialoguing a useful means to assist learning on role-emerging placements in particular? How? Why?"*

Were replaced for a less critical, evaluative lens and more of an explorative lens, with the question:

*"How does reflective dialogue contribute to learning on role-emerging placements in particular?"*

## Appendix C: Pre-Suppositions Self-interview

This self-interview exercise was conducted to assist to build an analytical framework (Thorne, 2008) before analysis occurred. Questions I asked myself:

### 1. How will I be looking at the data? (Thorne, 2008)

- Thematic, inductive analysis - going bigger
- Discipline specific knowledge about reflective practice and reflective learning and the importance thereof for students as well as clinicians
- Appreciation of the context of role-emerging paradigm
- Open questioning predominantly to develop themes
- Theoretical sensitivity and knowing about studies on role-emerging placements and on learning theory and theory related to reflective writing and reflective practice will influence my lens. Attempts to bracket this. Awareness of my own construction in the analysis

### 2. What am I looking for? (Thorne, 2008)

- Considering my research question and sub questions... review these also as analysis progresses.
- Openness to see what there is (grounded in the data) rather than have too many ideas of what should be seen /what I am looking for...

### 3. What am I hoping to find? (Thorne, 2008)

- That students gain confidence, disposition and skill (increase in depth and frequency of critical reflections in their logs over course of the placement)
- That students respond to supervisor feedback and this assists them with new learning /discovery (of clinical content /self /process of reflection itself) (feedback allows reflection – Boyd; and co-construction of meaning /learning)
- Evidence of ownership of learning
- A maturation and professional development evidenced in the writing over course of placement – likely there is a process / pathway from anxiety /conflict toward more clarity of purpose /ease with role and resolution...
- Explore the role of the supervisor - as a mediator and mentor in the learning – possibly helping to link theory and practice, reframing /probing / supporting / validating etc...

### 4. What am I expecting to find? Why – for each question? (Thorne, 2008)

- The above but less clearly observed over time /fluctuations rather than linear process.
- Context specific dilemmas
- Emotional aspect of the placement (hard environment)
- The REP paradigm reflected in student and supervisor dialogues – universal participation /group inclusion rather than diagnostic type 1:1 intervention
- Some content linking students reflection of what happened (incident) to OT specific philosophy /theory, but that the supervisor helps with the linking of practice context and OT theory. Later in the placement or dialogue, OT student might be able to show / an understanding of how theory relates to practice. Why? FW2, lack of knowledge and experience of students... likely will need advice on how classroom observations can be linked to the role or domain of OT...
- Considering if this is an example of learning to reflect or reflecting to learn? **These concepts as possible core concept within the study** (See reflexive note p 37: \*Bracketing) Or something else – what else?
- The role of the LA supervisor in the reflective dialogue – to question, to probe deeper thinking, to reframe, to support /validate / affirm, to link to theory, to explain relevant theory, to feedback, to provide a different perspective, to challenge, to congratulate, to empower, to monitor, to assess, to safeguard, to assist, to link, to direct, to teach, to provide information / resources /understanding of context and clinical relevance...Highlight SV role in the data – what action best describes her in that specific dialogue. ▪ Facilitated Reflection as a possible core concept within the study
- I'm thinking that the structural analysis (Freeman, 1996) may well be more useful in the analysis to pick up things like increased confidence /ownership of learning /resolution of purpose etc.

### 5. What am I bringing to the research?

The study objectives impact on the researcher positioning - I am hoping to validate and or provide ideas to improve a current supervision method or learning tool (reflective dialogue) that supports students on REPs and is resource-effective and results in improved reflective practice and optimising students learning opportunities on placement.

Researcher influence on study: My assumptions based on experience as an OT clinical supervisor and educator, clinical experience and having had a preliminary look at the data: as well as based on themes from studies on REP /learning /reflection Firstly I consider the research question as a guide and then list the assumptions, questions and related theory that might be asked of the data. Awareness of purpose of the reflections ( for assessment, compulsory element, for supervisor) will influence their writing – How? What might be seen – students might try to evidence their / learning / put themselves in a good light What is seen? What might this mean? o Purpose of using the reflective dialogue as Assessment – issues with this being inherently against reflective practice. ▪ How will I determine this within my study? ▪ Consider what is said, but what is omitted and how it is said – e.g. to paint student in better light perhaps?? Might come out more in structural analysis or in interview?? o To promote critical reflection /reflective practice ▪ my assumption is that this should improve over the course of the placement in terms of depth of reflection. ▪ My assumption is the dialogue between supervisor and student will assist to facilitate the depth of their thinking... ▪ Idea of different levels /depth of reflection from description to critical reflection

#### 6. *Borders - What will be covered and what won't be covered?*

- Decision to include all logs from the pair participants, not to have a threshold which includes only that which is an actual “reflection”.
- Decision against providing an analysis of the depth of reflection in the logs to compare growth /learning to reflect over the course of the placement - *No, this is not an inductive approach!*
- Will try unpack themes on the types of issues reflected through reflective logs, such as students struggle to find their place or role within the classroom, student considers the injustice in classroom punishment, conceptual conflict between OT and teacher perspectives of confidentiality... etc.

#### 7. *What context (and time) and how does this influence things? Various considerations of context:*

- School contexts
- Study context
- OT participants: Second year students, Fieldwork placement 2
- Masters Thesis - Resource constraints affected this study The size of study, no funding and pressure of timeframes /expectations of the project size, my own lack of experience in research - this being my first research of this size. Another constraint is that I am a distance learner which means having only met one of my supervisors face to face at the start of my research journey. While the other supervisor I have only known online. The constraints of working as a research group because of geographical distance meant that theme / construction was the task of the primary researcher with the supervisors providing feedback but not actually performing theme analysis together or separately (blind coding).
- Purpose of Reflective dialogue and how it is explained to students will influence their use of it:
- The REP placement- assumptions of the researcher

## Appendix D: PP1 dialogue (student 1 and supervisor 1).

Short excerpts from week 1 & 2 (brown) and week 3 & 4 (green) are provided relating to Participant Pair 1

### Week 1 & 2 Day 1 student entry

"Celebration....Meeting new people, making new friends and acquaintances is always a cause for celebration for me. I enjoyed getting to know the wonderful students in my class and forming a rapport with my teacher and his assistant teachers. I felt welcomed and accepted and respected. I am looking forward to getting stuck in with my class!Dilemma.....There is a few children that have attention challenges and got removed frequently and missed out on alot of work, although my teacher told me that being the first week of school there is always 'holiday kinks' to iron out and behavior tends to improve for majority of children. One of the children 'magneted' (as the teacher called it!) to me and she is renowned for being quite 'touchy feely'. I spoke to the teacher about how I am able to handle this and I now feel I am able to handle her touching behavior should it occur again.Desire....My desire is to continue to build a strong rapport with all of the children so I am able to engage well with not only my target children, but with the class as a whole."

**Supervisors response:** "Hi <@>, well done for seeking advice from your teacher about how to manage the child's 'touchy feely' behaviour. Do any of the other children behave in a similar way? I am interested to hear how you are juggling rapport building with clear boundary setting - this can be very challenging in the intense environment of a classroom. It's interesting to hear about the children being removed from class and missing out on a lot of work, do they gain other skills during this time instead?"

**Student response:** "Hi >, thank you for your response and questions. None of the other children are 'touchy feely' like this particular child. I had a couple moments today where I had to remind this child of boundaries. I have a couple of points about this childs behavior to bring to supervision as I feel like certain behaviours are an attempt to seek more of my attention though acting up only in front of me, but snapping back into form when the teacher appears...hopefully that makes sense, if not I will clarify in supervision. When a child has to be removed from the class they are not always removed from the room as such- they first get sent to a 'thinking spot' which is in a high traffic area next to desks, the front door and windows so not a lot of 'thinking' happens here, which in turn leads to further disruptive behaviour..

### Student Entry Week 3 & 4:

"Celebration: Today was a great day! I had an amazing hour long meeting with my teacher and we went through all my ideas and finally organised how I can work my interventions in with class life. My new concept for the thinking spot has been finalized and we decided it will be a class project that the children can all contribute to. My interventions and goals for my two focus children have been given a big tick and we are collaborating on the environmental modifications that are part of the intervention. My environmental intervention with the maths groups has been finalized and we will organize the room this Friday ready to initiate this intervention\/change next week and my teacher is excited about my 'brain breaks' which we are going to try out between maths groups to give the kids a bit of time to 'shuffle off' before re-focusing on the next task. AND I have been assigned my own morning 'class'...I will be taking a group of 4-6 out for 10-15 mins at a time between 9.30 and 10.30 for some P.E to work on their 'fundamental movement skills' which have been set out by Sport Waikato. Dilemma: I had a small concern with the sustainability of my P.E class seeing as I will only be around for another 4 weeks and I am not wanting to be leaving a 'gap'. Although I was pleased to hear they are getting a teacher aide who will be coming in a few times a week and my teacher wants her to follow on from me, so while it won't happen as much as it will with me, at least it won't be just cut off. I have also been given the all go for buying equipment if I need it...it feels like alot of responsibility! ...

## Appendix E: Familiarisation summary for PP1

### Participant Pair 1: Summary of Familiarisation Notes.

From onset of reflective logs, has a clear idea of purpose (identifies potential and articulates the OT role) and process (is mindful initially that rapport building is key, later considers forming baseline, planning intervention, reviewing intervention etc)

- Values rapport building
- Values working collaboratively (with pupils, teachers, peers, family)
- Makes adjustments to her plan based on her own observations
- Adopts OT language /philosophy /approach /model /theory /framework of the supervisor through the dialogue
- Refines observations and makes more in-depth analysis based on feedback dialogue from supervisor (considers and adjusts plan according to feedback, uses language /frameworks suggested by supervisor dialog)
- Shows initiative /takes ownership from the get-go (research, direction)
- Understands behavioural change mainly from a CBT framework rather than BT (values internal motivation, self-monitoring /regulation, insight oriented strategies)
- Uses research to support and guide intervention plans
- Able to identify and articulates universal issues within the classroom setting – concerned with the “Exclusion” as punishment for bad behaviour and repercussions on pupil learning – this transitions from a dilemma issue, raised more than once, then becomes a desire issue – what she wants to change within the classroom and emerges as a celebration – where she has implemented the thinking spot, and the tepee within the classroom
- Bases intervention ideas on research /evidence /theory
- Identifies the following dilemmas on placement:
  - Rapport building versus behavioural management
  - TA unprofessionalism /conflict with her idea of professionalism
  - Exclusion as punishment for bad behaviour
  - Issues around current classroom use of “thinking spot”
  - Turnover of school teachers, teacher aids – lack of consistency of staffing – impact on pupils as well as her intervention /role
  - Painful back (her own)
  - Child goes missing
  - Sustainability of interventions once she leaves – the gap factor
  - Managing inappropriate behaviour - physical outbursts
  - Managing child Ks behaviour on the school trip to the bus
- There is a sense of realisation that she may not be able to be the solution to every problem, that some problems are outside of her scope
- Appreciates the environmental impact on children’s participation
- Able to anticipate triggers for certain children in the class – likely becomes a very useful assistance to teachers in the classroom
- Shares /discloses how she is feeling /affect through the placement
- Concerned about sustainability of interventions (once she leaves), the “gap” factor
- Shares about the nature of her relationship with the teachers – her working collaboratively and her being able to confront the teacher when her behavioural intervention was modified with focus K... briefs us about several meetings she has with the teacher
- Uses reflective log to brief (and reflect) on progress of interventions:
  - Teachers adopt universal changes within classroom setting - brain breaks, tepee, sensory seats

- She briefs us that teachers make adaptations to some of her programmes
- Insight into how her two focus children, E and K progress through the weeks /respond to intervention – see their progress over 2 -3 weeks and see their relationship /rapport
- Dialogue /feedback with supervisor provides language (OT jargon /speak /frameworks/ models ) relating to the practice that student has done or is planning to do – linking placement context, school classroom, briefs /updates /incidences to OT theory
- Supervisor also links students to their peers (students on placement with similar focus for intervention)
- Supervisor affirms, congratulates, empathises, listens and supports, reassures, normalises
  - Supervisor probes, questions, assists thinking beyond the single incident to the bigger picture (other cases /theory) often relating to universal ideas based on the students observations of a single case
  - Supervisor explains and reassures students about the potential learning that they have done – relating their practice to theory and comparing this placement to “traditional” placements
  - Supervisor meets with teachers and relays feedback/ information back to students in the dialog
  - Supervisor challenges student to see an opportunity within the dilemmas expressed – e.g. how can the OT assist with making the transitions from one teacher to the next, more smooth (in response to the issue of teacher inconsistency /schedules)
  - Supervisor suggests the potential OT role within schools
  - Provides answers to questions relating to assignments /hours etc to the students

## Appendix F: Familiarisation summary for PP2

### Summary - Participant Pair 2: (PP2)

Her /his story is frequently about extreme behavioural issues – poorly behaved children in her classroom: Day 1 teacher remarks “you have the most challenging class to work with” The behavioural challenges are often recorded within the celebration, possibly just as its front of mind “Celebration: Today was a really hard day”, “(when) the child with the most intense behavioural problems has a bad day, the whole class gets disrupted...” “Celebration: Today was a very challenging day behavioural wise...” to Dilemma “today was a diabolical day and I don’t know how to describe it well. It wasn’t a good day. Desire: I don’t have a desire right now.” “I got slapped and kicked by two kids” until “The behaviour has gotten so much better since the two boys were removed (from that classroom)” There is an emotional component / reaction to the constant bad behaviour “Desire: I want to go in tomorrow with a positive approach and try figure out a way I can work with some of these kids without getting frustrated with everything else going on.”

She /he is finding it tough, emotionally. Her supervisor provides support and sympathy and advice on looking after herself /pastoral care. Also advises that some issues are beyond the students control “this is not your responsibility to change” as well as specific behavioural techniques.

It is less clear which are her/his focus children. The main focus discussed is Child L (but it is unclear if this is a focus child). However she does discuss more universal type interventions which she introduces within the classroom setting – Choice board (Green and Red Choices); Social stories, Emotions Chart. Later the celebrations allow her to discuss the positive outcomes of these interventions . Uses the reflective log to express her/his concern about child L (debrief).

Is designated the role of one on one with Child L when teacher aids are not available (needs 1:1 monitoring to supervise due to risk of seizures), this child appears to have an OT and PT already assigned to her. Becomes apparent that the child had a CVA at birth (? student mostly understands this from teacher /teacher aide /lay person perspective). Concern as Child L deteriorates. Highlights issue of home /collaboration with family needed. Student begins to collaborate more with mom and gains more understanding of context and diagnosis (e.g, works through home programme from physio, witnesses petite-mal seizure, starts to understand CVA-minimally) Reflective dialogue assists us to develop a story over time of understanding /her perception over time of focus L. Dialogue allows supervisor to monitor progress of child?

Note has psychologists and OT /PTs visiting school to various pupils in the class but no reflection suggesting that she collaborates with these professionals?? Asks questions and collaborates mainly with teacher aid. Uses the words “I looked over a list that the **physiology** gave us for him about hemiparesis...” Does she identify as the TA here rather than the professional? Unfamiliar with the word physiotherapist.

Appears to be able to use self therapeutically and reports great results with children – often managing tricky behaviour (de-escalating) or teaching and getting further than teacher herself through 1on 1 intervention but fails to respond to questions /probing from supervisor to name /articulate how /what strategies were useful /used or formulate OT reasoning as such. Succinct in her description and leaves supervisor questions unanswered.

Values culturally safe practice and Te Reo - is impressed when the teacher uses this in class and brings this into her own interventions (emotions chart).

Discusses instances of making decisions on the spot (reflection in action) - interactive reasoning – e.g. “so I sat with him and read some stories and talked about why he’s been feeling sad lately” links his behaviour to possible changes /stress at home

Supervisor provides OT perspective, models (4QM), OT language and ideas of intervention, teaching e.g. play based learning, use of social stories, strengths-based approach, considering underlying motivations of behaviour etc. Also probes /questions /frames /contextualises , normalises /explains. Congratulates, validates, affirms, supports. Empathises. Encourages her to advocate the OT role to staff – will you be explaining the choices board at the staff meeting? Supervisor directive and providing answers a lot e.g. describes the social stories and links this to theory etc as an intervention idea. Less problem solving within the dialoguing. More questions and answers and less collaborative to and fro.

She/he is able to turn dilemmas into desires “ I want to research some ideas on behaviour and how I can adapt some routine within the classroom to potentially avoid so much disruption”

At times has difficulty naming the desire and seems overwhelmed with the dilemma (poor behaviour).

At times uses language of a lay person rather than professional. Does not readily take on the language /models of the supervisor in her reflective log, despite taking on the interventions themselves which appear to have good outcomes. Responds less to supervisor questions and misses key guides from the supervisor – such as direction to explore ‘learning through play’ in more detail. Appears to use writing to record rather than to learn... Also uses RD as a debriefing tool.

Supervisor comment: “Teachers are very limited in their time and scope to impact on childrens’ development beyond academic learning...” perspective of supervisor – hint at the difference perspective and scope and opportunity for the OT students role /OT role in school.

Has difficulty framing the occupational therapy issue. Mainly discusses reading, writing and scholastic / teacher focus instead. Supervisor provides an OT lens, frames of reference /ideas on intervention and on the potential OT role /OT language and framework.

### **Reflexive note:**

PP2: Far less discussion of the teacher and the relationship with him/her. Likely this was not conflictual /did not pose ethical or interactional reasoning issues.

I wonder if this student is more of a do-er than a writer? I imagine she/he has more knowledge but finds the writing it out cumbersome – I get the feeling she /he is able to reflect and respond in practice even if her /his articulation thereof is not as good as her/his actual practical hands-on skills...?

I wonder how reflective dialogue could be more action oriented for the students /students like her/him?

There is an element of internalising versus externalising e.g. I wonder what she went through emotionally – sometimes she just says she cannot articulate it. Would she /he have been better to discuss it face to face? I wonder what role her/his peers had with this? How open was she /he in face to face supervision?

## Appendix G: Familiarisation summary for PP3

### Familiarisation Notes – Participant pair 3 (PP3)

- Begins placement with excitement /happy disposition
- Reveals an awareness of process and initial steps being to build rapport , observe and gain baseline knowledge
- Initially difficulty framing the OI in OT framework instead takes on the teachers language /framework e.g. discussing reading and writing age instead of developmental or underlying school readiness issues
- Dilemmas reveal ethical concerns such as Injustices of the school system
  - e.g. wrong person getting punished (reputation /identity)
  - E.g. Child excluded from production /play due to incontinence
  - E.g. Child J1 not receive teacher aide support when was approved (not actioned by teacher)
- Expresses that she/he is struggling to find the link to OT theory several times, but often vague or unable to articulate exactly what she needs more information about to assist with her placement /to link to her actual focus children
  - Fails to make links to theory despite explicit ideas being discussed in the reflective dialog by supervisor e.g. “conditional learning” from supervisor discussed in day 2 entry and a month later student requests readings on behavioural management
  - “Am a bit worried I am not learning enough as an OT in the school role in my second year...” (entry 4) “Could learn more about different models or assessment...”
- Values peer learning and peer support (frequently discusses other students interventions - observes them /their support of her, works collaboratively with them etc)
- Discusses the harsh social realities of the school pupils and how this affects school performance e.g. dog attack, not getting sufficient sleep /food, lack of carryover with toileting programme in home environment
- Realises school pupils behaviour is teacher dependent and approach –dependent (when given responsibility he behaves well)
- Supervisor provides an OT lens, frames of reference /ideas on intervention and on the potential OT role /OT language and framework. Teaching and advice giving, guiding e.g. “possibly one role of the OT at school is...” and “when a person has restricted vision, they benefit from...” directing intervention, hand holding /assisting with preparation for meeting with teacher and whanau for child with toileting issue (working through)
- Supervisor provides empathy and support, validation / affirmation, explanation and framing
  - Safeguard /teach /instruct... at times explicit guidance
- Appears to often be in the role of teacher assistant “teacher splits the classroom in two and I deal with half” ... query her understanding of her role and that of her teachers at start of placement?
- Realises that lunch time is an important time for informal observations and rapport building. Realises that playground is hard, mean, lonely and unfair at times through dialogue with supervisor and peers.
- Briefs supervisor on interventions /plans /outcomes... however seldom uses OT framework language or theory to explain rationale
- Some tension at times with the teacher in the classroom (“mixed day” felt unsupported – teacher did not carryout toileting plan /protocol when she was away). Teacher reminded her that she was the teacher not her... Difficulty of true collaboration with overt power dynamic and different priorities of the two professions (OT vs teacher).
- Values connection with the children “my buddies” (may also suggest less barriers /prof boundaries)
- Makes astute observations and discusses her impression and feelings through reflective logs
- Celebrations allow her/his to describe positive outcomes with her focus children
- Universal intervention – shapes on mat for all kids esp for one of her focus children

- Dialog allows a picture of baseline information, to intervention, to reviewing outcome especially for Child J1 toileting issue... Her /his intervention is improved and directed by feedback dialog and outcome is more precisely captured through guidance and questioning from supervisor.
- Sense of sadness on leaving (I will miss seeing how they grow up) and the pupils were sad to say good bye. No discussion of handover /carryover /follow up.

## *Appendix H: Familiarisation summary across all datasets*

All three students try to make sense of the placement /classroom from the perspective of an OT. This is difficult as they have to construct this... (against) the over-shadowing of the prevailing expert, perspective and opinion (the teacher). This conflict and purpose and journey is apparent in their logs esp PP2 and PP3.

The placement appears to be broken into stages. Students discuss forming rapport, observation and getting a baseline over the first couple of weeks. Toward the end of this stage, key focus children within their classroom are identified. Thereafter plans and interventions are discussed in the logs. Theory is often suggested by the supervisor. Collaboration with the teacher and implementation in the classroom is discussed. Intervention plans are put in place... success and or review and changes are discussed. Sometimes changes are made by the teachers – not always in collaboration with the students. The OT process is slowed down and reasoning and dialogue occurs at each stage to assist students to work through this stage.

The dialogue is emotionally open – students use dialogue to debrief. Emotional excitement and confusion mainly at start of placement. Some frustration and exhaustion during placement. Then pride and a sense of achievement when implementation works well. Students appear to ‘come of age’ professionally in the placement /maturation /professional maturity develops. e.g. acceptance of things outside of their control, awareness of complex social issues, more complex understanding of situations, more autonomous and professional thinking and managing on the spot.

Being proactive and self-directed in learning appears key throughout. There is a range in the amount of active participation in dialoguing. Some students appear more proactive in answering written questions and responding to feedback than others. Those that engage critically and respond to questions and source literature are able to articulate their reasoning more clearly and from an OT perspective. Begin to use OT language and theory. Others appear to struggle to use the OT theory in their writing /thinking but gain confidence in their hands-on practice skills with the children. Some engage more readily in the written exchange to construct and learn. Others use dialoguing to debrief and get answers rather than problem solve with the supervisor.

Addressing behavioural issues is common... and exhausting. Collaboration with the classroom teacher is an important component and not always smooth sailing. Finding a perspective that is different to the teacher or teacher aids but that compliments the scholastic goals is tricky and the off-site supervisor and dialoguing seems key to assist with this.

## **Appendix I: The occupational therapy process in the data**

Data supporting and showing the staged OT process and students awareness of tasks over time (see in this doc)

Entries from the first two<sup>24</sup> weeks:

### **Phase 1: Baseline observation and rapport building, planning and collaborating**

PP3 day 2 student: "I was able to gather data to develop part of a baseline with this student" ... "As it is early into my placement observing is my main tool for the next week before I focus on a child more and look at progression with them"

Reinforced by PP3 supervisor: "Continue to get more baseline information"

PP3 end of week 2: "I also has a good talk to my teacher about the ideas I have with the two children I am working with and she loves the idea and has pointed me in the right direction to make sure these things can be taken place."

PP2 end of week 2: "I want to research some ideas on behaviour and how i can maybe try adapt some routines within the classroom to potentially avoid so much disruption"

Entry toward end of week 2 PP1: "I want to be able to set things in place for next week so that I can push through with my interventions."

PP2 supervisor week 1: "I encourage you to take the time to get to know the children and the class in your own time and to formulate your own clinical opinions based on your observations over time"

PP1 week 2: "I plan on researching and applying my observations to CMOP-E and the 4QM and the ARC framework to form strong baselines so I can start my interventions over the coming week so 😊"

### **Phase 2: Intervention planning, implementation and in class collaboration**

PP1 supervisor week 3: "Well done <@█>, planting the seed is a powerful thing to do with children at this age. Great that he is motivated to look at new ways to help with his focus. Well done for taking the time to 'interview' and observe your students and to adjust your plan based on the data collected - this is a brave thing to do and demonstrates integrity in your clinical reasoning."

PP1 week 3: "Today was a great day! I had an amazing hour long meeting with my teacher and we went through all my ideas and finally organised how I can work my interventions in with class life. My new concept for the thinking spot has been finalized and we decided it will be a class project that the children can all contribute to. My interventions and goals for my two focus children have been given a big tick and we are collaborating on the environmental modifications that are part of the intervention. My environmental intervention with the maths groups has been finalized and we will organize the room this Friday ready to initiate this intervention\change next week and my teacher is excited about my 'brain breaks' which we are going to try out between maths groups to give the kids a bit of time to 'shuffle off' before re-focusing on the next task"

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<sup>24</sup> Each dataset has been divided into three colours according to week 1 and 2 (brown); week 3 and 4 (green) and week 5 and 6 (blue) to enable easier tracking of entries over the 6-week placement

PP3 start of week 3: "The three children I have as 'target children' are all in quadrant 1 need a lot of instructions and showing but today during this time I only had to prompt them twice and they understood clearly about what to do as all the other children were able to show them. Another exciting process was I did up a class activities chart that my teacher is happy to carry on once I am gone."

PP2 supervisor: "it sounds like you're progressing your conversations and plans with your teacher well"

PP1 supervisor: "well done for following through with your interventions with Child ■ and re-evaluating as you go along to further develop your understanding of his occupational performance needs"

### **Phase 3: Intervention continued, review & re-evaluation, and handover**

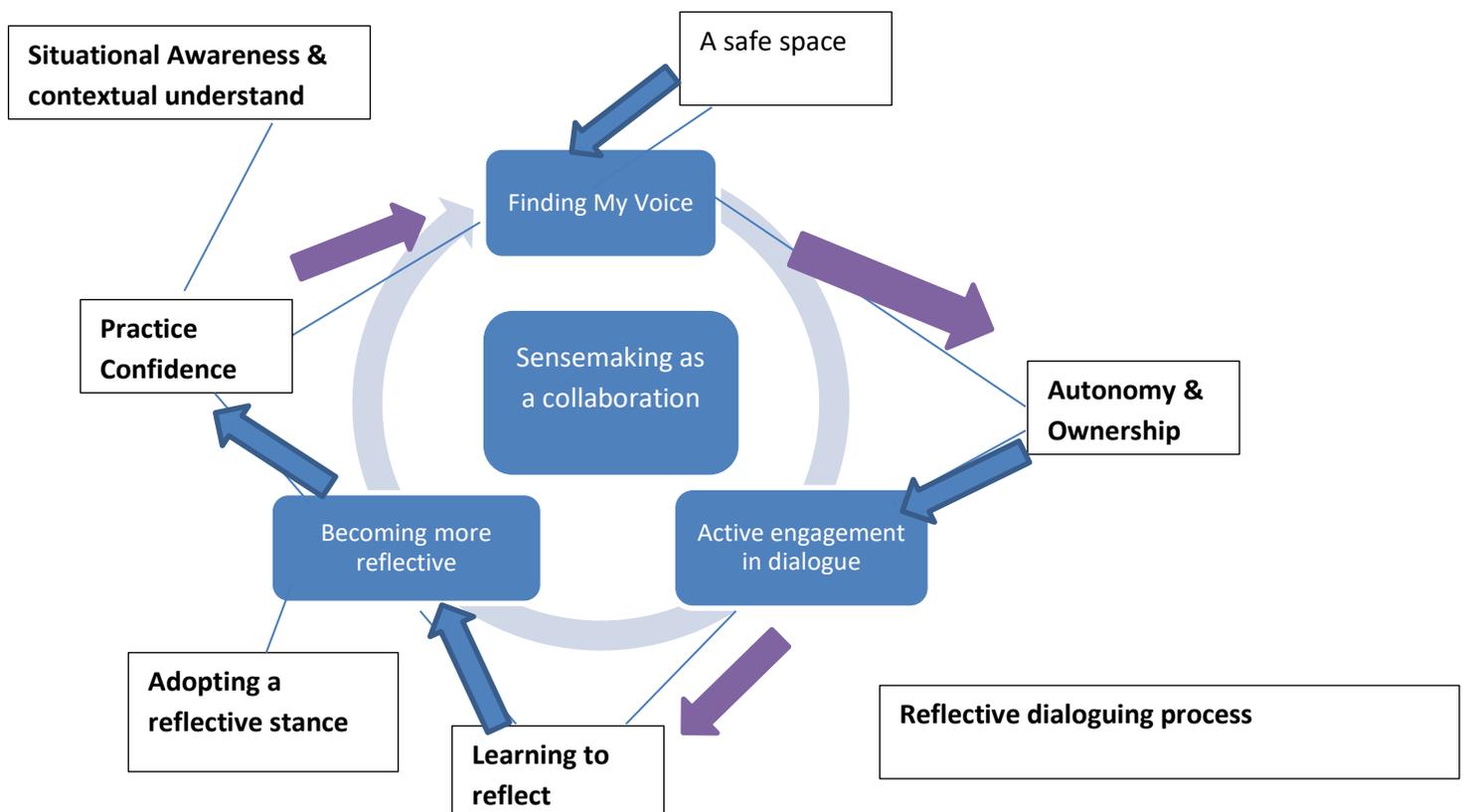
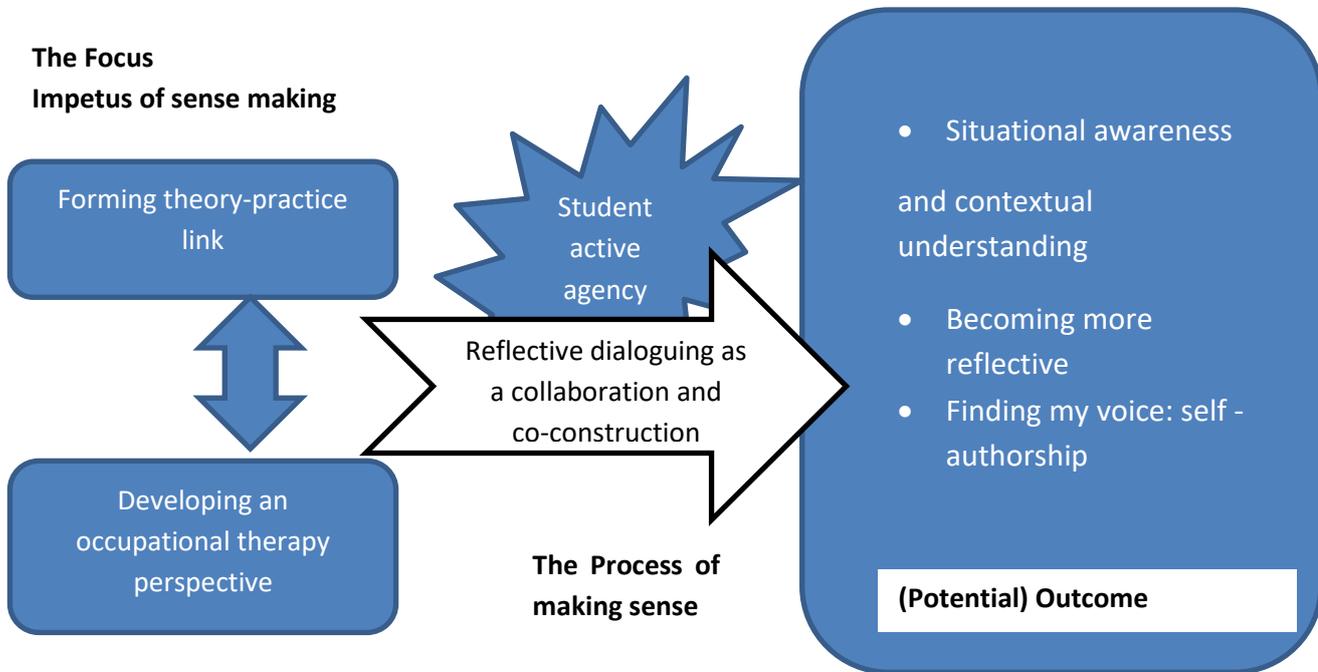
PP3 Week 6 Student Log 31/8: "lots of kids made it to the top of the bee chart getting treats. My teacher liked the certificates I have made for the kids next week as part of me leaving . I got to use the middle block to work with my focus kids and see how they are doing since my first observations to start my intervention and they both have improved and feel that they have gone up to quad 2 from 1"

PP1 end of week 6: "Today I wrapped up ,my second week of intervention with E and the progress has been amazing ☺: The OPPM's and the GAS goals have helped me to see and show the teachers his progress which has gone from -2 to start with (obviously) and then -1 at the end of week one to +2 at the end of week two. I had a final meeting with my teacher today and talked about my time at ■ and my contributions to the class as a whole. He was really positive and really values the work I have put in and was really open to my transitional ideas regarding how he can carry on with focus ■ because he was excited about his progress and wanted to keep it up."

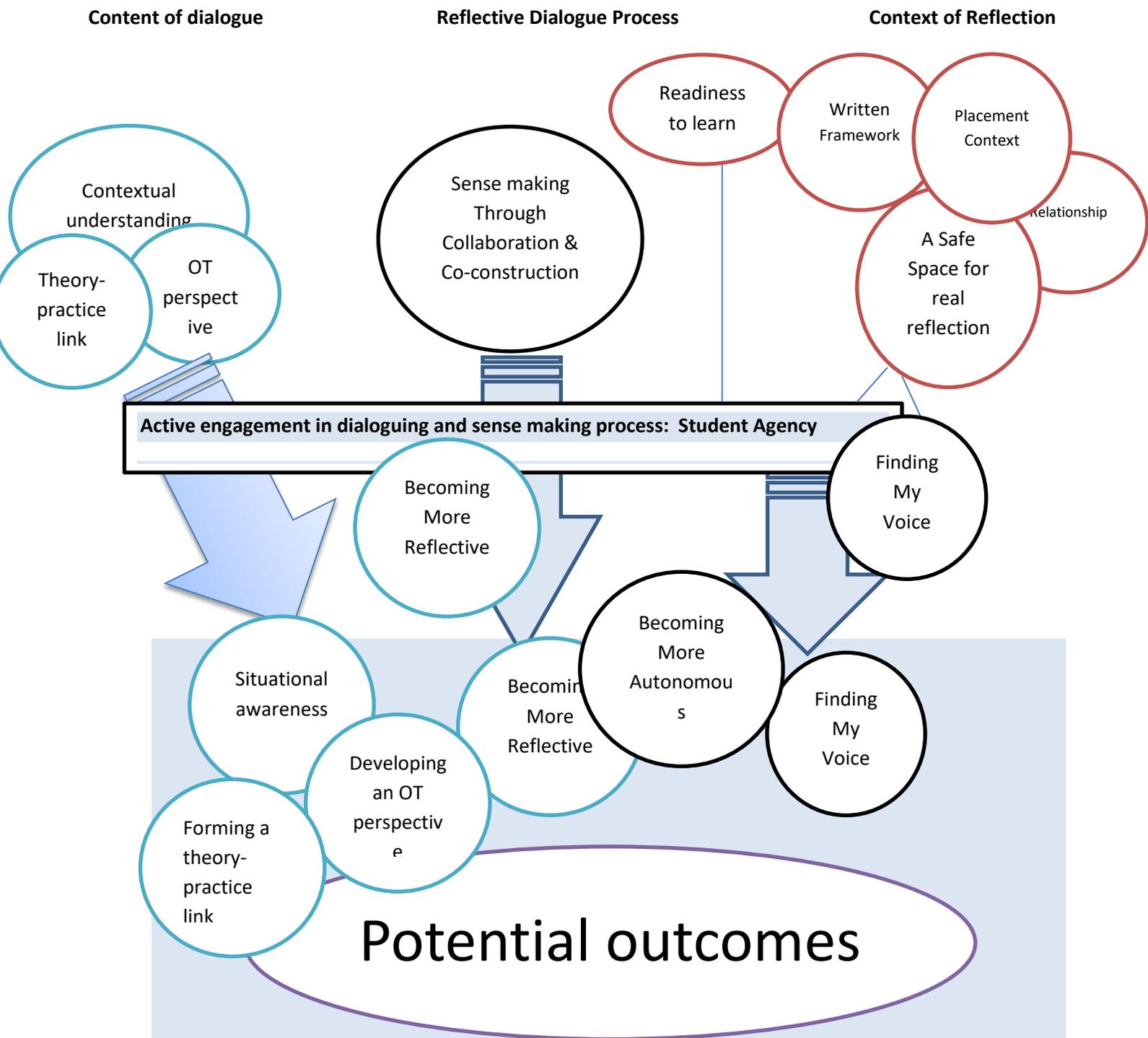
PP1 week 5 or 6: "Dilemma: Knowing how much input I should be putting in at this time is a challenge. When some children were playing up for the teachers and creating disruptions I am wary of how much I should help with/intervene the situation seeing as I am going in a few days. This especially goes for the relieving teachers who do still look to me alot at times for help with situations and I have in the back of my mind 'what will you do when you are the only one in here?'. I have taken to only getting involved when absolutely necessary or when a teacher asks. For me its mainly about the 'gap factor' (as I call it), and making sure there isn't a gap when I leave and ensuring that the staff are able to seek support within their own colleagues"

## Appendix J: Diagramming

**Top diagram A: Key concepts associated in the process and outcome of learning through dialoguing on role emerging placements. Lower diagram B – connecting themes and inter-relationships**



**Diagram C: The lens that the researcher used – classification of themes:**



## *Appendix K: Learning stories with researcher comments and theme development*

**Learning Story One from participant pair 3 dialogue** [This learning story showcases all seven of the key learning concepts]

The dialogue learning story revolves around a toileting issue regarding a child's incontinence at school. The occupational therapy student uncovers that the young school pupil seems to enjoy her mother coming to 'clean her up' after an incident. The occupational therapy student initially expresses that the toileting can be managed with "regular" "reminders" from herself and the classroom teacher. The long arm supervisor adds to her understanding of this issue by highlighting the possibility of the mother providing "reinforcement" of the problem behaviour [Category: Theory-driven sensemaking... allows more insight from a professional perspective – build the complexity of her ideas from being confident that regular reminders will solve the issue to the complexity of the toileting issue, introducing ideas around the child's motivation and reward]. The supervisor provides the theoretical framework of thinking about this from a behavioural framework naming "operant conditioning" and links this knowledge to the students' academic course content [Forming a theory-practice link, overtly referring to course content]. The supervisor then poses questions to the student to facilitate thinking about the young school pupil's incontinence issues in relation to her motivations, habits and external reinforcers [Central theme: sense making; categories: theory-driven sensemaking (theory-practice link), developing sensemaking skills (questions from supervisor, mentoring how to reflect)].

The complexity of the situation is further discussed and this becomes a focus of intervention for this student working with this pupil towards independence in toileting, which also entails collaboration with the teacher and staff as well as with the mother of the child. We see that the student gains an increased situational awareness and a deeper more complex understanding of the issue is developed through the dialogue [theory-driven sensemaking]. The student explains that the child was excluded from the school play production because of her incontinence and is able to frame this issue from an occupational therapy perspective [Demonstrating the central theme of sensemaking, and themes of: developing an occupational therapy perspective; finding my professional voice; becoming more reflective]. Student: "By taking away the production her social environment has been effected."

The student also becomes frustrated with the teacher and mother at times, who do not always appear on board with the intervention plan, however she is able to gain an understanding of this from a boarder perspective through the supervisor: "it is so hard isn't it, caught between respecting the teachers culture of the classroom and your own values and world view" (Central theme of sensemaking, enabling more understanding; developing a professional self which is guided by more informed professional theory rather than our emotions during interactions... linking to the category of transformational learning and themes of personal and professional growth)

Student: "Her mum agreed and sounded so happy about the ideas - and then the child came out and [the mum] picked her up tickling her and laughing with her about taking poos in her pants"

Supervisor: "It is so complex- the mum may have been trying to protect her child's self esteem - unconditional love - however society is not so forgiving. There are really mixed social messages out there about - giving your child hang ups if they connect toileting accidents with belief in self...it is complex. But that is why we are going to work on it together. However you uncovered a really important piece of data gathering today about the

mums reinforcement. Have you done behavioral approach in PP2 yet? If yes think about the concept maladaptive reinforcement.” [Theory-driven sensemaking; Becoming more reflective; Central theme of sensemaking; Personal and professional growth]

Later we see enhanced reasoning and a deeper understanding, as well as increased conviction in her own reasoning in the quote below regarding the impact of the change in the bathroom to the success in toileting [Demonstrating themes of Finding my professional voice; Becoming more reflective]. Self-authorship suggests more autonomous sense making [Becoming more reflective; Student agency and active engagement; personal and professional growth].

Student: “Child [x] has been having a few more accidents in her pants than last week and i [I]think its because i [I] have changed the physical environment from the office to the girls bathroom. When i [I]pulled her aside today and asked what she had done her fae [face] went bright red - this is sad but also a positive as she is starting to know the feeling of getting embarrassed about what has happened and recognises that she isn’t meant to do that. (if that makes sense).” [Finding my professional voice and self; Becoming more reflective].

The supervisor responds providing affirmation and framing to further consolidate the student’s understanding and clinical reasoning around the issue of toileting:

Supervisor: “she is starting to understand the social messages and expectations of society, this is what actually makes us all go to the bathroom rather than in other places whenever possible. This is actually a huge developmental step.” [Theory-driven sensemaking; Forming a theory-practice link]

Agency is demonstrated by the level of commitment, ownership and initiative on the placement, which is illustrated below when the student opts to take her lunch break at a different time to oversee the child’s toileting during the lunch break.

“Child (x) pooped again today I have been taking my lunch at another time of day so I can take her at 1pm but also I am gathering more report [rapport] seeing the kids at play time. I think I need to leave child j1 on toilet longer as I knocked on door she must have jumped up quickly wiped but some fell on the stool.” [Student agency:active engagement]

The supervisor provides a clinical focus by introducing measurement to record outcomes. Having overt and objective outcome measures relates not only to the behavioural approach but links to the Occupational Therapy process, which includes reviewing and recording outcomes of progress.

Supervisor dated 20/8: “for the child you are supporting with toileting what is your numbers, she had the program for 4 days and out of those four days her successes was 2 out of 4?” [Developing an occupational therapy perspective]

Supervisor: “do you think there is a connection between your child getting embarrassed and her asking to go to the toilet today? What enabled this to occur today ? Is there anything that you can put in place to enable it to occur on Monday? Wonderful milestone!” [Becoming more reflective; Central theme of sensemaking seen through collaboration].

Dialogue response: “Yeah I do think there is some connection I feel that she is finding out her own cues that she thinks is important which is good . Yes I did I asked her questions what she is going to do at home to make sure she doesn't have an accident (I scaled that conversation to her ability) and gave her mum a sticker book to take

home which she was happy about.” [Finding my professional voice and self; Becoming more reflective; personal and professional growth]

Reasoning skills are demonstrated by the student as she had already attended to ideas of how to carryover the successful toileting while at home in the weekend. The words “scaled that conversation to her ability” suggest her mindful handling skills and the ‘therapeutic use of self’, an Occupational Therapy specific technique to maintain rapport and a therapeutic alliance with the child. [Becoming more reflective; Finding my professional voice; Finding my professional self]

The story is an example of the student developing in her own understanding of the issue of toileting, using theory in practice and having a clear focus to address this issue from a clinical perspective. The complexity of this issue in our society and the implementation which involves close collaboration of family, teacher and school together all assist to make this a rich learning experience for the student. We get a sense of her reasoning and understanding developing through the story as well as her emerging confidence, self-authorship, agency and ownership, and personal and professional growth.

### **Learning Story Two from participant pair 2 dialogue**

[The dialogue demonstrates the core theme of sensemaking and in particular the category of theory-driven sensemaking and its two themes of forming a theory-practice link and works toward developing an occupational therapy perspective.]

Participant pair 2 explore the topic of behaviour management addressing significant behavioural issues and disruptive children in the classroom context. The supervisor often teaches and frames the Occupational Therapy perspective as well as providing a theory-practice link and the dialogue strives towards developing a more complex appreciation of the issue.

Student: “I want to research some ideas on behaviour and how i can maybe try adapt some routines within the classroom to potentially avoid so much disruption.” [Student agency and active engagement]

The supervisor’s response provides ideas of what the student could research giving a link to specific theory, a “strength-based approach” and an idea for intervention using “social stories” [Forming a theory-practice link]. The supervisor also assists the student to develop a link regarding managing the behavioural issues with an Occupational Therapy perspective: “considering the children's routines and how this impacts on their occupational participation and/or disruption - this demonstrates and [an] emerging focus on the occupational perspective central to your role in the classroom” [Developing an occupational therapy perspective].

Supervisor: “A strengths-based approach might be to consider making the assumption that children behave as they do because of a lack of information available to them, in a form they are able to process and integrate into life experiences, about how they are expected to behave in given situations. Social stories are one strategy for overcoming such challenges, originally they were developed for children with autism, however, they certainly have a wider application. Might be something worth looking into further. What do you think is motivating the behaviour of these children?” [Forming a theory-practice link; developing an Occupational Therapy perspective; Central theme of sensemaking is seen to develop through collaboration /largely dependant on the supervisors contribution; Becoming more reflective: stimulated by the questioning from the supervisor]

This question is not answered in the dialogue, however, the student subsequently discusses collaborating with the teacher on the ‘social stories’ and later implements these in the classroom with successful outcomes

[Forming a theory-practice link; Student agency and active engagement] so much so that other teachers begin to implement them in other classrooms within the school. We also see how the concept of social stories provided by the supervisor is enhanced and added to by the student, illustrating the concept of co-construction:

"I've decided to create a board with 'Green choices and red choices' with visual aids" [photos]... I will integrate this in with my social stories i am starting next week so that they have the story reminder as well as the chart on the wall." [Central themes of sensemaking; Student agency and active engagement; Finding my voice: student articulating confidently her plan].

The supervisor phrases a link between the practice context (and the issue of poor behaviour) and a potential occupational therapy perspective throughout the dialogue, for example:

"You are making clear links between Child [x]'s behaviour and the occupational domain this is affecting most - communication and social interaction skills. Change can be immediate or take a long time to take effect- the work you are doing now may not create noticeable changes while you are still on placement, but it will be planting seeds for him, his teacher and those around him that people care and are motivated to do something to support him in developing his occupational role as a good friend and a student in the classroom." [Developing an occupational therapy perspective].

The dialogue in this learning story has less collaboration between the supervisor and student participant, their data involves the least amount of co-construction through dialoguing across the participants. While the supervisor often provides a framework which explains the context and theory (such as suggesting and explaining the theory and intervention) there is less written response to the feedback or questions posed by the supervisor within the dialogue from the student on that concept. However the student is able to take on the suggestions within her intervention (such as by implementing the social stories), hence while there is less dialogue exchange the feedback appears to assist with sense making by providing a theory-practice link, guiding the Occupational therapy intervention and articulating the possible Occupational Therapy perspective.

### **Learning story 3 from participant pair 1 dialogue**

[The reflective dialogue exchange on the topic of 'environmental adaptations' involves all of the central theme of sensemaking and demonstrates all three categories of sensemaking and their associated themes]

Student "A big celebration for me was being able to engage a child who has consistent attention issues (diagnosed ADHD) in several maths games today. I found shifting to another floor spot in the room and swapping dice and counter colours each game kept it exciting and changed things up each time, which seemed to help is engagement." (Themes: finding my professional voice, becoming more reflective)

The response of the supervisor provides a link between the student's interventions and Occupational Therapy theory, introducing the concept of environmental adaptations as seen in this exchange:

Supervisor: "great therapeutic moments - well done using those small but effective environmental and occupational adaptations to engage the boy with ADHD in maths - are there any other children in your class who you think might benefit from similar therapeutic intervention?" [Category: Theory-driven sensemaking; themes: Forming a theory-practice link; developing an occupational therapy perspective].

Student: "Today I managed to have a good discussion with my teacher about my direction as an OT and how I am able to contribute to the class as a whole and individual students. Despite my own reservations about

disrupting his collaborating with the students I was really pleased to have him really enjoy my input and he told me how he really appreciated my observations as they were not anything he would have really thought about. He is really keen to start working with me to try and change up current environmental factors to see if they may have an impact on engagement.” [Finding my professional voice; developing an occupational therapy perspective; Central theme: sensemaking is developing through collaboration around the concept of environmental adaptations].

We are able to deduct from the above dialoguing that this student quickly understands and integrates theory to the practice context and applies the theory (environmental adaptation) in different contexts (not just the boy in maths) [Forming a theory-practice link; Finding my professional self]. It also suggests the student has clarity about the Occupational Therapy perspective or at least a different perspective to the teacher, perhaps evidencing an Occupational Therapy perspective and suggesting that she has been able to articulate this to the teacher [Finding my voice; Developing an Occupational Therapy perspective]. Further dialogue involves the supervisor linking this student to another and assisting further in her knowledge of theory, reflective reasoning and suggesting the Occupational Therapy perspective, all assisting with sensemaking. It also hints at sense making outside of the dialogue such as through peer discussions. [Facilitating sensemaking through collaboration; Becoming more reflective].

Supervisor: "Hi <@student x>, as you and <@ student y> are both looking at environmental interventions, it might pay to have a more in-depth discussion about this together, if you haven't already. What are the occupational needs you've identified that you are aiming to address with the environmental adaptations? It is interesting how the mood of a small group of children can impact the rest of the class. What do you notice the children do that helps them regulate their emotions at other times? Social emotional learning can be an important element of the role of an occupational therapist in the school setting and if this becomes a reoccurring theme it might be something worth looking into in more depth.",

Later dialogue reveals that the student introduces the concept of the “thinking spot” as one of her key interventions in the class – which is an example of environmental adaptations. We also see how she is able to appreciate the environmental context differently to the school teachers and is able to pre-empt the impact of the bus environment on the pupil’s behaviour during an outing to the gym. [Forming a theory-practice link; Student Agency; Developing sensemaking skills].

Student: “The bus ride to the gym trip was a highly distressing time for focus a. I spoke to both teachers prior to departure as I know he is really sensitive to noise and chaos and he was getting anxious and was 'acting out' with all the hype and noise. [Becoming more reflective; Finding my professional voice; Finding my professional self]. I knew the bus ride was going to be traumatic for him, but they both said \"he will be ok\". It got to the point where as we got on the bus the teacher had to take over from me as he was hiding under seats, holding his head and when they got him up he began yelling \"I hate gymnastics\" which he continued to do the whole way. It had to be the loudest bus ride I have EVER been on. By the time we got to the gym place focus a was quite tense, stressed and continued yelling all the way into the building. He was unable to participate despite the best efforts of the staff. I got a moment with (the teacher) and said to him that should (child 'a') like a break I packed pens and paper in my bag for him, as I know that as a calming tool he likes to write and create word finds [Student agency]. (The teacher) wanted to persevere with (child' a') for a while so I just left him with that message in case he wished to use the tools I brought. No more than 10 minutes later he came and found me and let me know (child a) was in a car outside, buckled in to feel safe and was wondering if I could be with him while he used the pens and paper I brought for him to use. He calmed quite quickly with the quiet, fresh air,

sunshine and writing tools. We talked about what he was feeling and how we might be able to help with a 'relax kit' that he may be able to use on trips when he is feeling distressed or overwhelmed. My teachers really took on board how upsetting the bus was for him and I ended up being with him in the car of [another pupil's] mum where he was quiet, relaxed and happy on the way back to school." [Student agency and active engagement; Finding my professional self; Becoming more reflective; Finding my professional voice: self-authorship].

By the end of story 3, the student is able to predict behaviour based on her clinical knowledge - her awareness of the child's behaviour and the depth of her understanding of the impact of the environment on this, at this point in her placement she is displaying autonomy with making sense of the situation and his behaviour, as well as pre-empting solutions to prevent and or reduce the behavioural outburst.

#### **Learning Story Four from participant pair 1**

[This story is chosen to illustrate dialogue exchange that involves all of the key concepts involved in learning through reflective dialogue on these placements, showing how these contribute to sensemaking around the topic of behavioural management in the classroom. In particular, note how understanding of the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation develops through the dialogue exchange below in both the student's understanding of theory and the application of theory to practice.]

"He thrived off the positive feedback from me and was chuffed I got to contribute to his 'behaviour book' which is sent home daily to keep his family in the loop of his behaviour. He could see I was proud of him and he explained how he is going to show me more 'good choice' behaviour tomorrow"

Supervisor: "use of positive reinforcement to promote the child's participation can be a highly effective strategy for promoting extrinsic motivation; it also provides him with opportunities for success, and to develop his sense of competence and mastery over the tasks, which in turn are likely to promote his intrinsic motivation. Maybe ask <@x> what she's found out about the ARC model as a framework for thinking about motivation from an occupational perspective that could further reinforce your approach." [Theory-practice link; Development of an occupational therapy perspective; Facilitating sensemaking through collaboration].

Student: "I plan on researching and applying my observations to CMOP-E and the 4QM and the ARC framework to form strong baselines so I can start my interventions over the coming week" [Finding my professional voice and self;; Forming a theory-practice link; Developing an Occupational Therapy perspective; Facilitating sensemaking through collaboration; Student agency]

Student: [My objective is to] "enable him to self motivate within his work. I have planted the seed of the intervention with him and he is really keen to try some new ways of helping himself " This statement shows that the student now understands the 'new' concept of intrinsic motivation and is able to apply and describe this in practice. Note the authoritative voice in her dialogue explaining her intervention and revealing the conviction in her plan. [Finding my professional voice and self: self-authorship].

The student goes on to describe and apply the use of positive reinforcement and extrinsic motivation (the reward of a lucky dip and the use of 'smileys') but moreover she conveys how she was able to use the therapeutic use of self to act as a motivator for this child in the following entry:

Student: "I got left in the class with the 5 'challenging' children while the rest of the class went to Te Reo today and I read to them and then each got to lucky dip a brain break and they loved them. I also tried a new tack with one of my boys who has been out all week in the office. He was really disruptive this morning but once I had

engaged him in helping me with one of the tasks for our 'thinking tent' I got to have a chat to him about choices. I asked if he wanted to use his smileys today and said 'not today' but he then said 'I promise I'll make good choices Whaea [x]....I'll even pinky promise\' So I rolled with this and told him that when I saw him beginning to make unhelpful choices I would lift my pinky up as our 'secret code' so he is reminded of his promise and he knows he needs to make a better choice. Worked a treat all day! (must have to say thanks to <@student x> for the inspiration of non-verbal prompting!)” [Becoming more reflective; Facilitating sense making through collaboration; Student agency and active engagement; Finding my professional self].

In the following entry the student reflects on the outcome of her interventions regarding behaviour management, an example of self-authorship [Finding my professional voice; Becoming more reflective; Emotional aspect- pride]

Student: “Today was a busy day but another golden one with my focus chaps. Both of them achieved all of their tokens, and since focus a has had 3 smiley tokens for 2 days in a row, he got to lead the class in the afternoon waiata and chose the animals in the song they sang about. It was such a proud moment to see how pleased he was with himself and his smile was ear to ear. He is well on the way to meeting the planned outcome with the GAS goal and if things keep on track it is looking like he will surpass expectations. I believe I have really done well with encouraging an intrinsic approach with the boys. They are finding pride and a sense of achievement within themselves this week (focus b with his focus on tasks and focus a with his positive behaviour choices) and that pride drives them to keep going. I could not be more happier with them”

We see her clinical focus and application of behaviour management in this intervention below, as she works to reduce external motivators (prompting) and to develop intrinsic motivation (automaticity) during the school child’s writing task:

Student: “We are now strongly focusing on number of prompts during writing. We had a discussion about the prompting and how this is what we need to work on most as he is able to set great goals now but is really reliant on being prompted back to it when he is distracted....its almost like he began using me helping him achieve his goals as a distraction (if that makes sense..) [Finding my professional voice]. I visually wrote the 'prompt limit' on his superhero chart and each time I had to redirect him back to his work (he is VERY EASILY distracted) I would erase one of the numbers on the chart. This worked well!! He managed to stay on task and completed his task without constant redirection\repeating of instruction from myself or the teacher. Hopefully this new tack is going to drive him toward the automaticity I am hoping to achieve\encourage with him before I go in terms of self motivation within his work :slightly\_smiling\_face:.”[Finding my professional voice; Student agency; sensemaking skills and informational sensemaking].

The student reflects on his progress and integrates theory “(Q4)” in her description to articulate the outcome of his behaviour in the following two entries, she shows how she is able to grade the intervention as the child progresses, demonstrating clinical reasoning skills and an Occupational Therapy perspective in practice. [Sensemaking skills and Informational sensemaking; Forming a theory-practice link; Developing an Occupational Therapy perspective; Student agency].

“Taking away the token chart and going with a 'prompt count down' really motivates him and he managed to use alot of aspects of Q4 today! He was so proud of his efforts.”

“Today focus E managed to get through his writing with absolutely no prompting from me or the teacher! He also wrote 5 concepts in the story and equated over a page of great writing :slightly\_smiling\_face: I was proud to see the self initiated priming (Q3) and self instruction (Q4) in his preparations such as moving to the focus zone, getting the wobble cushion and made sure he had all of what he needed so he was not tempted to use the excuse of needing something as a distraction! His use of visual cues such as the count down chart (a whiteboard thing with numbers 1-5 on it) works a treat and he makes sure he has it in view so he can 'remind himself of what needs to happen'...in this case finishing his story on his own without getting distracted from his surroundings.” [Forming a theory-practice link; Developing an occupational therapy perspective; Facilitating sensemaking through collaboration; Student agency and active engagement; Theory-driven sensemaking; Becoming more reflective; Finding my professional voice and self: self-authorship; Developing sensemaking skills]

## Appendix L: The DAViT Member Checking Form

Example of returned forms covering two of the themes from supervisor 1 showing layout of the questionnaire

**Theme: The development of an OT perspective**

The construction of the OT perspective was ...

Facilitated by the co-construction and sense making process through the dialogue as well as the role emerging placement itself

Facilitated by the role emerging placement /practice setting itself

*always*  
Not clear to the student  
*Developed over time*

My personal satisfaction with this issue was

HIGH – The student was able to consolidate the OT perspective in this placement. Developing the OT role was key to learning on this placement. The dialogue facilitated a link to theory and the articulation and justification of the OT role. Working through professional boundary issues appeared to enhance learning. A link to theory is key to forming an OT perspective. Overcoming the role-confusion is key to developing an OT perspective. The dialogue contributed to the development of a professional identity.

~~DEPENDENT-CHANGEABLE~~ – The student was able to articulate the OT role in certain situations more easily than others. The student was able to link theory to the practice context at times. The dialogue assisted with a link to theory. The student found it hard to create or articulate the OT role, but the dialogue assisted with this development. The dialogue was useful to ascertain where the student was at in terms of role-confusion /creation.

LOW – The teacher /teacher aid role appeared to overshadow the OT perspective. The student found it hard to articulate the OT role. OT theory was not well applied to the practice context. ~~Working through professional boundary issues appeared to confuse learning. The dialogue feedback had to explicitly state the OT role to assist the student's focus.~~

Instructions: The above diagram summarises the findings of the study. My sense from the dialogue is that the students needed to construct the OT role and find the OT perspective. Please cross out all words that do not apply, leaving only (and all of) those that most reflect your experience. You are also invited to make comments below and/or include when this was particularly important. This may help me understand and interpret your views more accurately. If you do not feel this affected learning through the dialogue, please state NOT APPLICABLE in the comment section below.

*Typically my satisfaction with this increased over the course of placement as the student's OT perspective developed.*

**Theme: The development of clinical reasoning and reflective practice skills**

Writing reflections and receiving daily feedback...

Documented the student's thinking and practice

Facilitated the student's thinking and practice

The dialog captured what happened. Feedback was not always responded to /actioned accordingly

The dialog feedback allowed the co-construction of ideas, clarified and directed the student's action and helped with her sense making. The dialogue assisted her active participation and observational skills, enabling a deeper level of learning /insight, developing her reasoning and advancing her thinking, and enhancing her awareness of the complexities of the situation.

My experience and satisfaction with the dialogue as a learning tool was

LOW – I found the dialogue too time-consuming. I experienced frustration with the dialogue process. I found the delayed feedback problematic (too late). Students practice was enhanced over time as they gained confidence ~~rather than through the dialogue~~. Students varied in their responsiveness to feedback /suggestions /guidance limiting their learning through this medium (missed learning opportunities)

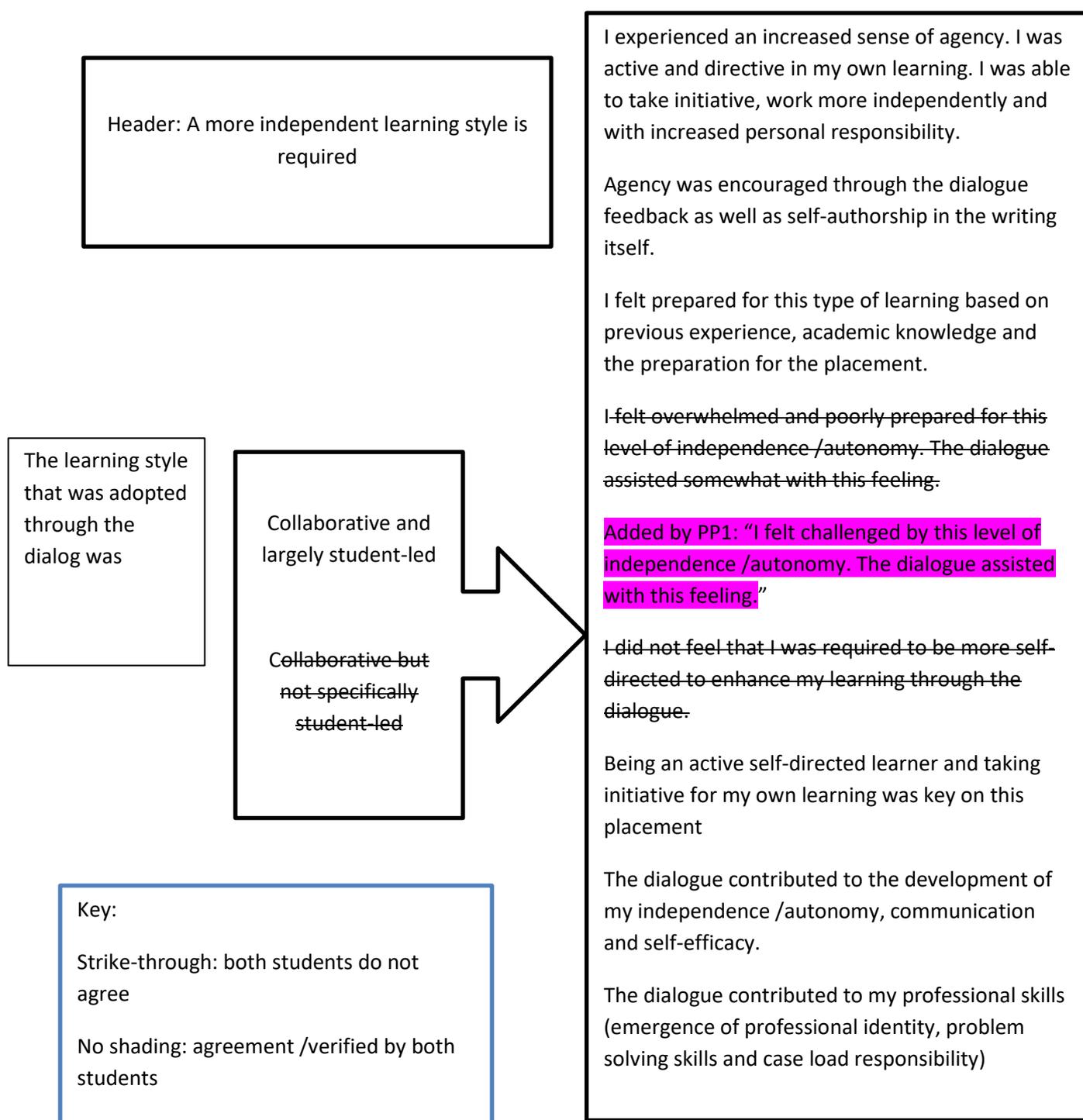
HIGH – This was an effective learning tool, important to the success of this placement, which resulted in and documented:

- Increased self-awareness
- The development of "therapeutic use of self"
- Reflection on action (writing) enhanced reflection in action (doing in practice). I noted improved "in the moment" decisions were documented
- Increased confidence and self-efficacy
- Enabled the student to make sense of and apply theory to the practice situation
- Assisted with safe and clinically sound practice
- Increased problem-solving skills

Instructions: The above diagram summarises the findings of the study. My sense from the dialogue is that the students learn about and justify their practice and the practice context through the use of reflective writing and dialogue. Please use the cross-out function to cross out all words that do not apply, leaving only (and all of) those that most reflect your experience. You are also invited to make comments below and/or include when this was particularly important. This may help me understand and interpret your views more accurately. If you do not feel this affected your learning through the dialogue, please state NOT APPLICABLE in the comment section below.

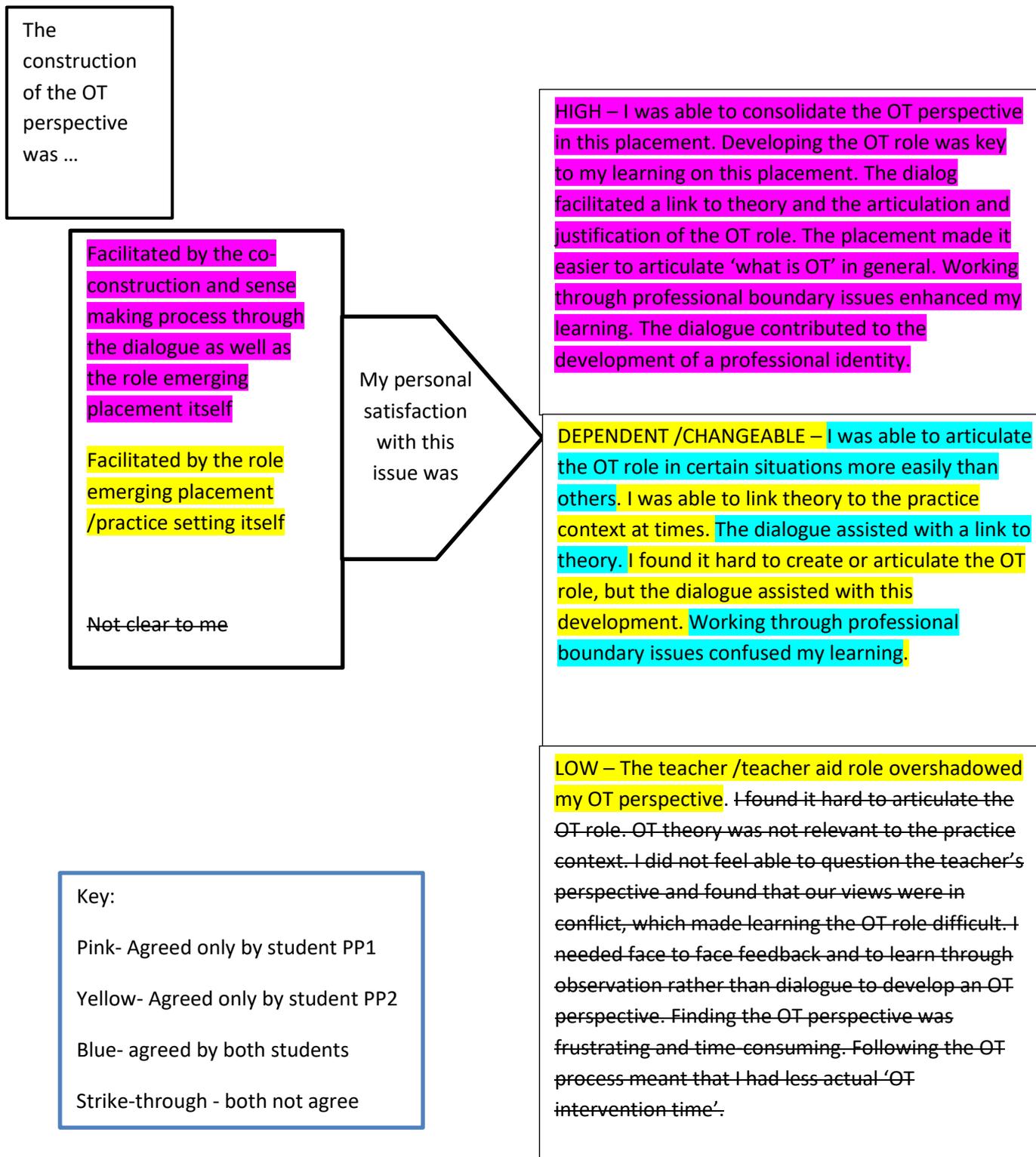
## Appendix M: DAViT Flowchart: Comparison of student responses

### Header a more independent learning style is required



## Appendix N: DAViT Flowchart: Comparison of student responses

### Header the development of an OT perspective



## Appendix O: Member Checking – Verification and re-assessment of themes

### Link from the DAViT provisional headers to final themes

**DAViT D1 Header:** The safety of the learning environment: Emerged into the final research category of personal and professional growth and the theme of emotional openness and support.

Statements verified by students from the DAViT member checking tool: (Quotes from D1 DAViT header). DAViT member checking verified that:

- “A safe climate was facilitated through the dialogue” allowing students to “explore and work through issues” “openly” and this “provided a supportive learning environment (sense of community)”
- “The supervisor provided timely and sensitive feedback through the dialogue”
- “A trusting relationship developed with my supervisor which was facilitated through the dialogue”

**DAViT D2 Header:** A more independent learning style is required to learn through reflective dialogue: relating mainly to the themes in the category *Developing Sensemaking Skills* including:

- Student Agency: active engagement within the dialoguing
- Becoming more reflective

Statements verified by students from the DAViT member checking tool: (Quotes from D2 DAViT header). DAViT member checking verified that:

- “Agency was encouraged through the dialogue feedback as well as self-authorship in the writing itself.”
- “Being an active self-directed learner and taking initiative for my own learning was key on this placement”
- “The dialogue contributed to the development of my independence /autonomy, communication and self-efficacy.”
- “I felt prepared for this type of learning based on previous experience, academic knowledge and the preparation for the placement.”

**DAViT D3 Header:** The development of an OT perspective relates to the category of theory-driven sensemaking involving the two inter-dependent themes:

- The development of an OT perspective
- Forming a theory-practice link

Statements verified by students from the DAViT member checking tool: (Quotes from D3 & D4 DAViT headers). DAViT member checking verified that:

- “The dialogue facilitated a link to theory and the articulation and justification of the OT role” (From header D3 of DAViT)
- “Writing reflections and receiving daily feedback”...” enabled me to make sense of and apply theory to the practice situation” (From header D4 of the DAViT)

**DAViT D4 Header:** The development of clinical reasoning and reflective practice skills: Relating mainly to the category of developing Sensemaking Skills including:

- Becoming more reflective
- Finding my professional voice and self

Statements verified by students from the DAViT member checking tool: (Quotes from D3 & D4 DAViT headers). DAViT member checking verified that:

The reflective dialogue “enhanced reasoning and reflective skills”; “Increased self-awareness”; Enhanced “The development of therapeutic use of self”; “Increased problem solving skills”; “Increased confidence and self efficacy”

“The dialogue feedback allowed the co-construction of ideas, clarified and directed my action and helped with my sense making. The dialogue assisted my active participation and observational skills, enabling a deeper level of learning /insight, developing my reasoning and advancing my thinking, and enhancing my awareness of the complexities of the situation”

“Writing reflections and receiving daily feedback”...” enabled me to make sense of and apply theory to the practice situation”

## *Appendix P: Invitation letter to students*



11/09/2018

Kia ora

As part of our role as educators and members of the occupational therapy research community Rita Robinson, Ema Tokolahi, Hayley Venn (Master's student) and I are conducting research into the experiences of occupational therapy students who have participated in a school based role emerging placement.

The research is open to occupational therapy students who have previously participated in and completed a school based role emerging placement.

We would like to invite you to be a participant in the research. Please read the attached information carefully. If you wish to participate in the research please signed consent form and give it back to Carolyn van Kampen or drop it off in the assignment box.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me by email [Jackie.Herkt@op.ac.nz](mailto:Jackie.Herkt@op.ac.nz) . Once we have your consent we will contact you to set up an interview time.

Kind Regards

Jackie Herkt

## ***Appendix Q: Consent Declaration by Participants***

**Project Title:**

**Exploring the learning experiences of role emerging placements situated in mainstream primary and intermediate schools**

I have read and understood the information sheet. I have had time to think about it and have had any questions I may have had answered

I hereby consent to my documentation (from the shared channels on SLACK and my Fieldwork assessment report) being used as part of this research into the experiences of occupational therapy students and teachers engaging in school based role emerging fieldwork placements.

I understand that:

- My participation in the project is entirely voluntary.
- The data gathered will be used as part of research, publications and conference presentations.
- My responses will remain anonymous with only general demographic information being gathered and that member checking will be conducted to ensure my perspective is accurately captured.
- I will be able to withdraw from the study up until my member checked information is submitted for data analysis.
- The results of this project may be published and that the data will not be linked to any specific participant, school, teacher, supervisor or child.
- Otago Polytechnic will store data related to this project on a password-protected computer for 5 years after which it will be destroyed.
- If I wish I will be sent a copy of the research findings
- I have had the opportunity to ask any questions about the research.

I agree to take part in this research under the conditions set out in the Participant Information Sheet

Participant's name:

Signature:

Date:



## **Appendix R: Participant Information Sheet**

**Project Title:** Exploring the learning experiences of role emerging placements situated in mainstream primary and intermediate schools

### **Background Information**

As part of our role as educators and members of the occupational therapy research community Rita Robinson, Ema Tokolahi, Hayley Venn (Masters students) and myself are conducting research into the experiences of occupational therapy students who have had experience of school based role emerging placements.

### **Who has been asked to be a part of this research?**

The research is open to occupational therapy students who have previously completed a school based role emerging placement.

### **Why is the research being conducted and how will it be used?**

There are two parts to this research: 1) an interview and 2) an analysis of documentation. Firstly, we would like to interview occupational therapy students to gain an understanding of your experiences and perspectives of being on a school based role emerging placement as part of your occupational therapy course. Secondly, we would also like to analyse documentation from the shared channels of the online forum slack and fieldwork assessment reports to further gain an understanding of how occupational therapy students articulate their learning and experiences on school based role emerging placements.

The analysis of the data from this research will inform the development and enhancement of the school based role emerging placements. The research findings could be used to promote occupational therapy in schools and to improve other student placements. Results of this research may be published but any information included will not be linked to you.

### **What would I have to do?**

For the first part of the research you would be involved in a semi structured interview which will be conducted by Jackie Herkt or Linda Robertson via Skype, telephone or in person. The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes, at a mutually agreed time. The questions you will be asked are related to the experiences, outcomes and learning associated with these placements. A list of potential questions will be sent to you before the interview.

For the second part of the research you would not need to do anything as this will just require the research team to review and analyse written documentation that has previously been submitted.

If you provide your consent you can select whether to participate in only one or both parts of the research.

### **How will my confidentiality be protected?**

Confidentiality will be maintained by not identifying demographic nor identity specific information that could identify: yourself as a participant, supervisors, other occupational therapy students, teaching staff, children or school environments. This information will be removed from the transcripts before the data is analysed by the team. Your participation or not in this

research will not be disclosed. If you chose not to engage in the research it will not affect any future opportunities with fieldwork placements or any ongoing professional relationships.

### **Can I change my mind and withdraw from the research?**

You can decline to participate without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time, without giving reasons for your withdrawal. You can refuse to answer any particular question, and ask for the voice recorder to be turned off at any stage.

To ensure your experiences and opinions are accurately articulated we will send the transcript of the interview to you so that you can ensure its accuracy (member checking). You can also make changes at this point to ensure your intention is clearly conveyed. Once this has been returned or confirmed that no changes are required you can still withdraw your data from the study up to the point of data analysis which will occur 1 week following confirmation of the accuracy of the transcript. You are able to withdraw from the documentation analysis up to 2 weeks after giving consent, at which point data analysis will occur.

### **How will the data be stored?**

The data collected will be securely stored in either locked or password protected environments. At the end of the research the data will be retained by Otago Polytechnic in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed. The research team will work with the data that has had identifying demographics and information removed.

### **Do you have ethics approval?**

Ethics approval was gained from Otago Polytechnics Ethics Committee on 3 May 2018. Reference number 767.

### **What if I have any questions?**

If you have any questions about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact Jackie Herkt at [Jackie.Herkt@op.ac.nz](mailto:Jackie.Herkt@op.ac.nz) or ph. 03 4796177.

Your participation in this research is highly valued and will contribute to current occupational therapy knowledge and in turn inform current practice.

Jackie Herkt

## *Appendix S: Copy of ethics approval letter*



3 May 2018

Jackie Herkt, Rita Robinson and Ema Tokolahi  
c/- School of Occupational Therapy  
Otago Polytechnic  
Forth Street  
Dunedin 9016

Dear Jackie, Rita and Ema

### **Re: Application for Ethics Consent**

**Reference Number:** 767

**Application Title:** *Exploring the learning experiences of role-emerging placements situated in mainstream primary and intermediate schools.*

Thank you for your application for ethics approval for this research project. This letter is to confirm approval for the project, following the responses submitted after the first Review Feedback report.

We wish you well with your work and remind you that at the conclusion of your research to send a brief report with findings and/or conclusions to the Ethics Committee.

All correspondence regarding this application should include the reference number assigned to it.

Regards

Dr. Liz Ditzel  
Co-Chair, Otago Polytechnic Research Ethics Committee