

**PEER GROUP SUPERVISION AS AN ADJUNCT TO INDIVIDUAL SUPERVISION:
AN INVESTIGATION OF MODELS OF LEARNING**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

of

RHODES UNIVERSITY

By

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July 2000

ABSTRACT

Supervision of practice makes an important contribution to the development of psychotherapeutic skills in the training of psychologists (Bernard and Goodyear, 1998). Much research has, until recently, focussed on dyadic, hierarchical models of supervision, even though other forms of supervision have been developed. Peer group supervision has had little attention in the literature, although it is a common form of supervision utilised by psychologists in practice (Lewis, Greenburg and Hatch, 1988). A review of the literature considers the purposes of supervision; elements of dyadic supervision; various forms of group, peer and peer group supervision; and the learning process in supervision.

The development and implementation of a peer supervision group (PSG) of intern psychologists within the training setting of a University is described in this study. The PSG model was developed from the model proposed by Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Morris, Betz and Hart (1991). Transcripts from nine audio-taped PSG sessions were analysed, and a comparison with four audio-taped dyadic supervision sessions was then undertaken. Grounded Theory methodology was employed in the design of the study and analysis of the data. The form and content of the two models of supervision were examined, with particular attention to the perspective of the trainees' learning experiences.

The relative merits of both forms of supervision were assessed, and this analysis clearly demonstrates that peer group supervision has the potential to complement dyadic supervision by contributing differing learning experiences. A model of key influences upon, and effects of, participation in the two forms of supervision has been developed. Suggestions are made of ways in which dyadic supervision may be optimised, and recommendations for further development of the PSG emerge.

The results were then considered from a neo-Vygotskian perspective. This enabled the findings to be linked to a comprehensive theory of learning, pointing to the key role of speech in thinking, and the contributions of the various forms of dialogue to deepened understandings. The discussion includes: consideration of techniques which enable trainees to obtain assistance from both more experienced practitioners as well as from their peers; an exploration of aspects of subjectivity and intersubjectivity; and contextual influences which have bearing on the study.

This study identifies the need for further consideration of the supervision process in South Africa, and makes recommendations for the training of supervisors. The neo-Vygotskian model offers great promise both as a framework for understanding the learning process in supervision, and for developing guidelines for enhancing supervisory practice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
APPENDICES	x
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xii

CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION	1
------------------	---------------------	----------

1.1 DEVELOPMENTS IN SUPERVISION	1
---------------------------------	---

1.2 SUPERVISION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT	4
--	---

1.3 MOTIVATIONS FOR ENGAGING IN THIS RESEARCH ENDEAVOUR	7
---	---

1.4 DEFINITIONS	9
-----------------	---

1.4.1 Supervision	9
--------------------------	---

1.4.2 Psychotherapy	12
----------------------------	----

1.4.3 Terminology	13
--------------------------	----

1.5 OVERVIEW OF THESIS STRUCTURE	13
----------------------------------	----

CHAPTER 2	LITERATURE REVIEW	15
------------------	--------------------------	-----------

2.1 THE PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION	16
---	----

2.1.1 Client needs or trainee needs?	18
---	----

2.1.2 Didactic or therapeutic?	19
---------------------------------------	----

2.1.3 Evaluative or supportive?	24
--	----

2.1.4 Resolving the tensions in supervisory purposes and functions	27
---	----

2.2	ELEMENTS OF DYADIC SUPERVISION	30
2.2.1	Models of supervision	31
2.2.2	The Systems Approach to Supervision (SAS)	36
2.2.3	Psychoanalytic understandings of the supervisory relationship	42
2.3	GROUP SUPERVISION	45
2.3.1	Definition	47
2.3.2	Forms of group supervision	48
2.3.2.1	Role of the supervisor	49
2.3.2.2	Group membership and participants' roles	51
2.3.2.3	Focus of the group	54
2.3.2.4	Conclusion	58
2.3.3	Structured group supervision	58
2.3.3.1	Structured Peer Group Supervision	59
2.3.3.2	Structured Group Supervision	61
2.3.4	Advantages of group supervision	64
2.3.4.1	Trainee experiences	65
2.3.4.2	Modified role of the supervisor	65
2.3.4.3	Widening the range of possible tasks	66
2.3.4.4	Promotion of the learning process	67
2.3.4.5	Increased exposure to interactive processes	68
2.3.5	Disadvantages of group supervision	68
2.3.5.1	Individual difficulties	68
2.3.5.2	Task-related difficulties	69
2.3.5.3	Group-related difficulties	69
2.4	PEER SUPERVISION	70
2.4.1	Support for peer supervision	72
2.4.2	Models for peer supervision	73
2.4.3	Critiques of peer supervision	76
2.5	PEER GROUP SUPERVISION	77

2.5.1 Group membership	81
2.5.2 Group organization	82
2.5.3 Group structure	83
2.5.4 Group focus	83
2.5.5 Conclusions regarding the efficacy of peer supervision groups	84
2.6 KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR PEER AND PEER GROUP SUPERVISION	85
2.7 SUPERVISION AND THE LEARNING PROCESS	86
2.7.1 The 'transmission' model of learning	87
2.7.2 Psychodynamic contributions	88
2.7.3 Inclusion of elements of adult education	89
2.7.4 Contributions from Behaviourism and Social Learning Theory	90
2.7.5 An integrative approach	91
2.4.6 Contributions from cognitive psychology	92
2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY	95
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	97
3.1 RESEARCH DECISIONS	98
3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	102
3.3 GENERATING THE DATA	103
3.3.1 Entering the field	104
3.3.2 Introduction to the peer supervision group (PSG)	106
3.3.3 Additional recording of individual supervision sessions	107
3.3.4 Transcriptions of PSG's and ISV's	107
3.3.5 Focus group discussion	108
3.3.6 Individual interviews	109

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS	110
3.5 GENERAL METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE STUDY	113
3.5.1 Confidentiality	113
3.5.2 Negotiating entry into supervisory contexts	114
3.5.3 Time period	114
3.5.4 Verification of data	115
CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS	118
4.1 THE CONTEXTS OF THE STUDY	119
4.1.1 The broader and institutional contexts	120
4.1.2 Group composition and participants' previous educational and work experiences	124
4.1.3 Nature of casework presented	125
4.1.4 Relevant institutional and professional issues	126
4.2 OUTLINE OF SOURCES AND TYPES OF DATA FOR ANALYSIS	127
4.3 STEP ONE: TRAINEES' REFLECTIONS ON THE LEARNING PROCESS IN SUPERVISION PRIOR TO ENGAGING IN THE PSG	129
4.3.1 Desired form of supervision	130
4.3.2 Role and contributions of supervisor	130
4.3.3 Changes in perception of supervision	131
4.3.4 Supervisors' perceptions	132
4.4 STEP TWO: DESCRIPTION OF THE UNFOLDING PSG PROCESS	132
4.4.1 Phase one of PSG: Case presentation	133
4.4.2 Phase one of PSG: Request for assistance (RFA) statements	135
4.4.2.1 RFA category (i)	137
4.4.2.2 RFA category (ii)	139
4.4.2.3 RFA category (iii)	139
4.4.3 Phase two of PSG: Questioning period and identification of focus	140

4.4.4 Phase three of PSG: Feedback statements and discussion	143
4.4.4.1 Process of discussion	144
4.4.4.2 Content of discussion	144
4.4.4.3 Benefits of presenter listening without participating	145
4.4.4.4 Participation of individuals in the discussion	146
4.4.4.5 Facilitation in phase three	148
4.4.4.6 Possible misconceptions arising in discussion	149
4.4.5 Phase four of PSG: Presenter's response	149
4.4.5.1 Content of phase four	150
4.4.5.2 Quality of peers' support	151
4.4.6 Overall evaluation of PSG by participants	151
4.4.6.1 Participation	151
4.4.6.2 Structure of the PSG	152
4.4.6.3 Peer support	153
4.4.6.4 Presentation and discussion conventions	154
4.4.6.5 Equal status in the PSG	155
4.4.6.6 Other aspects of PSG	156
4.5 STEP THREE: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF 4 CASES OF PSG AND ISV	158
4.5.1 Structuring	162
4.5.2 Presentations	163
4.5.3 Purpose	164
4.5.4 Questioning	165
4.5.5 Strategies and suggestions	166
4.5.6 Interactions	198
4.5.7 Facilitation of the process	172
4.5.8 Response to supervision	174
4.6 STEP FOUR: FACILITATING LEARNING PROCESSES IN SUPERVISION	178
4.7 STEP FIVE: BUILDING GROUNDED THEORY	180
4.7.1 Learning through languaging	180

4.7.2 Learning as transmitting information or as constructing meanings	181
4.7.3 Moving from supervisor authority to intern autonomy	183
4.7.4 Oscillating between support and challenge	184
4.7.5 Making the implicit more explicit	184
4.7.6 Shifting between the interpersonal and the intrapersonal	186
4.8 STEP SIX: MODEL AND ACCOUNT OF INTERNS' SUPERVISORY EXPERIENCES	186
4.9 COMMENTS ON REPORTING THE FINDINGS	190
CHAPTER FIVE	DISCUSSION
	191
5.1 CENTRAL THEMES FROM VYGOTSKY'S WRITINGS	193
5.2 SPEAKING AND THINKING, THINKING AND SPEAKING	196
5.2.1 External and inner speech	196
5.2.2 Spontaneous and schooled concepts	200
5.2.3 Internalisation of speech	203
5.2.4 The dialogical nature of speech	205
5.3 THE ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT	212
5.3.1 Means of providing assistance	216
5.3.2 Collaboration	223
5.4 THE SUBJECTIVE NATURE OF LEARNING	226
5.5 INTERSUBJECTIVITY	232
5.6 CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES	238
5.6.1 Schooling and labour	240
5.6.2. The education system	243
5.6.3 Professional training	246
5.6.4 Multicultural context	248

5.7 CONCLUDING COMMENTS	249
CHAPTER 6	CONCLUSION
	251
6.1 REFLECTIONS ON THE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY	252
6.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	259
6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	261
6.4 FINAL COMMENT	263
REFERENCES	264
APPENDICES	280
APPENDIX A: Summary of PSG agreement	280
APPENDIX B: Structured Group Supervision	281
APPENDIX C: Letter to interns	282
APPENDIX D: Tables of 9 PSG cases	284
APPENDIX E: Comparative summaries	296
APPENDIX F: Reading Guide	315
APPENDIX G: Comparative analysis	316
APPENDIX H: Focus group discussion	329
APPENDIX I: Linking form and content of learning	339

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Primary foci of supervision	28
Table 2.2 Summary of studies of peer group supervision	80
Table 3.1 Outline of the research process	104
Table 3.2 Categories of activities in discussion groups	113
Table 4.1 Age of participants	124
Table 4.2 Previous work experience	125
Table 4.3 Referral problems in casework	125
Table 4.4 Outline of the research process	128
Table 4.5 Length of case presentation	133
Table 4.6 Number of questions asked in phase two	140
Table 4.7 Number of utterances in discussion phase	143
Table 4.8 Length of presenter's response phase (number of words)	150
Table 4.9 Relative contributions and limitations of PSG and ISV	176
Table 4.10 Strategies which facilitate learning for trainees	179
Table 5.1 Means of assisting performance	217

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 The six modes of supervision	34
Figure 2.2 The Systems Approach to Supervision	38
Figure 2.3 Continuum of forms of group supervision	48
Figure 4.1 Diagrammatic representation of the contexts of the study	119
Figure 4.2 Question types in each PSG	141
Figure 4.3 Graphs of the pairwise analysis of four matching PSG-ISV sessions	160
Figure 4.4 Proposed model of features of the interns' experiences as learners	187

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of people have given generously of their time and expertise in order to assist me in this endeavour. I would particularly like to thank:

- Dr. Kevin Kelly, my supervisor, for seeing the potential in my ideas, for providing sound critique, and reassurance in good measure;
- Dr. Rose Schoeman, for her ongoing support and enthusiasm for this project;
- Prof. Clive Basson and Prof. Harvey Adams for their roles in providing the impetus for this study;
- The interns of 1998, for their commitment and motivation in participating in the study;
- The supervisors who were courageous enough to allow me to record their work;
- Jane Flockhart, for her assistance with the final document and printing;
- The University of Natal for their generous financial support for this study through both the University Research Fund and the staff development programme;
- Especially, my husband John, who believed in me from the start, made valuable contributions to the study through our innumerable discussions, and persevered with me through the long hours of work. I dedicate this work to you, John.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 DEVELOPMENTS IN SUPERVISION

Supervision is recognised as a key element in the development of psychotherapeutic skills (Friedman, 1988), and has been widely researched in the United States of America (henceforth USA) and Britain (henceforth UK) (Robiner and Schofield, 1990). Supervisory practice, as an important part of training, evolved along with the psychotherapeutic discipline to which it was allied, and Hess (1980a) noted that due to its location within particular 'schools' of therapy, by that late stage, no "specified focus or set of theories regarding psychotherapy supervision" (p.525) had emerged. Furthermore, supervision was "somewhat abstract, amorphous, and undefined..." (p.525).

During the 1980's a number of models for supervision were proposed, and much attention was given to commonalities in the body of knowledge which existed in professions employing supervision of psychotherapeutic practice (e.g. social work, psychology, counselling, psychiatry). This resulted in an acknowledgement that there are many overlaps in the practice of supervision, and in a shift towards considering supervision as a "discipline in its own right" (Inskipp, 1996, p.268).

Historically, models of supervision in mental health services have relied on a type of apprenticeship training model where one-to-one or dyadic supervision is undertaken by a more experienced professional (Hardcastle, 1991). Much research in the USA has focussed on the dyadic supervision of trainees, "exploring different needs of supervisees as they develop" (Inskipp, 1996, p.274), and developmental models have been proposed. The research has tended to be circumscribed in scope, with the perspective of the supervisor being highlighted, and Martinez and Holloway (1997) note criticisms of models for the "lack of attention to the relation between interpersonal dynamics of the supervisor and supervisee" (p.328).

Research into supervision has often been atheoretical in nature, with limited references to other relevant psychological theories (such as learning theories). The integration of findings across studies has been made difficult by the varied methods and groups employed. Furthermore, uncritical acceptance by mental health professionals of supervision as a 'given' has been an inhibitory factor. Perlmutter (in Hardcastle, 1991) has criticised one-to-one supervision on the grounds that rather than developing professionalism, it "encouraged and perpetuated dependence..." (p. 65), and Hardcastle (1991) argues for the implementation of, and research into, alternative models to 'high intensity supervision'.

In the training of psychotherapists, it is common practice to find combinations of one-to-one supervision and various forms of group supervision. The presence of a more experienced supervisor seems to be a requirement in such group supervision. Most group supervision within training programmes is based on the presence of a supervisor who supervises trainees "one at a time, in the context of a group meeting" (Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Morris, Betz, and Hart, 1991) to optimise the use of the time of the 'expert'. The value of group supervision is that it provides the potential for peers to support each other and opportunities for co-operative learning. However, these potentials may not be realised in situations where group members observe passively, without becoming involved in the process.

Holloway and Johnston (1985) reviewed the literature on group supervision up to that point in time, and noted that there seemed to be a "rudimentary level of explaining and understanding group supervision" (p.338). They state that without exploratory studies and a systematic effort to develop models of group supervision, it will "remain a weak link in our training programs, widely practiced and poorly justified" (p.339). A decade later, Inskipp (1996) noted that there was still little theory related to group supervision, and that it has "often been seen just as individual supervision done in a group" (p.278).

In the supervision literature an increasing number of studies have recommended peer supervision (without the presence of an 'expert') as an adjunct to one-to-one supervision (Benshoff & Paisley, 1996; Borders, 1991). Benshoff (1993) defines peer supervision as "... a process through which counselors ... assist each other to become more effective and skillful helpers by using their

relationships and professional skills" (p.90). A survey undertaken in the USA indicates peer supervision as a modality used quite widely by psychologists in practice (Lewis, Greenburg & Hatch, 1988). However, the use of peer supervision in training in psychotherapy seems to be more limited and it appears that the presence of a supervisor is seen as necessary, even if the focus of group supervision changes to that of input from peers.

Hardcastle (1991) provides an argument, from the broader field of worker motivation, for consideration of supervisory models which "are less authority-oriented and which emphasize team, peer and self-leadership" (p.65). Bernard and Goodyear (1998) note further that "peer supervision seems to be a growing phenomenon and an important ingredient to the vitality of the mental health professions" (p.127), and then go on to describe peer group supervision. They conclude by saying "we would be well advised to give this vital form of supervision more empirical attention at the same time that we develop and test group supervision models" (p.129).

An acknowledgement of the demands related to the traditional model of supervision, where an experienced practitioner passes on skills and competences to the trainee, may be seen in the recent recognition that training in supervisory skills is necessary. Previously, there seemed to be an implicit assumption "that if a person has become an effective therapist, that person will also be an effective supervisor" (Russell, Crimmings and Lent, 1984, p.625). There has been a growing recognition that therapy and supervision differ in fundamental ways, and that the practice of supervision requires different skills from those used in psychotherapy. This has led to the realisation that whilst learning from one's own experience of supervision may be one contributor to developing supervisory skills, experiential and other training in supervision is also necessary to enhance supervisory practice.

The requirement that supervisors be trained is becoming more common, especially in the field of counselling in the UK, with the British Association for Counselling (BAC) prescribing requirements regarding training of supervisors (Dryden, 1991); and in the USA where models for training of supervisors are being developed (Taub, Porter and Frisch, 1988). As licensing, registration and certification become more important, and especially as accountability of service providers and the rights of consumers become the focus of greater attention, training in

supervision needs to be considered. It is possible that earlier approaches to supervision were being based on the “questionable belief that if one can do it, one can also teach it” (Taub *et al.*, 1988).

In this first section, certain of the themes to be developed in this dissertation have been identified. Internationally, research into supervision has increased greatly in volume over the past two decades. Whilst there has been extensive consideration of dyadic models of supervision, the investigation of group and peer supervision has been more limited. Group supervision is widely practised in training settings and peer supervision is often utilised by practitioners, but both forms are not firmly based on models linked to psychological theory. A number of commentators in the field of supervision have identified the need for forms of group, peer and peer group supervision to be studied in more detail, since such forms provide potentially different learning experiences for trainees and practitioners. From a practice perspective, the issue of training of supervisors has also been identified as needing further attention.

1.2 SUPERVISION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

At the present time in South Africa, an active process of consultation and the examination of policy proposals with regard to the "Roles, licencing / registration, training and education within the professional field of psychology" is under way (Veldsman, van der Westhuysen and Lindegger, 1997). Questions are being asked about the training of psychologists, and proposals for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) have been made. These are timeous, since there has been little research into the training of psychologists, and more specifically training of psychotherapists, in South Africa. Only two South African dissertations which examine the training and supervision of psychologists could be located (Snyders, 1985; Gower, 1989), and Snyders (1985) wrote that it was critical that opportunities for post-basic training and continuing education of psychotherapists be provided.

Supervision remains a mandatory part of training in the new proposals, but there has been no explicit mention of examination of the practice of supervision in the policy discussions. It seems as if supervision as an endeavour remains unquestioned, and no mention is made in the documents of the need for the training of supervisors. Following the trends in the USA, it is

possible that increasing concerns about accountability may drive the need to examine supervisory practice in the near future.

In contrast to the education and training requirements prescribed for qualification as a psychologist in South Africa, there are no specified requirements for a qualification in supervision, other than the requirement that any supervising psychologist be registered for a period of three years and have appropriate training and/or relevant experience, or have a doctoral qualification. There is no detail in the documents of the professional board which clarifies what 'appropriate training' might signify. Although initiatives for training in supervision, linked to a small number of universities, by which psychologists may be credited with CPD points, are in the planning stages, there is no national agreement in the profession regarding the content and extent of training necessary for competency as a supervisor.

Supervision may thus be undertaken with little critical reflection and evaluation of its efficacy. The fact that many psychologists supervise without formal training contributes to this. Commenting on this in the context of clinical psychology in the USA, Bernard and Goodyear (1992) note that though many supervisors lack training, "they are *doing* supervision - typically believing they are pretty good at it", and continue that since "they have learned it without formal preparation, then their ... trainees can as easily do so" (p.3). If these are the reasons for supervisory practice not being critically considered, the need for questions to be asked and research to be undertaken becomes important. Lindblad - Goldberg (in Haber, 1996) notes that although supervision is seen as a central activity for many mental health professionals, "many supervisors do not have a clear perspective of the essential issues, processes, and methods" (p.vii).

One of the results of the lack of training in supervisory practice in South Africa could be that "supervision becomes subject to the theoretical style of the practitioner rather than advancing through an integrated and widely accepted methodology" (Laveman, 1994, p.76). The predominating theories in South African training tend to be cognitive-behavioural or humanistic, and trainees are not required to engage in their own therapy during training (Ivey, 1992). This leads to potential problems in psychotherapeutic practice. Ivey (1992) asserts that "South African therapists are particularly predisposed to countertransference pathology owing to the particular

supervisory orientations employed at our training institutions" (p.31). Furthermore, Ivey (1992) identifies the lack of a culture of ongoing supervision amongst practising psychotherapists as inhibiting the development of psychotherapeutic skills. Such concerns highlight the need for the examination of supervisory practice.

In informal discussions and at a workshop on supervision (July 1993, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg), there have been expressions of dissatisfaction with the practice of supervision. Criticisms highlight the diversity of practice amongst supervisors, the lack of reflection on practice, and the tensions experienced due to conflicting role demands - where an evaluative approach inhibits a focus on support of the trainee. Supervisors participating in the workshop expressed the need for greater examination of supervisory practice, and acknowledged that although "there is an overlap between therapy and supervision abilities, differences in roles, goals and skills are recognized..." (Taub, *et al.*, 1988, p.76).

To summarise the above then, there is likely to be great variation in supervisory practice and styles in South Africa, and many who supervise have probably had little exposure to the literature and models of supervision which have developed over the past twenty years. The absence of open discussion or documentation in this regard, in the deliberations of the professional board, would seem to indicate that a more unified approach to the discipline of supervision and to a credentialing process for supervisors is likely to be a topic for the future. In this regard, it would seem that the profession in South Africa is lagging behind developments in the UK and USA.

There seems to be a pressing need for supervisory practice to be examined in South Africa, and the words of Russell *et al.* (1984) have relevance here: "In the light of the emphasis on supervised training, it is surprising that relatively little systematic examination of the theoretical and applied underpinnings of supervision is offered to graduate students" (p.625). Since professional training structures in South Africa are in a process of evolution towards doctoral level qualifications, and the contents of training courses are being re-evaluated, it would seem that a debate regarding the supervision of trainees needs to be initiated.

1.3 MOTIVATIONS FOR ENGAGING IN THIS RESEARCH ENDEAVOUR

In this section, I identify the factors which contributed to my decision to engage in the research to be described in this dissertation. The first contributory factor relates to the needs of trainee psychologists. A certain proportion of my day-to-day work relates to supervision and consultation with trainee psychologists in the context of a child guidance clinic attached to a university academic department. A number of the trainees are in their final, internship year, and often seek additional supervision due to increasing caseloads during the year. Interns also often report feeling stressed by the nature of the adaptation to therapeutic work during the year. Ronnestad and Skovolt (1993) note the stresses of adjustment for interns, such as the need to shift from being students to working at a more advanced level, where there are pronounced differences in concerns and in the complexity of the work.

Research has shown that interns have specific supervisory needs (Skovolt & Ronnestad, 1992a), and the stressful nature of the internship year is well documented in the literature (e.g. Kingsley, 1985). Furthermore, according to Worthington (1987), as therapists gain experience there is the need to encourage increasing independence. To facilitate this, support and encouragement have been shown to be especially useful in internship programmes, and a peer-group approach could make a contribution to both providing support and encouraging greater autonomy.

One of my particular concerns has been with the problems trainees experience in adjusting to psychotherapeutic work. The transition from hearing about and learning about psychotherapy in an academic setting, to engaging in work with real clients, is challenging, and has been reported in the literature (Kingsley, 1985; Solway, 1985). The therapist's own personality, style and skills become important issues in the therapeutic engagement, and need to be examined. Weiner and Kaplan (1980) note that "learning to be a technician and a real person at the same time is an almost universal difficulty for beginning therapists" (p.41). They go on to elaborate on three adjustment issues with which the beginner therapist will need to grapple:

- (a) learning to integrate treatment techniques with personal authenticity, (b) learning to recognize the boundaries of psychotherapy and of themselves as effective agents of behavior change, and (c) learning to achieve an appropriate sense of professional identity and responsibility (p.41).

An additional adjustment required of interns relates to the process of being supervised by a number of different supervisors, in different settings. Barnat (1980) identifies a number of issues which impact on trainees' experiences of supervision, and notes that the literature on supervising is plentiful, but that there is less "available on the process of being supervised" (p.51).

The second contributory factor to this research endeavour is my experience of a form of group supervision. For a number of years, I have worked with the 'Supervision Case Study' approach to peer group supervision, introduced in our province, KwaZulu Natal (KZN), by Shaver (1994), for use by church ministers engaged in pastoral work. This model follows a particular format in which a presenter focusses on a specific therapeutic issue in a brief case presentation, and once some of the details have been clarified by the group, the presenter becomes a silent observer of the peer group engaged in discussion of the issues presented. A group facilitator manages the group process. The roles of presenter and facilitator rotate from one meeting to the next, and the model is not dependent on an 'expert' being present. In my experience of working with the model, as the facilitator of a group of clergy which meets regularly, I have noted its potential to enable participants to develop insight into practice, and the way in which group members have found the experience to be both supportive and informative. I have felt a growing conviction that this model might offer benefits within a training setting and have also wondered about its value for ongoing post-training supervision for psychologists.

A further motivation for undertaking this research was my reading the account of the research undertaken by Skovolt and Ronnestad (1992b), in which they explore the developmental stages and themes described by therapists and counsellors, leading to an evolving professional identity. I found the methodology employed in the study appealing, since it was based on an extensive qualitative approach and on philosophical principles with which I identified. The findings of the study emphasised the process of ongoing professional development over the course of psychologists' careers, and described the valuable role that supervision can play in enhancing this development. Since I have concerns about psychologists' ongoing professional development, and have experienced the value of post-training supervision, I became interested in exploring peer group supervision as a contributor to this development.

I thus became convinced that an investigation into supervisory experiences of intern psychologists in a South African setting was necessary, and believed that an exploration of an additional form of supervision, which might provide additional opportunities for support and the development of skills as trainees grapple with the nature of psychotherapeutic work, would be beneficial. There appears to be the need to work towards the development of a model suited to the particular requirements and needs of interns in a South African setting. Also, since the deliberations regarding CPD, within the profession in South Africa, are ongoing, and the suggestions for practitioners include supervision as a means of gaining CPD points, I hope that this study will make a contribution to the debate.

The focus of the proposed study is therefore the area of peer-group supervision without the presence of an 'expert', used as an adjunct to one-to-one supervision in a training programme for intern psychologists. The model to be investigated is used in a training programme with a particular emphasis on the development of psychotherapeutic skills.

1.4 DEFINITIONS

1.4.1 Supervision

The word supervision is derived from the Latin words, *super* (over) *videre* (to see), and in a narrow sense means “to direct and inspect performance” (Martin, 1983). The term implies that “an experienced person (supervisor) with appropriate training and experience supervises a subordinate (supervisee)” (Bradley, 1989).

Such a definition of supervision is applicable to a diverse range of professions including mental health disciplines, business, industry and administration. Within such a definition, a power differential exists between participants, and there is also an implied evaluative component. This definition is, however, limited when applied to the complexities of psychotherapy supervision, and does not “encompass the multiple roles, disciplines, and settings associated with supervision” (Bernard and Goodyear, 1992, p.4). It is thus necessary to be more specific in defining the supervision of psychotherapeutic work.

Lambert and Arnold (1987) note the complexity of conditions subsumed by 'supervision', and denote it as: "that part of the overall training of mental health professionals that deals with modifying their actual in-therapy behaviors" (p.217). Such a definition highlights supervision as a part of training, and has a particular focus on supervisee behaviours. I would however challenge the limitation of this definition to the context of training, since supervision in many settings continues beyond the training phase, and training implies a more limited focus on specific skills (Bernard and Goodyear, 1992). Also the term 'in-therapy' behaviours may be seen as too exclusive, since conceptualising and expanding knowledge extends beyond the therapy room.

Hart (1982) provides a definition which draws attention to an education which is broader than initial training, focussing on the teaching of competencies through the examination of the trainee's work, but also specifies the acquisition of a professional role: thus, supervision is "an ongoing educational process in which one person in the role of supervisor helps another person in the role of supervisee acquire appropriate professional behavior through an examination of the supervisee's professional activities" (p. 12). This definition provides for the supervision of not only psychotherapy, but also includes other psychological services; however, the specification of an educational focus could be seen to exclude other supervisory functions and does not refer to the supervisory relationship.

By contrast, in the context of psychological counselling and therapy, Loganbill, Hardy and Delworth (1982) define supervision as: "an intensive, interpersonally focused, one-to-one relationship in which one person is designated to facilitate the development of therapeutic competence in the other person" (p. 4). Such a definition is more narrowly focussed on therapeutic competence, and highlights the contribution of the supervisory relationship to the process; it also re-phrases the educative aspect in the term 'facilitate', which would seem to be less of a 'top-down' approach than that implied by the definitions above.

Much supervisory practice has been dyadic in form: that is, one-to-one or individual supervision of a trainee. This is reflected in the definitions provided thus far - they relate directly to dyadic supervision, and are not therefore inclusive of other forms of supervision. There has been growing use of group supervision, in which peers participate, in training programmes (Holloway, 1992); and for practitioners who have qualified, peer supervision in various forms is growing in

popularity (Lewis, Greenburg and Hatch, 1988). Some authors have questioned whether supervision in which peers contribute should be called 'super'vision, and the terms 'intervision' 'peervision' and 'covision' have been proposed. However, Worthington (1984) did not find any evidence showing that more experienced supervisors provided better supervision than those less experienced, and recent developments in educational theory propose that it is possible to learn as effectively from peers as from authority figures (Tudge, 1990).

Bernard and Goodyear (1998) note that some authors prefer the term 'peer consultation' to 'peer supervision'. They acknowledge that peer supervision is neither hierarchical nor evaluative, essential aspects of some definitions of supervision. However, they feel that the term 'consultation' does not imply an ongoing interaction, nor does it imply accountability, thus it is also not a satisfactory term. Because I believe that peers can make as effective contributions as more experienced practitioners, and since peer supervision is ongoing, "and group members feel more accountable to each other" (Bernard and Goodyear, 1998, p.127), I have retained the term supervision for both forms of practice to be examined in this dissertation.

It must also be noted that supervision occurs in the context of collegial relationships between members of a profession (whether they are senior in experience or not), and in an era in which mutual respect is being promoted, and in which the need for lifelong learning is acknowledged, a more cooperative notion of supervision needs to be proposed. Cowie and Sharp (1996) thus denote supervision as collaborative reflection by a person upon aspects of his or her work in order to continue a learning process in which she or he is engaged.

Consideration of the above definitions highlights the following aspects which need to be included in a definition of the term 'supervision': a learning process within a professional milieu; the context of a facilitative collegial relationship (with either one supervisor, or within a group); a focus on therapeutic work in order to develop therapeutic competencies to better serve clients' needs. I therefore propose the following working definition of supervision for the purposes of this study:

A learning process within the context of (a) collegial relationship(s) in which a person reflects collaboratively upon different aspects of her or his therapeutic work with clients, in order to facilitate the ongoing development of professional competencies.

1.4.2 Psychotherapy

The participants in this study were in their final year of training as psychologists (in the categories of counselling and educational psychology). One of the focal points of this final year is the development of skills in psychotherapy or counselling. I have chosen to use 'psychotherapists' rather than psychologists in the title of this study because a substantial proportion of the content of supervision relates to psychotherapeutic work, and there are commonalities in this work, whether it is undertaken by clinical, counselling or educational psychologists. I have therefore used this generic term in order to be inclusive of the different categories of trainee.

It may be argued that the term 'counsellors' might be preferable, since some of the work subsumed under the term psychotherapy is more strictly counselling work. I decided against the use of counselling and counsellor, to avoid confusion with the current debate in South Africa around who should be qualified to counsel; and to denote the more advanced level of training of the trainees in this study, as compared to the proposals for the training of counsellors in this country.

The use of 'psychotherapists' follows the lead of Moursund (1993), who asserts that although there might be differences between counselling and psychotherapy, the dividing line between the two is blurred, and there are many commonalities in the work. Furthermore, Hansen, Stevic and Warner (1982) assert that counselling and psychotherapy exist on a continuum, with differences related to focus of the interaction rather than to the basic skills employed or the theory which informs practice.

'Psychotherapy' is thus used to describe the work undertaken by the intern psychologists in which the focus is on assisting a person or persons with a personal or social problem for which they have sought help. This work relies on the therapist creating and working within a relationship with a client "in a way that focuses on the other person and his needs" (Moursund, 1993, p.2).

1.4.3 Terminology

One of the conventions employed is the preferred use of the words 'trainee', rather than the more clumsy 'supervisee', and 'intern', to signify the particular trainees who participated in this study.

Since there are no unisex pronouns in the English language, in order to be inclusive, I have chosen to alternate the use of he and she, her and his, through the text, rather than to use the notation 'he/she' or 'his/her'.

1.5 OVERVIEW OF THESIS STRUCTURE

Chapter 2 consists of a review of selected themes from the supervision literature. The purposes and functions of supervision are first considered since these form the basis of the discipline. Since dyadic supervision has attracted the most attention in the literature, key elements of dyadic supervision, including some models of supervision and the supervisory relationship, are then outlined. Various forms of group supervision are then described, since peer group supervision derives from these; and the structure and functioning of groups, as well as their advantages and disadvantages are considered. A review of studies of peer and peer group supervision is then undertaken, providing support for the study to be described in this dissertation. Finally, references to various models of learning in the supervision literature are considered, in order to provide a base for the discussion in Chapter 5.

Chapter 3 outlines the research decisions, particularly with regard to the choice of Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1992; Strauss and Corbin, 1990), and describes the principles which guided the methods used. The unfolding research process and emergent research questions are described. Then, the methodology employed in data generation and analysis are introduced, in order to provide a basis for the data presented in Chapter 4, where the stepwise process of the unfolding research is explained in detail.

In Chapter 4, relevant contextual details are foregrounded before the presentation of descriptive and more analytic data. The iterative process of data collection and analysis resulted in findings related to the Peer Supervision Group (PSG) process first, followed by a comparison of PSG to

Individual Supervision (ISV), leading on to a table listing the merits and demerits of both forms of supervision. Further analysis of the data, including that which emerged from a focus group discussion and three individual interviews with participants, led to the development of a list of facilitative learning strategies evident in the two forms of supervision. These were then analysed in order to identify six processes which seem to play an influential role in successful supervision. Finally, following a Grounded Hermeneutic approach (Addison, 1992), a model which focuses on the interns' experiences of supervision is presented and described.

In Chapter 5, the findings are viewed from a neo-Vygotskian perspective. The discussion specifically focusses on the role of language as a mediator of supervisory interactions, and highlights the interrelatedness of speaking and thinking. The means by which educators provide assistance are illustrated by reference to specific supervisory phenomena, and the subjective nature of learning and role of intersubjectivity are then highlighted. Finally, the findings are located within the contexts of the educational, work and professional milieus which play crucial roles in influencing the learning process.

Chapter 6 summarises the important themes developed in this thesis and considers the implications of these for supervisory practice in South Africa. The limitations of this study are acknowledged and suggestions are made for further research in the field.

Finally, it must be noted that this thesis is not based on an *a priori* approach which constructs hypotheses and designs the research in response to these. Whilst the thesis has been written following the standard layout conventions, every part of it evolved through the research process. Following the conventions of Grounded Theory, after a brief literature review, the PSG model was implemented. After the data had been collected, the findings were analysed, and following extensive reflection and presentations of the findings to my peers, I engaged in the more extensive literature review found in the thesis. I then considered the findings in the light of the work of Vygotsky (1962, 1978) and the associated writings of Wertsch (1985a, 1985b, 1991) in order to write the discussion. Thus the study did not proceed in a linear way, but proceeded organically. In the words of Strauss and Corbin (1990), the “data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant is allowed to emerge”(p.23).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature in the field of supervision is extensive. There has been an exponential increase in the number of publications on the subject in the past thirty years (from 1730 publications cited by PsychLIT prior to 1971, to 6157 publications by October 1999). There are a number of comprehensive books describing approaches, models and aspects of supervision (e.g. Bernard and Goodyear, 1992; Bradley, 1989; Caligor, Bromberg and Meltzer, 1984; Feltham and Dryden, 1994; Hart, 1982; Hawkins and Shohet, 1989; Hess, 1980; Holloway, 1995; Kadushin, 1992; Page and Wosket, 1995; Shipton, 1997). It is therefore neither necessary nor possible to write an exhaustive literature review of the field, and I have therefore chosen a thematic approach to the chapter (McLeod, 1994), informed by the topic of this dissertation, *viz.* peer group supervision and the interactive aspects of dyadic supervision, and references in the supervision literature to the learning process.

Robiner and Schofield (1990), following a review of the literature, published a bibliography listing references to supervision in the fields of clinical and counselling psychology. It would seem as if research in the field of supervision has tended to focus on circumscribed dimensions of the endeavour. Robiner and Schofield (1990) note that “almost all of the literature ... centers on psychotherapy supervision” (p.297), and continue:

Most of the supervision research is restricted to a truncated range of therapist experience, examining novice rather than advanced therapists ... In addition, the empirical studies usually are remarkably narrowly limited in scope, which reflects the fact that there is as yet little scientific basis for supervisory practices (p.298).

The research into supervision has also tended to focus on dyadic supervision, with much less consideration of forms of group and peer supervision (Holloway, 1992). Much of the material in this literature review is therefore based on various authors’ experiences and reflections on the supervisory enterprise, though wherever possible I will report on related research findings.

The purpose of this literature review is to provide a rationale for the study to be described in this dissertation. The literature provides a number of themes which will become the strands of an argument, to be woven together at the end of the literature review. I begin this literature review by considering the purposes and functions of supervision. Much of the literature, chronologically, has focussed on dyadic supervision, and in the second section, I select key elements of dyadic supervision for discussion. The emphasis of this section is the trainee's perspective, since the study to be described considers peer group supervision alongside individual, dyadic supervision. In the third section, I go on to discuss briefly types of group supervision because peer group supervision draws on certain features of group supervision. The literature on peer supervision is then considered in greater detail, highlighting approaches to peer group supervision. I include details of the sources which contributed to the structure of peer group supervision developed and studied in this dissertation. Finally, I consider references to learning theory in the supervision literature, as a basis for the development, later in this dissertation, of an approach which integrates the learning process and supervision.

2.1 THE PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION

It is only recently that supervision has been "recognized as a distinct professional activity that would deserve specific examination as to its processes, methods and products" (Mander, 1993, in Pickvance, 1997, p.131). There have been developmental trends in the fields of social work, psychoanalytic therapy, counselling training, family therapy and group work which have contributed to deepening understandings of the purposes of supervision and the role and functions of the supervisor. These trends and the emergent tensions will be briefly explored, before possible ways of resolving these apparent tensions will be discussed.

During the nineteenth century, supervision in the fields of mental health arose in the context of social work, and the primary purpose of supervision was the monitoring of care-giving to clients. The first documented call for supervision to focus on the professional as well as the client came in 1901, but such a focus only gained some recognition during the 1930's (Bernard and Goodyear, 1992), due to a growing awareness in the social work field that the concern of training was not only with "the acquisition of a set of skills but rather with the development of a professional

identity which is part of the personal identity” (Itzhaky and Itzhaky, 1996, p.79). Furthermore, the recognition of a process of change, with its attendant anxieties, which accompanied training, led to acknowledgements of the need to address emotional elements in some way.

In contrast, in the field of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, a training analysis with a supervising analyst was seen to be the key means through which practitioners were trained, thus personal psychotherapy was a vital element of training from the inception of the approach. It was decided, in 1922 in the UK, to make it obligatory for anyone wishing to train as an analyst to undergo a training analysis (Edwards, 1997). Primacy was “attributed to a supervisee’s awareness and understanding of self and the modeling of the analysts’ methods through the direct experience of being the recipient of treatment” (Holloway, 1992, p.178). In Vienna, a control analysis was also introduced, distinguished from the training analysis because it referred to the supervision of clinical work. This led to disagreements “over the nature and content of psychoanalytic training” (Edwards, 1997, p.16) in 1935. Therapy and supervision were subsequently separated, with the trainee thus having a personal analyst, as well as someone else who would be responsible for instruction (Lederman, 1982). Personal issues which arose in the control analysis would then need to be addressed in the training analysis. However, the distinction between what was personal and what related to an emotional response to the case became difficult, since there were inevitably “emotional questions ...which were increasingly regarded as part of the supervision and not part of the therapy” (Itzhaky and Itzhaky, 1996, p. 79).

A third contribution to supervision came from the development of the microskills approaches in the 1960's, when direct recording of counselling sessions became more common. Programmes were developed to teach counselling skills, and the actual in-session behaviours of therapist and client became the material for discussion in supervision. “These structured, competency-based approaches contrasted with the more global, case-method approach of traditional psychotherapy training” (Holloway, 1992, p.178), and there was an increasing reliance on actual recordings which complemented trainee accounts of the content and process of sessions.

A further influence was linked to the emergence of various types of group work in psychotherapy during the 1960's. Michael Balint developed group approaches for both social workers and

medical practitioners, in which countertransference issues were explored, combining reflections on personal responses with skill development (Pedder, 1986). The methods of interpersonally oriented psychotherapy groups, which emerged at this time, were adapted to group supervision “designed to increase counselor trainees’ self-awareness of interpersonal style and behaviors, and ability to provide feedback to peers” (Holloway, 1992, p.178). Thus working within a group enables trainees to explore in a different way, to develop greater openness, take on responsibilities and risk venturing opinions (Bradley, 1989), enabling participants to benefit from each other, gain greater case exposure “and vicarious as well as direct learning” (Bernard and Goodyear, 1992). Various forms of group and *in vivo* supervision (including opportunities for role play) were also developed by family therapy approaches which evolved during the 1970's. Such innovations broadened the focus of supervision to include trainees’ reactions and interactions, and ideas about systemic influences.

Consideration of the above brief overview and the literature indicates a number of emergent tensions regarding the purposes and focus of supervision. Three of the debates which may be identified, viz., whose needs should be the focus of attention, whether the function should be educational or therapeutic, and whether the approach should be evaluative or supportive, will be discussed below. The headings for each have been phrased as a question to indicate the debate between the two perspectives which needs to be considered.

2.1.1 Client needs or trainee needs?

The first tension is that between the focus on the client’s needs and the focus on the trainee’s needs. Supervision in which specific counselling techniques are the dominant material for discussion has tended to focus more on client needs, whereas that emerging from psychoanalytically informed approaches tends to focus more on trainee experiences of the client and countertransference issues.

Consideration of the definitions of supervision which have developed in the field of psychotherapy, discussed in Chapter 1, shows that the protection of clients is implied, but not explicitly stated as a key aspect of supervision. The monitoring of client care is emphasised by a number of writers as an essential focus (e.g. Bernard and Goodyear, 1992; Feltham and Dryden,

1994, Inskipp, 1996). However, “alongside this protective or monitoring role there is another, arguably of equal importance, which is that of facilitator of the development of the trainee” (Page and Wosket, 1995, p.9). The tension between a focus on client needs or those of the trainee has been debated at length in the literature, and remains a crucial issue for consideration by both supervisor and trainee. Munson (1981), in a study which elicited the opinions of 65 supervisees and 64 supervisors in the field of social work in the USA, reported that more than 50% of supervisory time was spent on case-related material; 20% on administrative tasks; with the smallest percentage spent on promoting supervisee growth. Thus, the main focus, according to participants in that particular survey, was on client needs.

Page and Wosket (1995) state that the supervisor may be “tempted to gravitate towards one pole or the other” (p.9), and that such polarisation can be undermining to the trainee’s sense of autonomy, or to the development of the trainee’s own style; on the other hand, permissive supervision may lead to the neglect of client welfare. Furthermore when the focus is solely on the trainee, the supervision might become too much like psychotherapy, a mode of supervisor functioning which many supervisees have found objectionable (Carifio and Hess, 1987).

Professional and ethical responsibilities underpin the concerns about the client, and such needs are of great importance if trainees are to develop an awareness of accountability to the client as an underlying informer of actions and decisions. However, the nature of psychotherapeutic work is such that the trainee’s perceptions, reactions and actions are of crucial importance to the development of therapeutic skills (to be explored further in the next section); and the trainee needs to be able to process these in an environment in which he feels secure. It is thus necessary for the supervisor to keep both fundamental elements in mind, and to strive for a balance between them.

2.1.2 Didactic or therapeutic?

The second tension is between the didactic and therapeutic purposes of supervision. Although the literature does not generally place these two in opposition to each other (often distinguishing between supervision and training/education and then supervision and therapy/counselling separately), I have chosen to consider these two together because they highlight different

supervisory roles. A didactic style might be preferred by supervisors with a more authoritarian approach whereas those tending towards a therapeutic and egalitarian approach are more likely to adopt a more facilitative and collaborative style.

The didactic purpose has been described by Kadushin (1992) as 'educative', and by Proctor (1988, in Inskipp, 1996) as 'formative'. The didactic approach emerged from the humanistic and microskills training traditions of supervision. A didactic approach "is about developing the skills, understanding and abilities of the supervisees ... through the reflection on and exploration of the supervisees' work with their clients" (Hawkins and Shohet, 1989, p.42). Edwards (1997) describes the learning in a didactic mode as "primarily rational, concerned with conscious thought processes, and in which considerable importance is attached to the teaching of theory and technique..." (p.16). Betcher and Zinberg (1988) list the advantages of a didactic model in that the knowledge thus acquired provides "a reassuring and clarifying template ... a cognitive scaffolding" (p.801), which enables the linking of observations with theory.

Seligman (1978) cites a number of studies of trainee counsellors, including her own, in which findings indicate that "a straightforward, didactic, techniques-oriented approach to supervision was more effective in raising the trainees' levels of empathy than was an experiential, counseling-oriented approach" (p.259). Kadushin (1992) cites a number of research studies in the field of social work in which educative tasks are reported to take up between 10 percent and 40 percent of supervisors' time, and were ranked as most important by 44 percent of supervisors surveyed.

There is debate around the extent of the supervisor's responsibilities with regard to education or training. Bernard and Goodyear (1992) state that though there is an overlap between education and supervision, for example the evaluative or 'gatekeeping' function to be discussed further in 2.1.3 below, supervision is nonetheless unique in that it is planned specifically to suit the individual trainee (whereas educational programmes have general syllabi designed for more general training purposes). Some writers, such as Dryden (1991), assert that coursework should prepare trainees for casework, and that the supervisor's role should not relate to specific skill training because there is the risk that "supervisors get bogged down in micro issues to the neglect

of macro issues” (p.22). Holloway (1992) reflects on the growing recognition “that the teaching of psychotherapy is different from doing supervision” (p.179), and Feltham and Dryden (1994) quote the BAC code of ethics which specifically states that the concern of supervision is not primarily training. However, Feltham and Dryden (1994) do assert that there is bound to be overlap between training and supervision since “supervisees are likely to gain implicit training from their supervisors’ interventions” (p.13).

Thus, making strict rulings about separating training and supervision may be unhelpful, and the focus of supervision should rather be the linking of prior learning to trainees’ current experiences in undertaking therapy. One of the key issues is likely to relate to the supervisory role, since there is a philosophical tension in teaching trainees to enable clients to be ‘self-directed’ in their therapy, yet not including trainees themselves in collaboratively determining their own development. Recent approaches to education are embracing more of a facilitative approach rather than one which is more authoritarian (Rogers and Freiberg, 1994).

I have chosen to contrast the didactic purpose with the therapeutic purpose, which historically emerges from the psychoanalytic tradition, and has emerged from basing supervision on therapeutic models (Storm and Heath, 1985). The therapeutic purpose has been variously termed ‘counseling’ (Bernard and Goodyear, 1992), ‘supportive’ (Kadushin, 1992) or ‘restorative’ (Proctor, 1988, in Inskipp, 1996). The focus of the supervision is on paying attention to and possibly alleviating “difficult or problematic feelings ... trainees have in response to their work” (Edwards, 1997). There is no doubt that psychotherapeutic work, due to its very nature, has emotional impact upon the therapist. Therapists will “be affected by the distress, pain and fragmentation of the client and ... need time to become aware of how this has affected them and to deal with any reactions” (Hawkins and Shohet, 1989, p.42). Thus it is necessary for the supervisor to help the trainee “examine the aspects of his or her behavior, thoughts, or feelings that are stimulated by the client, particularly when these may act as barriers to work with the client” (Bernard and Goodyear, 1992, p.5).

There is an extensive body of literature which examines the supervision-therapy interface (e.g. the review by Itzhaky and Itzhaky, 1996). Shipton (1997) writes that “supervision occupies a

different space from therapy but it cannot be understood without being contrasted to it” (p.144). Supervision shares many features with psychotherapy. Both include the microskills of reflection, questioning summarising, and interpreting (Wosket and Page, 1995); the building of a relationship which enables mutually negotiated goals to be established (Bordin, 1983; Carifio and Hess, 1987); the facilitation of personal development (Bradley, 1989); and the use of emotional reactions to the material (Lederman, 1982). In supervision which explores the trainee’s personal reactions, there is the potential for trainees to learn “about their unconscious motivations” (Betcher and Zinberg, 1988, p.801) and enables a fine-tuning of the ‘third ear’. This type of learning is termed ‘affectively charged’ by Betcher and Zinberg (1988), and may bring about changes in both trainee and client.

However, there is a growing body of research which indicates “that supervisors do not practice supervision as they practice counseling and that the character of a supervision interview has features unique from the counseling interview ...” (Holloway, 1992, p.179). Furthermore, Laveman (1994) notes that the “goals, purpose, and intent of psychotherapy and supervision are different” (p.76), and Wosket and Page (1995) list the differences between therapy and supervision under headings which include: aims, presentation, relationship, expectations and responsibilities (pp. 20-21). These headings highlight differing features which must be considered.

In supervision, it is necessary to approach trainees’ personal material with great care. Trainees may find such probing an infringement on their privacy, and may respond in a defensive way. Betcher and Zinberg (1988) write of the need for following a therapeutic course in supervision, since it interferes “with the establishment of the rhythms and boundaries essential to both therapy and supervision...” (p.801). Laveman (1994) also notes the need to be aware of the boundary distinction between supervision and psychotherapy: “the goal of supervision is to extend the professional knowledge and personal awareness of the supervisee through a case related focus, while the goal of psychotherapy is to examine and promote personal growth through insight and awareness that is embedded historically” (p.76). Carifio and Hess (1987) cite research which suggests that the supervisory relationship is not as empathic as that between therapist and client, and state that “the ‘limits’ of the topics to be covered should be fully discussed” (p.247).

In contrast to the warnings above, a number of authors in the field (e.g. Bernard and Goodyear, 1992; Feltham and Dryden, 1994; Page and Wosket, 1995) believe that it is permissible, and even desirable, to engage in therapeutic work with trainees, provided that the work is focussed on issues related to work with a client, enhances the work being undertaken, and contributes to an overall understanding of the therapeutic process. This approach is seen to be one related to experiential learning. Bordin (1983) espouses this view, discussing personal obstacles which may occur in the trainee's experiences in undertaking therapy. He acknowledges that this brings supervision "into a close contiguous relationship with therapy" (p.40), but states that the focus should be on mastery of the therapeutic task "by bringing the supervisee back to how these feelings and explorations must be either incorporated or overcome in order to achieve an effective response" (p.40).

A number of more recent writers (e.g. Holloway, 1995; Edwards, 1997) see supervision as located somewhere on the continuum between the didactic and therapeutic poles. The work of Haesler (1993, in Itzhaky and Itzhaky, 1996) considers the role of supervisor to be both teacher and therapist, the challenge being "maintaining the right balance and distance between the two" (Itzhaky and Itzhaky, 1996, p.80). Itzhaky and Itzhaky (1991) then continue by stating that supervisors are:

not so much teachers who know more, but rather teachers who know differently. Everything that happens in supervision is a doorway to deepened understanding and the supervisors teach the supervisees to be observing participants in the process. This technique extends the supervisee's ability to understand their situation. As therapist the supervisor's role is to be the 'third eye' to locate the supervisee's blind spots and help him or her overcome blockages in their work" (p.80).

It may thus be problematic to distinguish between didactic and therapeutic purposes of supervision. Learning has been acknowledged as a key aspect of psychotherapy (Blocher, 1983), therefore it is possible that learning in supervision can be therapeutic.

A crucial concept to be explored is therefore the approach to learning which informs the supervisory interaction. Bradley (1997) makes this point by citing "Bertrand Russell's important distinction between 'knowledge by acquaintance'... knowledge acquired by direct, personalized

contact with the object ... and ‘knowledge by description’...an acquisition of knowledge where direct experience is missing...” (p.50). He goes on to state that both psychoanalysis and its supervision are clearly based on the former. The philosophy underpinning understandings of the learning process is therefore of importance in this debate.

Another linked influencing factor might be in the supervisor’s approach to supervision, which Edwards (1997) suggests needs to be “sufficiently flexible” to accommodate “the needs of the supervisee” (p.12). He then goes on to cite the opinion of Pedder (1986), “who considers that supervision has a function somewhere between therapy and education. Precisely where ... will ... vary according to the stage of professional development reached by the supervisee” (Edwards, 1997, p.12). This conclusion would seem to be supported by many of the more recent writers in the supervision literature.

2.1.3 Evaluative or supportive?

The third tension is found between the evaluative and supportive purposes of supervision. There has been an increasing demand for accountability in the past two decades, and evaluation is linked to the promotion of accountable services, both for the well-being of the profession and for the provision of service to the public. Bradley (1989) notes that the profession exists for the purpose of meeting societal needs, and that accountability is the index of the extent to which those needs are being met.

Since privacy is a key element of psychotherapy, Inskipp (1996) states that supervision is crucial to the profession monitoring “the work of its members and ...to ensure a competent and ethical service to the public” (p.268). It is possible that the evaluative purpose is subsumed under the more general purpose of promoting ‘professional behaviour’, but Bernard and Goodyear (1992) caution that where supervisors take ultimate responsibility for clients’ well-being, “the concept of vicarious liability” (p.7) should lead to a focus by the supervisor on client care as a matter of self-interest, along with the promotion of professional standards.

The evaluative purpose is potentially linked to more authority-based definitions of supervision, and is described by Hawkins and Shohet (1989) as the “*managerial or formative* aspect of

supervision (which) provides the quality control function in work with people” (p.42, italics in original). Evaluation in supervision has also been extensively debated in the supervision literature, because there is the potential for conflicts to develop between the evaluative purpose and the other purposes of supervision.

Trainees are often very anxious when first engaging in supervision. In an empirical study, Reising and Daniels (1983) found that beginner trainees are significantly more anxious, dependent, skill-focussed, in need of approval, “and less ready for confrontation” (p.239) than those at an advanced level. A part of this anxiety has been reported to be linked to the supervisor’s evaluative role, and the resulting authority which is vested in the supervisor. Bradley (1989) cites studies which question the “compatibility of supervision and evaluation, and anxiety-evoking qualities attributed to evaluation...” (p.25), and goes on to describe literature which has questioned the learning which takes place when evaluation is a strong element in the process and the threats which often accompany such assessment.

Anti-evaluation lobbyists have written of preferring models where the supportive factors in supervision are separated from the evaluation necessary in training. Where the trainee is anxious about evaluation, a number of writers have reported that the trainee might feel the need to prove her or his competence, striving to perform for and please the supervisor, promoting responses to supervision which are not fully open (Greenburg, 1980), and possibly leading to non-disclosure of important details regarding case management and therapeutic interventions.

The evaluative element promotes a “real or imaginary power discrepancy” (Shohet and Wilmot, 1991, p.91), which contributes to stress in the supervisory relationship. Such interactions are likely to work in opposition to the provision of support in supervision. Open communication and the building of trust which is possible in a more egalitarian relationship may thus be compromised. Inskipp (1996) notes that in both experience and role acceptance, the supervisor “has more power and authority in the relationship,” (p.274), and thus argues for an ‘adult-adult’ relationship, with conflicts being worked through. Conflicts that arise due to the inequality in the relationship may be further complicated by the trainee’s previous experiences with authority figures such as teachers or parents. Edwards (1997) warns the if such issues are “not adequately

addressed ... these conflicts may inhibit the supervisee's ability, need or desire to learn ..." (p.15). Fisher (1989) quotes studies which show that "all levels of trainees preferred a supportive supervisor relationship" (p.59). Worthington's (1987) research showed that this was particularly so when trainees are in transition into new roles, where identity issues may be foregrounded. Loganbill, Hardy and Delworth (1982) regard the building of a facilitative and supportive supervisory relationship as an important foundation to the work both to reduce anxiety and to "provide opportunity for reflection and introspection" (p.32).

Considering that the evaluative and supportive purposes of supervision might work in opposition, a number of writers have proposed ways in which supervisors should acknowledge both, and work towards ways of integrating both into the supervisory process. Bradley (1989) notes that "misperceptions about evaluation" (p.25) might be the source of the potential conflicts. She proposes that evaluation be reframed as "an eagerly sought activity that answers the basic accountability question that should be asked by every professional, 'Am I accomplishing my objectives?'" (p.25). Thus, supervision should be designed in such a way that both trainee and supervisor set clear objectives, and evaluation is linked to these, with both participants regularly assessing progress. This requires that a working agreement be openly negotiated (Bordin, 1983; Feltham and Dryden, 1994), and that regular time is spent re-visiting this issue. Working out such an agreement is dependent on both parties being involved in a mutual and open decision-making process. The prerequisites for such an agreement are to "provide sufficient safety and clarity for the ... worker to know where she stands; and it needs sufficient teeth for the supervisor to feel free and responsible for making the challenges of assessments ..." (Proctor, 1988, in Shohet and Wilmot, 1991, p.94).

A further advantage of evaluation is that, properly managed, it can provide an additional source of motivation for trainees (Bernard and Goodyear, 1992; Bradley, 1989). The challenge for supervisors is to develop evaluative skills which can be used alongside a supportive approach. This role may feel uncomfortable to many since their training as therapists promotes a nonevaluative stance (Bernard and Goodyear, 1992).

2.1.4 Resolving the tensions in supervisory purposes and functions

Thus far, this section has highlighted tensions between three potentially competing purposes which need to be resolved in approaches to supervision. Whilst these three polarities have been separated for the foregoing discussion, it becomes clear that there are ways of integrating certain of the poles thus resolving the potential for tension: in the first instance, if the trainee is to become an effective therapist, the client's needs will always need to be balanced with the therapist's issues; in the second, recent approaches to education emphasise the educator's facilitative function, and therapy is also seen as an educative process, thus therapeutic and educative goals are not necessarily in opposition; in the third, evaluation which is linked to mutually contracted objectives is more likely to be supportive. Open evaluation can make explicit the internal evaluative and critical processes within the trainee, enabling these to become more reality-based.

It must also be noted that the three polarities are also not separate from each other - a blurring of the boundaries between some of the themes in the discussion is noticeable, e.g. between a client-centred focus and evaluation/accountability; and between a trainee-centred focus and supportive approaches. In much of the psychology supervision literature, the emphasis has tended toward the educative and supportive functions (Holloway, 1995), and Bernard and Goodyear (1992) state that the "widely acknowledged purpose of supervision is to facilitate supervisees' development of therapeutic and case management skills" (p.7). To this statement I would add 'to the benefit of both the client(s) and the therapist'. Furthermore, evaluation has recently been acknowledged as an integral part of the educative function (Bernard and Goodyear, 1992), and it is therefore crucial to establish the role of evaluation in the process.

Holloway (1995) recommends that to understand "the purpose and structure of supervision, it must be asked whether the primary context ... is administrative or clinical ..." (p.2). Thus, it is necessary for the supervisor to establish where her priorities lie - are they in the service of the organisation or in the development of the trainee? There is not likely to be a straightforward answer to the question, and many supervisors might answer 'both'. It is, however, imperative for those engaged in supervision to consider such questions because the answers will have an impact on the supervisory interaction. I would hypothesise that in South Africa, part of the difficulties

which trainees experience in supervision relate to the lack of explicit discussion around such issues.

Hawkins and Shohet (1989) propose that three categories, **educational**, **supportive** and **managerial** describe the roles and functions of supervisors. Such a division of supervisor functions is supported by Itzhaky and Itzhaky (1996) who identify a general consensus in the literature regarding these three categories. In order to specify further the content and process of supervisory sessions, Hawkins and Shohet (1989) have linked these categories to activities in the table below. The functions on the left reflect the types of activities which may be experienced in supervision from the trainee's perspective.

Table 2.1 Primary foci of supervision (from Hawkins and Shohet, 1989, p.43)

	<i>Main categories of focus</i>
* To provide a regular space for the supervisees to reflect upon the <i>content</i> and <i>process</i> of their work	educational
* To develop understanding and skills within the work	educational
* To receive information and another perspective concerning one's work	educational/supportive
* To receive both content and process feedback	educational/supportive
* To be validated and supported both as a person and as a worker	supportive
* To ensure that as a person and as a worker one is not left to carry, unnecessarily, difficulties, problems and projections alone	supportive
* To have space to explore and express personal distress, restimulation, transference or countertransference that may be brought up by the work	managerial/supportive
* To plan and utilise their <i>personal</i> and <i>professional</i> resources better	managerial/supportive
* To be pro-active rather than re-active	managerial/supportive
* To ensure quality of work	managerial

Consideration of the activities listed in the above table highlights the complexities of the supervisory enterprise. The challenge to supervisors is to take on educational, supportive and managerial roles, as and when appropriate, and to be able to combine these roles in a way which facilitates the trainee's development and protects the client. With regard to the focus of the study to be described in this dissertation, it must be noted that certain of the activities described in the table might also be tackled effectively in a group supervision context, to be described in more detail in a later section in this chapter.

A further indication of the complexities in supervision is that the three categories of focus identified by Hawkins and Shohet (1989) are related to aspects of the three professions which Freud termed 'impossible': viz. education, psychoanalysis and government (Bradley, 1997). In labelling each of these 'impossible', "Freud conveys very clearly the unique difficulty of an enterprise where insight into the state of mind of others needs to be accompanied by an insight into oneself" (Bradley, 1997, p.49).

The discussion in the above section has underlined the following: that although supervision is widely acknowledged as being of crucial importance to the development of therapists, there is potentially great variation in the way supervision is approached and understood, even within one training approach and organisation. In the UK and USA, many models, styles and pronouncements regarding preferred approaches to supervision have been developed in the literature and there are "notable differences and disagreements ... concerning the means by which the generally agreed aims of supervision might best be accomplished" (Edwards, 1997, p.13). This has led to diverse types of supervision being developed, the development of training courses of various kinds (although there are still many supervisors who are untrained, especially in South Africa, where training in supervision is in its infancy), as well as calls for a broader research base to inform the practice.

Edwards (1997) notes the importance of investigations in the field since the "role of supervision within training - its quality, theoretical orientation and mode of delivery - not only influences the subsequent clinical work of therapists, but also appears to influence the approach taken to supervision of others later in their careers..." (p.14). Inskipp (1996), at the end of a review of the state of the discipline in the UK, remarks: "If supervision is in its adolescence, this may be a time of energetic growth - and some struggles to find an identity" (p.279). There is no doubt that the diversity which exists might lead to a richness within various approaches to training, but there is also the potential for problems and difficulties to arise, especially with regard to the establishment of professional identity and greater uniformity in supervision, which will have impacts upon the development of trainees' autonomy.

Much of what has been written about supervision has focussed on one-to-one contact between a supervisor who is experienced in psychotherapy and a trainee with much less experience (Holloway, 1995). This is sometimes known as hierarchical or 'vertical' supervision (Hawkins and Shohet, 1989, p.45), though for the purposes of this study, I have termed this 'dyadic' or 'individual' supervision. In the following section, I highlight key elements of dyadic supervision which become evident when reviewing the literature.

2. 2 ELEMENTS OF DYADIC SUPERVISION

Certain key variables which influence supervision have been identified: the role of the supervisor and degree of power in the relationship (real and fantasised), particularly in hierarchical supervision; the supervisor's perceptions of his or her role and functioning; as well as the trainee's expectations, prior learning and experiences, and needs in supervision. Laveman (1994) writes:

Supervision requires a complex blending of skills that are considerably different from the skills required to do psychotherapy. To mentor, teach and train while attempting to uncover nuances in style and pattern, in order to produce an independent style in the supervisee, is an enormous task. The increasing complexity of the supervisory relationship makes psychotherapy and supervision alike in style but totally different in practice (pp. 81-82).

In this excerpt, Laveman is identifying a number of key elements of supervision, as well as a number of issues which have been the source of ongoing debate in the literature. These are: the supervisor, the trainee, the aims of supervision and the supervisory relationship. The debates in the field have been around the location of supervision *vis a vis* psychotherapy and/or education and training; the purposes of supervision which will determine the focus of the supervision session; and the practice and skills of the supervisor (the techniques employed).

Until relatively recently there have been no comprehensive models which express the complexity of the enterprise. In the literature, a number of writers began identifying and describing the various elements of supervision: Blocher (1983), Goodyear and Bradley (1983), Greenberg

(1980), Hess (1986), Marshall and Confer (1980), but these were not systematised into formal models. The following sub-section briefly considers the development of models of supervision.

2.2.1 Models of supervision

In this sub-section, a progression in the literature is traced: from earlier models in which the focus is on the trainee's development, to those which include supervisor development, and then on to later models which focus on the supervisory relationship and process.

Amongst the first models to emerge were those of Hogan (1964), Gaoni and Neumann (1974), and Loganbill, Hardy and Delworth (1981) (all cited in Hess, 1986). These "developmental models" (Worthington, 1984) focussed on supervisee development and the differing needs of practitioners in supervision, depending on their level of development. Holloway (1995) comments as follows: "these models advocate that supervisors match the structure and style of supervision to the trainee's level of development as a counselor" (p.4). Worthington (1984) conducted a study of 237 counsellors at various levels of training, and found that the reported experiences of supervision were generally congruent with the developmental models.

Sansbury (1982) critiqued the model of Loganbill, *et al.* (1981). Although Sansbury (1982) was supportive of many of the broad tenets of the model, he believed that the authors presented only a limited range of supervisory skills, and failed to identify which particular issues have greater relevance at which stages of supervisee development. He wrote that a specification of particular competencies to be developed would have enriched the model.

Riesing and Daniels (1983) were critical of Hogan's model (1964, in Riesing and Daniels, 1983) because the account of counsellor development was too simplified. Their empirical analysis of results of a study of trainees' experiences produced a rather more complex model of development than Hogan's model suggested, involving various factors which they identified as: Anxiety/Doubt; Independence, Method/Skills Training; Work Validation; Commitment Ambivalence, and Respectful Confrontation.

The developmental models have also been criticised for not giving enough attention to differences in supervisor and to supervisor development (Hess, 1986); and the models also pay little attention to contextual factors. Both Sansbury (1982) and Riesing and Daniels (1983) therefore believe the above-mentioned models to be rather too general, and Riesing and Daniels (1983) recommend that researchers “examine in detail how developmental issues constellate in ways that may appear individualistic, but are nonetheless understandable in terms of a comprehensive model of counselor development” (p.243).

The above-mentioned developmental models tend to focus mainly on the training period, and there has been little attention given to ongoing professional development. Skovolt and Ronnestad (1992a) conducted a qualitative study of over 100 practitioners at various experiential levels, covering the professional lifespan. They propose an extended stage model, but also provide a detailed account of influences on development by synthesising data into 20 themes. The authors suggest that “development involves a movement from reliance on external authority to reliance on internal authority and this process occurs through the individual’s interaction with multiple sources of influence over a long period of time” (Skovolt and Ronnestad, 1992a, p.514). A key finding which has relevance to the topic of this dissertation is that at the internship stage, the chief sources of influence and support are supervisors and peers.

Watkins (1990b) noted that whilst in the literature there had been extensive focus on the supervisee’s development, “very little attention has been given to the growth and development of psychotherapy supervisors themselves” (p.553), other than that in the work of Stoltenberg and Delworth (1987, in Blair and Peake, 1995). He therefore proposed a four-stage developmental model of supervisor development. Blair and Peake (1995) support Watkins’ framework as the most comprehensive, and recommend increased training for supervisors.

In the above models, the focus on the supervisee, and to some extent the supervisor, is noted, but Hess (1987) states that the process of supervision had not been theoretically conceptualised before the mid-1980’s, and that the theories applied to supervision to that point had been “overlays of theories of psychotherapy” (p.251). He therefore identified the need for the nature of the supervisory relationship to be described, since it differed from a therapist-client

relationship. Robiner and Schofield (1990) note that at that stage the supervisory relationship had received some attention in the literature, but state that it remains “perhaps the most ambiguous and difficult issue in supervision” (p.297). Shohet and Wilmot (1991) identify the supervisory relationship as the key issue in supervision, and state that “when what happens in the room between supervisor and supervisee is openly negotiated, reviewed and available for comment by both parties, then the primary work of supervision ... happens in a much more productive and fulfilling way” (p.87).

In a South African study, Gower (1989) analysed trainees’ experiences of dyadic supervision. Her results highlight the “value of emotional holding, of the relationship that supervisees developed with their supervisors and how this affected the way in which they were able to make use of their supervision” (p.53). The emotional holding enabled trainees to cope with the anxieties and ambivalences which they experienced as beginner therapists. She also noted a developmental process from trainees preferring a more didactic, pragmatic approach earlier on, to desiring more theoretical input further on. The study also emphasised the need for “continuity in supervision and for consistency in theoretical perspectives adopted by supervisors” (p.53).

A comprehensive model for supervisory interactions, developed in South Africa, was proposed by Snyders (1985). This model evolved from a programme in which therapists were being trained to engage in family therapy, using live supervision and an observing team. Using various rating scales completed by supervisors and trainees, Snyders (1985) assessed supervisor and supervisee experiences of the relationship. He also analysed videotaped supervision sessions. The shifts in the relationships, and accompanying changes in the interactive processes over time, as well as the influences of contextual factors, were highlighted in the results of this study. Snyders (1985) identified a number of issues which impacted on supervision, particularly certain limiting factors within the profession of clinical psychology and society more broadly, as being detrimental to development in supervision, leading to stagnation in the discipline.

Employing a structure developed in the field of family therapy, Snyders (1985) proposed a systems-based model of supervision. Using a model of concentric circles, with the client system in the centre, enclosed by circles successively representing the therapeutic, supervisory,

observing and political systems, he considered the changes in supervisory roles and tasks over time. This model is not explained further here because it has relevance to the family system approach to psychotherapy rather than to therapeutic approaches which have individuals as the focus of attention. However, it is interesting to note that there are some similarities between the factors included in this model and those identified in the following model, which was developed in the UK for supervision of individual psychotherapy and counselling.

In more traditional approaches to psychotherapy and supervision, one of the important factors which will influence the supervisory relationship is the style of supervision adopted by the supervisor, and the focus of the supervisory session. Hawkins and Shohet (1989) propose what has been termed a process model of supervision. They propose that the therapy system and supervision system are interlocking, and thus give rise to six modes of supervision. This model enables the supervisor to consider a range of options which are potentially topics for discussion in supervisory sessions. They state that “good supervision must inevitably involve movement between modes” (Hawkins and Shohet, 1989, p.58), and believe that each of the modes “is relevant at different times, but ... have found that supervisors have their preferred areas of working” (Hawkins and Shohet, 1991, p.100).

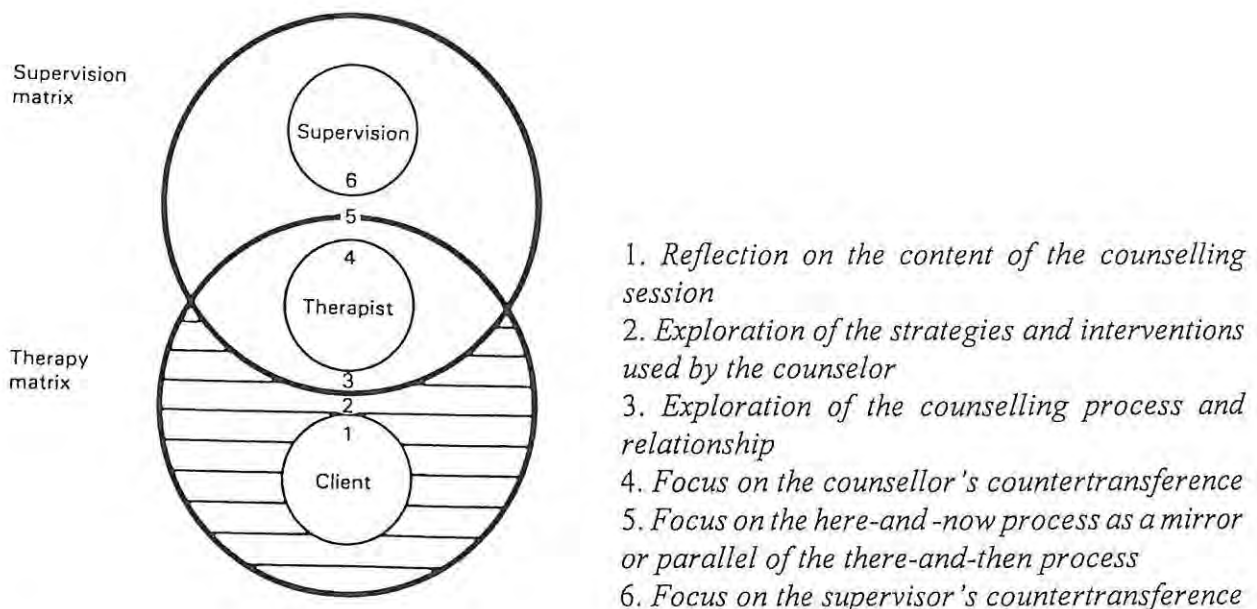


Figure 2.1 The six modes of supervision (Hawkins and Shohet, 1991, p.101)

The above model highlights the potential complexities of supervisory interactions. Hawkins and Shohet (1989) propose that in supervision, the supervisee needs to reflect on the counselling experience in a safe environment, and that the above range of options for consideration are the mode through which the reflection and learning can occur.

Hawkins and Shohet (1989) derive the core of their theoretical conceptualising from Donald Winnicott's concept of the 'good-enough mother', translating the idea into supervision as a milieu which potentially enables the therapist to be good-enough "to survive the negative attacks of the client through the strength of being held within and by the supervisory relationship" (p.3). They believe that consideration of this model by both supervisor and trainee enables the generation of increased options for discussion, and the potential for the trainee to negotiate changes in supervision style. The model may also be used as a basis for review and appraisal of the supervisory process.

Also drawing from psychoanalytic theory, Watkins (1990a) makes a further proposal for consideration regarding the supervisory relationship. This is based on both his experiences as a supervisee, and reflections on his work as a supervisor. Watkins (1990a) reflects on shifts in the relationship from both the supervisor's and supervisee's perspectives during supervision conducted in a training setting, and notes parallels with the sub-phases of the separation-individuation process proposed by Margaret Mahler. He suggests that the work of Margaret Mahler be used "as a metaphor for conceptualizing the separation-individuation process in psychotherapy supervision" (p.202). The resultant model proposed by Watkins (1990a) has, however, not been subjected to research and evaluation, and is therefore not described in further detail here.

With regard to the unfolding process during the course of supervision, a cyclical model of session content has been developed in the UK by Page and Wosket (1995). In the model, they attempt to address "a lack of an overarching framework for the supervision process" (p.34), hoping to complement existing models. Page and Wosket (1995) detail five stages of supervision: contract, focus (the subject or material), space (exploratory working in the supervisory relationship), bridge (between supervisory context and the work with the client), and review (reflection,

feedback and assessment). The order of the stages do not necessarily need to be followed slavishly, but these are proposed in order to systematise the supervisory process, and ensure that key aspects of the process are not neglected. The model is designed both for in-session and session to session application.

The overview in this sub-section briefly describes some of the models of supervision which have been proposed in the literature, and more recent models place greater emphasis on the supervisory relationship, which has become the subject of greater attention in the literature in the last decade. The next sub-section will be given to describing and commenting on the most comprehensive model of the elements of supervision proposed to date: that of Holloway (1995). Since this model is very recent, it has not been subjected to comprehensive study, and Holloway (1995) encourages both practitioners and researchers in the supervisory field to use it and evaluate its utility.

2.2.2 The Systems Approach to Supervision (SAS)

This model has emerged from “the empirical, conceptual, and practice knowledge bases of supervision” (Holloway, 1995, p.7), and seven dimensions have been identified as key elements. These seven factors have been integrated conceptually in the diagram reproduced on the following page. Drawing from the theories of social role models, empowerment theory and systems approaches, components of the model are specified, but are also acknowledged to “mutually influence one another and are interrelated” (Holloway, 1995, p.8).

The contribution of social role models has been in establishing supervisor roles and “actions consistent with the expected role” (Holloway, 1995, p.5) which then lead to certain reciprocal roles in the trainee, as well as leading to expectations, beliefs and attitudes in both participants. Holloway (1995) refers to Rappoport’s (1986, in Holloway, 1995) definition of empowerment with regard to the developmental process in supervision, where the trainee is encouraged to move from dependence to independence through a process of learning “about oneself, the consumer one serves, and the profession” (p.7). She believes that a sense of autonomy is achieved through the trainee recognising his own resources as well as acquiring knowledge and skills which enable the trainee to be more effective in the psychotherapeutic process.

In the model, Holloway (1995) emphasises the interactions between various components which she has identified after extensive reviews of the literature. Thus, a systems approach is foregrounded, since the emphasis of the model is on the “learning alliance between supervisor and supervisee based on multiple interlinking factors in the relationship of supervision” (p.6).

In the diagram below, the seven factors referred to earlier are represented as a central core - the supervisory relationship, with six ‘wings’ connected to it. The task and function are shown in the foreground, the supervisor and trainee variables in the middle, and institution and the client are more distal influences (though not of lesser importance). The supervisory relationship is thus identified as central to the model and “contains the process of the supervision interaction” (Holloway, 1995, p.7). The design of the model enables each of the factors to be examined independently, as well as in interaction with each other, and if the model is imagined as rotating, the “process is influenced by each of the factors, and reciprocally, the process itself influences the factors” (Holloway, 1995, p.8). Following the diagram of the model, a brief discussion of each of the factors is undertaken.

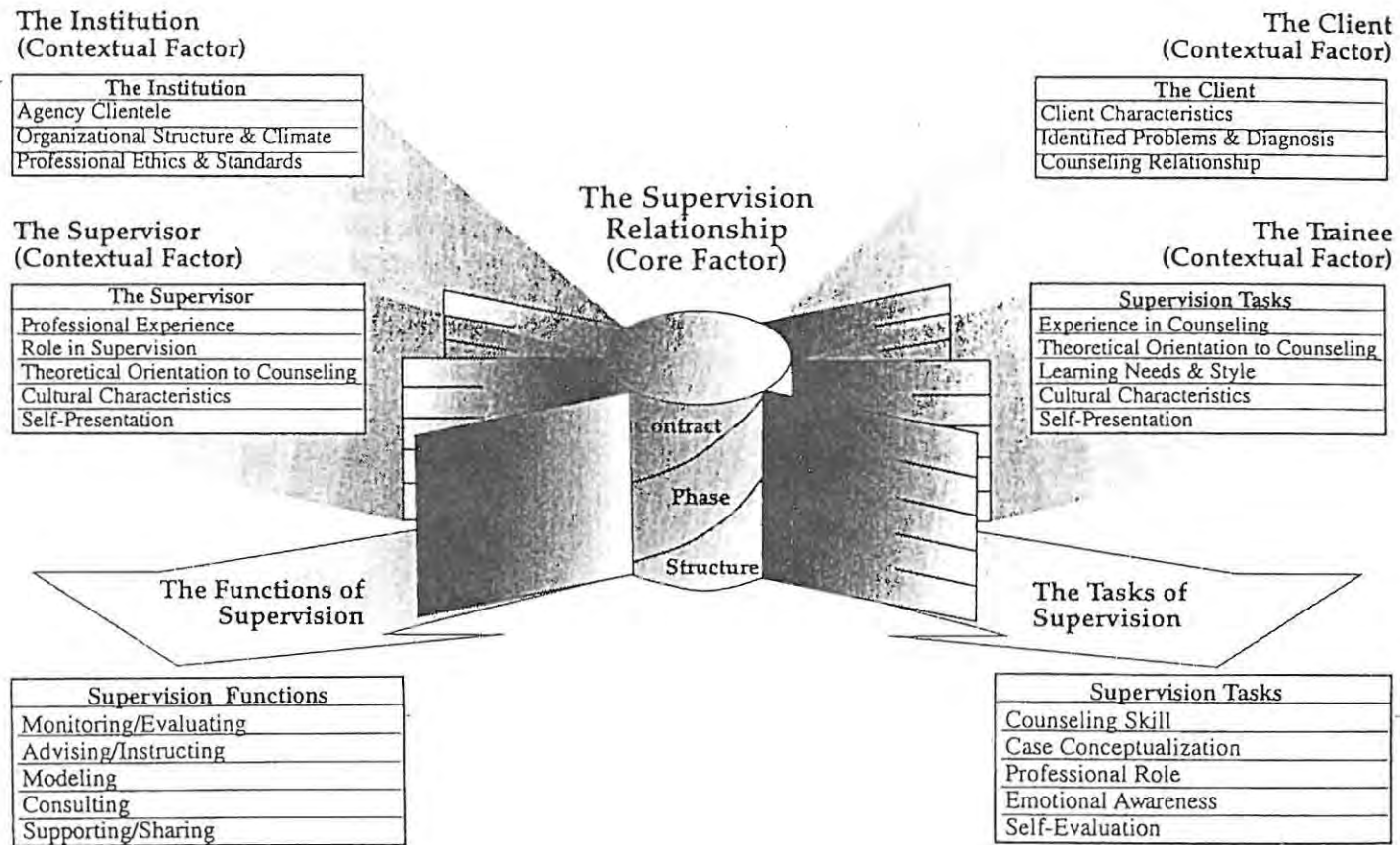


Figure 2.2 The Systems Approach to Supervision (Holloway, 1995, pp. 213-214)

The first, foregrounded factors are the functions and tasks of supervision. There are clear links between the five functions specified in this model and the three functions identified by Hawkins and Shohet (1989) and referred to toward the end of section 2.1, viz., educational, supportive and managerial. Holloway's first function, 'monitoring/evaluation' would be equivalent to the 'managerial' function; the fifth is 'supportive'; and the balance would be part of 'educational' functions. The tasks of supervision identified by Holloway (1995) result from a review of the literature regarding counsellor competencies, which she then grouped into the five broad areas specified. She identifies these as 'domain-specific knowledge', stating that it is "encumbent on supervisors to actively reflect on their own use of knowledge" (p.13) in order to articulate these to the trainee in an understandable and relevant way.

The supervisor and trainee variables listed are also based on an extensive review of the literature, where a number of studies have considered various personal and personality factors which impact on supervision (e.g. Carifio and Hess, 1987; Greben, 1991; Pickvance, 1997; Watkins, 1990a; Zimmerman, Collins and Bach, 1986). Three of the variables listed by Holloway (1995) are common for both supervisor and trainee: theoretical orientation to counselling, cultural characteristics and self-presentation. The two areas of difference listed are: professional experience and the role of the supervisor; and experience in counselling and the learning needs and style of the trainee. It is likely that with regard to the professional experience of the supervisor, Worthington (1987) would caution that supervisors, through gaining experience in providing supervision, do not necessarily become more competent. There are also a number of authors who would contend that competence as a therapist does not necessarily relate to competence as a supervisor, since supervision is a unique learning context (Bernard and Goodyear, 1992). The supervisor's role will be influenced by her perceptions of her functions and also by her understandings of the learning process. With regard to the trainee, experience and learning needs are likely to be inter-related to some extent.

In the literature, a growing number of authors have acknowledged the impact of the context on supervision (e.g. Olsen and Stern, 1990; Snyders, 1985; White and Russell, 1995). In Holloway's (1995) model, she identifies four factors as contextual: the institution, the client, the

supervisor and trainee. The supervisor and trainee factors have been briefly noted above, and some comments regarding the other two factors follow.

Holloway (1995) includes such factors as the clientele, organisational structure and climate, and professional ethics and standards in the 'Institution' category. Skovolt and Ronnestad (1992b) would seem to support the inclusion of intra-institutional elements by stating that

the physical structures must be suited for relevant professional activities to unfold, the administrative/organizational structures must support and allow professional activities and processes to occur, and the relational/social structures of the work setting must be benevolent to change and development. It is particularly important that the milieu can stimulate innovation and provide the individual with sufficient support and care needed for tolerating complexities and challenges and enduring the often emotionally exhausting nature of therapy work (p.132).

This quotation identifies physical, organisational and relational features of the training setting which may be facilitative of professional activities, openness to change and supportive. It is thus necessary for educators and/or administrators to provide the necessary structures to enable these to occur.

Snyders (1985) would agree with Holloway's (1995) inclusion of professional ethics and standards as an element impacting on the institutional context, and also notes contextual factors broader than the institution as influential. The broader professional, social and political-economic milieus also have a noteworthy impact on supervision. Snyders (1985), writing in the South African context of that time, identified issues such as the proliferation of basic training courses without provision for advanced continued education of therapists; the resistance in the profession to incorporating new developments; and the lack of financial and physical resources to deal with the extent of the mental health needs in much of the population, placing service-providers under great pressure.

With regard to the fourth factor, a number of authors might contest the location of the client as a contextual factor by Holloway (1995). Hawkins and Shohet (1989) place the client more centrally in their model, and White and Russell (1995) locate case management and client-related

variables in their 'Supervisory Interaction' cluster. Friedlander, Siegel and Brenock (1989) note that supervisory work "can vary greatly depending on the client in question" (p.149).

Holloway(1995) motivates for the client as well as supervisor and supervisee as contextual, since she views these factors as "conditions related empirically and practically to the ... choice of task and function" (p.57) in the supervisory interaction. Hess (1987) also notes that the "client helps to determine some of the issues that will define the focus of supervision" (p.251).

Finally, Holloway (1995) locates the supervisory relationship centrally. She states that the "structure and character of the relationship embody all other factors and in turn all other factors are influenced by the relationship" (p.41). Many authors in the area agree that the relationship is pivotal to the functioning and efficacy of supervision (e.g. Dorn, 1985; Shohet and Wilmot, 1991; Feltham and Dryden, 1994). This relationship has been variously termed the 'working alliance' (Marshall and Confer, 1980; Bordin, 1983) or 'learning alliance' (Hess, 1987) by adherents to psychoanalytic approaches. Feltham and Dryden (1994) prefer to term it a 'supervisory alliance' and Hess (1987) prefers a more isomorphic structuring which is broader than that implied by a therapeutic stance. There have been calls for greater attention to the "interactional variables in supervision" (Martin, Goodyear and Newton, 1987, p.234), and Holloway (1995) believes that her model and the associated approach to research might facilitate such attempts.

Holloway (1995), drawing both from empirical studies and her own experience, identifies three essential elements in the relationship: the contract which establishes the expectations, tasks and functions; the relational development phase; and the interpersonal structure of the relationship which involves dimensions of involvement and power. Holloway (1995) views the relationship as the "container of dynamic process in which the supervisor and supervisee negotiate a personal way of using a structure of power and involvement that accommodates the trainee's progression of learning ... the empowerment of the trainee" (pp. 41-42).

It is interesting to note that White and Russell (1995), in an empirical study of supervisory outcome, undertaken amongst 108 family therapists in practice in a totally different context from

Holloway, found that their results clustered into five categories: supervisor variables, supervisee variables, supervisory relationship variables, supervisory interaction variables and contextual variables. Their findings thus support the inclusion of the factors selected by Holloway (1995).

Holloway's (1995) model would seem to provide a comprehensive framework representing the complexity of supervision as an endeavour. The model strives to be inclusive of the varied theoretical approaches to psychotherapy and draws extensively from research-based findings. Through proposing this model, Holloway (1995) aims "to raise questions about what each of us does as a supervisor ..." (p. 8). Furthermore, the model "provides a common language of supervision that is relevant to supervisors and educators of different theoretical points of view" (p. 8). The model seems to provide a useful way of organising the elements of supervision, and the identification of the supervisory relationship as central is explored in more detail in the following sub-section.

2.2.3 Psychoanalytic understandings of the supervisory relationship

The reference on the previous page to the supervisory relationship as a container, and earlier references in 2.2.1 to the work of Winnicott (Hawkins and Shohet, 1989) and Mahler (Watkins, 1990a), reflect the way in which the psychoanalytic literature has been a source of theorising on the interactional processes between supervisor and trainee.

Jarmon (1990) refers to certain psychotherapeutic principles which he believes have relevance to supervision: Winnicott's concepts of *regression*, the *holding environment* and *identification* (italics in original). He explains that the "supervisory relationship ... evokes feelings about one's dependency on and responsibility toward others" (p.197); as such, the creation of a holding environment by making appropriate provision for regular time, place, continuity and privacy may lead to the participants developing "a sense of safety with each other" (p.197), and potentially provides greater support for the trainee. Jarmon (1990) then goes on to describe the way in which the triad of supervision (including supervisor, trainee and patient) works to enable the therapist to consider her dyadic experience in therapy from more than one perspective and to "hold the whole field in awareness" (p.197). This description seems to echo the earlier model of Hawkins

and Shohet (1989), which draws attention to the variety of experiences and interactions in both therapy and in the supervisory relationship which may be the focus of discussion in supervision.

Itzhaky and Itzhaky (1996) also refer to Winnicott's theory in proposing consideration of the idea of the 'intermediate area of experience' as relevant to the supervisory relationship. This intermediate area is "located between the objective external reality and the subjective internal reality" (p.82). Using the three supervisory functions of education, support and administration (discussed in section 2.1.4) as three angles of a triangle, they locate supervision in an intermediate area in the centre of the triangle, equidistant from each. They describe supervision as operating optimally in the intermediate area when the supervisor

clarifies new facts learned by the supervisee, adds understandings, provides emotional-support and allows the supervisee to continue the growth experience ... In this situation there is an ongoing emotional regulation of the process, with the help of the ego strengths of both participants (p.83).

Itzhaky and Itzhaky (1996) note that there may be a need to move the focus of supervision toward one of the three apexes listed above, and give three guiding principles, one attached to each apex, for determining such movement. Based on the view that the goal of supervision is essentially learning, they specify the principle of the 'maximum possible' for education, where the supervisor strives to advance the trainee's learning "while paying attention to the ability of the supervisee to digest the new learning from an emotionally cognitive point of view" (p.84), thus not overwhelming the trainee. The 'minimum necessary' principle of the support function reminds the supervisor not to turn supervision into therapy; and the 'according to need' principle of administration will be dependent on systemic factors such as case-load management and periodic evaluation. The challenge for the supervisor is to maintain a balance between the supervisory functions within the intermediate area.

A further key theme in the psychoanalytic literature, which has also been referred to in some approaches to counselling supervision (Feltham and Dryden, 1995) and group supervision (Sansbury, 1982), is that of the 'parallel process'. The phenomenon of parallel process was first identified by Searles (1955, in Caligor, 1984), and confirmed by studies by Mattinson (1975, in Jarmon, 1990) and Doehrman (1976, in Caligor, 1984). Parallel process is described by Jarmon (1990) as

the extent to which a patient's relational difficulties could be unconsciously transmitted (i.e., enacted toward) the supervisor by the therapist. If the supervisor is attuned to these transmissions, they register in the supervisor's conscious rather than unconscious experience. This enables the latter to observe potentially important but not directly reported aspects of the patient's personality and the psychotherapeutic relationship (p.196).

Two case studies, by Friedlander *et al.* (1989) and Alpher (1991) illustrate aspects of the parallel process and make conceptual links with the social psychological theory of interpersonal influence. Friedlander *et al.* (1989) conclude that it is imperative that client and relational dynamics be studied as influential in the process of supervision; and Alpher (1991) recommends a continuing focus "on observable events in psychotherapy and supervision and the interpersonal factors related to these events" (p.229). Jarmon (1990) writes of a "growing recognition that parallel processes are omnipresent in supervision and that they may be the supervisor's primary source of data about patients' and therapists' unconscious processes and the ongoing relationship between the two" (p.196). Understanding of the phenomenon remains relatively limited, although recognition of it as influential in the supervisory relationship is widespread in the literature.

It would be possible to write about the supervisory relationship in greater detail; however, I have chosen not to discuss this further since the focus of this dissertation is peer-group rather than individual supervision. Further references to the psychoanalytic literature related to supervision are to be found in section 2.7, when the learning process in supervision is considered.

To conclude this section, I refer to a quotation from Holloway (1995):

... the primary goal of supervision is the establishment of an ongoing relationship in which the supervisor designs specific learning tasks and teaching strategies related to the supervisee's development as a professional. In addition, the supervisor empowers the supervisee to enter the profession by understanding the attitudes, skills, and knowledge demanded of the professional and by guiding the relationship strategically to facilitate the trainee's achievement of a professional standard" (p.7).

Holloway (1995) therefore identifies the supervisory relationship and the learning process as key elements of supervision. References to the learning process in supervision are explored in a later section (2.7).

In the next sections, I turn to the literature on group, peer and peer-group supervision, since these form the basis for the design of the peer group supervision process to be explored in this thesis. There are a number of configurations or modalities of supervision, other than dyadic, which are used both within and after training programmes. Lenihan and Kirk (1992) note that comparatively “little attention has been directed to alternative frameworks for supervision” (p.36) in the literature. The principal alternative framework is “that of conducting supervision with more than one person” (Bernard and Goodyear, 1992, p.69), that is, group supervision. Working chronologically in terms of themes emerging in the supervision literature and the volume of literature available, I have chosen to review the literature in the field of group supervision first, drawing mainly from the fields of counsellor supervision and social work supervision, before considering peer and peer group supervision.

2.3 GROUP SUPERVISION

Group supervision has developed as a result of contributions from various sources. In the psychoanalytic realm, Michael and Enid Balint were influential contributors to group supervision from the 1950's, not only for psychotherapists, but for general practitioners and social workers as well (Pedder, 1986). Forms of group supervision originated from their work at the Tavistock clinic, and other leading psychoanalysts also adopted this modality. In the field of counselling training, interpersonal process groups developed in the 1960's and 1970's, influenced by the work of Rogers, and the ‘T-group’ movement, in order that trainees not only experienced didactic approaches, but also learnt from the group experience. Though these groups do not strictly meet the requirements of supervision groups, there was a blurring between counselling and supervision in these process groups, which were at that time mandatory in the training (Holloway and Johnston, 1985). Discontent with the directive nature of much social work supervision in the 1950's led to experimentation with a variety of modalities, including peer-group supervision (Kutzik, 1977), and group supervision is used in addition to individual supervision in many agencies (Kadushin, 1992). The development of group therapy and family therapy as treatment modalities also led to greater use of group supervision, and innovative forms of supervision in groups have been developed by adherents of various ‘schools’ of family therapy (Lenihan and Kirk, 1992; Snyders, 1985; White and Russell, 1995).

Group supervision has become a “widely used practice” (Lenihan and Kirk, 1992, p.36), but has been the focus of much less research and theory-building than dyadic supervision (Holloway, 1992; Inskipp, 1996). Kadushin (1992) reports the results of an extensive study in the field of social work, which he conducted from the University of Michigan (USA), which established that group supervision was the “principal context for supervision for about 18 percent of the respondents” (p.403), and was used as a supplement to individual supervision for another 60 percent of respondents.

Furthermore, Kadushin (1992) cites an earlier study, also conducted in the University of Michigan School of Social Work, which evaluated students’ satisfaction and training outcome where some students were assigned to individual supervision, and others to group supervision. The findings were that both “modes of supervision result in equivalent overall student performance” (Sales and Navarre, 1970, in Kadushin, 1992, p.418), and that group supervision was much more time efficient. Also, students were more willing to challenge their supervisors in the group modality and appreciated the greater variety of learning experiences afforded by this form of supervision. Students in individual supervision did however rate the specific help given to each as valuable. Another study confirmed these findings, and the suggestion was “to use group supervision at least as an adjunct to individual supervision until further research suggests that a different method is obviously superior” (Lanning, 1971, in Kadushin, 1992, p.418).

Getzel and Salmon (1985) review the literature on group supervision, and identify three issues which have promoted its development:

- * role conflicts experienced by supervisors as they tried to balance administrative, educational and supportive functions;
- * the impact of organisational theory, which reconceptualised the role and functioning of the supervisor and the impact on workers;
- * concerns regarding dependency in individual supervision and issues related to the supervisor’s authority, and the ways in which these have limited worker autonomy.

In contrast to the above support of group supervision, in my literature search I found that group supervision was often relegated to a small section of a number of the books I consulted, and I share the concern raised by Sansbury (1982) that the modality is viewed as part of the “auxiliary

methods of clinical supervision” (p.54) rather than as a central technique in supervision. However, group supervision has been acknowledged to make substantial contributions to training, and is specified for inclusion in practicum and internship training by both the American Psychological Association (APA) and the American Association for Counseling and Development (Holloway and Johnston, 1985).

The above introduction highlights the need for closer consideration of group supervision, given the support for the endeavour, its seemingly widespread use, and its potential advantages. Various forms of supervision in groups have evolved, and it is first necessary to define group supervision, and to distinguish it from peer group supervision, before considering the types of group supervision, and its advantages and disadvantages.

2.3.1 Definition

There are many forms of activity which may occur in groups within a training setting (e.g. case conferences, seminar presentations, workshops, and staff meetings), and group supervision needs to be distinguished as separate from these. Kadushin (1992) defines group supervision as “the use of a group setting to implement the responsibilities of supervision” (p. 404), referring the reader to the educational, administrative and supportive responsibilities of supervision (discussed in section 2.1 above). He then goes on to reiterate that the ultimate objective is the “more effective and efficient service to ... clients” (p. 405).

Holloway and Johnston (1985) define group supervision as those applications “in which supervisors oversee a trainee’s professional development in a group of peers” (p.333), thus emphasising the presence of a supervisor(s), implicit in Kadushin’s (1992) definition. Bernard and Goodyear (1992) also specify the presence of a designated supervisor in group supervision, in order that the trainees further “their understanding of themselves as clinicians, or their clients, or of service delivery in general and who are aided in this endeavour by their interactions with each other and with their supervisor in the context of group process” (p.72). This quotation identifies the varied potentials inherent in group supervision in terms of the focus of discussion and the interactions between participants.

For the purposes of this review, I will distinguish between group supervision and peer group supervision. In group supervision, a supervisor, who is at a more advanced level of expertise and may have some form of hierarchical authority, is present. The supervisor is responsible for seeing that the supervisory functions of education, support and management are undertaken, as well as for utilising the group process in some way. In peer group supervision (to be described in more detail in section 2.5) all participants are of equal status, and the participants will decide on the role(s) and functioning of group members, and the way in which the group will be structured.

2.3.2 Forms of group supervision

The forms of group supervision are variable - from supervision of two or three trainees at one time to larger groups where there are one or possibly even two supervisors present. Whitaker (in Whitaker and Garfield, 1987) states a preference for small subgroups of trainees rather than dyadic supervision because this “small two or three person-sibling group can thereby have more strength in their struggle *vis-a-vis* the teacher” (p. 107). He is thus alerting the reader to some of the authority-related dynamics in dyadic supervision which it may be more possible to challenge in the group context. Other variables in group supervision relate to the group composition (e.g. participants’ levels of training/development, theoretical and/or training orientation), or disciplines (e.g. only psychologists or multi disciplinary) and the dynamics of group interaction (e.g. levels of activity, types of contributions).

Inskipp (1996) describes the variations in group supervision along a continuum (see figure 2.3) based upon the levels and types of involvement of the supervisor and group members.

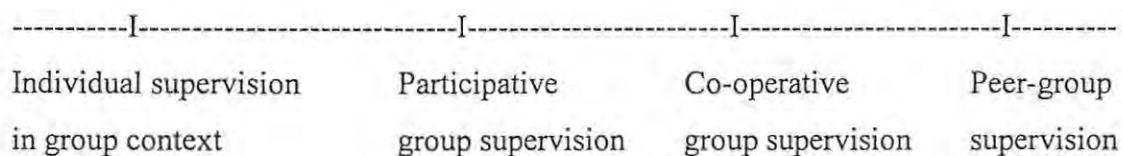


Figure 2.3 Continuum of forms of group supervision (adapted from Inskipp, 1996, p.278)

On the above continuum, supervisor activity shifts from a high level on the left, to lower levels further right, and the converse of this occurs for participants’ active involvement. In the first form on the left, a supervisor “supervises individuals in turn, and the other members are audience”

(Inskipp, 1996, p.278). In the second form, group members are encouraged to contribute to the discussion, and in the third form, the members are more involved in a progressive process of supervising each other. Peer-group supervision involves members supervising each other as well as negotiating the structure and functioning of the group.

The above continuum highlights variations in the role of the supervisor and of the structure and functioning of the group, with varying emphases in different modalities. The discussion which follows will cover the first three forms, with peer-group supervision discussed in 2.5 below.

2.3.2.1 Role of the supervisor

The role of the supervisor in group supervision as shown on the continuum varies from sole responsibility for the mode of supervision of the individual, and management of the group structure and process in the first form; through supervision, management and group facilitation in the second; to group facilitation, 'teaching' of supervision skills, and to a much smaller extent, supervision itself, in the third (Inskipp, 1996). These possible supervisor roles identify the supervisor as leader of the process, and the supervisor requires skills in supervision, in managing group process, in structuring the group, and in understanding and articulating the learning outcomes and means of achieving these. The role of the supervisor thus requires advanced and complex skills related to both supervision and group process, for which such a supervisor needs both training and experience.

A single supervisor working with a group over a period of time is able to work developmentally with group members, and has the freedom to focus on both "didactic and experiential needs of the supervisee" (Sansbury, 1982, p.54). Abels (1977), Bernard and Goodyear (1992) and Sansbury (1982) cite work which points to a series of stages through which groups move, depending on the issues the members are confronting in their professional development. Thus, the supervisor will need first to develop a level of trust in the group, which once established will lead to "risk-taking and the ensuing learning" (Sansbury, 1982, p.55) in participants.

Getzel and Salmon (1985) cite a number of writers who note the potential of groups to modify both the supervisor's use of power and control, leading to possible changes in "the nature of the supervisory relationship" (p.33), because participation of group members may lead to "the

assumption of shared responsibility by the group ... a great relief to the supervisor” (p.33). The optimal utilisation of the group in this way will obviously depend on the supervisor’s willingness and ability to relinquish aspects of power and control.

Kadushin (1992) highlights the leadership role of the supervisor, both in terms of meeting the objectives of the group and as an authority figure. The supervisor thus has responsibility for keeping the group moving towards specified aims through planning and structuring the group, and through initiating and monitoring group discussion and members’ contributions. Furthermore, even in a group in which the approach is egalitarian, the supervisor’s position in the organisation, as well as education and experience, mean that she has authority, and any group which has a supervisor present “is not a democratic group” (Kadushin, 1992, p.422).

Savickas, Marquart, and Supinski (1986) designed a study in which they empirically evaluated the factors which identified an effective group supervisor in a group of medical students learning interviewing skills. They found that “the primary requirements seem to be modeling, instructing, evaluating and facilitating” (p.23) and that “supervisory behaviors that responded to their needs for structure and reassurance” (p.24) were reported as effective.

Abels (1977) refers to the work of a number of authors regarding leadership styles and the resultant influence on group process and productivity. Styles of leadership varying from authoritarian, laissez faire to democratic have an impact on the volume and nature of the work done; as well as on levels of competition, co-operation and creativity. Abels (1977) compares certain group patterns to the dynamics which occur in families. Group members may become discontented and resistant in certain groups. There is also the potential for a supervisor to become over-invested in a group and for group members to become dependent on the supervisor (Meyerstein, 1977), particularly when the supervisor takes a more directive or didactic role or when there is less focus on group process as in the model of “individual supervision in a group context” (Inskipp, 1996).

In certain settings, cosupervision has been recommended as a means of optimising the supervisory role and Meyerstein (1977) highlights its value in “decreasing the hierarchical teacher-student relationship” (p.485). A cosupervisory team has the potential to be nondirective

and less engaged in investment in the group, allowing “each cosupervisor the flexibility to experience and respond more fully to the richness of group process and to highlight generic themes” (Meyerstein, 1977, p.485) which emerge. Furthermore, cosupervision allows for the modelling of cotherapy behaviours in the discussion between cosupervisors, and the emergence of differing, equally valid, viewpoints, promoting “a nonthreatening atmosphere valued by group members” (Meyerstein, 1977, p.485).

Group leadership is thus a challenging role, one in which the individual needs to strike a balance between “leading without imposing, directing without controlling, suggesting without dictating” (Kadushin, 1992, p.422). Furthermore, the supervisor needs to progressively hand over “an increasing proportion of the initiative, responsibility, control, direction, and activity” (Kadushin, 1992, p.423) to the group; requiring the supervisor to have the flexibility and confidence to enable this sharing of responsibility. It is therefore necessary for the supervisor to develop his awareness of the group dynamics and the way in which group forces impact on him, and Abels (1977) proposes a “contract synergist” (p.181) model of supervisor role in order to maximise participation, co-operation and joint problem-solving.

2.3.2.2 Group membership and participants’ roles

The roles of the group members in different types of groups vary from being mostly the observation of a dyadic supervision process, where members take turns to be ‘in the spotlight’ as the supervisee, to group members taking on some of the supervisory responsibilities, and being involved in group discussions and decision-making. In the modality where one group member is supervised by the supervisor in the presence of others, learning for the ‘observers’ would be mostly of the vicarious kind, since their contributions would not be a focus of the group. Where group members are more actively involved in the group process, the potential for varied types of learning is increased.

An initial issue to be decided is that of group membership. Hawkins and Shohet (1989) recommend a group size of between three and seven, to enable interaction and also to allow each member sufficient time for their own needs; but if group attendance is voluntary, a larger number of members might be necessary. Bernard and Goodyear (1992) cite work which suggests a



screening process for potential members, and question whether the group will be voluntary or not - irrelevant issues when group supervision is a prescribed part of training.

A further consideration for groups is the level of homogeneity in experience level and theoretical approach to psychotherapy. There are varied opinions about homogenous or heterogenous groups. Hawkins and Shohet (1989) recommend that the group has “enough similarity in the types of clients they work with, their general theoretical approach to their work, and their level of accomplishment” (p.99). Bernard and Goodyear (1992), in a review of work on group process, state that there seem to be advantages for novices to be in a relatively homogenous group, whereas following training, more heterogeneity is likely. Getzel and Salmon (1985) warn against too much homogeneity in a group, and note that “differences in levels of skill and organizational identification are important elements for spontaneity in the group” (p.39). Bernard and Goodyear (1992) note that homogeneity of cultural background is undesirable, “especially if the clientele being served is culturally diverse” (p.74).

The next consideration is the way in which the group will function, and what contributions will be expected from members. Getzel and Salmon (1985) note that the “aim of the group is to encourage openness and honesty in sharing concerns about practice skill” (p.39). In order for this to occur, group members need to develop a certain sense of trust and safety in the group; issues which will require consideration in setting up the group. An optimally functioning group “provides the opportunity for supervisees to share their experiences with similar problems encountered ... and possible solutions that each has formulated in response” (Kadushin, 1992, p.406). When group members contribute, a greater variety of opinions and solutions is possible than in individual supervision. Kadushin (1992) continues: “The group not only provides the opportunity for lateral teaching - peer to peer - but provides opportunities of mutual aid of various kinds” (p.407). Thus, group functioning needs to optimise the opportunities which being in a group provides - that of participating in collaborative work.

One of the important roles of group members is the provision of support for their peers. Abels (1977) notes a number of writers who have highlighted this aspect of group functioning: that the group is a “supportive mechanism, as mediator, and as link to society...” (p.176). Peers empathise with each other, and can give feedback about their own responses to the challenges presented in

casework. Sansbury (1982) notes that “the group is a support situation in which to examine the counselor’s affective responses to his or her client” (p.55); and when peers provide emotional support and reassurance to each other, this has the potential to build morale through the sharing of common problems (Kadushin, 1977).

Group members’ interactions are also potentially the focus of group discussions. It is inevitable that group members will develop feelings about each other, and evaluation of each other’s competence will lead to status hierarchy developing in a group (Abels, 1977). Since such factors will influence the roles and functioning of individual group members, it will be necessary to have some mechanism to address such issues. Furthermore, group members’ responses to the content of group discussions will reveal individual attitudes, and Sansbury (1982) remarks that such attitudinal responses have the potential to set the stage “for the supervisor to facilitate the supervisees’ emotional sensitivity to their clients” (p.55).

Abels (1977) notes that there needs to be open discussion of how members will use each other and the supervisor, highlighting the need for ground rules in a group. Bernard and Goodyear (1992) note the need for a “ground rule of openness and respect” (p.75) which they believe can be achieved through both supervisor and group members stating expectations of the group at the outset. Contracting thus becomes vital in order to spell out the expectations and limits of group functioning; and Bernard and Goodyear (1992) cite rules pertaining to “confidentiality, the responsibility of each member, level of participation, and protection of members from undue peer pressure and intimidation” (p.75). Hawkins and Shohet (1989) write of the need to develop a group climate which “encourages a sharing of vulnerabilities and anxieties without group members being put down or turned into ‘the group patient’... Simple ground rules help to avoid destructive group processes, ...” (p.100); and they go on to suggest such techniques as group members ‘owning’ their statements and speaking out of their own experience, as well as feedback being specific and balanced.

A further issue which needs to be openly addressed is that of evaluation. Sansbury (1982) notes that this is always a concern of trainees. A formal evaluative component linked to group contributions is likely to inhibit group members. Whilst group members will inevitably compare their work and competencies with others, and the group context “provides the supervisor with the

opportunity of observing the supervisee in a different kind of relationship ... in action in a group” (Kadushin, 1992, p.409), the issue of whether individual functioning in the group will be assessed and contribute to evaluation must be addressed. Getzel and Salmon (1985) state their belief that formal evaluation “should be done individually to protect privacy and guarantee confidentiality” (p.39), and that the “patterns of use of individual with group supervision must be carefully thought out in advance” (p.39).

Then, the issue of the legitimacy of challenging the supervisor needs to be addressed. Kadushin (1992) notes that the “group context provides the safety in numbers that individual supervisees may need in order to challenge the supervisor” (p.408); thus having the potential support of peers enables individuals to present differing opinions from those of the supervisor. However, Getzel and Salmon (1985) caution that challenging the supervisor will depend on the ability of the supervisor to accept criticism and to be direct with trainees.

Thus, the roles of each group member need to be clearly articulated in the process of group formation. Hawkins and Shohet (1989) state that it is important that “the group supervisor ensures that there is a roughly equal amount of sharing between all group members, both in terms of quantity and level of self-disclosure” (p.100), and continue that this can be facilitated by the supervisor sharing his own unsureness and anxieties at times. Bernard and Goodyear (1992) give some examples of guidelines for supervision groups, and an example of a structured supervision group is described in section 2.3.3 below.

2.3.2.3 Focus of the group

The focus of the group interactions depends to a large extent on the roles and responsibilities of the supervisor and group members discussed under the previous two sub-headings. Bernard and Goodyear (1992) suggest that such issues be addressed in the initial stage of the group, to establish clarity “regarding the direction of the group and each person’s contribution ... to find a balance between too much structure and too little” (p.77).

Sansbury (1982) states that a group is an “excellent setting for the type of learning that includes an affective or behavioral experience followed by cognitive integration” (p.54). He goes on to list four different types of group activities: teaching; case-related information, suggestions or

feedback; focus on the trainee's affective responses; and consideration of the group's interactions (p.54). Similarly, Holloway and Johnston (1985) identify "a varying degree of attention to case conceptualization, didactic information, and interpersonal process material" (p.334). Thus the focus of the group might be one of the following: didactic, where informative material is presented; a case presentation approach, in which casework material is presented and issues regarding the approach to the case and case formulation are discussed; or affective and interactive, including individual and group responses to both the material and the interpersonal dynamics which develop in the group. Through using the phrase 'varying degree of attention', Holloway and Johnston (1985) imply that the focus of attention might shift within a group session, or between sessions, depending on the group process. The three different kinds of group focus, *viz.* teaching, case presentation or group interactions will be briefly discussed below.

The first focus, direct teaching or training activities, particularly if led by the supervisor, as part of group supervision, is challenged in the literature in terms of its relevance to supervision, unless the content relates directly to professional and case-related issues which have arisen in the group, and the 'teaching' occurs in response to the group discussion (Blocher, 1983). A strongly didactic approach by the supervisor may lead to passivity in group members and does not optimise the opportunity to use the group as a medium for learning. Abels (1977) criticises traditional supervisory approaches in which the supervisor is viewed as having the answer. In such an approach, the supervisor will be leading "from her cognitive structure (patterned meanings) of what is good" (Abels, 1977, p.185) for group members. The possible effects of this 'one-up-manship' are dependency in group members, frustration, collusion between group members, and limiting of the cognitive functioning of participants. Abels (1977) cites work which encourages group leaders to trust the group interactions to be the 'teacher', and states that the "way out is also the way in - finding a solution within the ideas and strengths of the group" (p.185). Group members need to be empowered to become more aware of and responsible for their own learning. "What they know together can lead to a synthesis and a synergistic solution" (Abels, 1977, p.186). There is no doubt that learning is an important goal of the supervisory process - but this learning takes place through participants engaging actively in the process, rather than as a result of direct teaching.

With regard to the second focus, Holloway and Johnston (1985) review a limited number of studies of the case presentation approach; however in each of the studies both the contributions of case presentation and of group dynamics to the efficacy of the group are considered. The case presentation approach had not been researched in isolation up to that point. Holloway and Johnston (1985) conclude that the “case presentation format has persisted in descriptive reports of the literature from the middle 1960s to the present, but, surprisingly, no substantive empirical information is available on this approach” (p.337).

Blocher (1983) comments on the utility of a small group format, in conjunction with individual supervision, in which the primary content of the sessions “is based on those aspects of their cases that students view as problematic and with which they seek help” (p.30). Blocher (1983) also suggests the use of tape recordings where “the supervisee is expected to take charge of the presentation and to present aspects of the case relevant to the current focus of supervision and to his or her own needs for assistance” (p.30). Lenihan and Kirk (1992) describe a conjoint model of supervision for beginning trainees which includes a group case presentation format. They comment that this format “noticeably enhances trainees’ observational, information-processing, and therapeutic planning skills” (p.46). Thus in both of these examples, the focus is on the trainee’s experience of the interaction with the client: perceptions of the client, the way in which information was processed, and the impact on the trainee’s feelings and responses.

The third focus, on interactions between group members, has been acknowledged as an important consideration. Hawkins and Shohet (1989) state that it is “essential that the group leader also ensures that group dynamics do not proceed unacknowledged and finds a way of bringing the dynamics into awareness so that they can be attended to and learnt from” (p.100). However, both Hawkins and Shohet (1989) and Holloway and Johnston (1985) are cautious about group dynamics as the major focus of supervision groups, since extensive research has not established the efficacy of such groups in facilitating the trainees’ counselling competencies (Holloway and Johnston, 1985). Holloway and Johnston (1985) state a preference for group functioning which “although recognizing members’ needs for self-disclosure and interpersonal process, still limits the focus to the members’ professional context” (p.337), to keep clear the distinction between supervision groups and other forms of interpersonal group process.

A supervision group could be a useful context for the trainee is able to examine his or her reactions to the client, thus promoting affective sensitivity. The value of group members reflecting on their reactions to the material "... rests upon the recognition that different people are responsive to different aspects of the patient and of the interaction with the patient. Because of this, a group is potentially capable of a higher level of synthesis of aspects of the patient than may be possible in a supervisory dyad." (Mollon, 1997, p.32). Thus, the affective responses of the presenter and other group members can be utilised to good effect.

A complication in the interactional aspects of a group occurs "when there is a parallel reenactment of the counselor-client conflict played out by the counselor with other members of the supervision group or with the supervisor" (Sansbury, 1982, p.55). The phenomenon of parallel process was mentioned previously in section 2.2.3, and has been noted in group supervision as well as individual supervision. Such a parallel process needs to be noted by the supervisor or other group members and processed. If adequately addressed, the processing of parallel reenactments has the potential to facilitate deepened trainee understanding of intersubjective processes. Thus, experience of interpersonal dynamics in action "helps supervisees to make important connections between their academic knowledge and clinical practice" (Hayes, 1989, p.404).

Bernard and Goodyear (1992) cite a number of writers who hypothesise about a transition stage through which groups will need to work before being able to function optimally. Group supervision inevitably brings with it the threat of exposure for trainees and is thus likely to provoke anxieties which are expressed in a variety of ways. Corey and Corey (1987, in Bernard and Goodyear, 1992) write of the need for the supervisor to balance support and confrontation in order for the members of the group to be enabled to become aware of and discuss ways in which they might be resisting working in the group.

Abels (1977) takes a more psychodynamic approach to group dynamics, citing the work of Bion with groups at the Tavistock Clinic. Abels (1977) proposes that each group will develop a set of unspoken rules or 'deep structure', a pattern of interactions which may contribute to 'nonwork' styles. The supervisor will thus need to be sensitive to the group interactions in order to facilitate group development. This is complicated by the supervisor's presence in the group;

since the supervisor is of a different status, this may lead to group members responding to “familial problems of authority, rivalry and competition” (Abels, 1977, p.180); and the supervisor will need skill to deal with such dynamics. One of the suggestions for dealing with such dynamics is to impose a certain amount of ‘surface structure’, since “by modifying one part of the system we can often bring about changes in the total system” (Abels, 1977, p.180). Thus, the structuring of group interactions becomes an issue for consideration.

2.3.2.4 Conclusion

At the beginning of this sub-section, the continuum suggested by Inskipp (1996) was used as a basis of discussion of the variables which impact on the forms of group supervision. Inskipp (1996) cites work that she and Proctor have undertaken which highlights three key findings regarding group supervision. The first, given the variations suggested by the above continuum, is that it is important that each supervision group contracts for “roles and responsibilities so that members - and supervisors - have clear expectations” (Inskipp, 1996, p.278) of group functioning. The second is that “the group supervisor needs extra skills and knowledge of the group process, and the ability to use the process to build a safe and challenging climate” (p.279). The third is that the opportunities for development, which result from creative group supervision, “outweigh those of individual supervision. It could not be just economically useful, but a preferred option” (p.279). Inskipp (1996) thus believes that group supervision may have advantages over individual supervision, but that the elements which impact on group supervision need careful consideration due to the greater complexity of influences on group process.

2.3.3 Structured group supervision

An important theme which emerges from the previous section relates to the structuring of group supervision. The amount and type of structuring of group processes is an issue which should be raised in the initial contracting phase, and has an impact on the group interactions, “particularly those interactions that they expect from one another in order to help the group function” (Abels, 1977, p.177). The structure of the group will determine *inter alia* what issue(s) are to be discussed in a session, whether and how the material should be presented, whether each group member will have an opportunity to present an issue in a session, or whether there will be turn-taking from one session to the next, and the amount of time to be spent on the group activities which have been decided upon. Structured group supervision is accorded a separate section in this literature review

because the research to be reported in this dissertation is based on a structured model of group interaction.

Hawkins and Shohet (1989) describe a structure for a supervision group in which the group session begins with a round of the group members, with each member "stating what issues they have that they would like to bring to the group. This is followed by a negotiation between the competing requests to decide on the order and how much time each person should have" (p.100). They go on to suggest a variation which follows the 'round' with "an exploration of whose issue most represents the current 'core concern' of the group ... This ensures that the person who is the centre of the work is not just working for him or herself, but has the energy and interest of the group" (p.101). A pertinent issue is that there needs to be some mechanism for sharing of time, and one approach, when the group is not too large, is to divide the available time equally between group members. An alternative is to have a roster of presenters, thus sharing time equally between members, however, this means that immediate concerns and difficulties will not be addressed, necessitating another form of supervision in order to meet those trainee needs.

2.3.3.1 Structured Peer Group Supervision

Borders (1991) has suggested an innovative model of group supervision which she terms Structured Peer Group Supervision (SPGS). She motivates strongly for peer group supervision in a structured format, referring to learning and other benefits, however in her model a supervisor is present, thus it does not conform to my understanding of peer group supervision. The supervisor acts as a 'moderator' to keep the group on task, commenting on the group process, and summarising at the end; thus I have included the model in this section rather than in the section on peer group supervision (section 2.4), giving some detail since this model has been the focus of a number of research projects.

The SPGS model relies on a group member presenting a videotape of a case, along with specific questions for which he requests feedback. Group members are then assigned different tasks according to the questions posed, and view the videotape with the task in mind. The supervisor may assign different tasks to observing members of the group depending on the skill which that particular member has identified as needing development. The four options for the generation of tasks are: focused observation (on a skill, or aspect of the session); role taking (of counsellor,

client, or of a significant other); consideration of the session from a specified theoretical orientation; or observation with a particular metaphor in mind. Borders (1991) describes her intention of using the groups to enhance participants' cognitive counselling skills: to integrate and synthesise data, "including conflicting information" (p.250); to differentiate relevant from irrelevant data; to develop flexibility in thinking which enables taking of more than one perspective; and to develop awareness of the "interactive, mutual influences in interpersonal relationships" (p.250). The role of the supervisor is to monitor the activities in order to maintain a balance of support and challenge, to create a "preferred environment ... based on a 'matching model' that both satisfies the counselor's learning needs and stimulates conceptual development" (p.251). She continues that a further important goal is to enable trainees to engage in increased self-monitoring of perceptions and skills. Finally, she recommends the approach not only for trainees, but also for ongoing peer supervision groups, and group supervision of supervisors.

Crutchfield and Borders (1997) conducted research which compared the SPGS model to peer supervision and to a control group, where the participants were school counsellors. Using a pre-test post-test design, they report that after two and a half months there were no significant impacts on scores of job satisfaction, self-efficacy and counselling effectiveness, although scores did move in a positive direction for the SPGS and peer supervision groups. Consideration of the qualitative data, however, showed that participants reported gains in support and concrete feedback. Participants were keen to continue with the SPGS, with a trained supervisor present, since they believed that it enhanced their skills. The findings from the quantitative measures were thus inconclusive, but the qualitative data showed support for the two forms of supervision. To make sense of these findings, the researchers hypothesise that either the counsellors' reports of increased awareness and skill enhancement were not transferred into school settings (the context of their evaluation), or that the quantitative measurements were not sensitive enough to the reported changes. This study emphasises the difficulty of measuring the effectiveness of interventions, particularly over a short period of time; and the philosophical debate related to the weighting of trainee reports of satisfaction as sufficient evidence for the value of a particular modality becomes pertinent.

2.3.3.2 Structured Group Supervision

Wilbur *et al.* (1991) describe the format of a Structured Group Supervision (SGS) model, and report their findings after conducting a pilot study of the model's effectiveness. This model will be described in detail, since this was the model adapted for use in the peer supervision group in the study to be reported in this dissertation.

The SGS model was developed by integrating the work of Hart (1982) in which he suggested three models of supervision for individual supervision: skill development, personal growth, and integration (Wilbur *et al.*, 1991), and a typology of group work modalities: task-process, psycho-process, and social-process, proposed by Betz, Wilbur, and Roberts-Wilbur (1981, in Wilbur *et al.*, 1991). Wilbur *et al.* (1991) propose that the focus and goals of each of the three models of supervision suggested by Hart (1982, in Wilbur *et al.*, 1991) correspond with the three types of group modalities: skill development corresponds with task-process (termed an 'extrapersonal' focus), personal growth with psycho-process (termed an 'intrapersonal' focus), and the integration model with social-process (termed an 'interpersonal' focus) (Wilbur *et al.*, 1991). One of each of these three resultant groupings becomes the focus of the group task, and will determine the level of group discussion in phase 3 (to be described below).

The proposed structure of the SGS model provides "for the orderly input and processing of the supervision focus and feedback" (Wilbur *et al.*, 1991, p.97). The structure of the SGS model is as follows:

- Phase One: The Request-for-Assistance Statement;
- Phase Two: The Questioning Period and Identification of Focus;
- Phase Three: The Feedback Statements;
- Pause period
- Phase Four: The Supervisee Response;
- Phase Five: Optional Discussion Period (Wilbur *et al.*, 1991).

In the first phase, the supervisee provides the group with case-related information which is relevant to the specific assistance he is requesting from the group. This is then followed by making a Request-for-Assistance (RFA) statement, in which the presenter specifies which of the above three foci (skill development, personal growth, or integrative - that is the integration of

personal beliefs with an approach to the client issue at hand) is relevant to his needs. The utility of such a problem statement at the beginning of a supervision session is noted by some writers (Storm and Heath, 1985).

In the second phase, group members question the presenter using a 'round-robin' technique. This requires that each member takes a turn to ask one question, allowing all members to participate. This turn-taking format could be repeated until participants have no further questions. This phase then ends with the focus of the discussion being identified by the facilitator as extrapersonal, intrapersonal or interpersonal, depending on the RFA and clarification which occurred during the questioning.

The third phase requires group members to provide feedback to the presenter, with the presenter (supervisee) remaining silent, but permitted to take notes. The presenter remains silent in order to minimise the potential for the presenter to feel the need to defend a position or course of action, and to enable the presenter to focus on listening to the discussion. For the feedback statements, the round-robin technique is again suggested, with each group member presenting feedback in the form of "productive suggestions" (Wilbur *et al.*, 1991, p.96), phrased in the first person - as if the contributor were the presenter, again to reduce the potential for judgmental attitudes and supervisee resistance.

A pause period follows phase three in order for the supervisee to have time to consider the feedback and prepare for the next phase. During this time group members might interact with each other, but not with the supervisee.

Phase four gives the supervisee the opportunity to respond to her peers' suggestions, saying what was beneficial, and giving reasons for her opinions. Group members remain silent during this phase. Following this phase, there is the possibility of a discussion of the four-phase process, providing the opportunity for further exploration or for closure.

The model was designed for both counsellors in training as well as those already in practice. It is intended that group size be between 8 and 10 members, and that the length of time required for the five-phase process be approximately an hour. It is thus possible, depending on the time

available, for two or three 'rounds' of the process to be undertaken, providing supervision for two or three supervisees. Since group participation is actively encouraged, use of the model potentially optimises the available time.

Wilbur *et al.* (1991) state that the aim of the structuring of the model is "to minimize group member interactions that interfere with the focus and goal of ... supervision ... enhance group productivity and reduce conflict and resistance that often impede group supervision processes" (p.97). They note that the group leader's role is to monitor the focus of the members' input, and to "avoid prolonged participation and judgements by individual members" (Wilbur *et al.*, 1991, p.94). They continue: "While providing psychological security for the supervisee and other group members, the leader relinquishes the responsibility for increased self-awareness, affective sensitivity, behavior change, and issue resolution to the group members themselves" (p.94). The leader thus avoids directing or guiding the discussion, and group members take a substantial measure of responsibility for the content of the group interactions, and the resultant benefits to themselves.

In a pilot study, two of the authors of the Wilbur *et al.* (1991) article ran a total of 10 groups over a 7 year period in three different universities, with 5 control groups being run during the same period by a third supervisor who used the traditional group supervision method. Participants were entry-level masters candidates randomly assigned to experimental ($N=194$) and control ($N=50$) groups (Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Hart, Morris and Betz, 1994). The groups met on a weekly basis for 3-hourly sessions over the duration of an academic year. Evaluation was done by author-designed "pre- and posttest ratings of self and peers ... after each participant had presented an audiotaped counseling session of himself or herself with a client" (Wilbur *et al.*, 1991, p.97). Given the level of training of the participants, only skill development and personal growth foci were considered since the "integration model of supervision ... assumes requisite levels of skills sophistication and personal development beyond those of entry-level master's students" (Wilbur *et al.*, 1991, p.98). Statistically significant differences were found between pre- and post test means of the SGS group, however the authors acknowledge limitations to the study, including author investment in the process and the many uncontrolled variables which may have contributed over the course of a year. They therefore recommend further research into the model by unbiased investigators (Wilbur *et al.*, 1994).

One of the features of the model which attracted my interest was the potential for it to be adapted for peer group supervision without the presence of a supervisor. Wilbur *et al.* (1991) comment that participants “quickly adapt to the structure ... and require little or no direction from the supervisor other than being informed of the time remaining for completion of the particular phase” (p.92). Furthermore, Bernard and Goodyear (1992) write favourably about the SGS model, and see it as having utility when group members are particularly timid. They state that “such a structure ... distracts supervisees from some of their more personal issues and seems, in our experience, to work very well with groups that approach the task of case conferences in an overly cautious fashion” (p.77).

Wilbur *et al.* (1991) acknowledge the continuing debate regarding the amount of structure needed in groups, and refer to the literature related to professional development which indicates

that a high level of leader-imposed cognitive and behavioral structure tends to enhance interpersonal behavior during early stages of group development. As the group becomes more cohesive and trusting, however, the positive effects of structure decrease, and the continued use of high structure may even impede the group process (p.99).

Given the support in the literature for group supervision, particularly in a structured form, and the availability of suggested models such as the two described in the above sub-section, it would seem that investigation of the implementation of such models over a time period could prove fruitful.

2.3.4 Advantages of group supervision

Bernard and Goodyear (1992) note that although economies of time, cost and optimisation of supervisory expertise are a feature of group supervision, expediency is not a justifiable reason for undertaking group supervision. Hawkins and Shohet (1989) concur with this view, stating: “ideally group supervision should come from a positive choice rather than a compromise forced upon the group and supervisor” (p.95). In this next section, the advantages of group supervision, identified by a number of sources and implicit in much of the discussion in section 2.3.2, are summarised under five sub-headings which follow.

2.3.4.1 Trainee experiences

Abels (1977) highlights a major advantage of group supervision: "... its emphasis on the use of the group as a medium for bringing about consequential change in people's lives brings it closer to the natural way in which people change and grow. It is through relationships with others that most change occurs" (p.176). The group experience thus utilises a naturally occurring process of interaction and may impact on the learning of the participants in a number of ways. Getzel and Salmon (1985), in a review of literature, identify seven forms of "mutual aid possible in group supervision" (p.31):

- * an increased number of sources of information, and range of life experiences;
- * the opportunity to challenge opinions and use the group as a 'sounding board';
- * opening up of risky topics for discussion;
- * the reduction in anxiety and reassurance of realising that group members are all 'in the same boat' and share common problems;
- * emotional support, sympathy and praise from peers;
- * provision of feedback from peers;
- * encouragement of peers to provide lateral help to each other.

Thus, as the trainee gains in experience, he begins to recognise his own skills and can make contributions which assist his peers.

Further positive comments in the literature regarding the benefits of group supervision for trainees follow. Bernard and Goodyear (1992) highlight a reduction in trainee dependence and diminishing of hierarchical issues as an advantage. Kadushin (1992) describes the wider variety of experiences which are shared, leading to richer "sources for learning" (p.406); and "opportunity to 'see' the work of others and ... a basis for comparison" (p.408). Thus, self-evaluation is also a benefit in this modality. Meyerstein (1977) comments: "the potential for moral support and mutual validation that emerge from the sharing ... can foster significant group cohesiveness" (p.486) which in turn can strengthen group members' sense of professional identity.

2.3.4.2 Modified role of the supervisor

Kadushin (1992) writes of the way in which the power and control of the supervisor may be modified in group supervision. There is the potential for the supervisor to share the

“responsibility for teaching” (p.412), and for group members to “have a greater measure of control and a greater responsibility for the initiative” (p.412). The group members become more able to articulate their collective needs, and it becomes possible to challenge bureaucratic issues and the supervisor as sole authority. Kaslow (1972, in Getzel and Salmon, 1985) states that “when the supervisor risks herself enough to deal with several workers simultaneously, the authority she exercises is more rational and less pervasive than in individual conferences ... she will be less likely to exercise rigid, autocratic control” (p.32).

Such a modification in the supervisor’s role can be a source of relief for the supervisor, since the responsibilities for group work and maintenance are shared (Getzel and Salmon, 1985). Kadushin (1992) writes of the way in which group supervision allows for both the instrumental and expressive roles to be expressed by the supervisor and group in complementary and concordant ways. Thus, the supervisor may confront whilst the group reassures, or vice versa. Furthermore, the group’s support of a supervisor’s opinion might give an individual more motivation to change.

Hawkins and Shohet (1989) write of an additional advantage: the group “can also provide a way for the supervisor to test out their emotional or intuitive response ... by checking if other group members have the same response” (p.95). The supervisor is also enabled to take more of an observer stance, enabling him to gain a sense of different individuals’ functioning in a group context, providing a further opportunity for evaluation. The extent to which the supervisor’s role may be modified will depend on the form the group takes and structuring of group tasks. A key factor will also be the willingness of the supervisor to relinquish a certain amount of power and expose herself to group scrutiny.

2.3.4.3 Widening the range of possible tasks

As mentioned in section 2.3.3 above, the potential for structuring group roles and interactions in a variety of ways in a group supervision context is far greater than in dyadic supervision. Further possibilities are as follows: Hawkins and Shohet (1989) regard the use of action techniques a benefit, and Kadushin (1992) mentions the possibility of using video- and audiotapes, role plays and group presentations. Abels (1977) suggests the use of creative problem-solving strategies such as brainstorming, metaphors and analogies in order to help members “restructure their patterns of thinking and acting” (p.194).

Pedder (1986) expresses the view that it “is much easier for a group to remain task-orientated” (p.6) than in individual supervision, and that general discussion outside of the work at hand is limited by the functioning of group supervision. A further possible use of group supervision occurs when the group members are involved in running group therapy: then the group supervision context mirrors the therapeutic modality more closely than dyadic supervision, providing the potential for experiential learning.

2.3.4.4 Promotion of the learning process

An important aim of supervision is to “facilitate the trainee’s own thinking around the case” (Pedder, 1986, p.10). Kadushin (1992) regards a group situation as a more comfortable learning environment for some trainees. He speaks of the “more diffuse relationship with the supervisor” (p.408), which a group promotes, as enabling a devotion of “energies to learning” (p.408). In an article reflecting on their experiences of group supervision, Paul and Bluck (1997) state that the “presence of other trainees ... broadened the experience. Hearing different views of our own patients, learning vicariously about others’ patients and standing in a ‘third position’ outside the therapeutic relationship ... were all useful” (p.224). Bernard and Goodyear (1992) suggest that several of the learning objectives of supervision are better accomplished in a group modality. These are:

- * the potential for a greater variety of learning experiences;
- * collaborative learning opportunities in which cognitive skills are enhanced through verbalisations of group members;
- * the collective and consultative problem solving of the group due to the variety of perspectives.

Hillerbrand (1989) explores some of the cognitive principles which underpin learning in group supervision. These include: the potential for learning skills through observation of both the supervisor and peers; a context for practising skills which includes the provision of feedback; the enhancing of skill development through the trainees’ verbalisations in the presence of peers; the ability of trainees to better decode peers’ nonverbal cues which indicate anxiety or confusion; the promotion of cognitive rehearsal, where others’ statements “are matched to an internal model” (p.294), and the monitoring of one’s own thoughts; and finally, increased motivation to acquire and use skills demonstrated by peers.

2.3.4.5 Increased exposure to interactive processes

Various ways in which the interactive and group dynamic processes may be used are mentioned in section 2.3.2.3 above. Abels (1977) states that “we cannot work with people without understanding the reciprocal underlying patterns of behavior ... that evolve when interactions occur” (p.181), and that trainees “engaged in attempting to develop their capacities for helping are part of a vast network of interrelated acts - past, present, and future - that impact on both their clients and themselves” (p.195). In a supervision group, members adopt different roles in the group, and developing awareness of one’s own and others’ interpersonal functioning deepens insight. Sansbury (1982) writes that the group is the ideal vehicle to broaden “the focus of supervision ... to facilitate the supervisees’ emotional sensitivity to their clients” (p.55), due to its interactive nature.

To summarise, using the ‘individual’, ‘task’ and ‘maintenance’ functions of groups (cited by Hawkinds and Shoheit, 1989): the advantages of group supervision relate to the variety of individuals involved (both trainees and the supervisor); the tasks in which the group engages; and group formation and maintenance.

However, where there are advantages, there are likely to be disadvantages - when the group does not function in the ways described above. Moore (1991), in reflecting on being a supervisee, comments on her experiences of group supervision, describing both the potentials and pitfalls: “In a group the possibilities for response and stimulation are multiplied, but so are the possibilities for misunderstanding, comparison, paralysis and frustration” (p.141). It is thus necessary to consider the disadvantages of group supervision.

2.3.5 Disadvantages of group supervision

The disadvantages may be summarised under ‘individual’, ‘task’ and ‘maintenance’ functions.

2.3.5.1 Individual difficulties

As with any group process, individual members may experience difficulties with both expectations and interactions. Moore (1991) describes difficulties in being able to trust the group and to feel safe enough to open up honestly. Furthermore, being able to be assertive enough to claim time and space are often issues. Kadushin (1992) notes that group supervision is tailored

to “general, common needs” (p.413), thus individual needs may often be neglected, at the expense of the individual’s interest in the group discussion. Borders (1991) comments that “peers may be overly supportive and prone to giving advice” (p.248). A further risk is that individuals develop dependence on group advice, thus abdicating personal responsibility for decisions.

From the supervisor’s perspective, group supervision is demanding, with the supervisor needing to fulfill the roles expected in individual supervision as well as manage the group context. The supervisor thus needs “substantial self assurance and personal security” (Getzel and Salmon, 1985, p.33), and a willingness to expose her skills and faults. The demands on the supervisor when facilitating a group are complex, and some supervisors may thus never be comfortable in a group situation. A further limitation is that the supervisor is often part of the authority structure in which the group members work, and this may limit the trainees’ willingness to risk opinions or to be open, particularly when organisational issues are problematic for their casework. If attendance of group supervision is mandatory, this may increase participants’ resistance, leading to further challenges for group facilitation.

2.3.5.2 Task-related difficulties

Hawkins and Shohet (1989) describe two difficulties related to group tasks: firstly, that the dynamic of individual therapy is less likely to be mirrored in the group; and secondly, that there is less time for each individual to receive supervision. Kadushin (1992) cites the second as a principal disadvantage in that group supervision “cannot easily provide specific application of learning to the worker’s own caseload” (p.413). These two disadvantages emphasise the need for trainees to have developed a certain stage of cognitive development in order to transfer learning from the specifics of one case or context to another. A further disadvantage raised by Borders (1991) relates to groups potentially having difficulty staying on task. She thus recommends a structured approach and participant training.

2.3.5.3 Group-related difficulties

A number of authors highlight the potential for the group dynamics to undermine the supervisory process (Abels, 1977; Bernard and Goodyear, 1992; Getzel and Salmon, 1985; Hawkins and Shohet, 1989; Kadushin, 1992). Certain of the potential difficulties have been discussed in section 2.3.2 above, and may be summarised as:

- * group competitiveness and rivalry leading to destructive comments and behaviour;
- * trainees being over-eager to please the supervisor, and unwilling to confront issues;
- * idealisation of the supervisor and consequent envy;
- * pressures from the group for individual conformity;
- * scapegoating or targeting of a group member, or the provision of too much negative feedback.

Gitterman and Miller (1977) warn against an over-investment in the consideration of group dynamics over the task: “Real learning takes place when the interaction or process is essentially a structured and goal-directed activity in pursuit of substance and competence” (p.114).

The disadvantages which have been highlighted above need to be borne in mind when plans are made for group supervision, and these considerations are included in section 2.6.

Following their consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of group supervision, Bernard and Goodyear (1992) state that they do not suggest that group supervision replaces dyadic supervision except for post-trainees. They believe that group supervision needs to be seen as supplementary to individual supervision when therapists are in training. Kadushin (1992) views group supervision as part of a developmental process. He proposes that the “movement is from dependence on the supervisor, to a lesser measure of dependence on peers, to autonomous self-dependence” (p.412). Thus, at the beginning of training the balance would be in favour of more individual supervision with limited group supervision, and as the trainee moves “toward independent, responsible practice” (Kadushin, 1992, p.412), the balance should shift toward a “greater measure of group supervision” (Kadushin, 1992, p.412). A number of authors therefore advise some combination of individual and group supervision, depending on the training and experience levels of participants.

2.4 PEER SUPERVISION

Peer or collegial supervision is listed as one of the six models of psychotherapy supervision by Hess (1980b), and has been mentioned in the previous paragraph as a means of trainees shifting from dependence on supervisors towards greater autonomy. Peer supervision occurs both in groups and in dyads or triads, and has been defined as “a process through which counselors or

counselor trainees assist each other to become more effective and skillful helpers by using their relationships and professional skills” (Wagner and Smith, 1979, p.289).

The term peer implies equal role status and Hess (1980b) emphasises the cooperative nature of the relationship, where mutual growth is the goal. The terms ‘peer’ and ‘supervision’ may seem to be contradictory terms, since peer implies equality and supervision implies authority; however, a number of authors, including Gomersall (1997), do not see these as mutually exclusive, since peers have differing experiences thus strict equality is not possible, and a broader definition of supervision incorporates principles and ethics related to the task at hand, to which participants assent. This section will review the literature on peer supervision, since it highlights the ways in which learning from peers provide unique and potentially different experiences from learning from those with more expertise and experience.

Billow and Mendelsohn (1987) state that the psychoanalytic training literature has made little mention of the role of peers “in the growth and development of a psychoanalyst” (p.35). Although there is no doubt that in the early days, peer supervision was common, and Freud clearly envisaged the inclusion of training experiences of many kinds - both hierarchical and otherwise, there are a mere handful of references to peer supervision groups prior to the 1980's (Billow and Mendelsohn, 1987). Billow and Mendelsohn (1987) go on to give examples of professional development issues where peer contact may make a significant contribution, however these peer consultations tend to be informal, and have not generally been formally structured in any way.

In the field of social work, ongoing post-training supervision is commonplace in agencies, but has been subject to growing criticism due to its resource intense nature and the perpetuation of dependency issues which mitigate against fully-fledged professionalism (Hardcastle, 1991). Peer supervision has thus been one of the alternate modalities proposed in order to promote greater “worker responsibility, authority and accountability” (Hardcastle, 1991, p.65).

From a family therapy perspective, Meyerstein (1977) notes that “peer networks using co-operative problem-solving to capitalize on pre-existing bonds between people have been shown through clinical application to enhance coping strengths” (p.486). Thus peer supervision for practitioners, who have completed their training, has gained growing support.

2.4.1 Support for peer supervision

The interest in peer supervision has been prompted both by professionals' needs in the field as well as by theoretical developments. Since many therapists work in private practice after their training, peer supervision offers the opportunity of relieving the potential isolation of the work. It is also a way of keeping pace with developments in the field. Furthermore, it protects the interests of clients, since practitioners can bring difficulties and issues for peer review.

One of the APA standards specifies that psychologists "maintain a continuing cooperative relationship with colleagues" (in Greenburg, Lewis and Johnston, 1985, p.437), and Greenburg *et al.* (1985) interpret this to apply particularly "when the best interest of the client is at stake" (p.437). An additional consideration is the potential for therapists' skill levels to decrease or be eroded after the end of training (Meyer, 1978, in Remley, Benschhoff and Mowbray, 1987; Spooner and Stone, 1977, in Runkel and Hackney, 1982); thus pointing to the need for ongoing supervision. Hawkins and Shohet (1989) note that humanistic psychotherapy approaches have "actively encouraged the development of peer supervision" due to a commitment "to continuous supervision throughout one's professional career and not only when one is in training" (p.104).

Hardcastle (1991) draws from two theoretical sources to support the move toward peer supervision: from two of the theories of motivation, and from growing understandings of the empowerment process. Hardcastle (1991) cites both Herzberg's two-factor theory and Vroom's Expectancy Model as relevant examples of theories on motivation. Intrinsic work factors such as recognition, challenge, and opportunities for growth are motivators; and expectations of worker performance, responsibility and accountability, if enabled and rewarded by the organisation, improve worker efficacy. From an empowerment perspective, participatory decision-making and appropriate autonomy and control "foster a greater sense of self-efficacy" (Conger and Kanungo, 1988, p.478). Engaging in peer supervisory practices has the potential to promote the development of such factors in the workplace.

Remley *et al.* (1987) state that trust between the peers is the "most important element" (p.54) in peer supervision. They then list a number of factors which need consideration in the selection of a peer supervisor: levels of training and experience; theoretical approach to therapy; and the work setting of each.

The first of the variables considered by Remley *et al.* (1987) is the relative level of training and experience of the peers, and whether there is an hierarchical difference between them in a work context. Both Kaplan (1983) and Worthington (1984) cite research which showed that greater experience does not necessarily make a person a better supervisor; with Worthington (1984) stating that “supervisors who are interns are often as capable as more experienced supervisors” (p.74). With regard to the second variable, Remley *et al.* (1987) cite research which suggests that for beginner counsellors, task orientated supervision is preferable, whereas more experienced practitioners can benefit from differing theoretical perspectives. The third variable, work setting, will depend on the needs for a common frame of reference versus the value of an outside view, and the ease with which meetings can be scheduled.

2.4.2 Models for peer supervision

Peer supervision can take a variety of different forms. An example is where a pair of practitioners meet regularly, “in which each ... alternate roles” (Houston, 1990, p.5) of supervisor and supervisee, within one session (each having a part of the time to focus on work with clients) or alternating week by week. “In this way, people overtly learn to supervise as well as to counsel” (Houston, 1990, p.5), thus both simultaneously benefit from the experience. Another common form is the use of triads, where the roles of supervisor, supervisee and observer are rotated either within sessions or from one session to the next (e.g. Spice and Spice, 1976). Hawkins and Shohet (1989) provide an example where one of the three takes a turn at being supervisor of the other two within a session, with the supervisee and observer giving feedback after forty minutes, before the supervisee and observer swop roles and the process is repeated.

A handful of models for peer supervision have been described procedurally and subjected to research. Seligman (1978) described a system where trainees were supervised by advanced graduate students with no training in supervision. The findings were that trainees’ levels of facilitative counselling were increased, and that “peer supervisors who were structured, didactic, and technique-oriented were most effective” (Hansen, Robins and Grimes, 1982, p.18).

Over a three year period, Wagner and Smith (1979) developed a model of dyadic peer supervision for counselling trainees, which included observation of the process by the peer group, and included the counselor educator. They reported accelerated trainee development in the areas of

self-direction, confidence and assertiveness; a reduced dependence on authority; increased willingness to take responsibility for self-development and to contribute to peers' training, promoting interdependence; and a commitment to ongoing professional training once qualified.

Runkel and Hackney (1982) critique a model of peer supervision developed in the context of pastoral counselling by Houts (1980, in Runkel and Hackney, 1982). This model was developed because ministers could not access adequately trained supervisors. Following a two-day workshop, the participants were divided into two- and three-person peer supervision teams. After three months of peer supervision, which included supportive monthly group meetings, all 23 participants responded positively to the qualitative self-report evaluation. Respondents appreciated the following benefits: the opportunity for in-depth growth, increased morale as assistance was received and goals were met, and perceptions of increased competency in which they "decreased dependency and increased their autonomy" (Runkel and Hackney, 1982, p.114). The advantages of this model are: an increase in available resources for assistance, the provision of peers as models, and individuals contracting goals according to their needs. Furthermore, Runkel and Hackney (1982) note that "a peer can help in dealing with conflicts in unique ways that a superior cannot" (p.114). This model seemed to be viable for counsellors after training, but more detail regarding actual peer interactions was not given in the article.

Remley *et al.* (1987) propose a structured peer supervision model, and Benshoff (1993) describes the results of two studies which use a modified version of the approach suggested by Remley *et al.* (1987). The Structured Peer Supervision Model (SPSM) is planned in such a way that it prescribes tasks for each one-hour session for seven consecutive meetings which include "goal-setting, tape review, and case consultation ... discussion of counseling theoretical orientations, individual approaches to working with clients, and relevant counseling issues" (Benshoff, 1993, p.91). In the first descriptive study, Benshoff (1993) evaluated participants' responses and "attempted to identify the ... unique aspects of the peer supervision experience" (p.93). The results indicated that students valued the "lack of evaluation, combined with the support and encouragement of peers" and "the opportunity to increase their repertoires of specific skills and techniques through observing and critiquing other counselors-in-training" (p.98). They did however report the need for "specific modeling, instruction, and guidance for how to conduct peer supervision sessions" (p.99) in particular the modelling of feedback skills. The second study was

designed to “assess the impact of the SPSM on overall supervised counseling effectiveness of counselor trainees” (p.95) through using counsellor self-ratings. These results were inconclusive, with no significant differences between those who had participated in peer supervision and a group who had received traditional supervision only. However, there were no measures of effects on participants’ levels of anxiety, self-confidence or “ability to utilize colleagues as consultants” (p.100) which had been measured in other studies (Benshoff, 1993). Benshoff (1993) concludes that further research is necessary to compare peer to other supervision models using multiple measures.

Benshoff and Paisley (1996) developed a structured dyadic model of peer consultation for school counsellors (SPCM), similar to that of Remley *et al.* (1987) described above, and reported positive results, albeit with a relatively small sample. The participants reported both improved consultation skills and improved counselling skills; as well as experiences of valuable support and the provision of new ideas.

In a further study using the SPCM for a group of school counsellors, Crutchfield and Borders (1997) did not find statistically significant gains in measures of job satisfaction, self efficacy or counselling effectiveness when a group following the model was compared to a control group, however there were small gains in the desired direction on each of the measures. From a qualitative perspective however, participants reported gains in support to be most helpful and receiving concrete feedback as a secondary gain. It is possible that these equivocal findings are due to the limitations of self-report rating scales, or to the time-limited nature of the interventions; however, the possibility that skills development in supervisors was limited, may also have led to limited change.

Stoltenberg (1981) noted that as counsellors develop their skills, there is an increasing preference for peer supervision. Certain studies have recommended dual supervision, where students receive both peer and staff supervision. Kaplan (1983) cites a study by Davis and Arvey (1978, in Kaplan, 1983), in which trainees receiving dual supervision reported significantly better experiences and training than those receiving only traditional supervision. Following a literature survey reviewing research on practicum supervision, Hansen *et al.* (1982) note that “peer supervision may increase facilitative communication and may be more effective with didactic methods” (p.21). It would

thus seem that, as for group supervision, peer supervision is recommended as an adjunct to individual supervision in training, and that it has a variety of potential uses for practitioners post training.

2.4.3 Critiques of peer supervision

A number of authors have offered cautions regarding peer supervision. Hardcastle (1991) conducted a pilot study of peer supervision in a social work unit of a large agency which included focused interviews with participants as well as observations. The preliminary conclusions supported the potential of peer supervision, if the organisational context allowed for workers to assume accountability and developed appropriate structural communication processes. Thus, respective responsibilities needed clear definition, and “structural and physical arrangements ... need to promote peer support, consultation and coverage” (p.73).

Roth (1986), in describing peer supervision in a social work agency, warns of the potential for peer supervision to promote mediocrity, since “not all people are capable of doing all things equally well” (p.166). He warns that peer supervision could be destructive and time consuming, and that without adequate training in supervision, an individual is as likely to model “some of the negative, punitive aspects of their own supervisors as they are to model some of the more positive, caring aspects” (p.166). He then goes on to assert that the “critical variables appear to be the time spent in organizing, the thought given to individual pairings, the amount and type of training in the supervisory process given” (p.168).

The views of Roth (1986) are supported by Kaslow (1986), who warns that supervision is a skilled process, and that downgrading it by the idea that ‘anyone can do it’ is detrimental to the discipline and “the best interests of the client” (p.248). Bradley (1989) also warns that peer supervision could be either helpful or harmful, depending on “the attitude of the peer supervisor, the format of peer supervision, and training in peer supervision” (p.162). She recommends the modelling of peer supervision by a trainer, with the group being seen as an opportunity to practice the skills required. Finally, she states that counsellors “with serious skill deficiencies and those who are extremely defensive should not be candidates for peer supervision” (p.163).

To summarise, the overview of studies in 2.4.2 above indicates that peer supervision may provide an experience of learning which differs from that provided by traditional supervision. Co-operative problem-solving seems to enhance coping skills, and participatory decision-making may promote a greater sense of self-efficacy. The decrease in dependency on authority figures means that individuals are encouraged to take greater responsibility and become more accountable for their work. Peers are potentially able to provide support and encouragement, thus increasing morale. Skills may be enhanced through the observation and critiquing of another, new ideas are generated, and conflicts are discussed. Peers may provide concrete feedback in an environment where formal evaluation is absent. Furthermore, individuals learn some of the skills of supervision, and there is the potential for participants to develop a greater ability to supervise themselves.

However, the cautions in 2.4.3 need to be carefully noted when peer supervision is being considered. It would seem that peer supervision could play a valuable part in professional development, once the individual has developed basic skills, has gained some experience, and has been exposed to some individual supervision.

2.5 PEER GROUP SUPERVISION

According to Billow and Mendelsohn (1987), "any peer supervisory group is a group without a leader" (p.39). Thus, the factor that distinguishes peer group supervision from group supervision is the absence of a supervisory figure who differs in status from other group members, and this will have a significant impact on group member responsibilities and interactions. Marks and Hixon (1986) thus note that "peer group supervision differs from group supervision in that all members of a peer group share equal responsibility for the functioning, outcomes, and decisions of the group" (p.419).

The absence of a supervisor changes the dynamics and functioning of a peer group, impacting on its potential to enhance learning for participants, and increasing the risk of the group experiencing some of the difficulties associated with group dynamics (listed in 2.3.5.3 above), since there "is no outside facilitator whose job (or one of them) is to watch the process" (Hawkins and Shohet, 1989, pp.105-6). Paul and Bluck (1997) note the difficulties their peer group experienced when

the supervisor was away, since reflection then was not facilitated and the “holding capacity of the supervisors did not seem to have survived their absence” (p.224).

The cautions mentioned in 2.4.3 above are also likely to apply to peer group supervision. Greenburg *et al.* (1985) note that since affective and interpersonal aspects may be a part of peer interactions, the “necessary conditions for safety and freedom” (p.439) must be provided. Thus, provision must be made, through some sort of system or structuring of the group interactions, for group members to develop a sense of safety in the absence of a group leader, or for some form of facilitation to occur.

Lewis *et al.* (1988) expressed concern that though there are isolated reports of peer group supervision in the literature “there is no information about the extent of participation among private practitioners and no general overview of the characteristics either of existing groups or of group participants” (p.81). They therefore conducted a study in which 480 psychologists in the USA responded to a survey. Of the sample, 23% were currently involved in a peer group, and 24% reported involvement in the past. 60% of the sample who were not currently in a group expressed the desire to belong to one. This indicated the popularity of peer groups at that time in the USA. There were no significant differences between those in or not in peer groups other than a greater tendency for those in metropolitan areas to attend. Typically, the groups were formed through personal contact, were informal and leaderless, and included an average of six persons. Group membership tended to be heterogenous “in theoretical orientation, gender, and amount of experience” (Lewis *et al.*, 1988, p.85). Groups met approximately twice-monthly for about two hours per session. The groups’ focus varied between dealing with difficult cases, “discussing professional/ethical issues, and giving emotional support” (p.85).

Borders (1991) states that “peer group supervision is widely advocated but infrequently described” (p.248), comparing the literature to the ‘rudimentary level’ of group supervision literature in general; and Crutchfield and Borders (1997) note that few “peer-group models have been implemented, and even fewer evaluated for their impact” (p.221). There are thus a limited number of studies which have described and evaluated models of peer group supervision. In the table which follows (table 2.2), nine studies of peer group supervision located in the literature are summarised, in order that comparisons may be made. The variables which impact on each group

are noted under four headings: membership, organization, structure and focus. The studies are listed chronologically according to year of publication. A discussion of the emergent findings from the studies follows after the table.

Table 2.2 Summary of studies of peer group supervision

<i><u>STUDY</u></i>	<i><u>MEMBERSHIP</u></i>			<i><u>ORGANISATION</u></i>			<i><u>STRUCTURE</u></i>	<i><u>FOCUS</u></i>		
	<u>Group Size</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Profession</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Fre-quency</u>	<u>Dur-ation</u>		<u>Task</u>	<u>Task & Therapist</u>	<u>Inter personal Process</u>
Todd and Pine (1968)	10	Practitioners	Psychiatry	1 ½ h	Monthly	13 years	Presentation then discussion. Close adherence to group task.		X	
Hare and Frankena (1972)	2 groups of 4	New practitioners of similar experience	Social Work		Regular meeting		Group A: Presenter-selected case, discussion. Group B: As for A, + case review and audiotapes.		X	
Winstead, Bonovitz, Gale & Evans (1974)	4	Second year trainees	Psychiatry	1 h	Weekly	1 year			X	
Hunt & Issacharoff (1975)	11	Practitioners in group therapy	Psycho - therapists	2 - 2½ h	Bi weekly, then weekly (3 rd yr.)	3 years	Leaderless and task - focused		X	
Meyerstein (1977)		Elementary - 2 nd year of training	Para - professional family therapists	1 h	Weekly	1 year	Leaderless and Unstructured	X		
Nobler (1980)	6	Very experienced practitioners	Social Work and Psychology	2h	Bi weekly	6 years	Leaderless		X	
Schreiber & Frank (1983)	5 - 7	Private practitioners	Social Work		Bi weekly	5 years	Leaderless, Case Presentation, Discussion	X		
Greenburg, Lewis and Johnson (1985)	6	Private practitioners	Psychology and Social Work	4 h	Monthly	3 years	Unstructured, leaderless, agenda determined by members' needs		X	
Marks and Hixon (1986)	5-10	Practitioners of varied experience	Social Work	1 ½ h	Weekly or Bi weekly	1 year	Case presentation and process observer	X		X

2.5.1 Group membership

Consideration of the table shows that groups vary in size from 4 to 11 members. Some groups remained a consistent size, whilst others changed according to members' availability and the changes in membership which occurred over time. A number of the writers noted the need for consistent attendance and commitment in order to promote continuity and the development of trust. One of the groups was initially open (Hunt and Issacharoff, 1975), but soon made a decision to create firmer boundaries regarding membership.

Seven of the nine studies were of groups of practitioners for whom training was complete, including one of newly qualified practitioners (Hare and Frankena, 1972), and on the other end of the scale one of practitioners who had at least twenty years of experience each (Nobler, 1980). There is one study of second year trainee psychiatrists who began the group in order to hone their psychotherapeutic skills (Winstead *et al.*, 1974), and one study of second year trainee paraprofessionals involved in family therapy (Meyerstein, 1977), where peer group supervision was a required part of the training. This confirms the Lewis *et al.* (1988) finding that peer group supervision is more commonly found amongst those already in practice. It is possible that so little peer group supervision is reported for trainees because trainer concerns about accountability, or concerns about the role of supervisor authority, or the need for evaluation in training programmes limit its formal inclusion in training programmes.

One of the concerns expressed in the literature on peer supervision was the potential for peer groups of equal levels of experience to share in their ignorance. In the above studies, this did not appear to be an issue of concern for the practitioners, since they already had experience to draw from. Hare and Frankena (1972) comment: "group members had already completed periods of training and supervision, they were not unacquainted with proven techniques or knowledge..." (p.529). They conclude that peer group supervision, for practitioners with a similar amount of experience, even if diverse, has the potential to foster innovation, and is a model "for learning that encourages flexibility and accountability in the delivery of service" (p.529).

Participants in one of the studies (Meyerstein, 1977), who were at an elementary level of training, reported concerns about not being able to learn from their peers. Meyerstein (1977) was of the opinion that the trainees' resistance to peer supervision "contained elements of their struggle with accepting responsibility for their own growth, reflecting broader problems in self-image and personal development" (p.487). This possibly reflected their limited level of professional development, and the need for a modified version of peer group supervision for such trainees was expressed by the author.

Of the professional disciplines represented in the above studies, participants in five of the studies were social workers, two were groups of psychiatrists, two were groups of psychologists, one group consisted of psychotherapists and one of family therapists. This indicates a greater occurrence of reported peer group supervision in social work, possibly due to the professional requirement for ongoing supervision after training, or indicating that whilst peer group supervision is undertaken in other disciplines, such as psychotherapy, it has not been researched. Only two of the studies combined participants from more than one discipline (social work and psychology), even though a number of sources write of the value of contributions from other disciplines, and the richness that a variety of perspectives provides.

2.5.2 Group organization

Groups met for between one and four hours, depending on the frequency of meetings, with weekly groups tending to use less time per session. The frequency of meetings seemed to depend on members' availability (with the two groups of trainees able to meet weekly). In one of the practitioner studies, where one set of groups was able to meet weekly due to agency support, a comparison of weekly meetings with those less frequent was possible (Marks and Hixon, 1986). The groups which met weekly reported the most growth in trust, support from peers, and decrease in anxiety which promoted greater expression of feelings. Those that met less frequently remained more task-orientated. Greenburg *et al.* (1985) note the need for regularly scheduled times and continuity in order to develop trust between group members, thus allowing "for deeper levels of exploration and growth" (p.446). Continuity in the group enables members to learn about each other's "needs and predispositions" (p.446) and enables follow-up to occur.

The groups represented in table 2.2 were in existence for between one and 13 years. The longest-standing group was that of Todd and Pine (1968), and in a follow-up article, Brandes and Todd (1972, in Hunt and Issacharoff, 1975), report on the dissolution of the group after 15 years. The stability of this long-standing group was ascribed to group norms which “emphasized close adherence to the group task and minimized any opening up of emotional currents between members” (Hunt and Issacharoff, 1975, p.1166); however following the death of two members, this “controlled and structured way of working ... prevented the expression and working through of these feelings” (p.1166).

2.5.3 Group structure

Eight of the nine studies reported on groups which were leaderless, and in most cases the group process was unstructured. The common mode of functioning was either a case presentation (rotated amongst group members) followed by discussion, or an agenda for discussion determined by group members’ needs established at the beginning of the group meeting. The most recent of the studies was developed following a careful study of the literature, leading to a process observer being nominated for each group meeting in order to comment on the group process and the group’s adherence to ground rules such as task orientation and participation of members (Marks and Hixon, 1986). One set of groups also included case review and the use of audiotapes (Hare and Frankena, 1972), but this approach was said to promote criticism and thus engender greater defensiveness in the presenter.

2.5.4 Group focus

Gomersall (1997) specifies two principal tasks of a peer supervision group: the sharing of skills and techniques; and the reflection on the effects of the work on one’s personal functioning and identity. Billows and Mendelsohn (1987) propose that there is a continuum of peer supervisory groups’ focus. At one extreme they place ‘case-centred’ groups, and at the other end, ‘process-centred’ groups, with the mid-point being ‘dual-focus’ groups. Group focus was referred to previously in section 2.3.2.3, where the merits and demerits of each type were raised. In the table above, I have chosen to label the three points on the continuum as ‘task’, ‘task and therapist’ and ‘interpersonal’.

It becomes clear that a number of the groups focussed on the mid-point of the continuum, where both the task, and the therapist's experience of the case material, including the potential for including aspects of group reactions and process, are permissible group foci. Nobler (1980) reports of the way in which their group began with a task focus, but then broadened the focus to include personal issues. She notes the fine balance required for such a position, where professional issues remain a focus, but there is scope for "working through competitive feelings and anxiety about revealing one's clinical work" (p.60). To achieve such a balance takes a good period of time and the willingness to take risks.

2.5.5 Conclusions regarding the efficacy of peer supervision groups

It must be noted that many of the advantages and disadvantages which pertain to group supervision, described in section 2.3, and peer supervision, in section 2.4, would also pertain to peer group supervision. However, there also need to be particular considerations given to the establishment of peer supervision groups, given the absence of a leader and differing roles and responsibilities of members.

Greenburg *et al.* (1985) note the importance of "group facilitation and process skills ... to maintain relationships and resolve conflicts" (p.442), roles which in their group were taken up informally by various members at various times. They also note that although their group was task oriented, therapeutic characteristics developed:

They include universality - the reassurance that comes from hearing that fellow professionals also have negative feelings and problems arising out of their work; acceptance and a sense of belonging that counters feelings of isolation that often come from a lack of contact with peers; altruism - the satisfaction of helping others in their conflicts and problems; the constructive ventilation of feelings and the opportunity for feedback and consensual validation. (p.445)

Schreiber and Frank (1983) emphasise the peer group as a forum in which the limitations of one's own internal monologue are shifted through the "expressions and exploration" (p.34), opportunities for ventilation, and crystallisation of aspects of decision-making which occur in the group context.

Also, there were “unexpected dividends ... the chance ... to experience oneself in a teaching role in relation to peers ... we could offer our individual expertise ... and also receive feedback” (p.36).

The issue of the level of group structure has been raised by many authors who have stressed the need for peer supervision groups to be structured in order to provide a safer environment, and to diminish the potential dangers of destructive group processes. Borders (1991) proposes that her model of structured peer group supervision (which includes a supervisor - see section 2.3.3), be utilised since it “provides the procedure and tasks needed for groups to capitalize on the benefits of peer feedback” (p.251).

Gomersall (1997) notes that peer group supervision is easy to organise and is cost-effective, however it is not intended as “a substitute for ... intensive regular individual supervision” (p.118). Furthermore, he notes that it has potential value in organisations where there is a lack of mutual support, or where a “psychodynamic understanding is only just beginning to emerge” (p.118). This last point was made by Winstead *et al.* (1974), since their aim in setting up their group was to include countertransference discussion which they felt unable to address in individual supervision, and to present cases which they avoided presenting to their supervisors.

A number of authors refer to peer group supervision having a place in a developmental model of supervision which increases in complexity, starting with individual supervision, and then adding group and peer supervision. Thus prior experiences and some individual supervision prepare the practitioner for the greater complexity of peer group supervision. Hayes (1989) notes that any training programme should have various patterns of supervision, and Lenihan and Kirk (1992) note recommendations of a variety of individual, group and peer supervision procedures in order to meet differing trainee needs.

2.6 KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR PEER AND PEER GROUP SUPERVISION

Consideration of the literature, in the above three sections, points to the following critical factors which need to be taken into account when designing peer group supervision:

- * group size and membership (including individual suitability);
- * the counselling training levels of participants - differing levels may require different styles;
- * the way in which leadership will be managed;
- * the goals set and expected outcomes;
- * the structuring of the interactions, related to both material and process;
- * the focus of discussions (task, process, or combination);
- * the training of participants, particularly in the skills of giving feedback;
- * the motivation of participants - whether participation is voluntary or required;
- * that evaluation should not be included in any way, to reduce the potential for rivalry;
- * the organisational factors which may accommodate or undermine peer group supervision.

Holloway (1992) formulates a crucial question which needs to be answered in considering the addition of group supervision to a training programme: "What unique contribution does group supervision make ...?" (p.206). To an extent, it is this question regarding peer group supervision, which is to be considered in the study described in this dissertation.

I briefly explore references to the learning process in the supervision literature in the next section, since another of the questions in the study to be described involves an examination of models of learning.

2.7 SUPERVISION AND THE LEARNING PROCESS

The impact of supervision on the learning of trainees has been extensively acknowledged in the literature, and supervision has been identified, along with engaging in psychotherapeutic practice itself, as the key means by which psychotherapists gain their skills (Bernard and Goodyear, 1998). Along with psychotherapy, supervision is seen as a "complex learning situation" (Abbey, Hunt and Weiser, 1985, p.477) however, references to learning theory underpinning approaches to supervision are relatively limited, with much being implicit or taken for granted. Furthermore, the reports of trainee perspectives (e.g. Barnat, 1980; Greenberg, 1980) show that there is not necessarily correspondence between supervisors' intentions regarding what they wish to teach and what trainees learn (Goodyear and Bradley, 1983). Blocher (1983) reflected that supervision to that point had been

conducted “rather casually with a ‘seat of our pants’ approach” (p.27), rather than being informed by the results of systematic research into learning processes. Munson (1981) reflected that both the conceptualisation and process of teaching and learning in supervision had been neglected in research up to that point in time.

Beginning with the writings of Gitterman and Miller (1977) in the field of social work, some measure of engagement with learning theory begins to appear from the late 1970's. In the field of counselling psychology, articles by Blocher (1983) and Hosford and Barmann (1983) apply aspects of learning theory to supervision. However, a decade later, Holloway (1992) still asserts that the “knowledge base of supervision could be substantially strengthened by the inclusion of research and conceptual frameworks in instructional and cognitive psychology” (p.206). This section explores briefly the implicit and explicit references to the learning process in the supervision literature.

2.7.1 The ‘transmission’ model of learning

The ‘transmission’ model of learning is implicit in much of the writing on supervision (Gitterman and Miller, 1977; Goodyear and Bradley, 1983). This is based in ideas of ‘mastery’ of knowledge, where the expert transmits knowledge to a relatively passive trainee. Davidson (1987) writes that such an approach emerges from the Latin word *educare* which means “to lead out or evoke from” (p.333). This rather patriarchal view of knowledge vests authority in the knowledge of the expert, “the self-sufficient, self-possessed proprietor of knowledge” (Felman, 1987, p.84); and places the trainee in an inferior position, where the expert knows what the trainee needs, and entrenches a power differential. Caligor, Bromberg and Meltzer (1984) reflect that the supervisor being both “an educator and ... an authority” is an “ever-present liability” (p.xiv), making it difficult for the trainee to “question or contradict the supervisor and to explore other possible ways of understanding with the knowing expert” (p.xiv). This prompts a seemingly passive stance in the trainee, which Barnat (1980) terms ‘being acted upon’. Knowledge is therefore objectified as something to be ‘passed on’, rather than being individually constructed within a context. Davidson (1987) notes that in the general writings about supervision there is a lack of clarity regarding what the supervisor actually does, even though supervisors might present their inputs in ways which imply infallibility and confidence.

Critiques of the transmission model, and suggestions for modifications, have come from both psychoanalytic circles, and from writers drawing from other learning approaches which have derived from both psychology and education. These viewpoints will be summarised in the following paragraphs according to the theory from which they are drawn.

2.7.2 Psychodynamic contributions

From a psychoanalytic perspective, much of the writing has explored the dynamics of the supervisory relationship, the issue of authority, and the potential responses in the trainee (Rioch, 1980), incorporating the affective dimensions of learning. Beginning psychotherapy and supervision generates great anxiety in the trainee, and it is within supervision that affective responses need to be discussed. In some cases the associated anxieties may block out any potential learning (Rioch, 1980); furthermore, Gitterman and Miller (1977) note that “unresolved libidinal and aggressive conflicts” (p.101) may inhibit learning. There is an acknowledgement of the importance of the supervisory relationship in building trainee’s self-esteem, and that some trainee identification with supervisors helps “promote a sense of being a competent professional” (Weiner and Kaplan, 1980, p.48), however slavish adherence to supervisory direction leads to dependency.

The functioning of authority vested in the ‘teacher’ evokes transference features, and Felman (1987) notes that Lacan has debated how the learner situates the self in relation to the knower. Rioch (1980) reflects that the “‘you are up; I am down’ situation is not likely to obtain for very long. The balance is untenable” (p.70), and goes on to say that there are a number of ways in which either of the participants will respond, consciously or unconsciously, to try to correct the balance. She suggests that trainees might present edited versions of the material in order to seem competent, or be resistant to supervision whilst appearing compliant. A further alternative is for trainees to resort to ‘fight-flight’ phenomena, and Rioch (1980) notes that it “is often amazing to see how nice decent people become devious, sulky, or even untruthful in the situation of supervision” (p.73).

Rioch (1980) summarises her thoughts on three main kinds of supervisor intervention in psychoanalytic circles as: firstly, telling the students what the supervisor would do in the situation; secondly, explaining the client’s dynamics in greater depth than the trainee’s formulation; and thirdly,

working with the trainee's anxieties and defenses in a therapeutic way. She is critical of the first kind because of what she sees as the dangers of telling the trainee what to do when the supervisor is not there; and she states that "what makes sense for one person does not necessarily ... make sense for another" (p.74). She sees some utility in the trainee gaining a deeper sense of the client in the second form, but states that a supervisor does not know what the trainee will make of this, and this may not help the trainee find a way "to relate to his patient therapeutically" (p.74). She thus favours the third kind of supervision, where an optimal level of anxiety is stirred up, since she believes that experiential learning then becomes possible. However, she notes that trainee consent is important for this type of work, and that such work raises questions in the supervisor regarding how best to intervene. She thus advises that such interventions be comprehensible and timed carefully so that the trainee is ready; alternatively interventions might be viewed as interruptions to the trainees' thought processes. She concludes:

just as in learning to play the piano, the most important thing is to practice, and to have the stimulation of a teacher to whom one can go once a week or so and show what one has done. In learning to practice and present one's work to a teacher, one also learns to listen to oneself. This is probably the most important aspect of teaching the piano and of supervising psychotherapy ... One learns to listen to oneself ... while one is also listening to the other (p.76).

Clearly, Rioch (1980) favours a therapeutic approach to supervision; however it is necessary to bear in mind the reservations expressed previously in section 2.1.2 regarding such an approach.

2.7.3 Inclusion of elements of adult education

Further criticism of the transmission model as being inappropriate for adult learners has come from those familiar with the developing literature in the field of adult education, sometimes termed *androgogy* to distinguish it from *pedagogy* (Gitterman and Miller, 1977). Rotholz and Werk (1984) cite literature which indicates both the "desire of the adult learner to be self-directing" and "to function in his chosen professional role" (p.25).

Hersh (1984) identifies a number of distinguishing features in adult education in comparison to the education of children: the learning of adults is more problem-centred and the time perspective relates

more to the present; adults are more self-directed and intrinsically motivated; adults are more able to identify their own learning needs; adults have extensive experiences from which to draw, and may be “teachers as much as learners, and openness to interaction and alternative answers is stressed” (p.33). Bearing in mind the features of adult learners, Feltham and Dryden (1994) advise “egalitarian discussion and contract-making” (p.4) between supervisor and trainee.

Gardiner (1989) notes that there is an “essential paradox between hierarchical supervisory models (based on notions of expertise to be imparted), and those which might encourage adult learners to make meanings from their experiences” (p.56). He supports a more egalitarian view of trainees where supervisors see themselves as educators rather than taking parental roles. Such an approach encourages the establishment of mutually negotiated learning objectives which create an emotional climate based on mutual respect and the promotion of greater autonomy in supervision.

Gardiner (1989) employed a multiple case study approach to learning in social work supervision, and using Grounded Theory methodology, developed a model which identified three stages in teaching - learning in supervision: stage 1, content focus - “*a surface - reproductive conception of learning*”; stage 2, process focus - “*an active - constructive search for meaning from experience*”; and stage 3, “*focus on meta-learning, and learning to learn*” (p.136, italics in original). Such a model promotes an approach to learning which is more explicit, negotiated, and the subject of reflection and discussion.

2.7.4 Contributions from Behaviourism and Social Learning Theory

Given the criticism that many supervisors find it difficult to specify what they actually do in supervision, certain approaches to supervision have drawn from behavioural and social learning theory in order to specify supervisory behaviours which facilitate learning. Modelling is frequently referred to in the literature as an important source of learning for trainees (Goodyear and Bradley, 1983), and attention has been given to the most appropriate type of ‘model’. Dryden and Thorne (1991) note that a ‘coping’ model is likely to be “more helpful than one which shows flawless performance (the mastery model) in encouraging trainees to practice the skill with confidence” (p.26). Furthermore, a preference for models whose level of experience is not too disparate from that of

trainees has been noted, since models with advanced expertise might find it very difficult to talk through what they do, since the skills are 'taken for granted'.

Hosford and Barmann (1983) offer a comprehensive description of a social learning approach to supervision, where "psychological functioning is conceptualized as involving a *continuous reciprocal interaction* among ...behavior, environment, and person variables" (p.51, italics in original). Supervision is thus envisaged as an educational process in which the trainee is helped to identify problematic behaviours, determine goals and effective interventions in order to reach these, and evaluate progress.

Savickas *et al.* (1986) noted in their study that trainees required modelling, instructing, evaluating and facilitating. With regard to instructing, "they wanted to learn cognitive schemes as well as specific behaviors that increased their competence" (p.23). The need for evaluation is supported by Dryden and Thorne (1991) who comment comprehensively on trainees' needs for accurate, performance-specific feedback. Facilitative behaviours are reported to include those which encourage critical thinking, self-reflection, self-exploration and experimenting with different behaviours (Savickas, *et al.*, 1986).

2.7.5 An integrative approach

An important critique of 'transmission' models of learning is that the content and substance are determined by the educator, rather than the focus being learner-centred. An alternate model is the integrative teaching - learning model for supervision, which has been noted in psychoanalytic, social work and counselling supervision. This model "is designed to have learning take place in the actual context of the subject or environment to be learned and mastered" (Munson, 1981, p.68).

Davidson (1987) notes that the focus is on the individual trainee's "learning and experiential process" (p.332), and that there are several concurrent contributors to trainee learning including: personal analysis, didactic learning from lectures and seminars, and discussions with peers. She sees the work of supervision as facilitative, binding these learnings into an "integrative, interpersonal tool ... to forge them into a working tool with the patients, so as to learn from what the patient presents and the

therapeutic process” (p.332). She emphasises that between the supervisor and trainee there always exists a “filtering mechanism of the student’s internal synthesis of what he or she is developing as a therapeutic tool out of the juxtaposition of self-knowledge, experience, and reading” (p.340), which should be activated in each therapeutic hour with a client, otherwise there has been no real learning and understanding - just compliance with the supervisor.

In the integrative approach, the supervisor becomes the individualised tutor, taking an ‘inquirer’ role (Kagan, 1980, in Goodyear and Bradley, 1983). Zimmerman *et al.* (1986) note that such supervisors “need to possess the qualities of genuine interest in and the ability to support the learning of the supervisee” (p.11). Such a learner-centred approach has gained increasing support in the field of education in the past decade (e.g. Mercer, 1995; Rogers and Freiberg, 1994).

2.4.6 Contributions from cognitive psychology

There are also elements of theorising from the field of cognitive development in the supervision literature. These may be found in some of the developmental models of supervision (e.g. Stoltenberg, 1981; Skovolt and Ronnestad, 1992b). Bromberg (1984) writes of the need for the trainee to engage actively in self-regulation, emphasised by Piaget as ‘the basis for all genuine learning. In order for new mental structures to develop from old ones, the person must *act* upon his environment” (p.36, italics in original). Skovolt and Ronnestad (1992b) refer to the Piagetian processes of assimilation and accommodation, noting that in graduate programmes, “sufficient time is often allotted for the acquisition and innovative aspects of learning (assimilation), but insufficient time is given to the integrative and consolidating aspects (accommodation)” (p.132). Learning through supervision has the potential to provide for the second. Such an approach clearly links with the integrative model described above.

Developments in the field of cognitive psychology have been referred to in a limited number of supervision sources. Firstly, Gitterman and Miller (1977) refer to the work of Bruner and ‘discovery learning’ (learning through activity) which promotes cognitive development and enhances memory functioning. Whitaker (1987, in Whitaker and Garfield) expresses concern about the giving of advice

rather than encouraging experiential learning: "It's like teaching somebody to ride a bicycle. Advice may be useful, but also so constricting that its usefulness is minimal" (p.106).

Secondly, the information-processing approach is referred to by Blocher (1983) who notes that "this field deals with ways in which human beings process information about their interaction with the environment and the changes that occur in the schemas or rules that they use for information processing" (p.28). Cognitive growth is hypothesised to occur when there is a mismatch between already existing cognitive schemas in the individual and experiences of people and events. Thus perception of a situation and attached meanings are assessed, and cognitive growth is most likely when "there is an optimal mismatch between the demands of a problematic situation in which the learner is ego-involved and the level of cognitive functioning available to the learner" (Blocher, 1983, p.28).

Functioning as a psychotherapist requires considerable complexity of cognitive functioning and Blocher (1983) includes the following metacognitive skills: being able to

- * take multiple perspectives in order to achieve empathic understanding;
- * differentiate among and manipulate a wide range and large number of relevant facts and causal factors;
- * integrate and synthesize in creative and unusual ways large amounts of ... information (p.28);

and to actively collaborate in the endeavour with the client. Thus the ultimate focus of supervision is "the acquisition of new more complex and more comprehensive schemas for understanding human interaction" (Blocher, 1983, p.29).

Thirdly, work done in the field of learning styles has been adopted by both Fox and Guild (1987) and Zimmerman *et al.* (1986), in order to emphasise the differing needs and preferences of trainees; and Rudisill, Painter and Rodenhauser (1988) acknowledge the influence of individual characteristics, including learning style, on the learning process. Olsen and Stern (1990) write that learning style impacts on perception of incoming information, conceptualisation, affect and behaviour; and

recommend that the supervisor assess a trainee's learning style in order to allow "supervision to start where the supervisee is" (p.55).

Finally, Hillerbrand (1989), drawing from research in the field of collaborative learning and information-processing considers cognitive differences between experts and novices, and concludes that three cognitive components are of importance in distinguishing the two groups: "problem representations, pattern recognition, and metacognition" (p.293). He notes the difference between 'declarative' and 'procedural' knowledge and the ways in which for novices, performance is at first slow, because "declarative knowledge must be slowly recalled and then translated into procedures for acting" (p.294), but that performance gradually speeds up as knowledge is transformed into procedural form. Hillerbrand (1989) signals the need for extensive research in these areas, and refers to the social context for learning as an important consideration. Furthermore, with relevance to the study to be described in the following chapters, he proposes the potential learning benefits of peer group supervision from a theoretical perspective.

In this section, I have briefly considered references to learning theory in the supervision literature. It must be noted that extensive research and theorising linking supervision and the learning process remains to be done. To conclude this section, Pedder (1986) notes that supervision "should not merely be an opportunity for the supervisor to be cleverer than the trainee, but should facilitate the trainee's own thinking around the case" (p.10). Lenihan and Kirk (1992) recommend that alternatives to individual supervision be investigated in order to avoid the 'do-it-my-way' pitfalls of traditional supervision. Thus, methods for facilitating the learning process need further investigation, and Holloway (1995) states that it "appears that authors and researchers have embraced the idea that cross-theoretical approaches to supervision are fruitful and informative" (p.205). If the ultimate goals of supervision in training are that the trainee internalise a supervisory function (Casement, 1985), in order that, as a psychotherapist, the person is able to consider the complexities of the process as it unfolds, it is necessary for the learning process to be more thoroughly understood in order that supervisory experiences are optimised.

2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

In the first part of this chapter, the purposes and functions of supervision were considered in order to highlight the debates in the field, and also to provide one of the motivations for the study. If supervision is regarded as a central contributor to the training and development of psychotherapists, a study which investigates aspects of supervision in the South African context is relevant at this time of reflection on professional training.

The second section of the chapter described the complexity of individual supervision, the topic which has been the focus of most of the research in the supervision literature. The progression in complexity of various models of supervision, from developmental to systemic models, was traced, and the elements which influence the supervision process were identified. An increasing recognition of the centrality of the supervisory relationship in the literature was traced, a theme which is to be further developed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Group supervision was then described in detail, both to provide foundation for the section on peer group supervision and to motivate for further investigation of this widely used mode. Two models of structured group supervision (Borders, 1991; Wilbur *et al.*, 1991) were described. Studies of both produced encouraging results from qualitative data, although pre-test post-test measures were not significantly different. The literature in both group and dyadic supervision has highlighted the value of a structured approach to supervision. The structure developed by Wilbur *et al.* (1991) was adapted for the study to be described in this dissertation. Thus, it is hoped that the results will build on previous work, as suggested by Hansen *et al.* (1982). Research into peer - and peer group supervision was described, in order to identify the factors which merit consideration when designing peer group supervision.

The section on the learning process underlines the complexity of the supervision process and the need to develop supervision programmes which are developmental, and employ various modes in order to provide a variety of experiences for the trainee. Section 2.7 also highlighted the need for research and theorising to enable clearer specification of the principles underpinning learning in supervision.

There is no doubt that research into supervision is as fraught with difficulties as research into therapeutic practice, and positivistic approaches to research have limitations. There have been criticisms of the over-use of self-reports from supervisees in supervision research, and Borders (1989) recommends that researchers verify self-reports “by directly measuring actual supervision events” (p.18). An increased number of studies more recently have considered *in vivo* supervision (Alpher, 1991; Friedlander *et al.*, 1989; Holloway, 1995), leading to findings more in keeping with the complexity of supervision.

The study to be described appears to be in keeping with current, emergent research, measuring actual supervision events as well as gathering participants’ reports of their experience. Some recent studies have employed Grounded Theory methods successfully (Gardiner, 1989; Skovolt and Ronnestad, 1992), and this methodology will be explored in the next chapter, before the findings are described and discussed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Much research into the practice of supervision has been based on quantitative research methods. A growing number of writers have recognised the complexity of supervision (Holloway, 1995), and have criticised research which is reductive. In the past decade, as research based on qualitative methods has gained momentum, there have been a growing number of calls for studies in psychotherapy and supervision which engage with the textual data generated from actual supervisory and therapeutic processes. Writers have recognised the value of the rich textured data which is generated in such endeavours (Skovholt and Ronnestad, 1992a); and that narrative and interpretive accounts of phenomena, which are based within their contexts, have much to offer in uncovering "the meanings which people employ to make sense of their experience and guide their actions" (McLeod, 1994, p.78).

The research context of this study was the participants' workplace; and one of the aims of the research was to implement and evaluate a model of peer group supervision in this setting. The research was to be exploratory rather than conclusive, and the data was to be gathered in the course of implementing peer group supervision. The resulting data thus records the evolving process over time. My intention as researcher was to follow the lead of Skovholt and Ronnestad (1992a), who emphasised the importance of maintaining an open and inquisitive stance toward the unfolding and complex phenomena and processes in the professional arena.

The aim of this chapter is to describe the purpose of the research, the underlying principles and process of developing the research design, the gathering of the data and its analysis. Since I believe that the legitimacy of using a qualitative research approach is now well established in the literature (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994), issues pertaining to qualitative research will be addressed with specific reference to the study at hand rather than argued in a more general manner.

3.1 RESEARCH DECISIONS

“Methodology is best understood as the overall strategy for resolving the complete set of choices or options available to the inquirer... Methodology involves the researcher utterly - from unconscious worldview to enactment of that worldview via the inquiry process” (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p.183). This section outlines the choices I needed to make as the research process unfolded, and the principles which underpinned those decisions.

The research to be described was multi-faceted and evolved over the time of the study, rather than being wholly preconceived, with hypotheses to be tested. Essentially, the purpose of the study was to explore intern psychologists’ experience of the addition of a peer supervision group (PSG) to their training programme, which included individual supervision (ISV) as an integral part of the training. Then, more broadly, the study aimed to investigate the trainees’ experiences of supervision, exploring the contributions and functions of each of the modes of supervision to their learning and development.

The study was therefore to be exploratory, descriptive and interpretive, necessitating a conceptual framework which would be flexible enough to: accommodate the breadth of the research questions, which needed to evolve during the course of the study; determine the type of data to be collected; provide a framework for the analysis and interpretation of the data. Thus, the aim of the research was to both investigate the phenomena and to provide a rationale for the emergent findings, an approach supported by Glaser (1978), who notes "(g)enerating theory and doing social research are two parts of the same process" (p.2).

In making the many decisions that surround a research undertaking, it was necessary to continually bear in mind and refine the research questions. Since the research was to be exploratory and the material was essentially linguistic, interpretive research located within the ambit of qualitative research was more suited to the endeavour. However, the challenge was to locate both the design and data analysis more accurately in the qualitative field where there are

numerous paradigms underpinned by a variety of philosophical and epistemological systems (McLeod, 1994). Packer and Addison (1989) distinguish three phases in interpretive enquiry: the entry phase which involves "discovering an appropriate workable perspective" (p. 3) from which to start; "the conduct of the inquiry" (p. 3) leading to an interpretive account; and the third phase in which "critical reflection and evaluation of the interpretive account" (p. 3) takes place. I therefore needed to find an approach which would guide my engagement in each of these phases.

The participants were functioning within the context of their workplace, ie. in a naturalistic setting, and the research design would need to accommodate this. "People sharing common circumstances ... share patterns of meanings and behavior" (Hutchinson, 1988, p.126). I hoped that this research would lead to an understanding of those patterns. Also, I believed it was important for the perspectives and 'voices' of the participants to be heard (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). Since I was working from the assumption that the experiences of participants would represent multiple realities, it was necessary to situate the research within the time and contextual frame which I wished to understand in more detail (Guba and Lincoln, 1989), that is, supervision within the internship setting. The goals of the study were to explore the meanings and processes of the supervisory experiences as constructed and described by the intern psychologists.

As noted earlier, in this research there were no preconceived theories or hypotheses to assess. Rather, I wanted to enter the frame in an attitude which would allow me to begin to discern the salient responses and issues. A relatively flexible research design was thus necessary. Thus, an inductive process of developing concepts, patterns and insights during the data collection and analysis was to be followed (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p.4), in order to enable conclusions to emerge from the data. I considered Action Research, various observational methods including participant observation, and programme evaluation, as possible research approaches; however due to various constraints, including the interns' reluctance to have me present during peer group processes or to have sessions video-taped, these were not suitable.

The procedures and framework of Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1992) seemed best suited to such an endeavour, and researchers in the field of psychology are increasingly using these (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Grounded theory draws from the philosophy of symbolic interactionism, where reality is viewed as “socially and symbolically constructed, always emerging and relative to other facts of social life” (Hutchinson, 1988, p. 124). Thus the philosophical basis of the approach seemed to match that to which I ascribed.

Discovery is a fundamental notion in grounded theory, including “discovering first the world as seen through the eyes of the participants and then the basic social processes or structures that organize that world” (Hutchinson, 1988, p.124). Essentially my research was to develop an account of trainees’ experiences of supervision, and to strive to gain an understanding of the process of peer group supervision, thus it seemed that grounded theory was suited to this endeavour.

In a design based on grounded theory, there is a continual interplay of data collection and analysis described by Glaser (1994) as a ‘constant comparative method’. The data collection is a systematic and iterative process with initial data collected and analyzed, leading on to the next cycle of data collection and analysis, and so on. As the process unfolds, tentative relationships between concepts are built and further examined through interviews and observations leading to a “theoretical formulation of the reality under investigation ...” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.23). Interpretations include both the perspectives and voices of the participants as well as that of the researcher who actively researcher has a strong mandate to strive toward the verification of these (Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

The process leads to the development of theory which has the potential to be conceptually dense and applicable to the practice being examined. Some forms of qualitative research are criticized for being mainly descriptive; however, a grounded theory approach strives to be interpretive, with an emphasis being placed on discovering the meanings of phenomena in order “to understand the contextual reality of social behavior” (Hutchinson, 1988, p.127). Glaser (1992)

locates the products of grounded theory at an abstract conceptual and integrated level in contrast to descriptive and phenomenological approaches, and argues that the methods in grounded theory enable accounts and interpretations of patterns of action, leading to deepened understanding and “an access for action and modicum changes” (p.14).

With regard to data analysis, Grounded Theory offers guidelines regarding means of allowing the data to emerge. Charmaz (1995) states that the fact that grounded theory offers "systematic approaches for discovering significant aspects of human experience" (p.30) makes it well suited to studies in psychology. I nevertheless read very widely, because the dialogic and interactive nature of the tape recorded data meant that most of the material was not in the form of the more widely used research interview data, which generate descriptive and explanatory data. The PSG recordings were made up of a variety of interactions: part narrative, part questioning, and part discursive (among 7 discussants) forms of data. The ISV recordings were also at times narrative, questioning and discursive, but the structuring of the interactions differed from PSG. I considered Conversational Analysis, Account Analysis, and Discourse Analysis; but each did not seem suited to the aims of the study.

I therefore decided to use some principles from these methods, but constructed my own analytic procedure in line with the suggestions of Miles and Huberman (1994) who recommend flexibility and an approach designed anew for each research endeavour. Charmaz (1994) notes that researchers who adopt the grounded theory approach are likely to develop their “own variations of technique” (p. 112). Charmaz (1995) writes of the variety of data which may be incorporated into analysis using grounded theory methods, and of the need for "thorough textual renderings" (p.33), and advises beginning "interpretations of the data from the respondent's point of view" (p.34). However, she acknowledges that the researcher's perspectives and concerns will immediately have effect, leading on to adaptations of further data gathering and analysis, according to the questions being asked of the data, as the researcher engages in various forms of coding.

During the data collection and analysis process, I was encouraged by the work of Addison (1989), in which he studies the socialisation of physicians in training in a hospital setting ('residents'), which seemed to match my endeavour to some extent both in terms of topic and research questions. Addison (1989) follows a grounded hermeneutic approach which results in a narrative account of the experiences of the residents. This approach is based in grounded theory methodology but rests on a hermeneutic framework which focusses on the meanings given to events. Thus, Addison (1989) considered both the residents' verbalisations, actions and contextual influences; and then offering "a narrative account of how (the) problem developed and is maintained; and ... directions for positive change" (Addison, 1992, p.113). I hoped to be able to construct a narrative account of the interns' experiences from the findings of my study.

Hutchinson (1988) notes that grounded theory is both useful in initiating new theory, as well as offering "an exciting new approach to an old problem" (p.124). Furthermore, since the grounded theory product aims to explicate "social and social psychological processes" (Charmaz, 1994, p.112), it was possible that using the approach might lead to changes in intervention (Hutchinson, 1988). I had hoped that engaging in the PSG process might lead to adaptations to the structure, such as those which evolve from a process of action research, (an approach which I had wanted to use, but was prevented by the nature of the planned PSG - not being able to be a participant or observer); thus it seemed that grounded theory might also facilitate changes if needed.

The grounded theory approach combines the gathering and analyzing of data along with the development of research questions in an iterative process. In order to enable greater conceptual clarity, however, I have separated the description of the processes in the sections below.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The goals of this research were to gain an understanding of how the experiences of the two models of supervision, used in conjunction with one another, contribute to the learning process

and development of skills in the interns. Furthermore, the research aimed to evaluate how the two forms of supervision might influence each other. Glaser (1992) notes that in true grounded theory methodology, the methodology itself “processes out the emergent problem” (p. 24), thus the researcher is advised to engage with the phenomenon to be studied, trusting that the process will lead to the questions emerging. I thus approached the implementation of PSG and the data collection with the above broad goals in mind, and the specific research questions evolved as I worked.

The specific research questions which evolved further specified and clarified the interrogation of the data. The eventual questions which emerged were:

- 1) What are the relative contributions and limitations of peer-group supervision and individual supervision?
- 2) What strategies, which may facilitate learning, are evident in the two models of supervision?

The findings related to the above two questions are explored in Chapter 4.

3.3 GENERATING THE DATA

In this study, the research data takes the form of initial written reflections on previous experiences of supervision by participants, and the transcripts of audio-taped PSG sessions, ISV sessions, a focus group discussion and three individual interviews with participants.

The participants were intern psychologists receiving training and supervision in a university setting, where their work is based in a child guidance clinic and student counselling centre. All the trainees had experienced some individual and group supervision of therapeutic work during the previous year, and are required to have twice-weekly individual supervision during the

internship. In addition, they were required to attend a weekly peer supervision group, which was to follow the procedure as described in section 3.3.2 below.

The unfolding research process is summarised in the following table:

Table 3.1 Outline of the research process

Step 1	Collection and analysis of written reflections of interns reflections on their experience of supervision prior to the start of the PSG.
Step 2	Introduction to PSG; 9 sessions of PSG tape recorded over a period of 4 months (PSG's 2 - 10); transcription of PSG sessions
Step 3	Midway through PSG sessions: decision to record sessions of ISV which paralleled the PSG case presented (ISV's 6 - 10 recorded and transcribed)
Step 4	Focus group discussion to gather data on participants' experience of the two models of supervision, and to explore certain emerging categories
Step 5	Data analysis; three individual interviews to further explore emergent themes from the data

The data collected were thus varied, including: interns' written reflections; tape recordings of both 9 PSG and 5 ISV sessions; tape recording of the focus group discussion; tape recordings of 3 individual interviews. The tape recordings required transcription, which I undertook, following Charmaz's (1995) advice that the same person should engage "in the data collection as well as the data analysis phases of research" (p.35). The following sub-sections will describe pertinent methodological and data collection considerations at each of the five steps outlined in the table above.

3.3.1 Entering the field

I was aware of the challenge of entering the field "in the right way" (Packer and Addison, 1989, p.3) to enable me to gain "an appropriate workable perspective" (Packer and Addison, 1989, p.3). I was committed to encouraging the participants to work in collaboration with me on the

research, and hoped that since the proposed PSG was intended to provide them with an additional forum for discussion of their work, and had the potential to enrich the learning experience in the internship, they would be prepared to participate.

The group of interns working in the training setting for 1998 were approached in February of that year, and a meeting was convened. The notion of a peer supervision group was presented, including a brief overview of the proposed structure, and my research ideas were outlined. A discussion of the structured nature of the sessions ensued. Whilst most interns seemed to support the idea, one expressed some disappointment, in that she had hoped there would be time for general sharing of concerns and feelings. In order to accommodate this, we thus negotiated the addition of 15 minutes to the end of each session, for some unstructured group discussion time.

The interns were asked whether they would be prepared to participate in the research, as part of their time allocation in the child guidance clinic. All agreed to participate, and the peer supervision group was to be scheduled for the 75 minutes before the weekly case conference on a Friday which they were all required to attend. The group might thus be seen as a 'convenience' sample (Patton, 1980, in Guba and Lincoln, 1989), but since there was actually no sampling procedure they could also be termed a natural group (Gardiner, 1989), since the group was already in existence. I was aware of the diversity of group members in terms of educational and experiential background, and the various racial and cultural groups represented, and believed this would introduce considerable variation into the group. (Variation is seen as a positive factor in qualitative approaches to research).

The issue of my presence in the group, as the researcher, was discussed, and it was agreed that I would attend the first one or two sessions in order to assist with group facilitation, but then that the interns would continue without me present as an observer. The recording of group sessions was also raised, and certain of the interns protested at the idea of being video-taped, believing that this would cause them to feel self-conscious and thus affect their participation. The group were, however, comfortable to be audio-taped, and gave written permission for this.

Bi-weekly sessions were negotiated, and the interns agreed to construct a roster of presenters and facilitators for 9 sessions. They also agreed to write up brief reflections on their experience of supervision up to that point in time. They were assured of the anonymity of all comments and responses.

During this process, I was aware of the need to enlist the interns' support in this endeavour, and tried to place them in the position as collaborators, reassuring them that should they wish to reject the structured nature of the group after the 9 session evaluation, that would be their choice. The agreement that we had reached was summarised in a document (Appendix A), and sent to each intern after the meeting. All nine interns returned their written reflections on supervision by mail, email or personally; which seemed to indicate their willingness to participate in the process.

3.3.2 Introduction to the peer supervision group (PSG)

I had agreed to facilitate the first PSG, in order to take the interns through the process in a stepwise fashion. The PSG was presented in the form found in Appendix B, and I clarified some of the explanations. The outline of the PSG is adapted from Wilbur et al. (1991), as described in 2.3.3.2, and the handout to the interns gives a description of the salient points. The first PSG (PSG1) was not audio-taped.

One of the interns had pre-prepared a case presentation for the first peer supervision group meeting, in the manner outlined. The group viewed a video excerpt of a family session before the intern presented the case, and the group followed the phases of the PSG process. Initially, the discussion in phase three did not seem to flow easily. I then noticed that they were addressing the presenter in the first person, but she was unable to respond, thus leading to a disjointed dialogue. I intervened to suggest that they speak about the presenter in the third person, and this seemed to ease the flow of the dialogue.

I began tape-recording sessions from PSG2 onwards, and did not attend again, merely setting up the tape recorder at the start. From PSG4 onwards, the interns took it upon themselves to set up

the tape recorder, an action which seemed to confirm their willingness to continue with the process.

3.3.3 Additional recording of individual supervision sessions

After 5 PSG sessions, my ideas about the PSG were beginning to form. In consultation with my supervisor, I decided that in order to gain a better perspective on the PSG sessions, I should collect audio-tapes of four individual supervision sessions which would match the remaining PSG sessions. These individual supervision sessions (ISV's) would enable me to engage in a comparative process with the PSG's, in which I could then seek answers for the research questions which had evolved by that stage (see 3.2 above).

I approached the four people who were still to present in PSG, as well as their supervisors, for their agreement and permission to tape record a session of supervision each. All were agreeable, and the supervisors expressed an interest in having feedback on the comparison. (This feedback to the supervisors took place some months later, when the findings had crystallised to a greater extent).

A letter was sent to the interns towards the end of the process when I realised that I would need a tenth PSG session. (I decided not to include PSG8 and ISV8 in the comparative process, since the case material was of such a sensitive nature that I believed the inclusion of it in any form, even with all identifying details disguised, could be potentially problematic). The letter described the additional recording process, and also requested the interns to complete a biographical questionnaire (Appendix C).

3.3.4 Transcriptions of PSG's and ISV's

I began transcribing the PSG's from the start of the process. This was a time consuming process, taking approximately 8 to 10 hours for one tape. Given my inexperience in working with such data, I transcribed each tape word for word, but did not use one of the standard transcription

notation systems (such as that described by Wetherell, 1998), rather converting the speech into a written form of dialogue, using standard punctuation marks.

I regretted this when I discovered the system described by Wetherell (1998), because this meant that certain details, such as the length of pauses, the conventions for indicating overlap in dialogue, and underlining when a word was stressed, were omitted from my transcripts. Since I was not undertaking discourse analysis, however, this did not have a major effect on the utility of the transcripts for my purposes.

In order to check the accuracy of the transcripts, I read each through, along with the accompanying audiotape, at least twice, correcting where necessary. This served a further purpose: I became very familiar with the content of each tape, and this assisted in the process of analysis.

Since the transcribed material in both PSG and ISV contains identifying client details as well as details which might identify both interns and the setting, I have decided not to include these in the appendix. In order for interested readers to gain a sense of the process of each session, I have included thematic tables which summarise the four phases of each PSG in Appendix D. I also summarised the process of each PSG and ISV (Appendix E), and then used these to undertake the comparison of the two modes. These comparative accounts may be found in Appendix G.

3.3.5 Focus group discussion

Following 10 sessions of PSG, I convened a focus group discussion in order to enable participants to give me feedback on their experiences of PSG. The transcription of the focus group discussion is included in Appendix H in order that the interns' opinions might be available (the identities of the interns are disguised by using code letters).

Focus groups, as a method for data collection, have grown in popularity in the past decade. Focus groups are formally organized in that the researcher convenes the group for the purpose of

discussing "select issues with each other" (Dawson, Manderson and Tallo, 1992, p.2). The advantage of such groups is that the aim is to facilitate a "lively and natural discussion" (Dawson et al., 1992, p.3), such as that which occurs in groups, enabling agreement and disagreement. A focus group is not a group interview where the facilitator asks questions which individuals are expected to answer.

Baker and Hinton (1999) discuss the potential for focus groups to encourage co-operative participation of the community in research efforts, but caution that the researcher be vigilant regarding power differentials. They cite the work of Paul (1987, in Baker and Hinton, 1999) which identifies a continuum of participation from "information sharing, consultation, decision-making" to "initiating action" (p. 80). In my research, I was hoping that the focus group discussion might engage participants in each of these activities.

Focus groups are 'focussed' on a particular area of interest, and involve "some kind of collective activity" (Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999, p.4). Kitzinger and Barbour (1999) comment that the difference between focus groups and other forms of group interview is "the explicit use of group interaction to generate data" (p.4). Thus focus groups engage in group discussion and interaction with the focus on an area of interest which is relevant to each. Dawson et al. (1992) state that "participants usually share a common characteristic" (p.3), without hierarchical differences between group members. These features were true of the group of interns.

I followed the guidelines of Dawson et al. (1992) regarding the structuring of the focus group, in that the facilitator is advised to have certain questions prepared beforehand, but these should not impede the flow of the discussion. I therefore had prepared certain broad questions beforehand, but strived to enable the discussion to proceed naturally.

3.3.6 Individual interviews

The final part of the data collection was to interview three of the participants in order to further explore the interns' experiences of the process, and to enable me to refine the data analysis in

which I was engaged. The three interns approached were three of the four whose PSG and ISV sessions had been compared, (the fourth was not available for an interview because he had left to take up a position in another city).

There were strong variations between each of the three interns in terms of their previous educational and experiential background - they had each been previously employed in a different profession, and had trained through different universities, two race groups were represented, and there were two women and one man. I had endeavored to maximize variation in order to assist in the verification process and to provide different perspectives on the data which was emerging from the other sources. Following these three interviews, I did not feel that further interviews were necessary, since I believed that the data was now 'saturated', a point reached when "no new conceptual information is available" (Hutchinson, 1988, p.137) to indicate that new categories should be developed. The key findings of the study were further confirmed a year later in an interview with another of the participants.

The interviews were semi-structured in that I had prepared certain questions for each of the participants, based on my analyses of their particular PSG - ISV comparison, however, I wished them to feel able to influence the flow of the interviews and be able to give their own opinions and ideas without my unduly influencing these through questions which were too specific. Cohen and Manion (1980) describe such an interview as a 'non-directive' interview, since the goal is to enable the respondent to express his views as freely as he chooses. Kvale (1996), however, cautions that interviews are co-constructions of the participant and researcher, and whilst the researcher strives to engender a naturally flowing 'conversation', there will inevitably be contributions from both individuals and their interactions in the eventual product.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The tape recordings of PSG sessions were transcribed and analysed first by a method of open coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Charmaz (1995) terms this process 'initial coding', which involves "examining each line of data and defining the actions or events that you see as occurring

in it or as represented by it” (p.37). This initial coding means that occurrences are labelled, generating ‘topics’ (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993). This process is repeated for the next and each following data set, in order that links between topics might be made, and the first categories are then generated.

Certain hypotheses about the PSG process began to emerge and axial coding was used to relate categories and subcategories (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.114). Questions about the emerging categories, as well as an exploration of the experiences of individuals of the peer group supervision informed the focus group discussion. The findings related to the PSG process were then refined, to provide the basis of the evaluation in 4.4.6.

As noted above, tape recordings of both PSG, and, from the mid-point of the study, ISV, were utilised as important sources of data. A comparison of the content and process of 4 peer-group supervision sessions with those of individual supervision sessions of the same case were gathered. A pair-wise analysis of the transcripts (across individual and peer supervision) was undertaken. At this stage, the analysis was still at the level of each of the four pairs of individual presentations, looking closely at and comparing experiences of learning in the two supervision contexts.

In order to engage in the comparisons, two methods were used. The first was an attempt to adapt a category system used by Powell (1986) for coding the utterances of participants in discussion groups. Powell (1986) proposes that the following categories be used:

Table 3.2 Categories of activities in discussion groups (adapted from Powell, 1986, p.29)

O	Giving an opinion
I	Giving information
A	Arguing (an opinion supported by information)
Q	Asking for information
C	Clarifying (re-phrasing earlier statements, giving examples, defining)
P	Formulating problems (suggesting, proposing, analysing approach to problem)
G	Group process (organisational comments or proposals related to group functioning)

I considered each of these categories from the perspective of the six means of providing assistance (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990), explained further in 5.3.1, and decided to include the following categories in addition to the above: M (modelling); F (providing feedback on reported strategies); and E (providing encouragement or empathy). I also decided to omit G (group process) from my categorising system, since there seemed to be little evidence of this from of statement in the data. The results of this attempt to categorise the utterances in each form of supervision are displayed in four graphs (Figure 4.3), and discussed in section 4.5.

The second method of undertaking the pairwise analysis was to follow Glaser's (1994) 'constant comparative method', various potential categories were coded in margins of the transcripts. Once the emergent categories which seemed to distinguish between features of the interactions had crystallised, a reading guide was then constructed (see Appendix F). This follows Brown, Tappan, Gilligan, Miller and Argyris (1989), where they recommend the method to assist in 'building' an interpretation: each pair of transcriptions (PSG-ISV) was thus subjected to the same questions, enabling the development of a comparison and account which integrated findings from the four pairs (see 4.5.1 - 4.5.8).

Analysis of the additional data collected from the focus group discussion, and further interrogation of the transcribed data led to the generation and refining of hypotheses, which were then subjected to a process of verification through further interviews. This follows the approach of Charmaz (1990), who advises delayed "focused theoretical sampling" in order to gain "an in-depth understanding of the realities and issues at hand" (p.1163).

The final step of integration which shifts the process from one of creating a list of concepts to producing a theory through the use of selective coding was undertaken following the guidelines offered in Glaser (1992) and Addison (1992). Glaser (1992) acknowledges the selective nature of this step, but encourages the researcher to search for the 'core category' which "accounts for most

of the variation in a pattern of behavior” (p.75). Thus a model which linked the core influences on the interns' learning and a narrative account were developed.

The data collection and analysis thus stopped short of the final step of grounded theory - that of 'theoretical sampling'. Charmaz (1994) describes this as the undertaking of further sampling of "other groups or events" (p.112) which might provide additional material to enrich the understanding of the core variable which emerged in the process. Charmaz (1994) describes the purpose of theoretical sampling as follows: "the conceptual categories that were inductively constructed have become sufficiently developed and abstract that the researcher can construct specific questions about them" (p.112). Time constraints and the limited prescribed scope of this research project precluded my engaging in this final stage, and I hope that questions raised from the model generated at the end of Chapter 4 will result in further research in the area.

3.5 GENERAL METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE STUDY

3.5.1 Confidentiality

It was important that the identities of both the participants and the clients with whom they worked be protected in the writing up of this study. The participants were assured that their comments and contributions would be anonymous. This led to my numbering the PSG's and matching ISV's, and using alphabetical letters to identify participants in the dialogues, which were not, in any way linked to their names. The convention of alternating 'her' and 'his' also contributed to the disguise of identities. I followed similar conventions when referring to the individual supervisors involved, labelling all of their comments in dialogue as 'S'.

From a professional ethical position, it was imperative that the clients' identities also be disguised in order that no client could be identified, and the case material presented was also changed to some extent, making it more general. In one case where the client had expressed concerns about her material being kept confidential, the transcripts were not used, except in the very general sense of counting of question types in phase 2 of the PSG.

3.5.2 Negotiating entry into supervisory contexts

During the introductory session with the interns, I encouraged them to discuss any questions or issues related to the proposed study with me individually, should there be any concerns. Since I was already known to the interns, both through having lectured some of them the year before, and having run two workshops earlier in the year, I felt I had already established some relationship with them, and believed that this had been open enough for them to approach me if needed. Over the course of the study, I endeavoured to keep the process as transparent as possible, in order for the participants to be informed about the process.

When the decision was made to record some individual supervision sessions as well, I approached the relevant supervisors individually for their consent, and explained the purpose of the research. When their permission had been granted, I also promised to feed back the results to them, and followed up on this once the emergent findings had been processed. Since the supervisors are my colleagues, I believe this process was eased because I had established a relationship of trust with each. I am aware that this relationship places a responsibility on me to report findings fairly and accurately in this write-up. The disadvantage of this is that findings which may be perceived of as critical might affect my relationships with my colleagues.

I was also concerned to present the research as being focussed on how learning takes place in supervision of various kinds; and that my interest related more to the process than the details of the content.

3.5.3 Time period

The time span of the data gathering phase of the research was six months (for the PSG's, ISV's and focus group), and the three further interviews then occurred during the following six months. This is a more protracted time span than in much of the research into supervision, although the peer-group supervision studies, reported in 2.5, were over varied, and often longer, periods of time. Hutchinson (1988) notes that one of the advantages of research based in grounded theory is its longer-term nature, although this may also be a disadvantage when limited time is available to

researchers. In my case, I was working on the research part-time, whilst continuing with my full-time work.

Gardiner (1989) notes that "what is observed will vary according to the time of the observation" (p.37). I am aware that the emergent findings have been influenced by the particular time frame employed, and that another study, done the following year, with a different group of interns may result in different findings. In grounded theory methodology, however, Glaser (1992) notes that theory is "fluid and changeable in time and space" (p. 116), and that a "substantive grounded theory continues on in generalizing a process to resolve a problem because it is readily modifiable to continue its fit and work and relevance" (p. 116). Thus the test of the model generated in this research project will be engagement in further research, by using other verificational methods.

3.5.4 Verification of data

Such terms as validity and reliability take on new meanings in qualitative research, since the philosophical tenets of the enterprise do not support such notions as 'objectivity' and 'truthfulness': "... we are embedded in our cultural and historical situation. We are both subject and object of and in this human realm" (Shapiro, 1986, p.172). In interpretive approaches, the term verification is preferred when judgements are made about the quality of data. This does not, however, mean that data is treated with any less care with regard to its accuracy or the rigour of the methodology, and Miles and Huberman (1994) write that issues of legitimacy must be tackled by researchers using qualitative methods. Guba and Lincoln (1989) note that "discovery and verification are ... continuously interactive processes ... as soon as an item of information is identified ... as salient in the local situation, ... it becomes immediately subject to scrutiny" (p.182).

In the study to be described, the phenomenon was approached both from the perspective of the actual supervision data, and from interns' reports of their experiences; to strive toward explaining "more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one

standpoint" (Cohen and Manion, 1980, p.208). Thus, a form of 'triangulation' occurred in the data collection, in that there was dialoguing between my emergent ideas and the discussion in the focus group and in the individual interviews. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the form of triangulation used was both by data source (different participants and the group together) and by method (actual transcript data, focus group and interview material). I thus endeavoured to gain a number of perspectives from which to consider the phenomenon, and the findings emerged from an iterative process which moved between engaging with the transcripts, exploring ideas in the broader forum of the focus group, considering the data further using different methods, and then engaging in the more focussed individual interviews. This approach fits with Charmaz's (1994) description of verification in this approach: "grounded theorists ... check their developing ideas with further specific observations, (and) make systematic comparisons between observations" (p. 97).

Glaser (1992) provides a number of criteria for judging grounded theory: those of "fit, work, relevance, modifiability, along with the achievement of parsimony and scope in explanatory power..." (p. 116). He reassures the researcher that focus on underlying emergent processes will lead to a theory in which terminology is reduced, and which moves on to a higher level of generalisability. It will be the task of further research to examine the model generated in this piece of work in other contexts and with other groups, in order to evaluate its utility in the field.

Whilst Chapter 3 has been devoted to discussing methodological issues impacting on the study, it must be noted that the process of developing Chapter 4 involved a continual dialogue between the tasks and methods. Breaking down the research design and methodology into discrete steps thus fails to reflect the organic manner in which the study developed. The methodological decisions and issues explored in this chapter will thus be further 'fleshed out' within Chapter 4. Firstly, the context of the study is described, followed by a stepwise presentation of the data and findings, as represented in Table 3.1. Following Charmaz (1995), examples from the transcripts of both forms of supervision as well as from the focus group discussion and interviews are included "to keep the human story in the forefront of the reader's mind and to make the

conceptual analysis more accessible to a wider audience” (p. 47). Such an approach also attests to the authenticity of the interpretations, and enables the ‘voices’ of participants to be ‘heard’.

Gergen (1989) writes the reminder that “the conclusions one draws as to a text’s meaning are fundamentally dependant on the shared understandings existing within the community of which the reader is a member” (p.242). I am mindful of this in presenting the findings in the following chapter. Chapter 4 thus results from the process of selection and analysis in which I engaged, as I made decisions regarding the findings to be explicated, and grappled with conveying a sense of the complexity and richness of the data. I acknowledge that re-engagement with the data at another time, or by other researchers might well generate differences in the findings, since others will bring different questions to bear, and will approach the data from different perspectives.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

One of the features of this research endeavour is that the phenomena under study are “processes in motion and in change” (Vygotsky, 1978: 6). This imposed certain challenges in terms of selection and application of the methodology and analysis of results. The need to analyse and make sense of the data meant that I needed to ‘freeze the frame’ at certain points in time, however the development of the interns’ experience in training and their responses to the evolving PSG process were ongoing. I acknowledge the limitations of my findings, which are a reflection of the data as it was ‘stopped in time’ by transcription, becoming a fixed form in the written word. Furthermore, the reading and interpretation are also subject to my cognitive processes, and I am continually aware of the oscillation which occurs between the record of the sessions and my role as interpreter in the process. These findings will therefore not be the final word, but are intended to contribute to the debate regarding the optimising of supervisory experiences for trainee psychologists.

A further challenge was that of selection of the method of analysis and the condensation of the data into units of meaning. In this process I became increasingly aware that one peer supervision group (PSG) recording and its individual supervision (ISV) partner yielded rich data for analysis. My chosen method of analysis was driven by the evolving research questions. The use of grounded theory enabled the data to emerge from an iterative and ongoing process of collection of material and engagement with it. The nature of much of this chapter will be in the form of an extended description, with a more interpretive analysis being presented in the final two sections. At times I used closer-grained analysis, using techniques drawn from other methods such as conversational analysis, content analysis or analysis of accounts, however in the main, I focussed on trying to understand the processes underpinning the interactions. One of the features of this type of data, is that it could be analysed differently, by other researchers, thus yielding further interpretations. Kvale (1996) is reassuring in this regard: “an explication of the perspectives adopted ... and a specification of the researcher’s questions posed ... several interpretations of the same text will not be a weakness, but a richness ...” (p.212).

The material in this chapter therefore moves from being descriptive to more analytical, and from the specifics of PSG and PSG-ISV comparisons to more abstract derivatives which strive to identify strategies which might promote learning and specify influences on the trainees' experiences of the learning contexts. Following Glaser (1992), the final section theorizes the core variables which seemed to me to be implicit influences throughout the process. To begin this chapter, an account of the contextual variables which are influential in this study is presented. This is then followed by a table (in section 4.2) outlining the material to be presented in subsequent sections.

4.1 THE CONTEXTS OF THE STUDY

In order to locate the study within the various contexts which contribute to, and impact upon, the interactions which are to be examined in detail in this chapter, the following diagram has been constructed. The features of the diagram are described in this section since they provide the backdrop to the detail of the data to be presented.

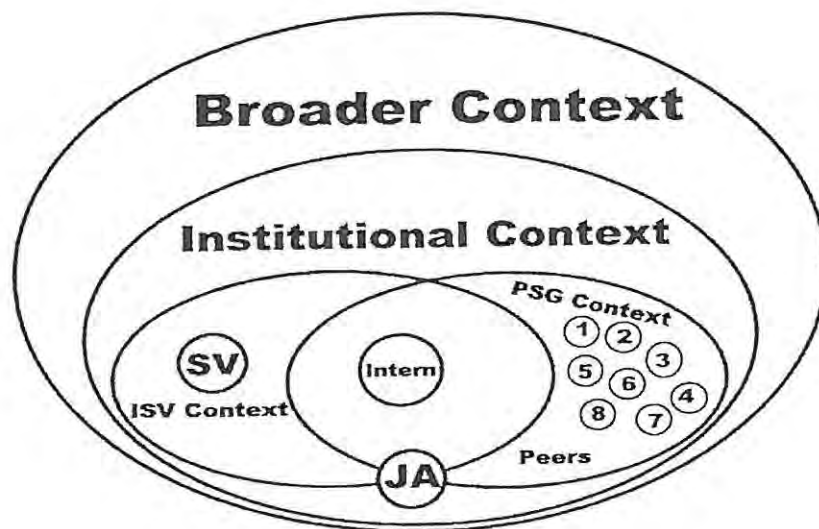


Figure 4.1 Diagrammatic representation of the contexts of the study

The above diagram indicates the aspects of this research undertaking to be considered. The diagram is based on certain of the elements of Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecosystemic model, in which the micro-, meso-, exo- and macro-systems impacting on an individual form concentric circles, nested into each other, with interactions between the levels. The first context is that of the PSG, represented by a circle for the intern-presenter, and smaller circles for the peers. The ISV context is represented by the same circle for the intern and a circle for the supervisor. The overlaps between the two contexts are shown by the overlapping spherical lines. The intern-presenter changes week by week over the duration of the period of the study. I have included a circle for myself as researcher (JA) to indicate my 'presence' in the contexts of both PSG and ISV, represented by the tape recorder present in ten sessions of PSG, and in four ISV sessions. Each person represented above is part of an institutional context, the training setting which is located in a broader context, the socio-educational milieu of the region within the South Africa of 1998.

4.1.1 The broader and institutional contexts

Although the broader and institutional contexts are shown separately in figure 4.1, I have chosen to discuss them together in this sub-section because the institutional context reflects many of the issues with which the broader society is grappling. Society in South Africa is immersed in the process of transforming from the authoritarian, hierarchical structures of the previous apartheid regime into a more democratically functioning society where the rights of all are respected. A dominant culture of obedience to guidelines set by those in positions of authority had kept many people disempowered, and individuals' confidence in thinking for themselves and making autonomous decisions was limited during the apartheid era.

This study took place during a period of accelerated change in the arenas of politics, social organisation, family life, education, and economics. As a society in transition, such issues as a high divorce rate and other disruptions to family patterns, the threat of HIV/AIDS, elevated levels of crime and violence, a high number of deaths related to motor vehicle accidents, and people feeling alienated from or turning from their cultural roots impact on many individuals. Such issues mean that there have been increasing needs for mental health counselling in South Africa.

The impact of the societal changes can be traced in various aspects of the study. These include: the composition of the group and previous experiences of the participants; the nature of the casework undertaken; some of the institutional and professional issues with which the participants were grappling; the underlying philosophies related to learning processes, of both the participants and their supervisors; and the system of professional evaluation functioning at the time.

Professionally, there has been little examination of supervision as a mode of training. (This has been discussed at greater length in Chapter 1). This has a potential impact on interns' views of supervision and supervisors. Supervisors are viewed by the profession as experts with advanced understanding of psychological theory and practice, and interns are expected to undergo two hour of supervision per week to cover casework, skill development, conceptualisation and professional development. The supervisor has an evaluative role, reporting on the progress of the intern at a quarterly meeting and giving input regarding the intern's readiness for professional registration at the end of the training period. The supervisor also takes responsibility for the progress of casework, and 'watches over' the work from ethical and legal perspectives.

The university in which the training setting is located was traditionally a university for white students which espoused a liberal view of education. The university was vocal in its opposition to the policies of the previous regime, and made efforts to begin transformation a number of years prior to the governmental negotiation processes of the early 1990's. The racial composition of the student body has thus changed dramatically during the past two decades, and the university experienced subtle forms of penalisation by the former government in the form of funding cuts. The economic pressures on the institution continued during the 1990's, given the economic constraints experienced by the Government of National Unity as they strived to redress past imbalances, and this impacted on staffing, particularly of support services (including student counselling) and of units involved in community outreach and service.

From an educational perspective, the university supports a policy of empowering students to become critical thinkers and leaders, and encouraged the challenging of academic practices which did not foster such approaches. However, in the university, many lecturers continue to function

in a more traditional 'transmission' mode, where lectures are content-driven, and where many students use the rote-learning practices they developed in school. Although there is a greater awareness of the fact that lecturers need training in educational theory and practice, particularly reflective practice which evaluates underlying educational philosophies and understandings of the learning process, the process of change in this regard has been very slow. A dominant mode still in existence is that 'experts' have access to knowledge and 'the answers', and there is little explicit development of thinking skills in students or widespread debates regarding understandings of knowledge as a socially constructed and dynamic entity.

Nationally, educational reform has led to support for skills-based educational programmes, with outcomes of such programmes being the focus of attention. Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) has been developed as a concept influencing all levels of education, from the junior primary through to the tertiary phases, and universities have had to develop programmes which conform to certain specifications, and incorporate the principles of OBE from planning to delivery and assessment. The underpinning philosophy of the approach is far more learner-centred than previously, and such methods as co-operative and collaborative learning are favoured. Since the model being investigated in this study is based on peers working together in a collaborative way, this study has the potential to contribute to the debate in education development.

The specific training setting of the interns is a student counselling centre (SC) and child guidance centre (CGC) of a university on the eastern seaboard of South Africa, where interns work for various percentages of time, depending on their registration category. The interns are registered either in the category of Educational Psychology (the equivalent of School Psychology in the USA)(3 participants) or Counselling Psychology (6 participants). In this university, the theoretical training of clinical, counselling and educational psychology occurs in parallel in the first year of the Masters degree, with coursework being shared, and the streams then separated for practical work and supervision. In the internships of educational and counselling psychology trainees, the work settings are identical, but the ratio of the work done in the settings differs (educational psychology trainees spend two-thirds of their time in CGC and one-third in SC, and for counselling psychology trainees the converse occurs).

The transformation of the student body (from whites only in the 1970's to substantially representing all population groups by the late 1990's, with 78% of the student body representing population groups formerly the target of discrimination in 1999), has placed increasing demands for service on the SC, especially from students who were disadvantaged educationally under the previous regime. The service-rendering function of the CGC has also changed in response to societal needs and the training required by psychologists; thus the majority of clients have very limited access to other services, and there is a greater emphasis on working within the wider community than in earlier models of training. The CGC works in collaboration with other projects in the region, and members of the group of interns in this study were also involved in work with multiply disabled, two hospital paediatric clinics, school-teacher groups and a project for abused children, which I will call XCentre, to protect its identity.

The two major settings in which interns work (SC & CGC) have differing management approaches. Both centres have a director, neither of whom take a strongly authoritarian approach; however the interns' experience of the two people differ with respect to support, approachability, and willingness to take action when the interns desired advocacy on their part in dealing with systemic issues. In the one setting, interns are responsible for scheduling their own appointments and duties; whereas in the other there is a centralised diary where demands on the time of staff are controlled by appointments being scheduled by receptionists. An additional responsibility for interns in 1998 related to the establishment of XCentre in collaboration with CGC. One of the interns played a major role in the setting up of XCentre; she thus carried high levels of responsibility in this regard, whilst the other interns were expected to take on casework from the centre.

Both CGC and SC operate on limited financial budgets; thus 3 of the interns were fully self-supporting, and the others had very limited incomes, thus supplementing their incomes from family assistance, other work, student loans or savings. Full-time staff include 3 supervising counsellors at SC and one at CGC, with additional supervision at CGC negotiated with 3 'outside' supervisors (some from an academic department). The financial and supervision constraints are mentioned because these have a potential impact on levels of motivation and commitment.

The nature of the above broader and institutional influences on this study will be explored more specifically below. At its core, this study emerged from explorations of ways of improving and optimising supervisory experiences within the constraints of the training setting described above.

4.1.2 Group composition and participants' previous educational and work experiences

The 9 interns who participated in the study were from diverse backgrounds. There were 8 females and 1 male; 2 were black African, 3 were of Asian origin and 4 were of European origin. Thus the group was not balanced from a gender perspective (although this represents the current state in the training of psychologists in South Africa, Richter and Griesel, 1999); and it was not representative of the proportions of race in the broader population (where black Africans are in the majority). However, 5 of the 9 were from groups previously subject to racial discrimination, thus the group was more inclusive than many other post-graduate groups in SA universities.

Five of the participants had been schooled in government-funded schools, whereas the other 4 (including the 2 black African participants) had been to private high schools. None of the group had therefore been subject to the restricted resources and discriminatory philosophy of black government-subsidised schools. Socio-economically most of the group were not from previously disadvantaged communities.

Table 4.1 Age of participants

<u>Age group</u>	<u>Number</u>
24 - 29	5
30 - 39	2
40 - 49	2

The above table shows that a number of the participants were in their late twenties. The average age for the group was 32.

The participants had had a diversity of university experience, and had entered this university at various levels. Only two of the group had attended the university, which is the focus of this study,

for both their undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Two had attended historically politically conservative universities for their first degree; and two had completed their first degrees overseas (one in the UK, one in the USA). Three had completed their Honours degree or its equivalent at this university, and six had completed their Masters level academic training here. Of the other three, two had completed their Masters training at a campus in a neighbouring town, and one had trained in the USA.

Eight of the group had previous work experience of various kinds, and only one had been a full-time student throughout, from undergraduate to postgraduate study. The types of work experience is tabulated below (some had more than one experience, hence n=10 in the table).

Table 4.2 Previous work experience

Teaching	2	Social work	1
Secretarial/administration	3	Correctional services	1
Journalism	1	Voluntary community work	2

4.1.3 Nature of casework presented

Of the ten cases presented at meetings of the Peer Supervision Group (PSG), five were of school going learners (i.e. CGC cases, between the ages 7 and 15), and five were of university students (i.e. SC cases). Important contributory factors in the clients' presenting problems were as follows, (n=16 in the table below because there was an overlap of issues in a number of cases):

Table 4.3 Referral problems in casework

Death (of immediate family member)	4
Divorce/separation of parents	2
Clash between culture and university experience	3
Educational and behavioural issues	3
Depressive symptomatology	4

The impact of broader systemic issues on the presenting problems of cases presented is evident from the above table (and reflects some of the issues mentioned in 4.1.1). Only in one case (that of the oldest student client) were family system issues not immediately impacting on the presenting problem. Further details of the cases presented in PSG may be found in the tables in Appendix D.

Four of the cases could be considered as cross-cultural since the client and intern were from different (racial, language or religious) groups. Such cross-cultural work is a feature of this training setting, since the nature of the society in South Africa means that individuals are relating multiculturally on a daily basis. Multicultural therapeutic work is regarded as an integral part of the training, rather than being highlighted as a separate topic.

The nature of the casework in this training setting is thus varied and adds a richness to the training of these interns, since they deal with a wide cross-section of cases.

4.1.4 Relevant institutional and professional issues

A number of issues impacted on the interns during the course of the year. The following information became available to me since I was involved in the training context, and was present at training committee meetings.

Interns experienced a tension between their needs as trainees for time to reflect, write up case material and read; and the needs of the placements to provide a service to clients, which meant that demands were being made on their time, requiring them to do additional work, such as report-writing, after hours.

Interns also compared the theoretical input they were receiving to that of the clinical psychology interns, who had been their peers in their first year of training, in a different placement (a government hospital setting which was better funded and could thus provide a more extensive training programme). Their concerns related to both the type of input received by the other interns

and the greater amount of time devoted to such activities; and they raised this as an issue at the training committee.

A further complexity for the 1998 interns was the service they were required to provide to XCentre cases (part of the CGC work). Since XCentre had recently started and was unable to appoint staff due to limited finance, interns were taking on extended roles related to the casework, and the boundaries of their work were not adequately specified (given the formative stage of the XCentre). They were subject to conflicting guidance and theoretical approaches regarding their work from various role players in the XCentre system, which led to increased tension and feelings of frustration for interns providing service delivery.

Another source of variation related to the differences between supervisors with whom the interns had contact. Some of the supervisors were employed as counsellors in the SC, with one being the SC director; one was the director of the CGC; some were lecturers in an academic department linked to the CGC; and some were employed part-time (being private practitioners contracted to provide supervision for the CGC). Interns thus experienced varying theoretical and pragmatic approaches from different supervisors, and some supervisors, having hierarchical positions, would have had certain investments in their work contexts.

The results to be described in the next sections emerge from the transcription data (from 10 PSG sessions and 4 ISV sessions), the focus group discussion with participants after ten sessions of the PSG, and individual interviews with 3 of the participants. The PSG met over a period of 5 months during which 10 sessions occurred. It was only possible to meet bi-weekly since other work demands meant that all group members were not available for weekly sessions. Although there were 9 interns, the person who had presented a case for the first meeting with me present as facilitator, presented again in the tenth session.

4.2 OUTLINE OF SOURCES AND TYPES OF DATA FOR ANALYSIS

In order to organise the research findings into a sequence, and to assist in explicating the research process, a table has been constructed. The following table outlines the stages of the research

process, indicating the data collection, evolving questions (in italics), and form of the data analysis following grounded theory conventions (in capital letters).

Table 4.4 Outline of the research process

Step one: Collect interns' written accounts of previous experiences of sv and introduce PSG	CODING
Develop question: <i>How do participants experience various aspects of the PSG?</i>	
Step two: Transcribe 4 PSG's	CODING
Develop question: <i>What are the relative merits and demerits of PSG compared to ISV?</i>	
Step three: Transcribe a further 5 PSG's and matching ISV's in order to engage in comparative analysis	PAIRWISE ANALYSIS
Step four: Focus group discussion	
Develop question: <i>How do the two modes used in conjunction contribute to the learning process?</i>	
	DEVELOP CATEGORIES & READING GUIDE
Step five: 3 Individual interviews	
Develop question: <i>What strategies, which may facilitate learning, are evident in the two modes of supervision?</i>	
	FOCUSSED CODING
Step six: Building a model which identifies core variables	
	DEVELOP NARRATIVE ACCOUNT

The above table is central to this chapter since each of the identified steps form the basis of the sections to follow. Section 4.3 is therefore a collation of the trainees' responses to the task of writing about their experiences of supervision. A descriptive account of the unfolding of the group's engagement with the peer supervision process then follows in 4.4. This includes a brief thematic description of the chosen case, the Request for Assistance (RFA) statement(s), a

thematic analysis of the question and discussion sections, and a summary of the feedback phase. This is then followed by reflections on the PSG process which are linked to the focus group discussion and individual interviews subsequent to the experience of the peer supervision.

The next part of the findings (4.5) considers the PSG in comparison to ISV. A reading guide is used to interrogate the transcriptions of four pairs of PSG-ISV. The summary of emergent themes from the pairwise analysis is presented. The data is then considered for the purpose of distilling possible strategies for promoting learning in the supervision processes. The categories which were crystallised from this process are then presented (4.6), and discussed in more detail (4.7). Finally, in section 4.8, a flow diagram of the proposed model which represents key findings (or the core categories), and a narrative account based upon this model is constructed.

The convention followed below when reporting verbatim transcript material is to italicise the quotation, and an omitted section of discourse is shown by [...]. When the excerpt is part of dialogue, P designates a participant (P1, P2 used when more than one contributes), F. the facilitator, S. an individual supervisor, and J. myself.

4.3 **STEP ONE:** TRAINEES' REFLECTIONS ON THE LEARNING PROCESS IN SUPERVISION PRIOR TO ENGAGING IN THE PSG

Interns had experienced supervision of the practical work undertaken in the academic year of training, and had already experienced two months of supervision at the beginning of this internship year. Prior to the start of the PSG process, interns were requested to write up their reflections on supervision up to that point. They were asked to reflect on:

- * What was helpful/unhelpful?
- * Whether differences in supervisor style have affected the experience?
- * Whether their expectations of and approach and attitudes to supervision had changed?

Thematic analysis and coding of the 8 written responses revealed opinions about the form of supervision the trainees desired, their perceptions of the respective roles of the supervisor and

their own contributions, and that their perceptions of supervision had evolved over time. The following sub-sections give more details of their opinions.

4.3.1 Desired form of supervision

The understanding of supervision tended to be mediated by a perception that supervision involves providing a supportive space where uncertainties and concerns could be addressed adequately. Two participants mentioned that there was too little time for supervision. Ongoing feedback regarding interns' progress was desired by participants, but they reported that very little feedback had been forthcoming.

4.3.2 Role and contributions of supervisor

With regard to the role of the supervisor, it was mentioned that the input of the supervisor enabled insights to be gained and broader issues than case management to be considered. A number believed that theoretical perspectives should be provided, and one also mentioned the provision of readings. There was some mention of an appreciation of supervisors who questioned the rationale behind trainees' decision-making and 'forced' them to be more explicit about the theoretical underpinnings of their approach enabled them to clarify their thinking and make conscious links with their theoretical understandings. Support for an approach which paid attention to the intern's experiences and feelings, as well as the intern-client relationship was evident. This was reported to be helpful in increasing awareness of and sensitivity to case dynamics. Some made mention of their need to deal more explicitly with transference issues which arose in therapy.

Interns reported experiencing most difficulty when supervisors approached the task from their own theoretical perspective, imposing their framework on the material and giving advice, or being atheoretical and too focussed on case detail. The preferred approach seemed to be the matching of the supervisor's approach and framework to the intern's understandings. One intern was critical of supervisors being sidetracked or not available for regular appointments.

4.3.3 Changes in perception of supervision

Some of the interns' accounts indicated that their perceptions of supervision had shifted during their training. Initially some reflected that they had expected the supervisor to give them specific direction, since they were inexperienced and the responsibility would then rest with the supervisor. They reported that as they gained confidence, they realised the need to take fuller responsibility for decision-making and determining the approach to their casework.

Interns were thus signalling an evolving process in their understanding of supervision. A number had viewed supervisors initially in the expert position, and had wanted input from them because of feelings of inadequacy. As they developed feelings of proficiency, they recognised changes in their own needs: i.e. for supervision which matched their level of understanding; recognised their needs; and, allowed them to take increasing responsibility. They also recognised the importance of the relational context for providing a safe space where they could express their concerns.

One of the interns wrote vividly of her preference in supervisor style:

It has been most effective for me when the supervisor has not adopted what I will call a red-light ethic of supervision - that of 'checking' on my work with a view to ensuring that there is nothing dangerous or untoward taking place. The green-light ethic of supervision should be a way of extending the insight, efficiency and efficacy of the therapy with a peripheral aim of ensuring that there are no ethical or professional blunders taking place [...] this green-light ethic assumes a competence, however latent, in the therapist which, if nurtured, can become a confident thoroughness in the later absence of the supervisor. Should the supervisor only assume the position of a policeman, this is not encouraged.

This excerpt highlights the desired balance - between encouraging competence in the intern and keeping a watch for ethical 'mistakes'. Furthermore, the intern alludes to a learning process where the learner internalises the dialogue in the supervisory context to later act as an internal 'supervisor' as the person monitors her own work.

4.3.4 Supervisors' perceptions

I did not ask supervisors to write their own descriptions of the learning process in supervision, because my focus was, at the time, on interns' perceptions. However, interns' reports of their experiences of various supervisors indicated that there were a range of approaches taken, which would imply a range of supervisors' understandings of their role and influence on the learning process.

One of the key influences on the supervisors is likely to be their sense of needing to keep a watchful eye on the interns' work, since they are required to take professional responsibility for it, and this might impact on their conceptualisation of their role. Thus the role of 'watching over' and of being the expert or authority figure might influence their ability to establish a working relationship that optimises the potential for learning to take place.

4.4 STEP TWO: DESCRIPTION OF THE UNFOLDING PSG PROCESS

The PSG met over a period of 5 months during which 10 sessions occurred. It was only possible to meet bi-weekly since other work demands meant that all group members were not available for weekly sessions. Although there were 9 peers, the peer who had presented a case for the first meeting with me present as facilitator, presented again in the tenth session. A summary of each of PSG's 2-10 may be found in Appendix D.

In order to consider the PSG as a process, patterns which emerge from the transcripts of sessions as well as pertinent comments from the focus group discussion, which occurred after the ten sessions, are presented. These have been arranged according to the phases of the PSG, viz.:

Phase one: Case Presentation and Request for Assistance statement

Phase two: Questioning Period and Identification of Focus

Phase three: Feedback statements and discussion

Phase four: Presenter's response

(See section 2.3.3.2 and the document in appendix B for details of the purposes of each phase)

4.4.1 Phase one of PSG: Case presentation

Of the 10 cases presented, 4 were CGC cases where a child was the index patient (girl aged 7; boy aged 8; boy aged 12 and girl aged 15); 5 were SC cases (4 women aged 18, 19, 20 and 26 respectively, and one man aged 19); one case was of a family intervention referred by a treatment centre serviced by CGC. 9 of the cases were psychotherapy-related, and 1 case involved a completed assessment where possible recommendations to the parents were discussed.

The case presentations varied in length and amount of detail included. The following table shows the number of words in each presentation phase, as an indication of the length of each.

Table 4.5 Length of case presentation

PSG2	PSG3	PSG4	PSG5	PSG6	PSG7	PSG8	PSG9	PSG10
2440	2176	2178	977	1316	1606	2279	1042 *	2421

(* Underestimate due to recording being indistinct)

The above table indicates the variable length of the presentations, influenced by the complexity of the case material as well as the presenters' perceptions of the detail they needed to present.

A further variation was in the level of organisation and formality in the presentations. Four seemed to mimic case conference-type presentations: initial referral details and impression of the client, background (including a genogram) and history, followed by themes in therapy. Four took a more narrative approach 'telling' the story session by session as it unfolded. One seemed relatively unstructured although a genogram enabled the trainee to present details. One presented a videotape of a family session in conjunction with case details.

In the focus group discussion, participants made the following comments about the value of the case presentation phase of the PSG:

- * It gives an opportunity to present a case where the trainee feels uncertain about a way ahead:
sometimes you are like stuck and you don't know where to go [...] it gives each and everyone of us time to comment and to clarify some questions that we have
- * It helps as a preparation for a formal case conference
it also helped me because when I went to present at case conference, I knew what sort of information to present and how to present it
- * The trainee has a sense that peers empathise with what they are experiencing
also the fact that you present it to your peers and they know where you're coming from, and you're coming from [...] the same kind of mode of functioning, and it became much easier to present

In an individual interview, one participant reflected:

in PSG I was able to present it, know that I was being listened to because of the structure of it, was that people had to listen and couldn't interject and that was quite an affirming experience, and then ask the questions and know the group were going to stick to it

This emphasised the value of the structure of PSG to this participant, enabling the person to develop her argument.

In one presentation there was explicit reference to a theoretical paradigm; and in four there were references to a theoretical style influencing the approach taken to the therapy. The value of the presentation for enabling some theorising is expressed in the following interchange during the focus group discussion:

P1: *For me it was the freshness of theoretical input [...] which I think could be even more, could be focused even more if we encouraged each other, or were encouraged to formulate according to theories [...]*

P2: *[...] by the time one is presenting the case you have already got some idea of what [...] you're dealing with and where you're coming from and maybe to mention that, is that what you're saying?*

P1: *Ja, maybe just make it more of an overt kind of, ja, clarity.*

The above comments about the potential for enabling links being made to theory are thus expanded to a suggestion for improving presentations by making theoretical perspectives more explicit in the case presentation phase.

A possible difficulty with presenting a case was however raised by a participant in an individual interview:

I got the impression that some people found it a bit uncomfortable doing the presentation thing in PSG, and there was a bit of trepidation [...] maybe it was only a couple of people but I did get that sense, maybe there were feelings about that.

This was the only comment in this regard, however it proposes the possibility that certain group members felt some anxiety about presenting to the group, raising questions about the potential for trainees to evaluate themselves, by comparing their performance to others' (Unfortunately this comment was made in an individual interview towards the end of the process, so I was unable to explore this further with participants).

4.4.2 Phase one of PSG: Request for assistance (RFA) statements

The RFA is stated after the summary information given in the presentation. The RFA statement specifies what type of assistance is required (Wilbur et al., 1991). This statement may fall into one of three categories:

- (i) skill development to facilitate "increased understanding of the client and skill acquisition to address client problems" (Wilbur et al., 1991, p.94),(also termed 'extrapersonal');
- (ii) personal growth (for increased personal insight - also termed 'intrapersonal'); or
- (iii) the consideration of therapist beliefs/attitudes related to a particular client issue, (also termed 'interpersonal').

In the focus group discussion, participants commented on the usefulness of specifying the RFA:

actually the process of trying to decide where it fits also helped focus you, and focus the way you were questioned.

Thus the explicit specifying of an RFA both led to a focus for the presentation and influenced the next phase, that of questioning.

An overview of the PSG transcripts shows that in the majority of cases, the RFA did seem to have an impact on the content of the discussion. In 8 of the 10 PSG's, two separate RFA's were asked by the presenters. Most of the RFA's could be categorised as (i) above (12 of 16). An overview

of the PSG's shows that the discussion between peers flowed more smoothly, and seemed to be more helpful to the presenter when the RFA fitted into category (i). When the RFA fell into categories (ii) or (iii), consideration of the transcripts indicates that trainees had greater difficulties engaging in the discussion. The participants seemed less confident to offer their opinions, with fewer peers participating, and there seemed to be more discontinuity in the flow of the discussion.

Wilbur et al. (1991) suggest that the RFA signals to the group the type of discussion and assistance needed. This does seem to be supported in the present study: consideration of the PSG sessions showed that RFA's identified as skill development or case management led to discussions which were more focused on providing ideas and assistance. Participants had more difficulty in providing assistance (indicated by fewer participants in the discussion and silences) when the RFA targeted issues which might have involved greater theoretical or interpersonal complexity, e.g. understanding of transference and countertransference. issues, or of the presenter's role as therapist. This may be reflective of the limited nature of their training in psychodynamic approaches, leading to their having difficulty when speculating about interactional processes.

The participants in the study, in the focus group discussion, expressed reservations about the wording of the divisions between the RFA categories as defined by Wilbur et al. (1991):

P1: *I think sometimes it was a bit difficult to place questions into one of those categories [...] But most of the time it was fine.*

P2: *Maybe it might be useful to actually expand the categories [...]*

P3: *[...] it was a bit forced.*

J: *So what you're saying is it might be worth me looking at the way you phrased your questions, and see how we could look at those RFA categories differently. That certainly has been my sense listening to the tapes, [...] somehow the division*

P3: *Got a bit blurred*

A much stronger additional comment about the categories of RFA was made later by a participant unable to participate in the focus group discussion:

P4: *The RFA's were more obstructionist and artificial than they were useful.*

The participants were thus signalling the need for further consideration of the wording of the RFA categories, in that they could not always fit their own RFA neatly into one of the three suggested. It is possible that the words chosen, (e.g. intra-, extra-, and interpersonal), made distinctions difficult to make, given the interactive nature of a therapeutic interview, and that having to choose one specific category was difficult.

A further point to be raised is that the participants might also have been indirectly signalling that the facilitator needed to be clearer regarding the function and use of RFA's to guide the discussion. One of the intended roles of the facilitator was to enable the clear expression of the RFA, which would then guide the third phase of the PSG. It appears that facilitators were not clear on this aspect of their role. Certainly considering the PSG transcript when P4 (quoted above) presented, the facilitator seemed not to hear, or not to reiterate the presenter's clarification of the RFA which occurred at the end of the questioning period, and this may be one of the reasons for difficulties in the subsequent discussion, and for the opinion quoted above.

An example of facilitator having difficulty with categorising occurs in PSG2:

F: So your first question is around skills, as to what to do in the playroom, and your next question is ... I'm not sure it has a slot (referring to the 3 categories of RFA)

P2: Can you re-phrase the last question? (Which the presenter then does)

(Note that P2 takes on a facilitation role - to be discussed in phase 3 below)

There is one example of a new RFA being mentioned in phase 2, arising as the presenter responds to questions regarding details of case management, however this is not picked up by the facilitator.

Consideration of the RFA's in each of the PSG transcripts confirms some of the reservations that the participants were signalling above.

4.4.2.1 RFA category (i)

With regard to category (i), the conflation of 'skill development' with 'extrapersonal' in the Wilbur et al. (1991) scheme seemed to pose some difficulties, since some of the problems presented were

related to both decision-making regarding the approach and skills (ie. category i) as well as the intrapersonal experience of the presenter (ie. category ii). Two examples of difficulties in the transcripts of sessions follow:

In PSG4, the presenter wanted help in understanding why the client had not arrived for the final session as contracted, and does not seem to be able to categorise this either as related to skill development or to her concerns about her own part in the interactions of the previous session.

In PSG6, the presenter says: "*I don't know how to work with this case*" which would seem to be a category (i) RFA, however, it emerges that her request is more related to category (iii) where she is dealing with a client from a different culture and is very aware of that in relation to her own preferred therapeutic style.

It would also seem that the definition of category (i), skill development, includes of number of quite different questions. Examples from transcripts follow:

- *what's happening in the family now?* (related to family dynamics)
- *I want to know, because I've had a sense that I want to work in object relations terms because there's a lot of early stuff, there's projective identification happening in most sessions. But then he's so depressed he needs some kind of mastery and opportunities for pleasure, I also have been emphasising his kind of thinking in the present. So I'm quite confused.* (ie. related to theoretical framework, whether to use a psychodynamic or cognitive-type approach)
- *in the little time left,[...] I'm wanting some structure so that I can promote rapid movement, so some suggestions on methodology [...] and suggestions as to who I could possibly hook in as a support mechanism for this child from the outside?* (An example of time constraints impacting on decision-making regarding therapeutic approach)
- (In a very complex case presented) *So now what do I handle first? There's the family issues, bereavement issues, the boyfriend issues, the pregnancy, I'm really feeling stuck, help [...]*

(After the questioning phase, the facilitator states) F: *It seems like you're wanting feedback on the task of what you do physically, but also about how you deal with some of your own countertransferential issues*

The last example shows a facilitator reflecting on the RFA's in a helpful way, crystallising the issues. It is also an example of two categories of RFA, (i) and (ii), being identified.

4.4.2.2 RFA category (ii)

Two of the PSG RFA's seem to fit into category (ii), because they relate to what the participants termed countertransferential issues

- *I'm often finding it difficult to separate the difference between what is mothering and therapy, where does one end and the other begin? (PSG2)*
- In the transcript of PSG9 there are potentially quite a few transference-type issues related to the client concerned missing the previous session, and then arriving at the next session and describing what might be termed as 'acting out' during the time of the missed session.

In both cases, the discussion does not seem to have directly addressed these concerns.

4.4.2.3 RFA category (iii)

With regard to category (iii), in PSG6, the facilitator decided the RFA fitted category (i), but it may have better fitted (iii) (although this is not noted by the facilitator). The other category (iii) RFA occurs in PSG10 where the presenter is being expected to work in a particular way by the treatment agency, but this clashed with a personal philosophy regarding the intern's preferred mode of functioning. The participants made some attempts to assist the presenter with each of these.

To summarise, with regard to phase one, the case presentation was found to be helpful because participants prepared for and could talk through the case details. The RFA's enabled trainees to specify the type of assistance needed, however the categories of RFA seemed to need further consideration since the divisions between them were not necessarily helpful, and facilitators did not, at times, specify the type of RFA clearly enough, which then had some impact on the later discussions.

4.4.3 Phase two of PSG: Questioning period and identification of focus

One of the purposes of phase two of the PSG, which follows on from the RFA, is for the group to question the presenter about case details and the RFA as presented. This phase enables peers to use questioning for additional information and to clarify issues. A further aim is to better understand the RFA and the presenter's concerns.

During the questioning phase, a round-robin technique is recommended in order to enable all participants to ask their question(s), and to encourage participation. This seems to have been achieved in most of the PSG's, though in PSG9 there are silences during this period.

Analysis of the phase two of each of the 10 PSG transcripts indicates that a question time of varying lengths occurs. The table below lists the number of questions asked in each PSG.

Table 4.6 Number of questions asked in phase two

PSG2	PSG3	PSG4	PSG5	PSG6	PSG7	PSG8	PSG9	PSG10
16	28	17	24	30	34	44	17	32

The number of questions asked ranges from 16 to 44. Consideration of the trends in the table seems to indicate that the number of questions asked relate more to case detail and complexity than to participants gaining familiarity with the process (which would have led to an increasing number of questions asked from PSG2 through PSG10). When the scores in Table 4.6 are paired with those in Table 4.5 (the length of the case presentation), visual inspection does not reveal a trend or pattern which might link the two.

I then categorised the questions by 'type', according to the categories. In the graph below, the number of questions in each category are illustrated per PSG.

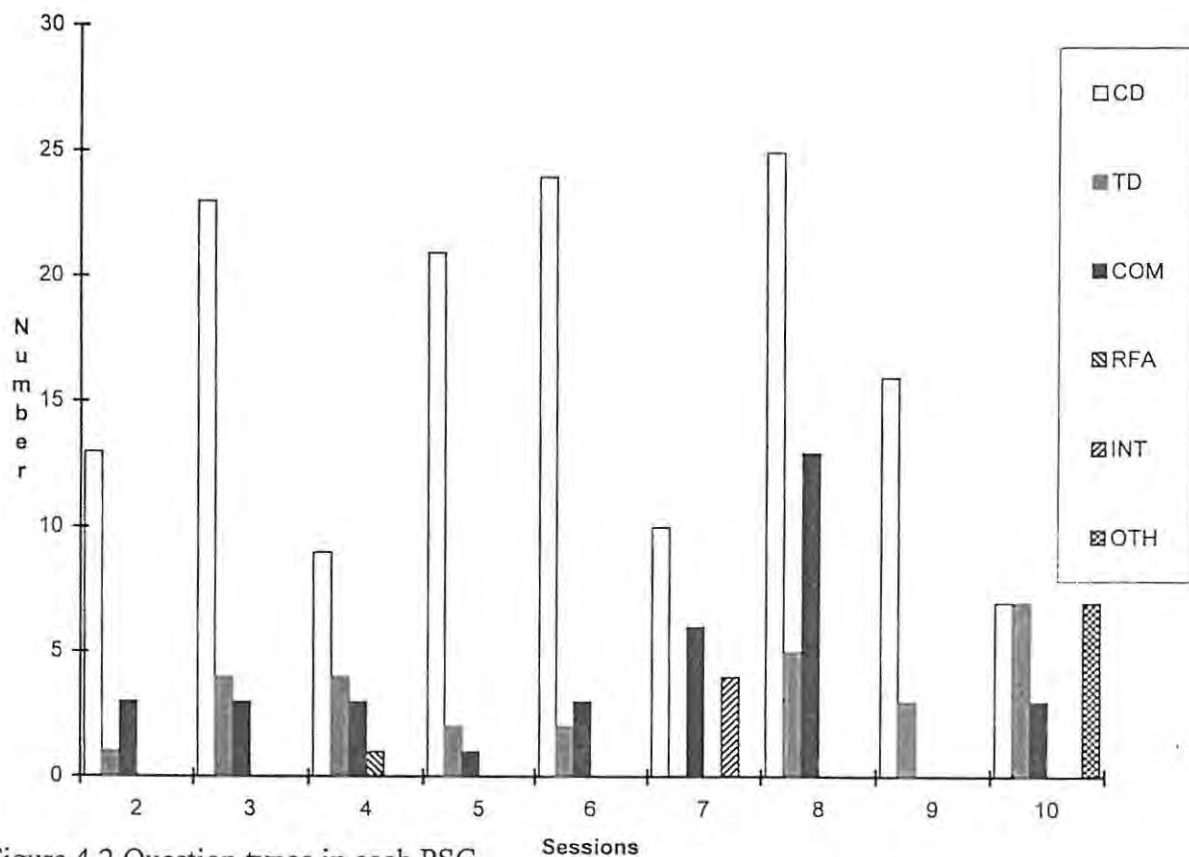


Figure 4.2 Question types in each PSG

The graph shows the number of case detail (CD) questions, therapy detail (TD) questions, comments (COM), questions regarding the RFA, interpretive comments (INT) and case details supplied by another peer (OTH). The order of the columns for each PSG follows that of the legend, i.e. CD followed by TD, followed by COM, and so on. Gaps between the columns indicate that the type omitted did not occur in the PSG.

The columns of the graph show that the majority of the questions related to case/biographical details (CD), with much fewer questions related to the therapists' intervention thus far (TD). Comments were also made in this phase (COM). A unique feature of PSG7 is the number of interpretive statements made by peers, related to the case dynamics (INT). In PSG10, a peer working with other aspects of the same case responds to questions (OTH), seeming to usurp the presenter's role to answer questions. PSG9 shows the most limited variety of questions.

The CD category of question occurs most frequently. The number of CD questions seem to follow the pattern of the overall number of questions for each PSG, except in PSG7 which had a high number of COM, and PSG10, with a high number of OTH. The TD category occurs much less frequently than I'd expected, possibly reflecting the trainees' limited experience in thinking about and asking more process-related questions.

Statements in the COM category are found in all but one of the PSG's, and comments seem to show a tendency to increase in number over the course of the process. These comments seem to fill the role of filling out case detail further, and follow on from a presenter having answered a previous question. Interpretive statements (INT) propose a deeper meaning for certain actions, and are only found in PSG7.

There is little reference to the RFA during the questioning period, with only one example of a direct question related to the RFA being asked; or discussion of the RFA in order to clarify the focus.

When case details are considered as possible mediating factors influencing the variety of questions, there does not seem to be a pattern. Other potentially influencing factors on the variety of questions may be the presenter's status in the group, or his/her openness to exploration; however these issues were not explored in the focus group.

The questioning phase seems to offer the opportunity for peers to test their hypotheses about the case and focus for discussion. The questioning is, however, not always exhaustive and there are 3 examples of further questions, to clarify case details, being asked of the presenter during phase three (when the presenter is required to remain silent).

There is one example where there are a number of silences during the questioning phase (PSG9), and most of the questions come from two of the peers, with other group members remaining silent (the facilitator does not seem to intervene to assist the process). The presenter concerned wondered whether that was because she had pre-empted possible questions during the presentation. During an individual interview (INT9), she said:

I was also aware that in constructing the case presentation I had also thought about a lot of the questions they might like to ask and included a lot of those details. So it might have been that they didn't have questions

Since this occurred later in the PSG process, it may be evidence of learning, in that the presenter had anticipated questions which might be asked and included details in the presentation.

The facilitator's role during phase two is twofold: firstly, to encourage the involvement of participants in the 'round-robin' and secondly, to specify a focus for the discussion in phase three. Most facilitators are silent during the questioning. At the end of the phase, five of the facilitators do manage to place the RFA in a category (they identify 'skill development' each time), but only one really re-phrases the focus with any accuracy. There is evidence of two of the facilitators only repeating one of the two RFA's presented, perhaps then not having noted the second RFA when it was expressed in phase one. The extent of one facilitator's interjection is to ask the presenter to repeat the RFA. A couple of facilitators show concern about the questioning not taking too much time, perhaps viewing their role as chiefly timekeeping.

There is evidence of one facilitator intervening to stop speculation (in PSG4, but in this case the speculation might have been useful). Another facilitator does manage to make a comment when questioning seems to go off the point, but this does not change the direction of the discussion (PSG10). The facilitators do not seem to take a strong enough role in this phase, signalling the need for further facilitator training at some stage in the PSG process.

At the end of the questioning phase, the focus for the subsequent discussion should be clear to participants. After responding to the questioning, the presenter then remains silent as the group move into the discussion phase.

4.4.4 Phase three of PSG: Feedback statements and discussion

The discussion phase varies in length and in complexity across the 10 cases. This is shown in the table below, which records the number of turns taken by people during this phase. Bakhtin (1986) terms these 'utterances', since the "change in speaking subjects" creates "clear-cut boundaries of the utterance" (p.72).

Table 4.7 Number of utterances in discussion phase

PSG2	PSG3	PSG4	PSG5	PSG6	PSG7	PSG8	PSG9	PSG10
58	32	54	67	24	68	60	12*	58

* Probable underestimate due to poor sound quality

The range of utterances in the discussion phase is between 12 and 68. Although poor sound quality may have influenced the total recorded in PSG9, there are also silences within the discussion. These silences may indicate the peers' difficulty with the RFA's presented, or their not feeling able to offer comments and suggestions given the nature of the case material. PSG6 is also characterised by a relatively short discussion phase, but the presenter reported the content to have been experienced as helpful. PSG3 also has a relatively short case discussion, but a further 12 utterances occur during phase four of the process.

An analysis of the variety of statements used in the discussion phase of the cases is undertaken in the comparative section analysed in greater detail in section 4.5. Consideration of the PSV columns of the graphs in figure 4.3, (omitting the questioning since those scores were from phase two), shows that in PSG the majority of statements fall into the 'opinion' or 'argument' categories, with a relatively small number of information-giving and clarifying statements, and minimal modelling and feedback statements.

4.4.4.1 Process of discussion

Consideration of the unfolding of the themes in each discussion phase shows that most of the discussions do not proceed in a linear fashion. There are a number of instances where the discussion moves from one theme to the next, and then recycles to a theme which arose earlier. In some cases, the discussion seems to be a collage of ideas, yet consideration of the presenters' feedback indicates that they are able to extract useful information from the various ideas expressed. Thus, what may appear on inspection to be discontinuity in discussion, is not necessarily experienced as such.

4.4.4.2 Content of discussion

With regard to the content of the discussions, members of the focus group indicated the pragmatic and clear nature of the assistance given:

- P1: *I found in PSG the suggestions much practical [...] after sitting here and everybody listening to me, I felt that the suggestions gave me a bit more direction, a bit more clarity at that stage where I should go [...] their suggestions are much more practical and grounded than the airy fairy stuff that I got (in ISV)[...]*

P2: [...] I'd agree with what she's saying. After PSG you leave with a sense of I know what to do now, that's how it felt for me [...] at the end of the day you get a clear picture of how to proceed, so that was very very helpful for me.

- [...] case management and present focussed.
- there was more of step-by-step assistance and I felt comfortable to ask about my uncertainties without feeling perhaps judged.

The present-focussed and non-judgmental nature of the input was thus valued. Consideration of the material in the PSG discussions supports the above focus group comments. Participants thus appreciated the practical suggestions made, and the nature of explanations which were clear, and gave step by step details of techniques or strategies.

One of the noteworthy features of the discussion phases is the extent to which peers refer to their own cases to illustrate similar problems, or to make suggestions which they have tried. Such examples may also serve the purpose of reassuring the presenter that the problem being discussed is similar to those others have encountered.

The strategy of encouraging participants in the discussion to talk about the issues from the presenter's standpoint, was mentioned as beneficial because the presenter does not then feel the need to defend a position, enhancing her/his ability to listen to the discussion. A further strategy used was that of talking about the presenter in the third person, as if 'gossiping in their presence', so that the presenter did not feel compelled to participate.

4.4.4.3 Benefits of presenter listening without participating

The convention of the presenter listening only to the discussion is used in PSG in order that the presenter is not drawn in to defend a position or argue a point. One of the benefits of the presenter listening rather than participating is that thoughts may be prompted by a peer's comments, even if these are not followed up in the discussion by other peers.

The participants also commented extensively (during the focus group and in the individual interviews) on the potential to be challenged to think about a case from different theoretical paradigms in PSG:

- *what happened here which was really good for me was that there was a cross-pollination of theoretical frameworks and a freshness of approach and an openness to a whole lot of different ideas [...] here I felt as if we did push each other to think more clearly into whatever framework the person was talking about*
- *[...] different if I may call them schools or theorists, different perspectives*
- *I also like the cross-pollination of ideas that came from different interns in the group*

It thus seems that participants appreciated being able to listen to peers discussing issues from different theoretical perspectives in ways which did not impose one theoretical approach, but offered varied explanations for consideration.

4.4.4.4 Participation of individuals in the discussion

There are variations between the respective discussion phases with regard to the number of peers contributing. In some sessions there are contributions from all participants whereas in one session most of the participants were silent throughout. The number of peers participating appears to be related in part to the RFA's, as mentioned earlier: where the RFA was more related to case management and decision-making there seemed to be more participation in the discussion than where the RFA was to do with the presenter's role as the therapy unfolded. This may relate to trainees feeling more able to contribute when the focus was task-oriented, rather than orientated towards the therapist's personal responses, requiring an understanding of relational dynamics.

Consideration of the discussion phases of the final two PSG sessions shows that they were more problematic in terms of the flow and focus of the discussion. Since these were later in the process, this may indicate a greater complexity of needs by mid-year, or that interns are developing at different rates, providing challenges to the PSG. It may also be that the nature of the cases provided greater challenges requiring greater expertise in processing the material. This may also signal the need for trainees' facilitation skills to be developed further, once the 'first round' of PSG is complete.

The final two PSG discussions do not seem to be as helpful to the presenters as the first eight. As mentioned earlier, in PSG9 there are periods of silence in both the questioning phase and the discussion; which might indicate that some of the peers found it difficult to contribute, and the discussion is chiefly between two of the participants. The presenter reflected that the silences were unnerving at the time:

I did quite a lot of cognitive processing at the time; coming from wondering whether I had phrased the RFA's correctly [...] to wondering whether it was related to the difficulties I had experienced working at Xcentre; to wondering whether I was asking them to work in a framework that wasn't too familiar to most of them. I'm aware that a lot of interns are not that au fait with working in psychodynamic theory. [...] But the fact that P1 and P2 did contribute quite a bit was quite affirming. I think they're seen by the group to be quite theoretically inclined [...] P2 was quite interested in the case and spoke to me about it later [...] It might also have been some of my own stuckness that maybe the group was feeling, I'm not sure.

When, however, asked about an overall response to PSG9, the person's response was:

I did feel some disappointment, but at the end I didn't feel it had been a complete waste, I felt I had gained something, a lot more than I'd gained in my ISV; [...] And I think the whole process of just being able to talk about a case to a group of colleagues in itself was cathartic and helped me to see the case quite differently without them having to say anything. That had been a very valuable process in itself.

In PSG10 where there were also difficulties, the presentation was of a family therapy situation. The discussion strayed from the presenter's RFA's to more general difficulties, and one of the peers dominates this, partly due to her involvement in dealing with one of the family members in individual therapy. The presenter reflected on this experience in our individual interview:

I felt annoyed when my presentation was 'hijacked' by another group member who was involved with the case because it was moved away from what I wanted to discuss.

The presenter believes that the PSG 'mirrored' what was being experienced in the system:

I think the way that it proceeded mirrored the institutional struggles that I was in [...] you define the reality of the case by what you say about it, and I think much of the reality of

my case was defined by other people in PSG[...] so I felt like hey whose reality are we going to buy here?

This indicates his frustration at the time, and reflections about his position in the system, where his concerns were not being foregrounded in PSG. I had felt when transcribing and analysing the session, that the case was possibly too complex for PSG, however when I suggested (in the individual interview), that it might be that a family therapy case was perhaps too complex for PSG, the person's response was:

[...] I don't know why it should be precluded [...] because I think the mandate that I gave to the group was not that complicated, it was a bit fuzzy, [...] how do I understand my role in this system, and I think the group was more inclined to say well let's talk about the case, not how you view the system

Further reflections on the experience in PSG10 were that:

- *group members were inclined to think in fairly narrow range (and)*
- *the facilitation didn't seem to happen quite honestly in that session for me*

In PSG10, then, there were various difficulties, with the group remaining focussed on the complexity of the case details and with one participant finding it difficult to empathise with the presenter's position due to her own perspectives on the case. The facilitator was also not of assistance in returning the focus to the presenter's issues.

Consideration of the above two instances of difficulties in the discussion phase thus raises a number of different factors which may have influenced the process, including the nature of the case material, the particular theoretical approaches adopted which were more challenging and less familiar to the group, potential group dynamic factors operating - both presenters were seen by the group as competent - or perhaps the influence of 'parallel process' phenomena, and the lack of active facilitation which is evident in both.

4.4.4.5 Facilitation in phase three

The facilitator's role varied across the cases, with some facilitators being more active than others. There are some examples of the facilitator being quite task oriented, but more frequently there is little evidence of facilitator interventions, with some of examples of peers in the group taking over the facilitator's role. One of the participants remarked during the focus group:

in other cases the facilitator tended to take a back seat and didn't want to participate, they could have facilitated the discussion a lot more.

The question of what might mediate the activity level and understanding of role of the trainees when taking on facilitation then arises. There seems to be some influence of age on the ability to facilitate - with older trainees who have more life experience showing more highly developed skills. I am not able to offer conclusions in this regard, but it is possible that older trainees feel more confident with peers, or that group experiences in previous work contexts enable them to work with group processes more effectively.

4.4.4.6 Possible misconceptions arising in discussion

Critics of peer supervision processes express concerns about faulty ideas not being challenged. This concern about the discussion phase was expressed by one participant who said that there *may be some misconceptions arising.*

When asked for a specific example, the respondent mentioned a particular session (PSG7). Consideration of the transcript of the discussion in PSG7 seemed to indicate that though there was evidence of the 'misconception' raised, the process of the discussion had enabled peers to explore various approaches, and the 'misconception' did not seem to have been reinforced in the process. Thus whilst this concern should remain a consideration, there is only one potential example of this in the ten sessions analysed.

After phase three, the discussion phase, there is a five minute break, termed a 'pause period', to enable the presenter to reflect on the content of the discussion before giving a response to the group.

4.4.5 Phase four of PSG: Presenter's response

As with the discussion phase, there is great variation in the length of the presenter's response in phase four, from a few sentences in length to a substantial number of comments leading into further discussion. The table below indicates the number of words in this phase.

Table 4.8 Length of presenter's response phase (number of words)

PSG2	PSG3	PSG4	PSG5	PSG6	PSG7	PSG8	PSG9	PSG10
628	926*	756	83	219	230	868*	n/a	1126

* In PSG's 3 and 8, discussion with peers taking a number of turns continued following the response. In PSG's 2 and 10, one peer makes a comment near the end of the response.

There seems to be considerable variation in the length of responses, from 83 words to 1126 words. The length of the response seems not to be linked to case-type, except for the shortest response, in PSG5, where the case presented was an assessment rather than a therapeutic issue; and the discussion related to the recommendations following the assessment, where there were a limited number of options to explore. It is possible that the length of the response is mediated by the presenter's style of expression or ability to articulate thoughts, since the five longest responses recorded in the above table are also the presenters whose presentations were the five longest in table 4.5 (though the order is not identical).

4.4.5.1 Content of phase four

In nine of the ten cases, the presenter responds to the discussion by mentioning its helpfulness. Some examples of such comments from the PSG transcripts are:

- *It's helpful to listen to the discussion and not get embroiled in it*
- *[...] at least I've got some things to think about [...] I had no answers, nothing to say to them*
- *I've got valuable input and that has given me an idea of how to move from where I'm at*

The presenters are thus responding positively to their peers' suggestions.

Presenters comment that there are aspects of the discussion which they have thought about previously, possibly reassuring them, or helping them to make a decision. They also report having heard new ideas. In some instances, presenters are able to respond to certain of the ideas by saying why the suggestion is unlikely to work in the specific case.

[...] there are lots of points that I was grappling with or thinking about but there are some new things which are quite interesting

Peers from similar cultural groups to clients have the potential to assist the therapist with cross cultural issues, and this is mentioned as helpful in two instances. Such contributions may thus assist the therapist in gaining a broader or different perspective on the client's issues.

4.4.5.2 Quality of peers' support

Participants in the focus group mentioned feelings of satisfaction when a peer noted that their contributions were helpful:

it felt like people were gaining something from our suggestions, and I think I felt good about that.

In the response phase, references are made to additional help from peers, in the form of: another peer doing a school observation, a book to be borrowed. In individual interviews there are also references to further individual discussions, outside the PSG, which were found to be supportive.

4.4.6 Overall evaluation of PSG by participants

The first research question which evolved, once the PSG had been launched, was as follows (see Table 4.1): **How do participants experience various aspects of the PSG?** This sub-section summarises participants' reactions to their experience of the PSG as reported in the focus group and the individual interviews, thus providing a form of evaluation.

4.4.6.1 Participation

A number of participants mentioned the way in which their participation was encouraged:

everybody had an opportunity to share no-one really dominated it, just such an equal process everybody was heard.

One participant spoke of being pleased that people, who in other contexts remain silent, became part of the discussion in this interaction. An added advantage mentioned was the diversity of participants in terms of their differing training, cultural and experiential backgrounds which enabled learning both cross-culturally and theoretically.

PSG enabled the participants to try out new ideas, and encourage one another. The positive attitude to participation in the PSG was underlined by the mention that there had been no absenteeism through the entire process. In an individual interview, one participant noted:

every PSG was something I was quite keen to do

They also felt able to move away from the prescribed PSG structure at times, and could switch the tape recorder off and on:

to assert our own independence [...] in most sessions that there'd be little breaches of the rules which would feel quite empowering for us.

This indicates participants feeling actively involved in influencing the process. They seemed to experience a sense of their own agency in being able to make some decisions about the extent to which they would follow the structure as well as to allow me as the researcher to hear their interactions.

4.4.6.2 Structure of the PSG

At the initial presentation of the PSG model, a couple of the participants expressed some concern regarding the structure of the PSG. I was thus interested to note that one of the first themes which arose in the focus group discussion was that the participants found the structure helpful:

- *useful in terms of keeping a direction and getting our questions answered. So even though it seemed a bit rigid when you first heard about it, I think it's a very useful model.*
- *I was very resistant to it at the beginning, I thought this is really going to be really stiff and contrived and it's going to inhibit rather than facilitate exploration, but in actual fact the opposite was true. It was really a facilitative structure which meant that everyone was heard, that we kept to time quite well, and by the end of the time we actually were so familiar with the structure we just did it anyway, it became a natural process*
- *I also didn't see the point of it from the beginning, and I think it helped quite a lot in terms of putting us into focus [...] that's exactly how we were able to actually get somewhere in assisting the person, and get the person to actually shift from where they are stuck*

Participants thus express an initial resistance to the structure, expressing concerns that it may be inhibitory. However, they reflect that their experience of the structure was that it was inclusive

and enabling. The above excerpts emphasise the way in which the structure gave the discussion focus and moved it in the direction of answering questions. The structure thus became a facilitative framework for the group process, in participants' opinions.

In one of the individual interviews, a participant spoke of the structure nevertheless enabling some flexibility:

where you chisel out the shape of the forum yourself in the process of doing it [...] we experimented a bit with that. I found the boundaries to be a few metres wider in the PSG than they were in ISV [...] I felt like the peer supervisors were much happier to really push things out and try some really stupid ideas, encourage me [...] we hadn't worked out how it worked and who was who and who could say what to whom and who could raise what ideas and how do we object to suggestions from a peer supervisor 'coz it's a very different way to the way you react to an individual supervisor ...

The participant then went on to say that there were times that the group felt able to shift the structure:

there was more space for us to do that, 'coz we were the only people there, there wasn't a sort of superordinate supervisor saying well hang on a second you know [...] (laughs) and we could sort of gesticulate quietly to the tape recorder, or I think maybe there was an element of doing that to assert our own independence from the superordinate presence, in that way.

These comments appear to be signalling a sense of increasing autonomy, and the trainees had greater control over the unfolding of the process. This is explored further in 4.4.6.5 below.

4.4.6.3 Peer support

In the above quotation there was reference to the encouragement of others and the increased willingness that participants felt to risk their ideas. The supportive aspect of PSG was discussed at some length in the focus group:

- *especially during the first three months of my supervision I felt like inexperienced, and incompetent, not knowing what I'm doing is right or wrong [...] when I come to PSG even if I'm not sure of something I'm more than welcome to say it and then I know I'm going to get positive feedback*

- *[...] I felt much more supported here [...] I felt that people here were understanding where I was coming from, they were able to empathise with that [...] I think that what helped is that people really understood*

The two participants who made these comments were thus comparing their experiences of the PSG to their experiences in ISV. The first refers to a sense of evaluating herself (and implicitly also feeling evaluated by her supervisor), and feeling inexperienced and incompetent, as a result of not knowing how her progress was being evaluated. ISV therefore did not enable her to establish a sense of what she was achieving, and where she needed to change her functioning. Implicit in the second part of her comment is a sense of not being able to ask in ISV if she felt unsure, but that in PSG she felt free to ask, and had a sense that in PSG she would not get negative, but rather positive feedback. The ISV context was therefore not experienced as supportive of her. The second participant also reflects that PSG is more supporting than ISV, and that peers provide much greater empathy than his experience of ISV.

4.4.6.4 Presentation and discussion conventions

In two of the individual interviews, participants explained how the talking aloud, in the presentation phase, in itself had value. One participant reported:

just being able to talk about a case to a group of colleagues [...] helped me to see the case quite differently

She was thus signalling that the context of talking to peers had some effect her presentation, enabling her to consider what she was saying and view the case in a different way. Another participant noted a similar effect, and then went on to compare that to individual supervision where there was the influence of differential power:

P: for me you know, I got to think out loud why I wanted to do what I wanted to do, which I'd never got to do till then, and it was quite nice for me to be able to do that. To actually say it, and to be able to find the flaws in my own argument as I was saying, and then to work through those as well.[...]

J: [...] I would sense that that might be one of the potentials of both types of supervision?

P: I think less from the other one because the structure really mitigates against you arguing your case, it's like an attorney trying to argue a supreme court case, it doesn't happen, you've got to be an advocate to get up there and argue; like that's what happens in individual supervision, you're an idiot by definition I think, (laughs), you know.

The first part of the above interchange would seem to indicate that talking through the presentation enabled the presenter to clarify his thinking. The participant then goes on to emphasise the value of presenting to peers where there is a sense of equality, whereas there is a sense of unequal competence in ISV, placing the intern in a different position (perhaps thus inhibiting 'arguing the case' aloud). The strength of the participant's feelings about the influence of the power differential in ISV is evident in the analogy to the courtroom, and the use of the term 'idiot', pointing to feelings of inadequacy in the context of ISV, feelings which were not reported to be present in PSG.

A further convention, the strategy of encouraging participants in the discussion to talk about the issues from an empathic standpoint, putting themselves 'in the shoes' of the presenter was mentioned by a participant in the focus group:

I like that because it doesn't open the floor for argument, you know where you start defending your point [...] It actually gives you who has presented the opportunity to listen to what is being said to you, and the people who are giving you input to think about what they're saying, and to give constructive input [...]

Thus this convention enabled presenters to listen in a way which was perceived as being less defensive and more open to the ideas being discussed. Presenters being excluded from the discussion phase thus enabled them not to feel the need to argue their position, but to be able to consider the ideas in a more measured way.

4.4.6.5 Equal status in the PSG

The shift from having an authority figure present to being with peers of equal status, noted in the excerpt in the previous section, was also discussed in more detail in the focus group:

- *it's a free forum and very empowering in that, in that we kind of moved away from this supervisors or lecturers have this kind of immutable truth, whereas here it was say we've got it, and we have the solutions, and I found that very refreshing and quite freeing, and very empowering in terms of saying 'ja' to access this kind of knowledge.*
- *(In ISV) I felt very conscious of the hierarchical difference. (P2 interjects: Me too) [...] it wasn't here, we were all equals*

- *it facilitated a lot more umm engagement, challenge, it was a much more comfortable and safe space to actually grow and explore, ja. And very enabling.*

Thus, an increased awareness of the co-construction of 'knowledge', rather than an idea of knowledge being passed on from those in more powerful positions, is being identified as resulting from working with peers. The first excerpt signals a move toward acknowledging the trainees' capacity to solve problems and co-construct meanings, and a desire to explore and actively engage in this form of activity. This activity felt 'refreshing', 'freeing', facilitating 'engagement' and 'challenge' in a safe environment.

It was felt that supervision

from people to whom one doesn't report [...] allow(s) a much more candid, open exploration of issues involved.

In an individual interview this was supported by the comment:

it put more responsibility on me and I felt like I had to carry much more in PSG than I had to carry in ISV [...] I knew at the end I had to go back to the case, my peers could go off home or whatever, they don't carry the can for me.

Thus the trainees also began to re-evaluate others' authority and felt they were taking more responsibility for decisions made and for their actions within their casework. The effects of equal status thus enabled greater honesty in exploration, and a sense of more independence.

4.4.6.6 Other aspects of PSG

Three other aspects of PSG emerged in the data. The first was that PSG served a social function - an aspect which was mentioned in a number of instances:

- *from a social point of view we never really get together as a group and when the tape was switched off, sometimes we laughed, it was also very refreshing 'coz we never have that opportunity to get together*
- *a nice sort of bonding exercise*

The participants thus appreciated the opportunity to be together and engage in a group task, and felt that it resulted in bonds between the members being developed.

Another function identified was that of being able to express frustrations:

- *And also gave us an opportunity to cathart [...] got rid of quite a lot of aggression*

There is evidence of this in the transcripts, where participants raise certain systemic issues affecting their particular case, and discover that the problem is also being experienced by others. The sharing of frustrations seemed to have the function of mobilising the group to take various actions in their training settings which they felt had been unresponsive to individuals' issues and complaints. It therefore seemed to provide a forum where common grievances could be aired (there was often a spare fifteen minutes at the end). Having this opportunity in some cases led to group action being planned to address issues.

The third aspect was a comparison of PSG to the weekly case conference in the CGC. The participants felt that they gained more from the PSG, because they said that their questions were not necessarily answered in the case conferences; that the 'expert' discussion in case conferences, which often revolved around dynamics of a case, excluded them; and that case conference had the potential to lead to conflict between different supervisors' points of view. Some participants also mentioned using their presentation at PSG to enable them to prepare for case conference presentations which they found more daunting than presenting in PSG.

To summarise, the following points highlight some of the emergent themes from the description of the PSG process thus far:

- * the structure seemed to be facilitative of the process;
- * doing a case presentation in a non-evaluative setting, where peers are listening intently, enables the talking through of the case details to be useful in formulating thoughts and clarifying the individual's approach, and enables presenters to express their uncertainties;
- * the case presentations are also used in preparation for other more formal presentations;
- * the formulating of a RFA has some value both in enabling the presenter to crystallise their thoughts about their needs, and in helping focus the discussion; however the wording and 'categories' of the RFA's need consideration;
- * case presentations related to skill development and case management are possibly more suited to PSG than where concerns are to do with countertransference issues or dealing with a family systemically;

- * the questioning period was used mainly to develop clarity on case details and for peers to test some of their hypotheses, but could be used more fully to clarify issues related to the RFA;
- * the presenter's silence during the discussion phase, assisted by the strategies of talking about the presenter in the third person and participants taking an empathic position, facilitates listening;
- * presenters valued the practical, clear, step-by-step suggestions given by peers;
- * the variety of theoretical perspectives and potential for discussions around theoretical approaches was valued;
- * participants felt encouraged when peers reported that their contributions had been useful;
- * the PSG provided a supportive social environment which enabled the interns to tackle other institutional issues as well;
- * the structure encourages peers, who often remain silent in other settings, to contribute;
- * the absence of an authority figure impacts on the nature of the interactions and discussion;
- * facilitators need assistance in order to develop their roles, both in the questioning period and in monitoring the discussion.

A number of themes are implicit in the above section, and run through the points summarised above. These include: trainees identifying feelings of aloneness and judging themselves as incompetent earlier in the year; discontent the system of evaluation in place, where ISV was experienced by some as critical, unsupportive of their needs, with little positive or formative feedback being given; PSG enabling the talking through of issues which might otherwise have remained unaddressed, and encouraging trainees to be more open and honest about their uncertainties. In the focus group discussion, trainees compared their experiences of PSG to those of ISV, a comparison which is to be taken further in the next section.

4.5 STEP THREE: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF 4 CASES OF PSG AND ISV

In order to compare PSG with individual supervision, recordings of five ISV sessions, which corresponded with the casework presented in PSG, were made. It must be noted here that each of the recordings of the ISV sessions followed after the presentation of the case at a PSG session, so in that sense the process of ISV would have been influenced by PSG. Also, it is possible that the ISV sessions were contrived to some extent by the request for a recording for the purposes of my research. The material in the ISV sessions is nevertheless valuable, in terms of the variation

in approach between five different supervisors, and the variations in interactions between each intern and her/his respective supervisor. A comparison of the two processes thus became possible.

It must be noted that although five pairs of recordings were made, I decided not to use the material from PSG - ISV 8 because of the sensitive nature of the case tackled (the client had specifically questioned the trainee about confidentiality issues and wanted an assurance that no other person would have access to the material). A further practical problem arose when there was a malfunction in the recording of PSG9, leading to much of the recording being too indistinct for accurate transcription. The comparative analysis thus involves four pairs of transcripts.

My first attempt to engage in the pairwise analysis of the four matching PSG-ISV sessions involved the coding of the data by using an adaptation of the system developed by Powell (1986) for categorising utterances in discussion groups (see section 3.4). The following categories were used to label utterances:

- Q Questioning
- O Giving an opinion
- A Arguing (an opinion + information to back it up)
- I Giving information
- P Formulating a problem
- M Modelling
- C Clarifying and/or providing cognitive structuring
- F Feedback (information on performance)
- E Encouragement and/or empathy

In the graphs below, the PSG questioning and discussion phases provided the material for analysis, whereas in the ISV's the supervisor's utterances were considered. (Thus the presenter's statements were not used from either form of supervision). I recognise that the comparison of PSG to ISV is made more difficult because i) the questioning section of the PSG is separate from the discussion; and ii) the presenter is not a part of the PSG discussion, in that the role is to listen but not participate. I therefore coded only the supervisor's input to ISV in an attempt to provide comparative data.

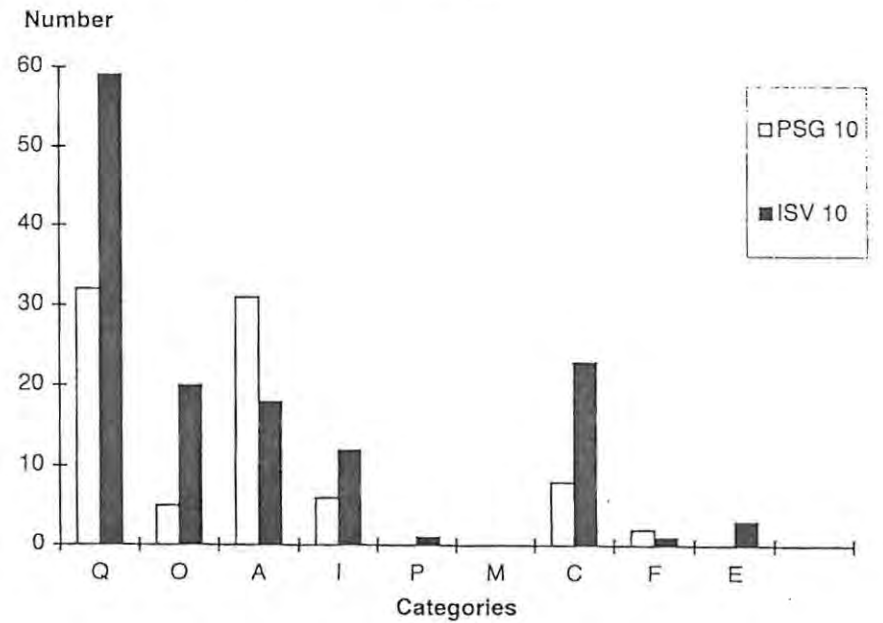
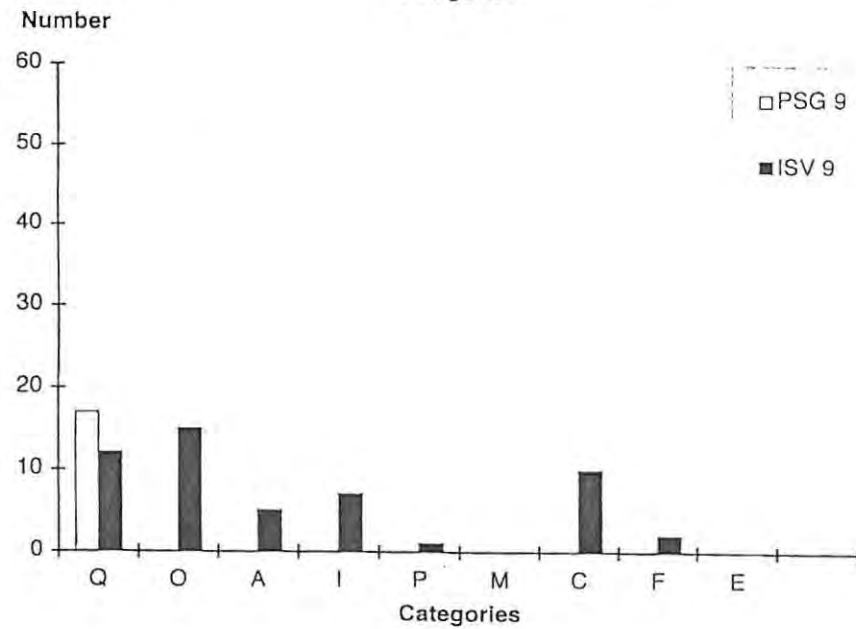
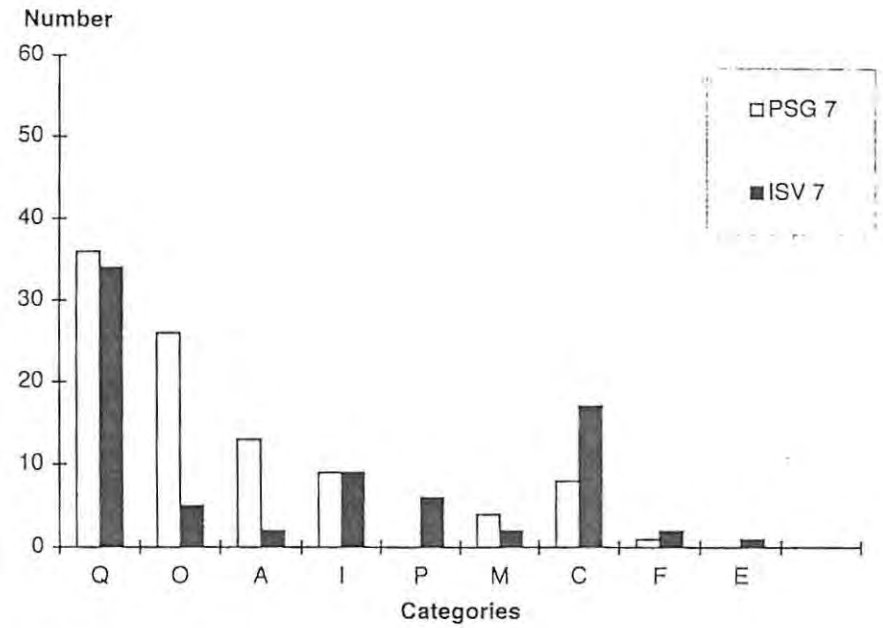
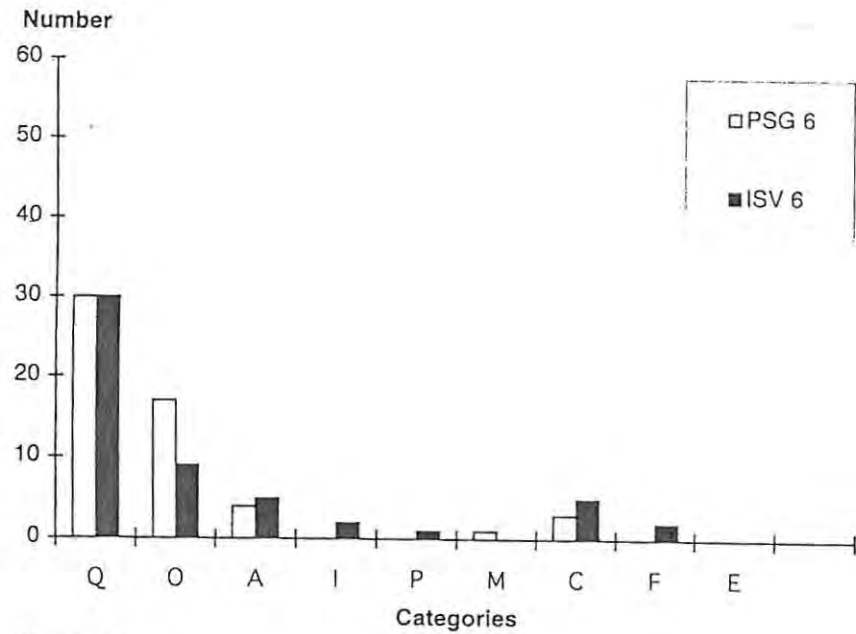


Figure 4.3 Graphs of the pairwise analysis of four matching PSG-ISV sessions

A visual comparison of the graphs indicates that whilst there appear to be noticeable within-pair differences in the categories, these are not sustained across pairs. The following exceptions must be noted: there seems to be more questioning by individual supervisors on the whole; the formulation of problems (P) is a category only found in ISV; the clarifying/cognitive structuring category is more frequently used in ISV. Overall, the low scores in the modelling, feedback and encouragement/empathy categories are notable. (However, the modelling scores are based on actual instances in the dialogue, and do not consider the implicit modelling done by some supervisors and peers in their approach to questioning, clarifying and structuring and giving of opinions).

Prior to undertaking the research, I had approached the endeavour expecting that PSG would produce interactions which would differ substantially from ISV. However, the comparison of pairs of PSG-ISV to each other using the above quantitative content-based coding system did not lead to substantial distinctions between the two forms of supervision being established. I then undertook a qualitative thematic approach to the data, to be described in more detail below, and this confirmed these findings: there do not seem to be generalisable differences in the two forms when distinctions in individual pairs of findings are compared to each other.

Each PSG and ISV transcript is complex and dense, and a descriptive summary of the content of both the PSG and ISV in each of four pairs, including some of my speculations related to the material, is to be found in Appendix E. These have been provided in order to enable the reader to gain a sense of the content and process of each, with pertinent excerpts included. Inclusion of the full transcriptions of actual sessions is not possible, in order to protect the confidential nature of the material.

On consideration of the four cases in comparison with each other, and drawing from three of the participants' reflections (in individual interviews) of their experiences of both forms of supervision, I have been struck by the variability in the experiences of both forms. The pairs vary from PSG reportedly 'better' than ISV (in pair 6); to both being experienced as effective (pair 7); to neither being experienced as helpful (though PSG still provided some support in pair 9); to ISV reportedly being much more helpful than PSG (in pair 10). As noted above, since there were variations in the findings between the pairs, the distinctions between the two, to be reported below, are shadings of difference rather than clear cut.

I used the method of a constructed reading guide (see 3.4) in order to undertake the thematic analysis to enable me to compare the two modes of supervision. The reading guide and more extended comparative analysis of each of the pairs may be found in Appendices F & G. The following summary is arranged according to the headings in the reading guide. The opinions of the participants from the focus group discussion is also included where relevant. The excerpts are included verbatim (and thus noted in italics) to continue to include the 'voices' of the interns.

4.5.1 Structuring

The structuring of some of the ISV's were similar to PSG in that there was both a presentation/exploratory and questioning phase early in a session, followed by a more active discussion later. This form of structuring enables the presenter to: present details of the case; identify pertinent questions to be raised in the session; and, may also enable the listener(s) to gain a sense of the paradigm from which the presenter views the case, prior to entering into a discussion. The explicit PSG structure appears to provide a sense of what is expected in each phase, and may provide some sense of security for the presenter. (The interns' appreciation of the value of the PSG structuring was reported in the previous section 4.4.6.2).

In contrast, ISV sessions provide little evidence of explicit structuring of the process, and it is possible that the form of the sessions had evolved without being consciously considered by the supervisors. There is evidence, in two of the cases of ISV, of the intern actively imposing a structure on the presentation in the earlier stages of the ISV session (this may even have been as a result of the PSG experience since these sessions were recorded when trainees were familiar with PSG).

4.5.2 Presentations

The PSG presentation is comprehensive in all four cases. When it was used prior to the first presentation of the case in ISV (as in PSG6 & 10), the presentation in ISV was more complete, (with added input from PSG), possibly signalling an increased level of formality in ISV.

The nature of equal status of participants in PSG enables presenters to be more frank about their unsureness and difficulties, than appeared to be the case in ISV where the presentation was more formal and seemed more guarded. For example (in PSG6), the presenter states *I'm stuck, I don't know what to do*, a level of disclosure not evident in the paired ISV. In the focus group discussion, the presenter of PSG7 said *I felt comfortable to ask about my uncertainties without feeling perhaps judged*. This second comment highlights the sense of evaluation which seems to result from the difference in status in ISV.

The presentation in PSG allowed presenters to find flaws in their own arguments as they spoke, thus enabling some processing of case material. This might not have been as possible in ISV when the intern's anxiety level may have been more elevated due to the supervisor's evaluative role, or because many ISV's did not seem to have a clear structure, therefore trainees may not have been clear on the purpose of their presentations. Participants commented on the quality of their peers' listening, with the presenter not being interrupted, whereas in ISV there is evidence of supervisors interrupting trainee's accounts. (This point was discussed further in 4.4.6.4).

In contrast to PSG where presenters present a case once in a cycle, ISV provides the opportunity for continuity from one week to the next, thus it is possible to explore the session by session process and details. Two examples of this continuity are found in ISV7 where the sequence of activities and discussion were described; and in ISV9 where shifts from one session to the next were discussed. However, the number of cases to be supervised in ISV may lead to neglect of finer case detail and week by week processing due to time constraints. In one of the individual interviews, a participant commented:

Sometimes I felt in ISV that not enough attention was given to the clients, there was more attention to detail in the PSG. Maybe it's because in individual there's more than one case [...] so we couldn't go into each case in the depth that we could in PSG.

This participant thus identifies the detailed examination of one case which is possible in PSG.

4.5.3 Purpose

In PSG the requests for assistance (RFA's) provide a statement of the purpose of the discussion to follow, thus focussing the discussion. In PSG most of the discussion reported to have been useful occurred when the RFA was related to practical handling of aspects of the case. The overall purpose of the PSG (implicit in the structure of the phases and the recommended interactions) is to provide support and assistance to the presenter, and participants reported this as their experience (see 4.5.6 below). Thus in PSG the trainee's needs provide the focus.

The purpose of the discussion in ISV is not necessarily made explicit. There is evidence of some supervisors asking what the intern's question was: for example, in the last quarter of ISV6, the supervisor asks: "...what are your issues here? What do you feel you'd like to get out of talking about it?" However although this appeared to be a useful question, in this case it did not then guide the discussion, and the supervisor then moved into advice giving. This seems to indicate the possibility that supervisors have a particular idea of what they should be providing in supervision, which might interfere with a specific focus on the trainee's needs.

The implicit purposes of the supervision sessions in ISV are thus often broader than the intern's concerns: there may be a greater sense of client-centred focus, evaluation of the intern's

formulation and handling of the case, or a future-orientation - a type of 'trouble-shooting'. Some of this may relate to the supervisor being expected to take final responsibility for the case from the professional board's perspective, and that supervisors have an ultimate legal responsibility for the client's treatment. It would seem though, that the varied and mixed purposes of ISV have an influence on the process of ISV and on its potential value for the trainee.

4.5.4 Questioning

Consideration of the number of questions asked in each PSG and matching ISV shows that a similar number of questions is asked in each of PSG-ISV's 6, 7 and 9. In ISV10 there are a far greater number of questions in the ISV (an ISV which the trainee found helpful, and in which the supervisor displays a seemingly far greater sensitivity to the trainee's position than in the other examples of ISV).

The questioning by listener(s) has value in that it may promote shared understandings. There are variations in the effectiveness of questioning in both PSG and ISV, where PSG questioning focussed more on case detail, whilst there was a greater variety of question types in ISV. This difference may be a function of the differences in structure, where in PSG there was a specific questioning phase, whilst in ISV questioning was one of the dialogic strategies available to the supervisor throughout the interaction.

Individual supervisors used more questioning which seemed to lead in a particular direction or toward formulations of the case. In ISV more probing questions are possible: these may be useful to clarify issues and to formulate the problem more clearly, promoting an exploration of the intern's construction of meaning. This might be mediated by supervisors' greater experience with casework and/or their differing theoretical frameworks. However, probing questions may also put the intern onto the defensive, especially if the direction and purpose of the questioning is not clear to the trainee. Further difficulties related to questioning strategies in ISV arose when some supervisors also asked more rhetorical and closed-ended questions where open-ended questions might have promoted better exploration.

4.5.5 Strategies and suggestions

The respective discussion phases of PSG and ISV are quite different in tone and 'feel': in PSG, peers take an active role, being able to argue with one another and challenge different points of view or perspectives. This is not found in ISV - where the supervisor takes the lead, and may tend towards a more persuasive style of arguing a perspective, with little disagreement or challenge from the trainee.

The strategy of the presenter being silent and listening only during the discussion phase of PSG seems to impact positively on his ability to listen to ideas, perhaps because there is no need to argue a position. Thus, the type of involvement of the trainee tends to promote the possibility of reflecting on ideas whilst listening to peers argue these.

Being amongst other 'beginner therapists' in PSG facilitates the peers sharing similar experiences, and giving examples from their own casework; (this is found in 3 of the 4 cases, and all 3 were reportedly 'better' for the presenter than ISV). Hearing that others have grappled with similar issues, or tried some strategies has value for the presenter both in providing reassurance and some suggestions for techniques which have had effect. Comparatively, there is only one example of an ISV where the supervisor reflects on a strategy used in her own casework, (i.e. in ISV10, the session which is reportedly a better learning experience for the presenter than PSG).

A variety of theoretical perspectives are often presented within one PSG (termed the 'cross-pollination' of ideas by some participants). The variety of suggestions or possibilities which arose in PSG also enabled participants to see that there might be different paths to follow - some might have needed to learn that, as one said, supervisors don't have the 'immutable truth'.

In the focus group, one commented:

here I felt as if we did push each other to think more clearly into whatever framework the person was talking about, and I didn't get that in individual supervision. I got acceptance, but not being moved on, challenged, or backup reading.

This implies that participants were challenged to consider various theoretical perspectives in PSG, since their peers would each present differing viewpoints. PSG thus widened the opportunities for engaging in such discussions.

The above perception of the value of PSG was confirmed, and then a contrasting experience of engagement with theory in ISV was described as follows:

with peer supervision you ... in a way different if I may call them schools or theorists different perspectives, whereas individual supervision you've got somebody who's already working in a certain mindset and it became kind of an issue when you suddenly come with another mindset, and that's where I felt not heard you know because I felt I'm being channelled into a certain way of thinking.

This participant was thus indicating that theoretical exploration might be possible in ISV, but that supervisors might be entrenched in a particular framework, and that this could hamper open exploration or limit the potential dialogue between the intern's and the supervisor's perspectives.

Consideration of the cases of ISV show that the supervisor tended to take one main theoretical perspective. This may be linked to supervisors' constructions of their roles - that is they may believe their role is to provide theory or to transmit or pass on information, but that this was done in ways which did not first consider the trainee's way of conceptualising the material.

In ISV, there is the potential for supervisors to provide more in-depth theoretical input (as demonstrated in PSG10). What seems to be important is the matching of their input to the intern's own constructions of meaning regarding the case, and the timing of the input. A further comment from the focus group confirms the perceptions of theoretical exploration ISV expressed on this page:

even if they do try and understand your paradigm, there's no sort of, um it's ok, I understand that's good, that's fine, end of story, there's no questions in terms of how did you get to that, why that, why that, and sort of have you looked at so and so have you considered, ja, you could tell you know it's just somebody working in a certain paradigm and probably having no idea on the idea on the paradigm you're bringing in.

In both PSG and ISV, there are examples of suggestions of strategies being given to the presenter. Consideration of the suggestions made, in both forms of supervision, indicate that they seem to take one of two forms: they are either reinforcing of the intern's ideas and chosen strategy, or they propose new ideas. It would seem that the balance between these two forms of suggestion is an important consideration. In PSG the suggestions seem to be more cautious and pragmatic, orientated towards the step-by-step handling of the case; perhaps because peers are much closer to the intern's level of development as therapist and recognise the sort of description needed. In ISV, the supervisor might need to more actively explore the intern's specific need and paradigm for working, because suggestions which do not link to these, or which are not developments from the intern's own framework, are less likely to be incorporated into the intern's practice.

In the focus group, participants expressed frustration at the input they had received from some supervisors in ISV:

- *[...] airy fairy stuff of [...] telling me that all you have to do is this and relax and things will happen, you know containment. At that stage I wanted a bit more practical stuff which I got from here (in PSG) in terms of where to go at that stage*
- *I found it much more helpful than individual supervision where individual supervision is okay but its mostly just containing, saying ja you're okay carry on, just do what you're doing, without kind of any theoretical input which I think we got here.*

The input from supervisors was thus not practical enough for one, and not theoretical enough for another (thus indicating varying experiences and needs of trainees). Also, when listening to the above excerpts from the focus group, I was aware of the feelings of frustration expressed by the trainees, and the sense that they were feeling that their needs were not being recognised or met in ISV.

4.5.6 Interactions

A variety of interactions is evident in both PSG and ISV, for example: laughter and playfulness, identification with the trainee, overt compliance with supervisor's suggestions, and silences. Laughter seems to play a role in reducing tension in some PSG's, and laughter is also evident in

two ISV's. One of the supervisor - intern interactions is characterised by playfulness in the choice of metaphors, perhaps enabling of the creative interaction which results during that session.

In a number of PSG's and ISV's, the peers or the supervisor identify with the presenter by using 'we' as the subject of some sentences, perhaps indicating solidarity with her. This may be a strategy used to convey a sense of support. In ISV's this may indicate the shared sense of responsibility felt by the supervisor.

Both ISV and PSG have the potential for building up relationships which are supportive. Most participants reported experiencing more support from their peers, however one reported to have found ISV safer. In the focus group, the first theme to emerge was a greater feeling of support in PSG:

- *I found I felt much more supported here than in individual supervision.*
- *I felt here I was being heard, and I felt that people here people were understanding where I was coming from, they were able to empathise with that, where in individual supervision I felt really lost.*

This last excerpt signals that more problematic interactions were also experienced, a feature also noted at the end of the last sub-section. In the transcripts of the ISV's, the feelings of frustration or being lost as reported by the trainees are not raised. The signs of trainee difficulties are much more subtle, and are indicated by an overt going along with the supervisor's suggestions without engaging in asking for greater clarity. There is one example of the supervisor admitting not knowing or understanding (ISV9), but this leaves the intern feeling unsupported, because there are no suggestions of ways forward.

There are examples of difficulties in the discussion in two PSG's too. In one of the PSG's there are a number of silences indicating that the peers have some difficulty with making contributions. This may have been influenced by the type of assistance requested by the presenter, where it was less likely that peers would have been exposed to such exploration in their own ISV's, thus they possibly lacked a sense of the strategies they might use to explore and discuss the issues.

Silence may also be used in a helpful and constructive way, when participants need time to think through issues or ideas. There is however little evidence of reflective silence in any of the PSG-ISV pairs considered.

Participants were also aware of the evaluative nature of ISV, even though there was limited explicit evidence of evaluation. The difference in status between interns and supervisors in ISV may determine a different type of support: the support may be more dependent rather than collegial. In the focus group discussion the following interchange occurred:

I felt very conscious of the hierarchical difference. (P2:me too) Clearly, supervisor, intern, and there being quite a chism (sic) between, and often feeling that if I asked something more, I'm either going to get assessed on it or ... (laughter). Ja, it felt there was a big gap, whereas it wasn't here we were all equals and ja.

P3: Ja, I think that hierarchy made a big difference. I think it also explains our experiences at case conference, hierarchical difference. Ja, it (PSG) was much more, it facilitated a lot more umm engagement, challenge, it was a much more comfortable and safe space to actually grow and explore, ja. And very enabling.

These comments seem to imply that engaging with those seen as having a higher status in the hierarchy influence the intern's feelings of confidence in venturing their ideas, and thus influence their levels of active involvement in a discussion.

The issue of who takes responsibility for the chosen course of action in casework is an important consideration. An expected part of the role of the individual supervisor relates to taking responsibility, thus decisions taken in PSG were more risky, and one of the interns expressed a greater sense of feeling responsibility - her peers could just go home and the intern had to continue working the case. Since there was no sense of 'reporting' to their peers, one reflected that a 'more candid open exploration' became possible. This point seems to indicate a dynamic related to the 'taking of responsibility' and the enabling of interns to take decisions, feel a greater sense of agency.

The success of the ISV interactions seemed very dependent on the quality of the relationship established (and this is influenced by contributions from both intern and supervisor). Given the

hierarchical difference referred to above, establishing a good relationship in ISV presents a greater challenge than between peers. If there was any hint of the intern not feeling supported, (and in one instance an intern reported being actively criticised), both the presentation and responses were more likely to be censored. The potential for conflict of ideas with a supervisor and difficulties in the interactions was raised by two participants in the focus group:

- *you go to individual supervision there's a bit of a clash and sometimes you're not heard, in terms of where you're coming from, and you walk out feeling very much unheard and to a point where you start to feel quite disillusioned with supervision itself, you know*
- *I was often criticised, and it felt like a criticism for the way I was reacting to a particular client, but at no stage, and I asked often I can't understand why I'm reacting in that way, there was no sort of shift in the theoretical paradigm why am I reacting to that client in that particular way, very disempowering*

The above excerpts highlight the effects of feeling unheard or criticised on interns' levels of motivation, feelings about themselves, and their sense of personal efficacy. Such interactions would thus affect the intern's level of confidence.

The first excerpt above also signals the difficulties trainees have with challenging a supervisor, or being able to raise interactional difficulties; and the second signals the frustrations of the intern who asked for assistance in understanding, but was not helped. Such issues point to the power issues inherent in ISV. There is the possibility that when there are interactional difficulties in ISV, that PSG could be compensatory (and one peer told of the tape recorder being switched off at times when one of the group wanted to 'sound off' about a supervisor).

As noted earlier, in contrast to the above, one participant reported feeling safer in ISV. Thus there is the potential for the interactive nature of ISV to promote better handling of transference and systemic issues than in PSG. However, this is also dependent on the supervisor's particular skills and was only demonstrated in one ISV in this study.

The PSG was a mixed group ethnically, and this had benefits in promoting discussions when peers were doing cross-cultural work. When there was an overlap between the ethnic group of a client presented and one of the participants, the participant could contribute to an understanding

of cultural issues which might be having an impact. Peers valued each others' contributions, acknowledging that as a group they could solve problems, (*'we have the solutions'*) and developed in their confidence to be able to contribute to discussions.

There is also evidence in PSG of peers developing a sense of solidarity with one another in the face of institutional difficulties, and the group encouraging and planning for action in order to tackle some of the issues. Examples of this are: in PSG7 where a strategy for coping with issues related to a certain school are explored; and in PSG10 where discussion regarding dealing with the structures in XCentre occurs. In ISV there is one example of such an issue being raised, thus ISV too could assist in some of this type of problem-solving, however at times the supervisor might be too much a part of the system for the peer to be able to raise the issue.

In both forms of supervision, the openness of the intern to hearing from others impacted on the learning process. In PSG this was partly influenced by the person's perceived position in the group (certain members were more vocal, and thus may have been or felt more influential); as well as by personal factors (for example, one presenter seemed to be influenced by a strongly self-critical way of functioning). Some presenters may have felt an imperative to demonstrate their competence, (in two cases of PSG, and in two of ISV) which may also affect the individual's openness to learning. Thus individual factors, including levels of self-confidence and ideas about personal competence, had the potential to contribute to interactions both positively and negatively.

4.5.7 Facilitation of the process

As noted in 4.5.3, implicit in the structuring of the PSG is a focus on the presenter's needs. This is however mediated to an extent, by the facilitation process. This is one of the areas of PSG in need of attention: the participants needed to further consider and develop skills of facilitation, with facilitators taking a more active role in keeping the focus on the presenter's needs. There was evidence, though, when the facilitator was passive, that other peers might take on the role of returning the focus to the presenter's questions (thus there is the potential for 'compensatory' facilitation - not possible in ISV).

In ISV, it is mainly the supervisor who determines the direction and structuring (or lack thereof) of the process, again indicating the power inherent in the position. It is possible that supervisors do not consciously acknowledge the role they play in facilitation. There is little evidence of explicit structuring in ISV, or reflection on why certain directions are followed in a line of questioning and probing. It may also be necessary for supervisors to become more aware of whose frame of reference they take during the process. The supervisor's frame of reference seems to shift within and between ISV's (seemingly related to the various responsibilities felt by supervisors).

In PSG, the intern selects from the various strategies and suggestions of her/his peers, thus being the decision-maker regarding aspects of the case. In ISV, there is more evidence of direction and advice being given by the supervisor, and the intern does not necessarily make suggestions or come to collaborative decisions with the supervisor. This may result in the intern experiencing a loss of agency. There is a felt sense of this on reading parts of ISV's 6 and 9 where supervisors make suggestions, and the intern seems to agree and indicate compliance, without clarifying what the suggestion means in practice, leading to my questioning whether the trainee was convinced of the merit of the suggestions being made. (See also the first quotation in 4.5.8 below).

The issue of directive approaches to ISV needs to be considered in terms of the appropriateness of such strategies at this stage in interns' training. More directive ISV may promote passivity in the trainee as well as dependency on the supervisor.

One of the roles of the supervisor in ISV is that of providing feedback to interns on their development as professionals. There are some examples of feedback in the ISV cases considered, however this was limited in scope and not formally signalled as such. As a group, the interns complained (in both the focus group and individual interviews) that they had had little formal feedback on their progress, and desired more:

in individual supervision it was sort of just what have you done, what are you doing, oh; it just leaves you not knowing are you going forward, are you going backwards. And when I presented here (in PSG) at the end of the day you get a clear picture of how to proceed, so that was very very helpful for me.

This trainee thus sees the content of her supervision as being a descriptive account of casework without a sense of the supervisor actively enabling a processing of the material in any way. The

trainee seems to be indicating her own evaluation of her progress, and a sense of not being reassured or given feedback. This excerpt contrasts her experience of the process in ISV with the pragmatic nature of PSG suggestions (as discussed in section 4.5.5 above).

4.5.8 Response to supervision

In PSG, there is space for the intern to provide feedback to his/her peers, and some use this time quite extensively, perhaps again using the 'talking of thoughts aloud' to enable the processing of information. Furthermore, in some of the examples of the last phase of PSG, the presenter asks for more detail of earlier suggestions, and may continue a debate which had been initiated in phase three.

In ISV, time provided for the intern to respond to supervision could be an opportunity to enable the intern to talk through what they are taking away, crystallising ideas and possibly even challenging some supervisor suggestions. There is little evidence of interns giving feedback to their supervisors in ISV (thus this seems to be a missed opportunity to summarise and make associative links).

In the focus group discussion, some participants reported that they had felt unable to challenge the views of supervisors, and this led to disillusionment with supervision:

- *individual supervision for me, [...] I started viewing myself as am I always the dissenter here, you know toe the norm (sic) and back off, and that's why I'm saying I had that feeling of being disillusioned 'coz I would go in listen, agree, walk out and do something totally opposite to whatever went in individual supervision.*
- *I also had that experience of being like the dissenter, almost wanting to say actually that approach that you've suggested doesn't quite fit my way of working, ja.*
- *I even felt like you know when it's time for supervision if you can run away or do something else during that time, especially during the first 3 months of my supervision I felt like inexperienced, and incompetent, not knowing what I'm doing is right or wrong, and being criticised was the worst of all, and when I come to peer supervision even if I'm*

not sure of something I'm more than welcome to say it and then I know I'm going to get positive feedback that's how I felt.

The above excerpts thus highlight a number of negative responses to ISV, in which participants feel discouraged, and react by withdrawing, being more passive, or actively doing something different to what had been agreed to. It seems that they were not able to address these responses in ISV.

The participants reported being more motivated to attend PSG (since there was no absenteeism over the period of the study), indicating that it had been a positive experience for them. I am however aware that since PSG only extended over ten sessions, this may be related to the novelty of the experience, and / or to participants wanting to contribute to my research. There were mixed responses to ISV, with some reporting that they attended to fulfill a training requirement rather than for what they gained, although others reported valuable input in some of their ISV sessions. It is possible that some used PSG to compensate for difficulties in ISV, and that where ISV was working well, the cases were not brought to PSG.

To summarise the discussion in this section, the merits of each model of supervision followed by the demerits of each, are listed in the table below. This table responds to the question (in Table 4.1): **What are the relative merits and demerits of PSG compared to ISV?**

Over the course of the study, this question eventually evolved into the more general research question (in 3.2) phrased as:

What are the relative contributions and limitations of peer-group supervision and individual supervision?

Table 4.9 Relative contributions and limitations of PSG and ISV

Contributions of PSG	Contributions of ISV
<p><u>Structuring:</u> Explicit procedure, goals Detailed focus on one case 'Trial' presentation</p> <p><u>Peers' input:</u> Share experiences Describe 'step by step' Argue various perspectives</p> <p><u>Interactions</u> Greater equality More open and honest Talking through case enables examining of argument Safer for some - no hierarchy</p> <p><u>Presenter's experience:</u> Support & encouragement/reassurance Non-participant in discussion - able to listen Make choices & take decisions Can argue & respond</p> <p><u>Contextual:</u> Compensatory for ISV difficulties Group solidarity develops Enables change to be negotiated</p>	<p><u>Structuring:</u> Weekly continuity Working relationship develops Change in supervisor quarterly</p> <p><u>Supervisor attributes:</u> Experience to draw from Skills in probing/clarifying Deeper theoretical understanding</p> <p><u>Interactions:</u> May enable shifts in perspective Questioning may be helpful Can challenge paradigms Tackle systemic and transference issues</p> <p><u>Presenter's experience</u> Feedback and evaluation possible Shared problem-solving</p> <p><u>Contextual:</u> Provides security for some Supervisor takes responsibility</p>
<p>Limitations of PSG</p> <p>Facilitation skills need development Ineffective in dealing with systemic and transference issues Understanding of theory may be limited More competent peers may be assisted less</p>	<p>Limitations of ISV</p> <p>Purposes not explicit Power differential inhibits open dialogue Interns feel unable to challenge Not intern-centred enough Too many cases to deal with Feedback too limited Tensions between differing paradigms</p>

Please note that although similar headings have been used for most sections of the table, there is no strict correspondence between entries on the same line in the two columns. Also, when considering ISV, the contributions listed in the above table often relate to the potential of ISV rather than being evident in the limited number of cases considered in this data analysis.

To conclude this section, consideration of the discussion and the summary tabulated above, indicate that there appear to be merits in both forms of supervision, even though participants are very critical of ISV in the focus group discussion. Their criticisms might be a function of the trainees' stage of professional development, but they may also be an expression of the difficulties this group had experienced in the training setting, related to the structural shifts which were occurring organisationally. One of the participants also noted that during the focus group discussion, she had been referring only to the supervisory experience related to the pairwise comparison, but that she had had other much more positive ISV experiences (and other peers agreed to this). Perhaps then, participants chose cases where they were having difficulty in ISV, to present in PSG. This possibility would then support a stronger complementary relationship between the two models.

A further research question which then evolved was (see Table 4.1):

How do the two modes used in conjunction contribute to the learning process?

This research question is briefly considered here given the findings presented in this section, but is answered in more detail in sections 4.6 and 4.7.

The two forms of supervision seem to be additive when considered together. There is some evidence of this in references to ISV made in PSG's 4 and 8, and references to PSG in ISV's 7 and 10. The potential for the two together to complement each other was noted by one of the participants in an individual interview (which occurred six months after the end of the PSG process, when the participant had launched her own practice):

I never really thought of them as separate [...] I think that's because they both complemented each other very well [...] I often remember something my supervisor might have told me [...] the comments that she made then I'm remembering it now or using it now, or something that might have been said in the peer supervision [...]

This excerpt thus refers to the contributions of both forms of supervision, and also indicates something of the process of internalising of dialogic material which enables a form of self-regulation at a later stage.

It would thus seem that PSG enables the interns to have a richer learning experience than having ISV alone. There are varied in experiences of ISV, and one of the advantages of this training

setting is that the interns work with at least five supervisors within their training year, thus increasing opportunities for valuable learning experiences from ISV. PSG offers a less hierarchical, more focussed and supportive experience, which differs from ISV, and a number of participants reflected on its empowering nature.

As I have engaged in analysing the two forms of supervision, I have noted the way in which my understandings and perspectives on the one form may lead to a different perspective and way of viewing the other. Thus, a comparison of ISV with PSG has shown some of what ISV is not, and vice versa. One of the values of considering the 'other' is thus to consider what is not present in the first, as well as what is present.

4.6 STEP FOUR: FACILITATING LEARNING PROCESSES IN SUPERVISION

As noted above, the next challenge in the data analysis, was to consider both forms of supervision to ascertain which aspects of the two modes of supervision promoted learning, in order to answer the above question. The above pairwise analysis was thus used as a basis for comparisons of the strategies evident in each form of supervision which seemed to facilitate learning.

In order to work towards answering this question, a table which considered the form of the learning strategy and the content of the resultant learning was constructed (see appendix I). This was in order to develop possible relationships between concepts (as described in Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p.278). This led to the development of the second research question (see 3.2):

What strategies, which may facilitate learning, are evident in the two models of supervision?

Consideration of the table in Appendix I led to the development of the following categories which seemed to capture some of the essence of the ways in which learning might be promoted.

Table 4.10 Strategies which facilitate learning for trainees

<p>A. Talking through one's ideas about the material in a setting where listeners give one active attention, without engagement in dialogue, in itself has value.</p>
<p>B. Active listening to a discussion about issues with which one is grappling assists the listener to reflect.</p>
<p>C. Empathic connection with the presenter's conceptual understanding of the material assists the helper to provide suggestions more in keeping with the presenter's needs (e.g. peers provided step by step, practical suggestions because they identified what was needed).</p>
<p>D. A supportive learning environment seems to facilitate openness in the learner. There also appears to be a developmental process from support towards greater autonomy, thus the level of support and the needs of the trainee need to be matched.</p>
<p>E. Effective questioning has the potential to help shift understandings.</p>
<p>F. Explicit structuring of supervisory interactions provides security.</p>
<p>G. A greater sense of equality enables participants to argue their case.</p>
<p>H. Engagement in dialogue socially leads to some form of internalisation of that dialogue.</p>
<p>I. A crucial element seems to be the learner's construction of her/his role. The positioning of role on the following scales seems to be influential:</p> <p>active / passive inept/competent helped/helper</p>
<p>J. The explicit linking of experience to theories previously learnt is of value.</p>

The above identified strategies will be explored further by considering processes which seem influential in the following section. The data analysis thus shifts to a more interpretive mode, which strives to identify processes which might underpin the features identified above.

4.7 STEP FIVE: BUILDING GROUNDED THEORY

The final stages of this research project were to strive to move from the categories developed above, which move a step away from the raw data, into a more comprehensive account of the phenomena identified, and then to move on to describe the links between these in some form of a model or account.

The categories which follow in this section, were developed through a number of attempts at organising the emergent findings into meaningful themes, and identifying principles which underpin these. The categories are phrased in an active mode to emphasise the nature of the processes which are dynamic and evolving.

4.7.1 Learning through languaging

Both forms of supervision investigated relied to a great extent on various ways in which language is used in interpersonal contexts. The forms of the two types of supervision rely on dialogue being structured in different ways. Interns exposure to a different form of structure in PSG, having experienced and become familiar with ISV, enabled them to identify language features which enhancing their experience of learning; for example talking through of the case, features of both peers' and the presenter's listening, and remembering what had been said in both forms of supervision. In Table 4.10, phenomena specifically related to language strategies are identified in A, B, E and H.

Trainees commented on the value of the presentation in PSG. Preparing for and presenting thoughts in language means that a form of structuring or ordering of thoughts needs to take place, and it is possible that that process leads to consideration of what is to be presented 'as if' listening to it with another's ears, leading to greater insight into the material. Furthermore, the 'saying out

loud' of one's thoughts may also enable the presenter to critique what he has said, also promoting further thought.

As trainees develop therapeutic competencies, they develop ways of constructing their understandings of the activities in which they engage. Engaging in dialogue with others enables them to hear of different ways of constructing meaning, and hearing these differences promotes the possibility of their own thinking being enriched by considering other opinions. Thus engaging in supervision of various types means that the exposure to alternative views is increased, and this might then add to inner dialogues when reflecting on therapy. Just as one of the purposes of therapy might be the generation of various different perspectives, rather than remaining trapped in one frame of reference, a similar function may be a part of the supervisory process.

There are examples of sections of the ISV's where the utterances of the two participants are not 'connecting' well. This may be because the supervisor takes for granted that the intern has particular understandings of terms used, and the intern feels unable to express uncertainty. This signals the need for the supervisor to gain a good sense of the intern's current level of understanding before questioning in a more challenging way, or giving advice. A further language strategy is for the supervisor to be more explicit about the direction of their enquiry or suggestions.

It would seem that there is an inextricable link between the various language phenomena and the learning process which could profitably be theorised further, and the next theme builds on this.

4.7.2 Learning as transmitting information or as constructing meanings

At a deeper level, one of the influences on the processes seems to relate to the view of learning espoused by supervisors and interns, which has a crucial influence on the learner's construction of his role (Category I in Table 4.10).

A more traditional approach to learning reifies knowledge as an entity, the objective linking of 'facts' in a system, transmitted from the teacher to the learner. This transmission mode depends

on a hierarchy of power, where the one who 'knows' passes the knowledge on to the one who is learning. This impacts on the relationship between learner and teacher and may be seen in the greater formality in some ISV sessions, and influences the intern's frankness in the communication between the two. The learner is thus a passive recipient, dependent on the 'expert' for input, and expectant that the other will provide the knowledge and judgements (in the case of the interns, that the supervisor will provide both theoretical input and practical guidance). The responsibility for transmission thus rests on the supervisor (along with the professional responsibility for seeing that the dealings with the client are in the client's best interests); and the intern is thus in dependent on the supervisor. This relationship has the potential to provide a sense of safety for the intern as beginner therapist, and influences the intern's perceptions of the need to demonstrate increasing competence, since the hidden expectation is that the learner will 'reproduce' knowledge gained in the process.

An alternate view of knowledge is that it is constructed in the social context, and that participants in the process have the potential to be equal contributors. Theory is thus used to make sense of links already emerging in the material, and understandings are negotiated dialogically. Speculation and the generation of various alternatives is encouraged in order to consider a variety of ways of considering the issue at hand. The learner is encouraged to express current constructions of meaning related to the issue, and further steps are negotiated in discussion; where the skills of the 'teacher' are to use various discursive strategies appropriate to the learner's needs.

One of the influences of the way in which knowledge is viewed relates to whether there is the potential to 'open up' and explore various alternative approaches, or whether there is the 'closing down' of debate, limiting the exploration to one direction without consideration of alternatives.

The underlying view of knowledge from the participants' perspectives impacts on the types of questioning which occur, the construction of dialogue (are interns able to disagree or to challenge views?), the consideration of differing perspectives, and the location of responsibility for decision-making. It also impacts on the ways in which roles of participants are constructed, and the levels of motivation to participate in the process.

4.7.3 Moving from supervisor authority to intern autonomy

This category is implicit in the previous paragraph, and inherent in categories D, G and I in Table 4.10. It underlines the importance of the intersubjective space in the provision of a safe enough context for learning. Relationships based on the hierarchy of expert and novice may provoke in the intern a need to demonstrate competence, and may lead to the trainee having difficulties in revealing uncertainties. Interns have emerged from learning contexts in which the authority of the expert is still a dominant perspective and they feel varying levels of concern and/or confidence about their own level of competence when functioning more independently. However, they are in their final year of training before launching into work as a professional, where they will need to be autonomous and make choices and decisions linked to understandings of theoretical perspectives, thus there is a need to develop means of building confidence and more independent functioning.

In supervisory interactions, they thus need to move from dependency on the supervisor providing guidance and direction, towards a greater sense of being able to 'work it out' for themselves. The PSG offered examples of peers of similar levels of competence working through the issues, and this had an impact on the interns as they felt a greater sense of personal agency as participants.

A growth in confidence in being able to consider alternatives and generate solutions emerged over the course of the PSG. In the cases of ISV which did not encourage a sense of working things out together, starting from the interns' experience, ISV was not regarded as being as beneficial as PSG.

In ISV, supervisors have the potential to provide an environment where probing clarifies thoughts and pushes the intern towards deeper understandings, however this needs to be within a safe environment, where the intern feels supported rather than evaluated, and where the probing is carefully modulated in the interpersonal space to enable a more open consideration of perspectives.

4.7.4 Oscillating between support and challenge

The trainees express a variety of views about support and challenge in both forms of supervision. Some felt supported and contained in both ISV and PSG, others felt unsupported and criticised in ISV but supported in PSG, and one reports feeling more supported in ISV than PSG. These variations may be partly a function of trainees being supervised by different people, where there may be a range of attitudes and abilities to providing support or challenge in supervision. However, the varied views about support may also relate to trainees' stages of development as practitioners, and their own particular needs, as expressed in category D of Table 4.10.

In a number of the excerpts in 4.5.5, there are references to interns also desiring the challenge of making more links to theory, and their belief that PSG enabled this in a way that some of their experience of ISV had not. This category is identified at I in Table 4.10. A key element seems to be the provision of a supportive atmosphere which then enables the challenging of ideas and understandings in a way which is beneficial. Thus, provision of support and then deeper probing of theoretical understanding and linking practice to theory seem to be interwoven in some way.

4.7.5 Making the implicit more explicit

One of the chief differences between PSG and ISV is that the procedures to be followed for each phase of PSG are explicit, thus the form of the session enables participants to focus their attention on the particular intention as specified. For example, the role of the group as listeners, in phase one, frees the presenter to make a full presentation without fear of interruption, and this 'talking aloud' of the whole enables the presenter to consider her/his own argument, and thus formulate the request for assistance. A further example is the structure of the discussion phase in which the presenter becomes a listener, and the group discuss his/her concerns without judgements, in the third person, enabling the presenter to listen without needing to argue any points or defend his/her actions or decisions.

In contrast, in ISV, the role of the supervisor as listener is varied and unspecified, leading to a greater sense of unsureness in the trainee, with some interns feeling 'unheard'; and the intern's

listening in turn is not necessarily open to hearing the supervisor's perspective. In ISV, the talking and listening is thus much more dependent on implicit interpretations of each participant of the intentions of the other, which has an impact on what is said and how it is heard. Whilst in PSG the intern's questions are specified, in ISV these often remain unsaid, increasing the potential for the participants to be approaching the interaction with differing expectations of its result.

PSG and ISV also differ regarding the purpose of the interaction, with ISV having a greater number of purposes, also not specified. Whilst both have the common goal of providing assistance to the intern, the supervisor in ISV needs to 'watch over' the actions of the intern in relation to the client, evaluate the intern's progress, and take on a 'teaching' role related to the intern's development. The supervisor's varied roles are not necessarily discussed, or made explicit, and supervisors shift between the roles in any one session. The implicit variation in role of the supervisor impacts on the intern's presentation of material and response to the supervisor's comments, with guardedness being more evident in the material presented in ISV.

The varied and unspecified roles and functions of ISV also impact on the types of questions asked by the supervisor. The goal of questions in ISV remain implicit, and questions may often 'catch' the intern unprepared or off guard, since her train of thought was moving in a different direction.

A further feature of ISV which is implicit rather than explicit is the question of whose perspective is being considered at any time. There is more evidence of the perspective of the client being taken rather than the perspective of the intern being foregrounded. In PSG the perspective of the intern is foregrounded, both in the presentation and in the discussion, with participants being encouraged to place themselves 'in the position' of their peer. It is possible that in ISV the distance between supervisor and intern, experientially, impacts on this, but it may also evolve from the tension between varied goals mentioned above.

4.7.6 Shifting between the interpersonal and the intrapersonal

This theme is implicit in categories C, G and H of Table 4.10, and in the theme of 'learning through languaging'. There seem to be links between the exploration that occurs between participants in the two forms of supervision, and developments in the individual's thoughts and feelings. The support of peers being at similar levels as the presenter, identifying with her struggles, seems to enable the trainee to have a sense of not being alone. It is possible that this external reassurance is internalised to enable the individual to reassure herself at other times.

There may be a number of 'voices' present in the supervisory contexts - the intern's, the client(s)', the supervisor's, peers'; and one of the achievements of effective supervision relates to being able to take on different voices, and empathise with the position of another. This enables the trainee therapist to step out of a personal perspective and consider other perspectives.

4.8 STEP SIX: MODEL AND ACCOUNT OF INTERNS' SUPERVISORY EXPERIENCES

A model and narrative account of interns' supervisory experiences are presented in this section. Following Addison (1992), a flow diagram of certain of the key influencing features and outcomes of the interns' experiences was developed. Then, having been through a process of continued questioning of the data, moving back and forth between the foreground and context, a narrative account which describes and explains the emergent patterns has been written, and follows directly on from the flow diagram below.

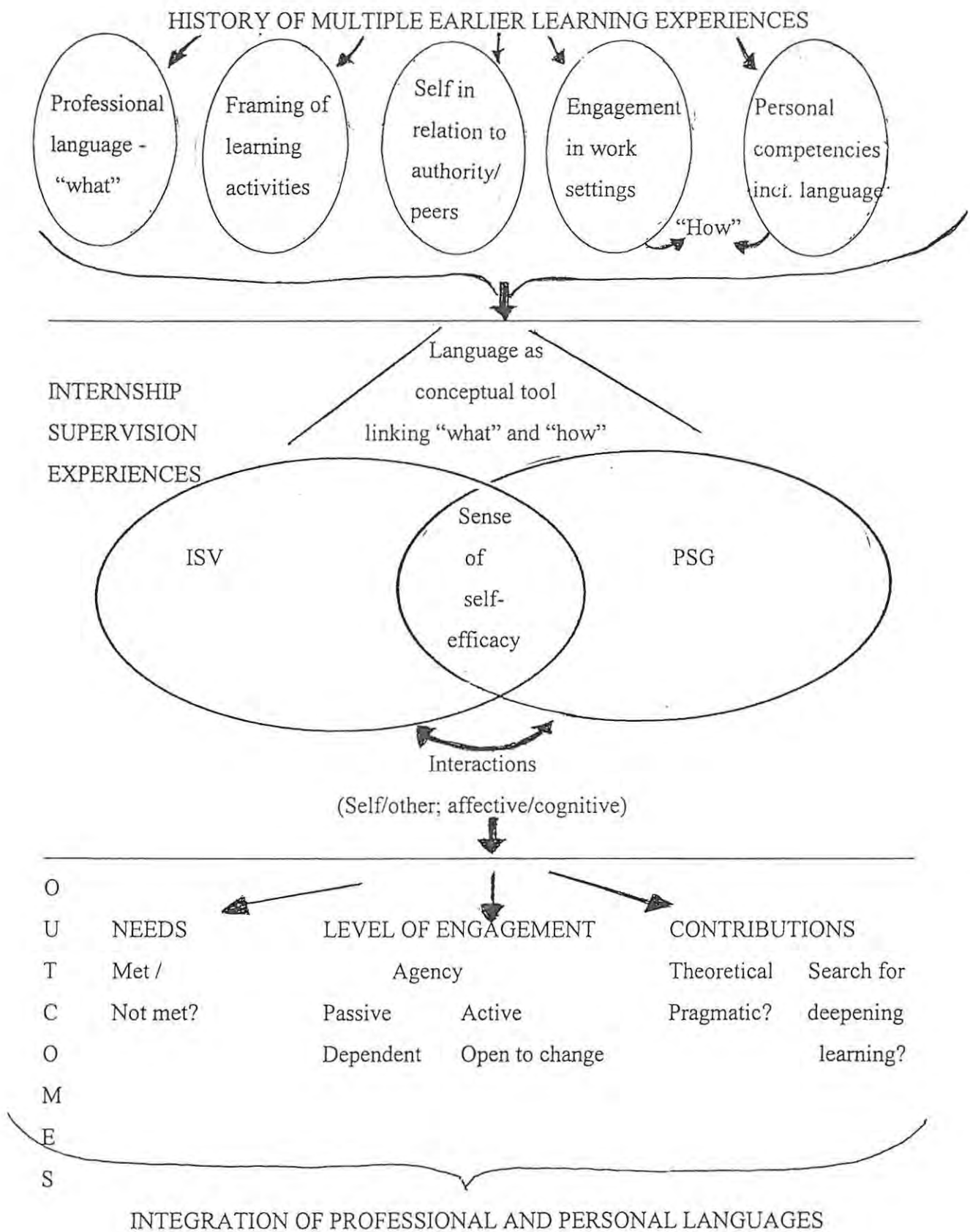


Figure 4.4 Proposed model of features of the interns' experiences as learners

The diagram is divided into three sectors, to represent the interns' learning experiences prior to the internship, the interactive nature of the supervisory experiences in the internship, and the outcomes of the interns' engagement in the learning process.

The unifying theme which related interns' supervisory and learning experiences together seemed to be their sense of self-efficacy within each experience (located centrally in the diagram). This influenced their constructions of meaning around supervision. This central theme was also influential in the way in which supervisors (both individual and peer) interpreted their own role and contributions. The sense of what was required in each role was also dynamic and shifting encapsulated in one of the participants' comments about "switching in and out of being the helper and being helped". Thus interns needed to tolerate the oscillation between the roles of being a therapist and being supervised, and of being a helper in PSG or being the 'helped'.

Prior to their entry into the internship, each individual's prior experiences in the learner role would have been influential in their approach to their role and tasks within the training setting (represented in the top section of the diagram). Influencing factors would include their prior engagement with the language and theories of the profession, (termed the "what" of psychotherapy); the way they engaged with learning activities; their sense of self in relation to authority figures and in relation to peers; their experiences of applying learning to work contexts; and their sense of being able to access their own competencies (including expressing themselves in language); with the last two factors influencing interns' procedural competency (the "how" of undertaking the work). Furthermore, the broader setting and organisational features such as the hierarchical structure and content and style of communications around supervision as a learning context would have made contributions to each of these factors.

As the interns began their training, they were confronted by the immediate pressures of working therapeutically with a volume of cases, making case management decisions, coping with their own evaluations of self as a therapist, their interpersonal relationships with a variety of clients, making adequate case notes, reflecting on processes. Added to this, they had to cope with the conflicting tensions in supervision, of needing to demonstrate adequate competence yet needing step by step assistance with practical and conceptual casework issues. Their encounters with

different people, many challenging and some helpful, would have made further contributions to their sense of self-efficacy.

The challenge for each was to make sense of these varied and sometimes conflicting experiences. Some internalised their difficulties, looking within and locating difficulties in feelings of inadequacy, feeling unsupported by the system, and thus needing to dig into personal resources in order to cope. Some felt a sense of inertia and passivity, lacking energy, one expression of which was a desire for input from others. Others became defensive and/or angry, seeing the system as unresponsive to their needs, and feeling unable to gain assistance. Their expressions of anger led to resistances and may have resulted in some rebellious behaviour. Some were more open to hearing and accepting help from various quarters, thus being more able to optimise the potential sources of support and for some this meant 'managing' their supervisors.

The peer group played a role, both informally, where individuals or small groups were consulted, and in the formalised larger group (PSG), when the meeting was an opportunity to express various feelings and reactions. Hearing others grappling with similar issues and feelings of aloneness led to greater honesty of expression, and a sense of solidarity developing in the group.

PSG offered a different approach to learning, where some felt more able to contribute and verbalise the search for greater understanding of their work and to link it to frameworks of meaning. PSG in conjunction with ISV widened the opportunities for learning, and provided expanded opportunities for engaging in dialogues. The PSG may also have contributed to being better able to utilise ISV, becoming more active, rather than being passive recipients.

The experiences of self efficacy in the PSG context would then have influenced the interns' attitudes to and activities within their professional development (represented as outcomes in the lower section of the diagram). Their expectations of and experiences related to their needs being met in supervision would have been one factor which they may have felt more able to influence. A second factor is that of their levels of engagement - whether their sense of agency was enhanced leading to a willingness to be active and open to learning, or whether it was inhibited leading to passivity and dependence on the lead of others. Another further factor is the reciprocal effect of their willingness to make contributions to their own and others' learning.

The resulting overall outcome of the engagement in the PSG and ISV process and its effects on participants' sense of self-efficacy, along with their developing confidence as casework progressed was reflected in the clearer linking of the professional language with their personal language. This is expressed by Hillerbrand (1989) as the linking of 'declarative' and 'procedural' knowledge (see 2.7) and experienced as operationalised insight into themselves and others.

4.9 COMMENTS ON REPORTING THE FINDINGS

In this chapter, the findings have been summarised at various points: the end of sections 4.4 and 4.5; the table 4.10 which is developed further in the six themes in section 4.7; and finally the model and its description in section 4.8. The findings tended to be rather descriptive in the first part of the chapter, but then moved to become a more interpretive analysis as the research questions evolved. The final section moves beyond the confine of the transcripts and illustrates the value of a grounded theory approach, which allows immersion in data followed by interpretation. This interpretation remains open since it needs to be further dialogued with interns - not possible in the current study because time constraints meant that the group of interns moved on, necessitating the write-up without completing the iterative process. I have endeavoured to show how the interpretations have been derived from the data at each step, and acknowledge that different methodological approaches would be likely to develop different interpretations.

Thus, whilst the engagement with the data of this study shifts in the next chapter to a dialogue between the findings and a theoretical perspective, further research projects are necessary in order to consider the findings, particularly in sections 4.7 and 4.8, with different groups and/or in different contexts. It is in such research that questions about the model's relevance and explanatory power would need to be addressed.

In Chapter 5, the findings will be considered from a perspective built on the work of Vygotsky (1962, 1978). The purpose of this is to enable deepened understandings of the PSG and ISV processes, and to develop certain of the central themes which have been identified in the findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The work of Lev Semionovich Vygotsky and his followers has had a significant impact on educational psychology in the past two decades, since translations of his work and applications of his ideas have become available (e.g. Moll, 1990; Wertsch, 1985a; 1985b). In much of my work, teaching educational psychology, I have been influenced by Vygotsky's ideas and developments in 'neo-Vygotskian theory' (Mercer, 1994). I therefore have no doubt that this would have had some influence on the analysis of the data in the preceding chapter. As Vygotsky himself notes: "facts are always examined in the light of some theory and therefore cannot be disentangled from philosophy" (1962, p.11).

As I worked with the findings, I became aware that Vygotskian theory had the potential to deepen understanding of the participants' experiences of peer group and individual supervision as learning contexts. The purpose of this chapter is to explicitly consider ways in which the ideas of Vygotsky, and ongoing work influenced by his writings, might enable the theorising of the complexities of the learning processes in peer group and individual supervision. In each section I aim to explore certain relevant notions from Vygotsky's theory and then illustrate these by drawing on aspects of the data, at times using methods from conversational analysis for close consideration of the words chosen and interchanges between participants.

As noted in section 2.7, there have been a variety of applications of cognitive theorising to supervision, as researchers have strived to gain a better understanding of the learning process in this context; however many of the attempts have focussed on the individual, without strong enough considerations of the learning histories of participants and social context of the interactions. Previous theorising, based often on a type of apprenticeship model, has to some extent been derived from 'instructional' and 'transmission' models of learning, which do not adequately link learning and 'doing'.

Much previous research has been based on empirical, factor-related studies. It has thus tended to be reductionistic and atomistic, considering methods of supervision and the supervisory

relationship separately, rather than in interrelated ways. Much supervisory practice seems to be based on the supervisor (as 'expert') giving advice and instructions, with the trainee following these and reporting back. Learning is thought to occur through the trainee somehow internalising the supervisor's strategies, without the inter- or intrapersonal processes being adequately theorised. Thus, such strategies as modelling, questioning and advice-giving are examples of strategies used and desired by trainees (e.g. Savickas *et al.*, 1986); but these have not been adequately linked into a broader theory of learning based in social practice.

Although the work of learning theorists such as Jerome Bruner and Albert Bandura may be relevant to aspects of the findings of this study, consideration of supervision as a learning process from the sociohistorical perspective of Vygotsky and the sociocultural perspectives of neo-Vygotskian theorists offers great promise, since there is the potential to link many of the emergent findings of this study together with the theory into a coherent form. The only reference to the work of Vygotsky that I was able to locate in the supervision literature is that of Hillerbrand (1989), where he refers to Vygotsky's model of the facilitation of cognitive skill acquisition in novices (p.294) as supportive of the unique potentials of group supervision. I believe that the use of the framework theorised by Vygotsky offers this and a great deal more to the enterprise of understanding learning in supervision: learning and cognitive development are seen as essentially culturally based processes, "social rather than individual; ...a communicative process, whereby knowledge is shared and understandings are constructed in culturally-formed settings" (Mercer, 1994, pp.92-3).

Further attractions of the work of Vygotsky are its cross-disciplinary nature and the research methodology he employed. One of the strong critiques of the human sciences in the twentieth century has been the way in which disciplines have developed within their own confines, leading to narrow focus and terminology particular to that discipline. A major impact of this has been limited interdisciplinary work resulting in "irrelevance to major social issues" (Wertsch, del Rio and Alvarez, 1995, p.2). This criticism is also relevant within the discipline of psychology where there has been limited dialogue, for example, between the fields of cognitive psychology and psychotherapy. The writings of Vygotsky promote cross-disciplinary dialogue, such as that to be attempted within this chapter. Also, since Vygotsky's work emphasises linguistic, social and

cultural factors it offers "a theory better suited to a naturalistic methodology, ... to the investigation of cognitive development and learning in context" (Mercer, 1994, p.95); thus it is compatible with the methodology employed in this study.

5.1 CENTRAL THEMES FROM VYGOTSKY'S WRITINGS

Wertsch *et al.* (1995) identify two fundamental themes which derive from the work of Vygotsky and are highlighted in sociocultural research: "*human action and mediation*" (p.10, italics in original). Whilst Wertsch *et al.* (1995) note that there are several other theories of action in psychological research, they state that these fail to take account of the sociocultural nature of human activity, and see actions as the result of, rather than intrinsic to, cognition. From a Vygotskian perspective, meaningful human action is viewed as inseparable from the context in which it is located, and Wertsch *et al.* (1995) state that the "goal of a sociocultural approach is to explicate the relationships between human action, on the one hand, and the cultural, institutional, and historical situations in which this action occurs, on the other" (p.11).

Some of the roots of the developments in the 'theory of activity' may be traced to Vygotsky's influence on his colleague Leont'ev (Zinchenko, 1995); however, this discussion will not focus on the concepts developed in activity theory (a theory which has emerged from the work of Leont'ev), but rather on ideas derived directly from Vygotsky's works (1962, 1978), and more recent expansions of these and related discussion by Wertsch (1985a, 1985b, 1991). Such a return to the ideas of Vygotsky is advised by Lektorsky (1999), since activity theory has been criticised for not taking enough cognisance of issues such as the creative and self-realizing nature of people, and the role of mediation in the intersubjective relations which underpin much activity; issues which Vygotsky begins to address in the "sphere of mediated, interindividual activity" (p.66).

Although this discussion will not employ activity theory directly as a means of analysis, action is at the core of Vygotsky's analyses of humans' use of signs, words and symbols; and the usage of these 'tools' is first established interpersonally before they become intrapersonal 'tools' enabling mental functioning. Wertsch (1985a) notes that "the notion of action ... provides the

framework within which mediation operates” (p.208). However, Wertsch *et al.* (1995) advise consideration of a wider range of actions than the basic teleological account of activity based on Leont'ev's work. They propose that symmetrical notions of intersubjectivity; enabling the complexities of communication, such as those outlined by Billig (1987), and contextually located psychological and sociological interactional processes (e.g. Rogoff, 1995), be considered.

A Vygotskian notion of action is broad, as reflected in the title of *Thinking and Speech* (mistranslated, according to Wertsch *et al.*, 1995, as *Thought and Language*, Vygotsky, 1962), in which "Vygotsky's focus throughout that volume was on the emerging interfunctional relationships between speaking and thinking as one example of a kind of action dynamic that characterizes the development of consciousness more generally ..." (Wertsch *et al.*, 1995, p.12). In this discussion chapter, the functions of various forms of speaking as an activity in both forms of supervision will be considered in section 5.2. Thus 'speech events' of various kinds, and their influence on cognitive functioning will be considered.

The second fundamental theme noted by Wertsch *et al.* (1995) above, that of mediation, is central to this discussion chapter, since peer group and individual supervision are activities mediated by structures of communication and interaction which have some similarities as well as distinctive differences. Wertsch (1985a) notes that although Vygotsky's approach is termed sociohistorical, Vygotsky was not concerned with all aspects of historical process, but focussed on the "symbolic-communicative spheres of activity in which humans collectively produce new means for regulating their behavior" (Scribner, 1985, in Wertsch, 1985a, p.32).

Both Wertsch (1985a) and Zinchenko (1995) argue that 'mediated action' is an "appropriate unit of analysis for a Vygotskian-derived sociocultural approach" (Wertsch *et al.*, 1995). Leont'ev (1983, in Zinchenko, 1995), in his obituary to Vygotsky, published in 1934, stated: "Vygotsky's treatment of the mediated structure of human psychological processes and of mental functioning as human *activity* serves as the foundation stone, the basis for all the rest of the psychological theory he elaborated ..." (p.39, italics in original). Although I intend to focus on mediation in the language of the supervisory interactions, the foregrounding of this is based on an inherent

relationship between action and mediation, separated only in this chapter for the purposes of analysis.

Mercer (1994) highlights the crucial importance of mediation in his statement that "*learning with assistance or instruction is a normal, common and important feature of human mental development*" (p.102, italics in original), and goes on to describe Vygotsky's 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD), in which learning through intersubjective means takes place. Gallimore and Tharp (1990) specify a number of means by which assistance is provided by a mediator, to enable the learner to progress within the ZPD, and these will be explored in section 5.3 below.

Mercer (1994) notes the importance of the examination of "the processes of learning and instruction as manifest in particular *events*, and in the relationship between teachers and learners in those events" (p.102). This highlights the consideration of participants' experience of the events, the subjective nature of these experiences, and influential aspects of the contexts, such as the nature of intersubjectivity, to be considered in sections 5.4 to 5.6 below.

It must be noted here that much of the focus of Vygotsky's work and research was on the development of the pre-school and school-age child. However, I believe that it is possible to extrapolate the underlying principles of his findings to adult learning, since Vygotsky, in his research focus, emphasised the need to understand the genesis of higher mental functions by studying their development in children, in order to better understand such functions when operating in the complexity of adult mental life. I am, however, aware that there are qualitative differences between the learning of children and adults (see 2.7.3), and will refer to these toward the end of this chapter.

Finally, the sociocultural nature of supervision must be considered more broadly, since this research did not take place in a socio-historical-political-economic vacuum. Vygotsky's own research, and that of his collaborators (e.g. Luria), was firmly located in a historical period which was profoundly influential. The influences of the current transition period in South African society, and more specifically in the profession of psychology, on the research events recorded, are therefore considered in section 5.6. The challenge of writing this discussion is expressed by

Wertsch (1991) as "conducting research ... into concrete empirical problems but in such a way that it always remains anchored in some more general picture" (p.4).

This discussion thus foregrounds the specifics of the supervision interactions in the earlier sections, before moving on to broader contextual issues. In relation to figure 4.1, the discussion will start with interactions represented at the centre and then move outwards. This does not imply any hierarchy, but reflects the "different planes of focus" (Rogoff, 1995, p.141) of sociocultural study: personal and interpersonal, community and institutional.

5.2 SPEAKING AND THINKING, THINKING AND SPEAKING

One of the major themes identified in 4.7 is that of 'learning through languaging'. This emerged from a number of the specific facilitative strategies (section 4.6) identified in each of the forms of supervision (such as the value of 'talking through the case aloud'; listening to the peers' discussion; 'arguing' the case; and 'internalisation' of dialogue). In the title of this section, I have used the active forms of the verbs, as preferred by Vygotsky, in order to emphasise the interconnectedness between these two functions and their dynamic, iterative nature. Vygotsky (1962) devoted the whole of a book to this topic, thus, for the purposes of this chapter, it will only be possible to identify certain major themes which I believe have relevance to the findings of this study.

5.2.1 External and inner speech

In *Thinking and Speaking*, Vygotsky (1962) traces the development of thinking by considering the way in which phenomena appear first in the interpersonal domain before being internalised to become intrapersonal. Vygotsky (1962) states that "thought development is determined by language, i.e., by the linguistic tools of thought and by the sociocultural experience of the child" (p.51). By referring to the process of egocentric speech development, and related research in which he and his colleagues engaged, he demonstrates the way in which egocentric speech, which is social in nature, is first based on external speech, and becomes more and more condensed to eventually become inner speech. He identifies certain of the properties of inner speech such as

its abbreviated form, predicativity, the agglutination of words, and the predominance of sense over meaning. Bruner (1985) interprets Vygotsky's specification of the predicative nature of inner speech as being the foregrounding of the new, unfamiliar, problematic and uncertain features and the backgrounding of the familiar, given and understood (p.32).

Thus in adults, thinking related to inner speech shows great complexity, since the process will have been influenced by the countless conversations in which the person has engaged, with interlinkages between cognitive structures: complexes and concepts internalised over many years. Wertsch (1985a) notes that such interfunctional relationships, as that between speaking and thinking "are characterized by constant transformation and mutual influence" (p.190). This is substantiated by Vygotsky's (1962) statement that the "relation of thought to word is not a thing but a process, a continual movement back and forth from thought to word and from word to thought" (p.125). This underlines the iterative nature of such processes.

Vygotsky explores the move from thinking to speaking, noting that inner speech and the speaking are not identical processes, and that there are times when words cannot be found for thoughts. He concludes that inner speech is

a distinct plane of verbal thought ... the transition from inner speech to external speech is not a simple translation from one language to another. It cannot be achieved by merely vocalizing silent speech. It is a complex, dynamic process involving the transformation of the predicative, idiomatic structure of inner speech into syntactically articulated speech intelligible to others (Vygotsky, 1962, p.148).

The above notions of the relationships between speaking and thinking thus give some explanation of some of the features noted in PSG and ISV: 'talking aloud', time for the formulation of thoughts, and the value of 'listening' in PSG.

A number of the participants noted the value of presenting their case in the format of the PSG. The presenters prepared in some way beforehand, thus they would already have organised their thoughts to some extent, deciding what to highlight, which examples to give, and what their concerns were with regard to their case. Their thoughts and experiences in dealing with the

client(s) would thus have been crystallised and ordered to some extent in verbal thought, perhaps already making possible links more clear. This confirms the value of linking activity (even though the activity in question is based in speaking) to speech: "as soon as speech and the use of signs are incorporated into any action, the action becomes transformed and organised along entirely new lines" (Vygotsky, 1978, in Wertsch, 1985a, p.138).

The further step, of speaking these thoughts about their casework aloud, meant that the thoughts would have needed to be expanded, from the condensed and context bound nature of inner speech to the grammatically constructed, more linear form of external speech, leading to further elaboration of meaning, and making links from the specifics of the context to the more generalised conventions of speaking. Hearing oneself speak about the case could thus lead to further new linkages between ideas. For example, in INT10, the intern reflected that thinking *out loud why I wanted to do what I wanted to do ... to be able to find the flaws in my own argument as I was saying*, was of value. Whilst there is the potential for a presentation in ISV to achieve the same purpose, ISV does not always offer such opportunities, and the power differential impacts on the nature of the 'listening' to one's own speaking. The value of presenting the case in PSG was also confirmed in INT9 where the intern reflects that presentation *helped me see the case quite differently without them having to say anything*.

Wertsch (1991) builds on Vygotsky's notions of transformations which occur through speaking, by drawing from Bakhtin's approach to meaning (Holquist, 1981, in Wertsch, 1991), in which the 'talking' "always involves at least two voices" (Wertsch, 1991, p.68). From Bakhtin's perspective, "understanding involves one voice's response to another, a process in which 'for each word of the utterance that we are in the process of understanding, we, as it were, lay down a set of our answering words'(Voloshinov, 1973, p.102)" (Wertsch, 1991, p.73). Thus even in what seems to be a monologue, the presenter is engaging in a form of inner dialogue. This casts further light on the reasons why the presentation aspect of PSG is useful: in constructing and engaging in the monologue, the presenter is 'dialoguing' with her perceptions of the listeners' responses, as well as 'listening' to her own words in a dialogic way.

It is interesting to note that some of the ISV's seem to follow the pattern of the PSG in that the first section seems similar to a case presentation, (it is not possible to say whether this is the result of the influence of one on the other, or whether this is a general pattern in ISV). In ISV6, the intern seems to have prepared a presentation, and when interrupted by the supervisor, says *I'll get to that*, and continues with her former train of speech. This seems to indicate that she did not want to be interrupted, but felt the need to continue the presentation in the way she had structured it. It is not, however, possible to say whether she was hoping for the benefits of an uninterrupted presentation, as described above, or whether it was a sign of her wish to retain some form of agency in ISV, or whether there was another reason for her response to her supervisor.

In chapter 2 of *Mind in Society*, Vygotsky (1978) discusses the function of speech in reorganising and creating new relations between perception and attention. He notes that speaking can lead to links being made to past, present and future; to the apperception of needs and to the planning of actions. He also highlights the analytical nature of speech in comparison to the more holistic nature of visual perception, since speech has a linear and sequential nature, meaning that "each element is separately labeled and connected in a sentence structure" (p.33).

The complexity of turning thoughts into words also has other implications, since such a process needs time. When interns are asked questions in ISV for which they have not prepared, they often need time for reflection. In transcribing the ISV's, I was aware of instances where interns may have felt the need to answer a question quite promptly, without having time to reflect on their thoughts. This would seem to imply the possible need to establish a form of dialogue in which participants are able to take time to reflect, and do not feel pressured to respond promptly.

In addition to the presentation phase, another feature of PSG, which was found helpful by participants, was the convention that the presenter listen to the group discussion in phase 3 without participating. They were thus able to confirm thoughts which they might already have entertained, as well as hear new ideas which they had not previously considered. Thus as listeners, they were engaging with the discussion in a different way, without needing to defend a particular viewpoint, or make comments immediately in response. Thus the listening to others

speaking led to comparative thinking, hearing a number of perspectives and comparing these, deciding which were helpful; and possibly prompted new thoughts, in a space which dialogue does not necessarily allow.

Vygotsky acknowledged two further functions of speech: those of *emotional release* and *social contact* (Wertsch, 1985a, p.93, italics in original). These two functions are sociocultural, and there is evidence of interns using both forms of supervision for these purposes (e.g. the occurrence of laughter in many of the PSG's and in some ISV's). However, a number of participants reported preferring PSG as a context for both of the above functions, since there was a sense of being more free to *cathart* (INT9). However, according to Wertsch (1985a), Vygotsky provided little further detail with regard to the emotional and social functions, since his interest was in what Wertsch terms the *communicative* and *intellectual* functions of speech and their interconnections (italics in original). Wertsch (1985a) continues: "it was only through understanding the inextricable ties as well as the genetic transitions between interpsychological and intrapsychological functioning that we can hope to build an adequate account of higher mental functioning" (p.94). I have therefore chosen not to expand further on the emotional and social functions at this point.

5.2.2 Spontaneous and schooled concepts

One of the important themes developed by Vygotsky (1962) relates to the distinction between spontaneous and nonspontaneous ('scientific') concepts, which he draws from a critique of Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Spontaneous concepts are related directly to the processing of everyday experience, and are, for children, said to be directly object related (without attention to the accompanying thinking). Vygotsky (1962) notes, in contrast, that many scientific concepts are nonspontaneous, derived from the systematic knowledge imparted to the learner in formal education which the learner "cannot directly see or experience" (p.86). The key difference is that spontaneous concepts are sign-object relationships, whereas schooled concepts are sign-sign relationships (Wertsch, 1985a). Vygotsky (1934, in Wertsch, 1985a), notes that "scientific concepts, with their quite different relationship to an object, are mediated through other concepts with their internal, hierarchical system of relationships" (p.103). Thus, scientific

concepts are decontextualised and sociohistorical in origin, a result of the process of schooling, introduced by educators, rather than developing out of the learner's ideas about and mental efforts to make sense of reality. Gallimore and Tharp (1990) note that the Russian term for scientific concepts may be translated equally well as 'scholarly concepts'.

Based on the premise that "instruction usually precedes development" (Vygotsky, 1962, p.101), Vygotsky notes the qualitative differences between everyday and schooled concepts, in that those imparted in school are likely to be more abstract (in that they have constancy across contexts of use) and organised into some form of system. The learning of such concepts in school leads to the learner becoming "conscious of his own mental processes" (Vygotsky, 1962, p.92), leading to the development of reflective consciousness, which may then be "transferred to everyday concepts" (p.93). Systematisation is one of the distinguishing features of schooled concepts, which evolve as theories related to academic disciplines (not only in the sciences), and are taught to learners in instructional settings.

Although there are distinctions between the two processes, with a 'gap' between the levels of systematisation and abstraction in everyday compared to schooled concepts, Vygotsky (1962) believes

the development of spontaneous and nonspontaneous concepts - are related and constantly influence each other ... Instruction is one of the principal sources of ... concepts and is also a powerful force in directing their evolution; it determines the fate of ... total mental development (p.85).

In relating schooled concepts to higher mental functioning, Vygotsky (1962) asserts that the development of spontaneous concepts proceeds upward, whereas the development of schooled concepts proceeds downward, "to a more elementary and concrete level" (p.108). In the above quotation, Vygotsky also signals the important influence of instruction as a source of schooled concepts.

In the context of this study, I believe these ideas have relevance to the relationship between the theoretical premises and paradigms, to which interns have been extensively exposed through their formal academic instruction, and the processing of their everyday experiences of adjusting to

work as psychotherapists. It is likely that many of the concepts which the interns learnt academically were not grounded in experience, since much academic instruction still conforms to what Tharp and Gallimore (1988) term the 'recitation script' mode of instruction, where learners may memorise concepts but do not necessarily understand these or commit them to memory in ways which link with experience. Thus, interns may have difficulty theorising their practical experiences: links between their everyday experience and theory not being evident to them. I believe that working towards the matching of these two systems is one of the key tasks in supervision: to enable interns to 'use' their theoretical understandings practically; as well as to understand their experiences more deeply through linking these to theory.

The desire to have the opportunities to consider various theoretical perspectives related to a case is expressed by a number of the participants in the study, and they reflect on the potential of PSG to enable this, an experience which they valued, since the variety of perspectives in the group allowed for *cross-pollination* (mentioned in both the focus group and individual interviews). Such an experience of dialogue between various frames of reference is rated as valuable from a postmodern perspective (Gonzalez, 1997); because it mitigates against reductionism. The experience of listening to and engaging in such peer discussion also encourages the possibility of inner dialogue of similar nature to be developed.

Reflection on the process a year later by one of the participants revealed that *the mix of theoretical interests was fresh and helpful ... and created flexible thinking for us*. When asked about a comparison to ISV, she reflected that supervisors are often entrenched in one theoretical framework, thus inhibiting the exploration of different perspectives during a supervision session. This seemed to be confirmed in certain of the ISV's transcribed, where supervisors tended to be informed by the theoretical perspective which made sense to them, not enabling the intern to make her own linkages to her own preferred theoretical system. There was evidence though, of one of the supervisors being able to draw from theory more flexibly (ISV10).

In the focus group discussion, the strong desire for more theorising in ISV was expressed, seeming to support Gallimore and Tharp's (1990) assertion that the "weaving of the schooled with the everyday is not only enhancing to the dialectical growth of concepts but also motivating"

(p.195). From my study, it therefore seems that PSG enables an engagement in the dialectic between spontaneous and schooled concepts, which participants find helpful. ISV also has the potential to enable this to occur, but given the constraints of ISV, the opportunities for this dialectic may not be optimised.

5.2.3 Internalisation of speech

The internalisation of speech is referred to in section 5.2.1 above, and the internalisation of concepts in 5.2.2. In *Mind in Society*, Vygotsky (1978) refers to the internalization of psychological functions, where the signs, first used in interpersonal interactions, are reconstructed internally: "we call the internal reconstruction of an external operation *internalization*" (p.56, italics in original). Thus the products of speaking, in dialogue with others, and of listening to others may become the "means of internal activity aimed at mastering oneself" (p.55). Vygotsky (1978) thus emphasises the social origins of cognitive processes, and especially that in the process of internalisation, there a transformation of those processes. Thus, this is not a mere "transfer model of internalization" (Wertsch, (1985a, p.63). Wertsch (1985a) continues by noting that "internalization is the process of gaining control over sign forms" (p.65), and the important implication that "changes in interpsychological functioning are inherently linked to changes in intrapsychological functioning" (p.65).

Wertsch (1985a) refers to Gal'perin's writings, which specify three stages of internalisation, an extension of Vygotsky's work. The three stages are:

- (1) making an external action maximally explicit;
- (2) transferring its representation to audible speech, first on the interpsychological plane and then on the intrapsychological plane; and
- (3) transferring it to inner speech (p.66).

As the individual progresses through these stages there is a process of condensation or abbreviation leading to transformations in the internalisation process.

Reflection on these notions, with reference to this study, highlights a number of points. The first relates to the point that "it is in argumentation, in discussion, that the functional moments appear

that will give rise to the development of reflection" (Vygotsky, 1934, in Wertsch, 1985a, p112). Thus, the nature of discussion in which the interns engage may have an impact on their resulting internalisation of ideas. The types of discussion in ISV, with at times the lack of explicit framing of the questioning of the supervisor, or lack of explicit linkages to theory, as well as constraints imposed by the status differential and evaluation, may constrain the intern's ability to self-reflect on casework. Conversely, where ISV and PSG offer a dialogic experience of engaging with theory, the potential for this external dialoguing to be internalised is increased.

The second point relates to a developmental process identified by one of the interns in an individual interview (INT7): she noted that earlier in the year, she had depended on discussions with her peers and supervisors extensively in order to process casework material, but that later in the year *I just learned to self-regulate which was discussing a bit with an intern but mostly with the supervisor*. Furthermore, she noted that once in independent practice, she still often remembered *something that my supervisor might have told me that was like so useful; I can't imagine that this comment she made then I'm remembering it now ... or something that might have been said in peer supervision ... I think they complemented each other well*. Thus, the speech sources for possible internalisation, and the difference in the types of discussion in ISV and PSG, may broaden the opportunities for both external processing of material as well as the internalisation of the products and processes of such interactions.

In contrast, the limited ability of interns to respond to RFA's of types (ii) and (iii) might well be the result of little discussion of this nature in ISV. Thus interns would have had little exposure to discussion of transferential notions and the therapist's personal reactions to material, leading to little opportunity to internalise such ideas and means of exploration for use in PSG.

The third point is linked to the other two: that the process of internalisation results in and can change reflections on one's activities, enhancing the individual's ability to gain mastery and control. Moll (1990) identifies Vygotsky's emphasis on the social organisation of instruction as leading to "the development of conscious awareness and voluntary control of knowledge" (p.9). This is evidenced in the above excerpts where the intern reflects on improved self-regulation and understanding of her work as a result of the discussions in which she engaged, thus increasing

her ability to act autonomously. Wertsch (1985a) reflects that “one would expect that the regulative speech found on the intrapsychological plane should reflect the inherent dialogicality of that found on the interpsychological plane” (p.113). This notion will be explored further in 5.4.

A fourth point is rather speculative. Wertsch (1985a) noted: "because the external processes from which the internal ones derive are necessarily social, internal processes reflect certain aspects of social structuring" (p.66). This led to my wondering about the nature of the inner speech which resulted from both forms of supervision. There is no doubt that, having experienced both ISV and PSG, there would be a broader base of potential contributions to the inner speech of the eventual self-supervision in which practitioners engage. Reports from practitioners about the nature of their ‘supervisory’ inner speech would make for an interesting study, given Vygotsky's (1962) hypothesis that inner speech is quasi-social in nature, both in terms of its structure and content.

5.2.4 The dialogical nature of speech

Lacan states that “no knowledge ... can be supported or transported by one alone” (*Scilicet*, 59, in Felman, 1987). The above section has already alluded to the inherent dialogical nature of speech, which will impact on the structure of internalised speech. Wertsch (1985a) states “in a Vygotskian approach structural properties of interpsychological functioning, such as its dialogical, question-answer organization, are part of the resulting internal, intrapsychological plane of functioning” (p.65).

In this subsection, I would like to consider certain issues related to the nature of the interpersonal dialogue noted in the supervision events transcribed. Vygotsky drew from the linguistic theorising of the time, and did not develop research which considered dialogue per se, thus I will be drawing from neo-Vygotskian and other sources for parts of this discussion. One of the key limitations of Vygotsky's theorising was his focus on the word as a unit of analysis, whereas later linguists have focused on the sentence. Bakhtin (1986) prefers the term 'utterance', which is for him "the *real unit* of speech communication" (p.71, italics in original), the boundaries of which "are determined by ... a change of speakers" (p.71).

Vygotsky (1962) makes the statement: "Every sentence we say in real life has some kind of subtext, a thought hidden behind it" (p.149). Thus behind every utterance spoken, there is a thought, and in a dialogue, the partners need to find some common ground for understanding the other's utterance to be able to respond, for the dialogical process to proceed smoothly, in a reciprocal way, based on shared understandings.

In Vygotsky's approach, language was seen to be the most important psychological tool, and he writes of the functional diversity of speech. One of the functions of language is that it is used first as "a means of influencing others, and only later becomes a means of influencing oneself" (Vygotsky, 1981, in Wertsch, 1985a, p.81).

Vygotsky (1962), drawing from the work of Yakubinskii, distinguished dialogic from monologic speech. He considers the speed and chain of reactions in dialogue, which "does not leave time for deliberation and choice" (p.144), to be disadvantageous with regard to allowing for time for reflection, since such dialogue "implies immediate unpremeditated utterance" (p.144). Monologue, on the other hand, is seen to be a more complicated form, during which "the linguistic elaboration can be attended to leisurely and consciously" (p.144). Yakubinskii (1923, in Wertsch, 1985a) distinguishes between the two forms of speech not according to the number of individuals involved (in all forms it is implied that the speaker addresses a listener), but rather as follows:

the dialogic form involves "a relatively rapid succession of actions and reactions by the interlocutors", whereas the monologic form is characterised by "*protracted* or *drawn out* forms of influence in social interaction" (p.86, italics in original). Thus "what distinguishes the two speech forms is the degree to which both parties participate in a concrete speech setting to create a text" (Wertsch, 1985a, p.86).

The questions of the degree to which participants contribute to the 'creation of text', and the degree of influence one participant has over another (implicit in certain of the comments in 5.2.1 and 5.2.3), have relevance to ISV and PSG. In ISV, the differential status of supervisor and intern immediately accords the supervisor with influential power, and privileges the supervisor's 'voice'. This is reflected in the supervisor generally directing the process of the interaction, being seen

as a source of advice, feeling able to interrupt a monologic presentation, and providing direction in casework. This places the intern in a role which is dependent on the supervisor for initiation and the directing of the dialogue, and although there are times when a well conceived question or clarification might enable the intern to shift his thinking, his role (as subordinate) also constrains the intern in terms of using the dialogic interaction as he needs. Furthermore, the status differential mitigates against the intern challenging the supervisor's perspective, or questioning the directives or arguing for a different approach, even though some interns report that they disregarded the supervisor's advice afterwards. Billig (1987) takes a rhetorical perspective and asserts that argument is inevitable when engaging in dialogue. Whilst there is evidence of argument in PSG, there is less evidence of it in ISV. However, the report of some interns of disregarding supervisors' advice indicates that argument is present, though not clearly evident in the session.

The speed of the dialogic interactions in ISV may not promote the kind of thinking which the supervisor is striving to influence, and may leave the intern feeling confused. In the examples of ISV reported to be helpful, the supervisors concerned seemed to leave more time for the intern to reflect, and also modelled a reflective style in their own speaking. One of the contributors to supervisory style may thus be the supervisor's understanding of the learning process. If this is perceived as being an expert influencing the trainee, it is less likely that the dialogic interactions will be enabling of the intern's own thinking, as in a more collaborative approach (as mentioned in 4.7.2 transmitting or constructing meanings).

Wertsch (1991) refers to the distinction Bakhtin makes between 'authoritative' and 'internally persuasive' discourse: "The authoritative word demands that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it binds us, quite independent of any power it might have to persuade us internally" (Bakhtin, 1981, in Wertsch, 1991, p.78). This indicates the inhibitory effect of the authoritative voice, more 'univocal' than other voices, allowing "no interanimation with other voices" (Wertsch, 1991, p.78), and leading to it being subject to transmission modes rather than meanings being negotiated. It is contrasted internally persuasive discourse in which the "word is half-ours and half-someone else's" (Bakhtin, 1981, in Wertsch, 1991, p.79), enabling re-organisation, awakening new words, dynamic in form, leading to openness, "this discourse is able to reveal

ever new ways to mean” (Bakhtin, 1981, in Wertsch, 1991, p.79, italics in original). These ideas have relevance to the discussion of the potential differences between the discourses in PSG and ISV noted above.

Edwards and Mercer (1987), in their book, *Common Knowledge*, suggest that educators' communications have a strongly influential role over the construction of knowledge of learners, because they elicit and cue certain responses, 'mark' others as significant, as well as reconstruct and paraphrase. Thus learners learn to 'read' these and respond accordingly. Edwards and Mercer (1987) express concern that these procedures may become ritualised in learners through the schooling process, and caution that this might lead to procedural rather than deeper forms of understanding. The process thus establishes "shared mental 'contexts', joint understandings" (Edwards and Mercer, 1987, p.69) which enable the engagement in the discourse of schooling. Such considerations related to the established rituals and routines of ISV need consideration, since there is evidence that some of the participants' experiences of ISV do not lead to deepened understandings for them.

An example of the rituals and routines of interactions is found in one ISV, where the intern herself speeds up the interactions, by finishing the sentences of the supervisor, possibly leading to the supervisor cutting some of his comments short. This interpersonal style may imply a close following of the interaction, but may also have the potential of foreclosing on possible reflection for the intern in question, thus inhibiting the making of links between the dialogue and experience. This highlights the joint participation in the construction of dialogue, since both participants will influence its unfolding, and interns' many previous educational and social interactions will no doubt have contributed to certain roles and responses.

In PSG, there are a number of differences in the forms of monologue and dialogue in comparison to ISV, potentially affecting the content of interactions. Firstly, the participants are all regarded as equals, thus potentially fulfilling what Billig (1987) terms an "image of communicative rationality ... in which rhetoric is used to share thoughts, rather than to impose persuasion" (p.16). This impacted on increasing interns' willingness to contribute to discussions (in comparison to remaining quiet in other contexts). Hearing others contributing to the PSG discussion was also

encouraging of participation, for example: *People ... going through the same experience as you are, have advice to give, ... so the next time that you're not presenting you have something to say to the other person that can be of value* (INT7). However, towards the end of the PSG process, more dominant voices were gaining ground in the discussions, and others were quieter than in earlier sessions, thus it is possible that there were shifts in the influence of some over others in the group, with a particular ordering of discourse emerging.

The value of the first phase of PSG as essentially monologic, was first mentioned in 5.2.1: the presenter relates case details without interruption. A further reason for it being mentioned as helpful by one of the interns was that she noted the quality of her peers' listening, and valued the fact that she would not be interrupted. Although this phase might be referred to as a monologue, the presenter presents with the audience in mind - thus there is always a sense of who is being addressed. This contributed to certain differences in levels of formality of presentation in comparison with ISV, with a more relaxed approach being evident in PSG. One of the interns reflected that she had prepared her presentation bearing in mind the sorts of questions her peers might ask, and ascribed the limited number of questions in the second phase of PSG9 to this.

The strategy of the presenter listening only to the discussion phase was also mentioned in 5.2.1 above, but has relevance here too, where the dialogue could be attended to in the more leisurely and conscious way that Vygotsky (1962) refers to when one is listening to a monologue. Then, because of the equal status of peers, there is also greater potential for argumentation in PSG, both between peers in the discussion and from presenter to the group in the final response section. Edwards and Mercer (1987) note that the

expression of stance and counter-stance is ... a negotiative depiction of education, a rhetorical, argumentative meeting of minds in which what is 'known' is merely what is claimed by somebody: it is open to scrutiny ... a social process ... of sharing, comparing, contrasting and arguing one's perspectives against those of others (p.164).

The PSG structure would seem to have more potential to promote such an approach to learning, since the structure provides for open argumentation without any status differential between participants, or any links to formal evaluation, (and there was more evidence of argumentation and opinion-giving in PSG compared to ISV - see graphs in figure 4.3). The PSG structure was

designed to exclude the presenter from argument during the discussion (as a strategy to enhance the listening to peers' opinions and arguments), but there was opportunity for rebuttal in the fourth phase, which a number of the presenters utilised to contribute their own opinions and arguments.

In *Thinking and Speech*, Vygotsky (1962) gives examples of ways that dialogue may be abbreviated by participants when there is a good degree of shared understanding. It may also be, however, that abbreviation occurs in a dialogue where there is insufficient shared understanding. This raises the question: how much is speech between participants abbreviated, perhaps not explicit enough? This would inhibit the clarification of meaning and establishment of understanding. In ISV, it would appear that some degree of misunderstanding occurs when a supervisor presumes that the intern understands implicit references to theory, and the intern does not feel able to ask for clarification. Also, there is the potential for misunderstanding when the supervisor asks questions, the intentions of which are not understood by the intern.

In the PSG, since the presenter does not directly engage in the discussion, the explanations given by peers tend to be more explicit - more like the extended nature of a monologue than in the abbreviations that may occur in dialogue. The more explicit nature of the input may also be ascribed to the peers being nearer to the experience of the presenter and thus more able to identify the level of explanation needed. Consideration of the above distinctions between PSG and ISV highlight the wider variety of interactions possible when both ISV and PSG are used, and this will have an impact on the variety of 'voices' available to the intern to internalise as inner speech.

Whilst it was not part of this research project to engage in the close-grained analyses of conversational or discourse analysis, there are certain features within the dialogues which I would like to mention. The first relates to Bakhtin's (1986) concepts of 'voice' and 'evaluative accents' within utterances. Vygotsky (1962) notes that "to understand another's speech, it is not sufficient to understand his words - we must also understand his thought. But even that is not enough - we must also know its motivation" (p.151).

Bakhtin (1986) draws attention to the multivoicedness of many utterances since they are constructed from inner speech which has had many contributors (from parents, educators, peers, among others). He draws attention to the potential for 'ventriloquation' of the voices of others in individuals' utterances, since inner speech of different types may draw from a heterogeneity of sources (Wertsch, 1991). In PSG, presenters are required to formulate their own questions (perhaps mimicking the convention in some ISV's of the supervisor asking the intern what their question might be), and then peers strive to formulate solutions in their discussion, thus also taking on the supervisor's role from ISV. This might lead to 'ventriloquating' of internalised models of supervisor voices at times (as referred to in the quotation in 5.2.3).

The term 'ventriloquation' led to my speculating about the voices of authority often embedded in supervisors' comments, and also evident in a more subtle way in some of the peers utterances in the PSG's (for example in PSG7 where there was a discussion about engaging in play therapy without an assessment). In ISV, interns are also aware at a certain level that their supervisors are evaluating them, and this is likely to have an inhibitory effect on the dialogues, since their utterances have the potential to be valued as "true or false, good or bad" (Moro, 1999, p.169).

It is possible that the interns may give greater weight to their own opinions in PSG, since the reduced sense of evaluation might lead to them venturing opinions more, and trying out their ideas. Moro (1999) refers to the way in which individualisation "is achieved through mediation and tool usage. The most powerful mediational means are manifested in the process of making one's own 'ways with words' ... or making one's 'voice'" (p.166). PSG thus offers greater opportunity for the interns to turn thoughts into words without as much concern for criticism from authority voices.

A further notable feature is the style of utterance employed particularly by one of the interns, which seems to be more casual than many of the others' in ISV, incorporating slang expressions into the presentation. Also, the supervisor in question responds in a playful manner, reflecting back some of the terminology, and also engaging in the use of some of the metaphors which the intern had offered in the descriptions. This seems to lead to a rich interchange of ideas, and to deepened understanding for the intern. This demonstrates the potential use of visual imagery in

metaphors as powerful signs within dialogue, possibly enabling new links between associations. Thus ISV10 offers rich examples of the potentials for engagement between supervisor and intern when there is a strong mutual commitment to a dialogue where there seems to be a greater level of shared meanings established than in the other ISV's transcribed.

To conclude this section, John-Steiner and Soubelman (1978), in the 'afterword' to *Mind in Society*, state that Vygotsky "presents a sophisticated argument demonstrating that language, the very means by which reflection and elaboration take place, is a highly personal and at the same time a profoundly social human process" (p.126). Also, Mercer (1994) notes that "talk is not simply 'thinking out loud'.... to talk, ... is to *engage in a social mode of thinking*" (p.95, italics in original). Thus speaking and thinking, thinking and speaking are both social and individual, in continual interaction, and reflective of the historical and contextual influences embedded within such interactions. The importance of speaking in the development of thinking has been emphasised in this section, and the potential role of PSG and ISV in the clarification and deepening of conceptual understanding of interns has been traced. The supervisory interactions reported in this dissertation are highly complex, multi-layered interactions, and this is richly reflected in the language of the text and the nature of the interactions, which are mediated by both the 'other' in PSG or ISV as well as by the structure of the two forms of supervision.

5.3 THE ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

In the introduction to this chapter, the concept of mediation was highlighted as central to Vygotsky's work. It also emerges as one of the important findings in this study: the role of mediation is embedded in the emergent themes 'learning as transmitting or collaborative construction' (4.7.2) and 'making the implicit more explicit' (4.7.5). The work of Minick (1987, in Moll, 1990) identified three phases in Vygotsky's work: the first emphasising "sign-mediated activity"; the second focusing on the "development of interfunctional psychological systems", especially thinking and speech; and the third "highlighted the importance of situating individuals within specific social systems of interactions" (p.3). The zone of proximal development (ZPD), with its emphasis on the means of mediation, emerged from the third phase, shortly before Vygotsky's death (Moll, 1990).

Vygotsky (1962) wrote: "(t)he discrepancy between a child's actual mental age and the level he reaches in solving problems with assistance indicates the zone of proximal development" (p.103). Thus a learner is able to reach a certain level of problem solving independently, but with assistance may attain a higher level. The gap between these two levels of attainment is the ZPD. This concept highlights the importance of learning with assistance, thus locating learning firmly within social and culturally constructed contexts, and is a significant shift from the notion of learners as isolated individuals, succeeding or failing on their own. With this concept, Vygotsky thus distinguishes between actual and potential levels of development, and Mercer (1994) states that these "are never just a reflection of an individual's cognitive potential and learning strategies, but are always also a measure of the strength of the cultural framework which supports that learning" (p.103).

Hillerbrand (1989) draws attention to Vygotsky's model of the facilitation of skill acquisition in novices. This work was taken further by a number of Vygotsky's colleagues (e.g. Luria, 1976, in Cole, 1985); and in the work investigating various examples of expert to novice teaching: such as in the traditional teaching of weaving in Mexico, and mothers teaching language (Greenfield, 1984); and comparative work of mothers and teachers undertaking the teaching of problem solving (Wertsch, Minick, and Arns, 1984). Whilst many studies have focussed on the role of the expert in providing assistance, Vygotsky (1978) notes that assistance in the ZPD may be "*through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers*" (p.86, italics in original). This raises the important question of who provides the assistance - should it be the expert, or are peers able to assist? Hillerbrand (1989) cites research which shows that "thinking aloud by novices, about their cognitive processes, has considerable advantages over thinking aloud by experts" (p.294), because experts are "poor reporters of their cognitive processes" (p.294). Furthermore, the language of novices is more understandable to their peers (Hillerbrand, 1989). These two features seem to be supported by the findings of this study (as reported in 5.2 above).

Vygotsky (1962) noted that for children,

imitation and instruction play a major role.... the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it, it must be aimed not so much at the

ripe as at the ripening functions ... necessary to determine the lowest threshold at which instruction ... may begin ... But we must consider the upper threshold as well ... (p.104). The implication of this is that, in providing the appropriate level of assistance, it is necessary for the facilitator to identify the learner's current level of understanding and problem-solving, and then to provide assistance, which may be of various kinds, such as modelling or instruction, to enable the learner to progress in understanding and competence. The input must also not be pitched at too high a level, too far ahead of the learner's current level of understanding.

Thus the challenge in supervision is to provide assistance at the appropriate level. It is possible that ascertaining the level of assistance required may be a challenge for supervisors because of the difference in their experience level, compared to that of the trainee, and the potential for trainees not to be open about their levels of (mis)understanding for fear of evaluation. In contrast, some of the trainees reported that they had received support but hadn't been stretched or enabled to deepen their understandings in ISV, or that the theorising in ISV didn't 'connect' with their experiences of their clients, and therefore was not useful. This highlights the complexity of providing assistance which both supports and challenges appropriately.

PSG on the other hand, given the 'experience near' context of the peers' work, provides a context in which peers are more easily able to 'connect' with the presenter's level of understanding, and are thus better able to provide assistance which is more explicit about 'step-by-step' processes and may be experienced as more practical (as noted in the focus group discussion). John-Steiner and Soubberman (1978) note that the "formation of new functional learning systems includes a process akin to that of nourishment in body growth, wherein at any particular time certain nutrients are digested and assimilated while others are rejected ..." (p.125). This underlines the importance of providing assistance which is matched to the interns' needs.

A further value of PSG related to movement through the ZPD for learners is identified by Bruffee (1993):

(I)n a heterogenous group that includes diverse experience, talent and ability, people's 'zones of proximal development' overlap. The distance between what the group as a whole already knows and what its members as a whole can't make sense of ... - the area

of what as a whole they can learn next - is likely to be fairly broad. As a result, I may be ready to understand a good deal more as a member of a working group than I would be ready to understand by myself alone (p.39).

The facilitation of progress through the ZPD has had attention from a variety of educationalists. Tudge (1992) noted that "the zone is not some clear-cut space that exists independently of the process of joint activity itself ... something that is *created* in the course of social interaction" (p.1365). This is based on Vygotsky's (1978) assertion that a

variety of internal developmental processes ... are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement (p.90).

This highlights the importance of the social in internalisation (as discussed in 5.2.3), and more particularly the role of facilitation in the shift from socially mediated to independent action.

Gallimore and Tharp (1990) propose that the process moves in stages from social regulation of activity through to self-regulation, "from assisted performance to unassisted self-regulated performance" (p.184) in a gradual way. This appears to be reflected the findings of this study: that there need to be shifts from providing support earlier in the year, through to encouraging autonomous performance at later stages.

The notion of the provision of various forms of support is also inherent in the process of 'scaffolding' first proposed by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976, in Mercer, 1994). Whilst the concept of scaffolding was first proposed as a type of assistance to enable successful problem-solving, Mercer (1994) believes that the term scaffolding has utility more broadly as "an effective conceptual metaphor for the quality of teacher intervention in learning" (p.96). This will be explored in more detail in the two subsections which follow: both the means of providing assistance and the role of collaboration in learning are explored.

5.3.1 Means of providing assistance

Vygotsky (1962) identified certain specific ways in which educators may effectively offer assistance: "the teacher, working with the pupil, has explained, supplied information, questioned, corrected, and made the pupil explain" (p.107). Assistance which is timeously provided, and matches the level of the learner, may promote more mature problem-solving: "The adult's help, invisibly present, enables the child to solve such problems earlier than everyday problems" (p.107).

Gallimore and Tharp (1990) expand on Vygotsky's (1962) specification of the various ways in which educators may provide assistance to the learner by drawing from the broader literature developed in both American and British educational psychology. They identify six 'means of assisting performance': "*modeling, contingency managing, feeding back, instructing, questioning, and cognitive structuring*" (p.177, italics in original). Each of these is summarised in the table below.

Following the table, I discuss each of these 'means of providing assistance' in relation to my findings in the comparison of PSG to ISV described in section 4.5 and the associated graphs in figure 4.3.

Table 5.1 Means of assisting performance (summarised from text of Gallimore and Tharp, 1990, pp 177-183, italics in original).

Modelling: The process of offering behaviour for imitation. A powerful means of assisting performance, both in childhood and extending into adulthood, which can extend to very complex behaviours. In education, both educators and peers may be modelled.

Contingency management: Assisting performance by arranging rewards and punishments to follow behaviour depending on whether the behaviour is desired or not. Used to bulwark gains already made, but will not lead to new behaviours.

Feeding back: A powerful means of assistance which may be internalised as self-assistance. Most effective when standards have been set and procedures for comparison are established. Consistency and proximity in time are important variables.

Instructing: The most ubiquitous means of assistance. Most common in education when tasks are assigned or discipline is imposed. More rarely used to assist in the performance of the next step in progressing through the ZPD. The instructing voice has the potential to become internalised as self-instruction.

Questioning: A valuable means because it evokes mental and verbal activation in learners. Enables educators to assist and regulate the linking of concepts and use of logic. The *assessment question* inquires to discover current level of understanding, the *assistance question* inquires in order to produce a mental operation that the learner may not produce alone.

Cognitive structuring: The provision of a structure for thinking and acting. Structures of explanation assist in organising perception, evaluation, grouping and sequencing of both old and new information. Structures for cognitive activity assist with metacognitive strategies e.g. memorisation and recall, identification of principles.

Gallimore and Tharp (1990) emphasise that the above means of assistance seldom exist in isolation, but are interdependent. They also state that the utility of the various means will be determined by the individualisation of these according to the exigencies of the moment and the learners' needs. Edwards and Mercer (1987) note that instructions and questions are frequently used methods in teaching, however it is the way in which they are used which is most influential on learners' responses. Their major critique of educators in classroom discourse is that their instructing and questioning is mainly determined by their own implicit "associations of thought and frames of reference" (p.30), and in order to maintain control in the classroom. Thus learners spend time guessing what the educator is intending, and the discourse is not aimed at learners' frames of reference: learners have very little opportunity "for asking their own questions, to formulate hypotheses, or to make intelligent responses other than those predetermined" (p.30) by the educator.

With reference to the study described in this dissertation, the interactions of ISV have advantages over the classroom discourse studied by Edwards and Mercer (1987) and Gallimore and Tharp (1990), in that they are of a one-to-one nature, and the PSG is a small group very different in function to an average class. In section 4.5 and the associated graphs in figure 4.3, I attempted to use a system for categorising the utterances of supervisors in ISV, and the utterances during the discussion period of PSG. Whilst the categories used for the graphs constructed are not identical to those suggested in the above table, some of the findings related to the graphs have relevance to Gallimore and Tharp's (1990) proposal of the above means of providing assistance.

Firstly, **modelling** is identified as "a powerful means of assisting performance" and as the major means by which "traditional and pretechnological cultures teach their offspring ... rather than through a verbal emphasis" (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990, p.179). Consideration of the graphs in figure 4.3 shows that there are few examples of explicit modelling, with slightly more evidence of it in two PSG's compared to its use in only one ISV. Thus, this would appear to be a form of assistance under-utilised in both forms of supervision.

It must, however, be acknowledged that the findings are based on verbal data where nonverbal communication has not incorporated due to the limitations of the audio recordings used. Furthermore, there is a great deal of implicit modelling in both forms of discussion, since there are similarities between aspects of the supervisory interchanges and the basic counselling skills which trainees are developing. Therefore, a question which might be asked of the data is: what form of modelling is implicit in ISV and PSG? Whilst this was not an explicit part of the research endeavour, certain comments in this regard are made in the following two paragraphs.

In ISV, the lack of explicit stating of the aims of questions and purposes of particular trains of thought expressed by supervisors means that trainees are not having a transparent form of construction of dialogue modelled, since the intentions of supervisors, in asking the questions or in probing in a particular way, are not made clear. I believe that greater explanation of these would be helpful in order to explicate the thought processes or concerns prompting the supervisors' lines of questioning, for possible use by interns (both to inform their developing 'internal supervisor' and to model a process which might be a helpful counselling microskill).

Clarificatory statements (a microskill) are, however, used to a much greater extent in ISV compared to PSG. There are also some examples of the supervisor being able to enable the trainee to deepen understanding through using other microskills, such as reflection (most evident in ISV10).

In the PSG's, overall, there was a greater extent of argumentation in the discussions, possibly modelling the potential for dialectical exchanges about potential strategies, a characteristic of a more open-ended and less deterministic approach to psychotherapy. The convention, in the PSG discussion, of the participants taking the perspective of the presenter, is likely to be more conducive to providing an empathic stance than the approach of the supervisors experienced by trainees in much of their ISV, (though an empathic, presenter-centred approach is not as much in evidence in PSG10 as in the other PSG's).

Secondly, with reference to **contingency management**, there is little explicit evidence of this in either form of supervision. In its positive form, this would be evident in the 'encouragement' category in 4.5. In two of the ISV's, there are a few statements of encouragement, whereas there are no explicit encouragement statements in PSG. However, trainees commented on finding the form of PSG encouraging and supportive, and drew encouragement in hearing peers grappling with similar issues to their own. In ISV, given its implicit evaluative nature, there is the potential of certain aspects, such as critical comments, to be experienced as negative, particularly since there is no evidence of evaluation being made explicit. A common complaint from interns more generally was the lack of feedback from ISV.

The third category, **feeding back**, is thus also an under-utilised form of assistance. Whilst there is a little evidence of it in each ISV, trainees desired a greater measure of accurate and specific feedback, rather than the relatively vague examples evident in the transcripts (this was also noted as a feature of the needs of advanced students by Ronnestad and Skovolt, 1993, in their research). It is possible that the form of the PSG discussion gives a type of feedback which participants reported to have experienced as positive. This is evident in phase four of each PSG, where the trainee comments on the relevance or otherwise of peers' input, which either confirms the

strategies they have considered or responds to new ideas. This indicates that they have experienced aspects of their peers' comments as feedback.

Although Gallimore and Tharp (1990) identify their fourth category, **instructing**, as the most ubiquitous form of assistance "in ordinary life" (p.181), consideration of the equivalent, 'information giving' in 4.5, does not illustrate this in the PSG and ISV sessions transcribed. There is generally more information giving in ISV, but more opinion-giving and argumentation in PSG. This indicates the less authoritative nature of PSG, perhaps peers are less inclined to strive to influence the process than might be the case in ISV. With regard to instructing, Bruner (1985) writes of its value, once the learner has already mastered the task at hand, in that the task is then represented in words, enabling the learner to internalise general principles related to the task. It is possible that the 'step-by-step' nature of the peers' accounts of strategies might provide such scaffolding. These internalised structures may then be evoked when similar tasks are encountered, enabling future task analysis.

The fifth category, **questioning**, is the most frequent of the utterances in both ISV and PSG. Holloway (1995) states that the "very act of asking questions, ... ultimately uncovers meaning and is critical in developing an epistemology of practice" (p.8). Thus, questioning has the potential to be helpful in developing understanding in the person being questioned. However, questioning is a very common form of educator statement in schools and Scribner and Cole (1981) "speculate that asking questions ... may be a major part of what school teaches" (in Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.107). Questioning has the potential to be anxiety-provoking, since educators may use it in a way that strives to uncover what the learner does not know, rather than it being a way of uncovering meaning as Holloway (1995) describes it above.

Wertsch (1991) distinguishes between 'instructional' questions and 'information-seeking' questions. In the former, the teachers know the answer themselves and are striving to prompt the learner to discover the answer, whereas in the latter, the teacher does not know the answer. He goes on to propose a third type of instructional question, which he terms a 'test the waters' question, in which the teacher strives to establish whether the learner is ready to move on in the ZPD.

In the context of this study, the form of questioning in PSG differs in nature from ISV in that it is more content-related (thus 'information seeking') and does not display the evaluative characteristics of some of the ISV questioning (which appear to be more 'instructional'). I wondered about the over-use of questioning in ISV, that at times it may feel like interrogation of the intern. It may also be that certain questions in ISV are intended more as directives (Wertsch, 1991). There is the potential for questioning in ISV to be more like the third type identified by Wertsch (1991), however there is only evidence of this type in ISV10.

The final category, **cognitive structuring**, does not have an equivalent in the categories used to draw up the graphs in figure 4.3. However 'problem-formulation' and 'clarification' may have some commonalities with this category. There is evidence of a greater use of both in ISV, signalling the potential of ISV to promote cognitive organisation and structuring of material. In ISV7, there are examples of the supervisor encouraging the intern to engage in forward thinking related to casework decisions made; and in ISV10, the supervisor enables the intern to re-frame her role and empathise more with the client; and to draw from the experiences with the client and link these to a formulation of the case. Ronnestad and Skovolt (1993) comment on the importance of methods of 'clarification' at all levels of training. There is little evidence of such statements in PSG since peers are less likely than supervisors to take on instructional roles.

The above analysis demonstrates ways in which ISV and PSG are both similar and different, and the ways in which, although there may be similarities in the categories of utterances, there are nevertheless qualitative differences. This indicates the limitations of considering speech events in isolation, since this may be reductionistic. The complexities of the interactions between the means of providing assistance are reflective of "the complex interfunctional processes that characterize actual psychological activity" (Wertsch, 1985a, p.185).

Edwards and Mercer (1987) and Gallimore and Tharp (1990) cite extensive research data from schools, which show that educational discourse seldom illustrates conversational exchanges between educator and learner(s) characterised by many of the above features of assisting performance. The above discussion shows that in the supervision events studied, there is a prevalence of questioning over the other possible forms of assisting performance. Consideration

of the other categories of assistance may indicate other potential means which could be used to a greater extent in ISV: particularly feeding back, identified as a "powerful means of assistance" (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990, p.180), and cognitive structuring which may assist in providing the links between the 'declarative' and 'procedural' forms of knowledge proposed by Hillerbrand (1989) (see section 2.7.6).

Gallimore and Tharp (1990) propose that the features of what they term *Instructional Conversation* (p.196, italics in original), such as those used by middle-class parents when 'teaching' or by crafters when instructing novices, be integrated into more formal educational settings. They note that 'instruction' implies authority and planning whilst 'conversation' implies equality and responsiveness, thus the two seem paradoxical, but drawing from their earlier work, they assert that "to most truly teach, one must converse; to truly converse is to teach" (1988, in 1990, p.196). It is the 'conversing' which many educators omit, because this assumes that learners have something to say, requires careful listening, a willingness to explore intended meanings, and responsive adjustments to assist the learner (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990, p.197).

It seems that this suggestion could be extended further in individual supervision, where the opportunities for establishing shared meanings and building on the current level of the trainee are far greater than in group or classroom settings. A key issue to be considered seems to be that of the asymmetry of power between supervisor and trainee, making problematic "one of the major goals of education - the eventual 'handover' of control over knowledge and learning" (Edwards and Mercer, 1987, p.161) from educator to learner, leading to greater learner autonomy. PSG seems to have potentials in conjunction with ISV in this regard, since one of the themes identified as emergent in the findings of the study in this dissertation is the move from supervisor authority to intern autonomy (4.7.4), a key goal of movement through the ZPD, identified by Vygotsky "to describe this shifting control within activities" (Cole, 1985, p.155). Thus, the shift from regulation of activities with assistance from others to self-regulation should be one of the core purposes and aims of supervision, and consideration of the various ways of assisting performance discussed in this sub-section may provide the tools by which this is achieved.

5.3.2 Collaboration

In the first part of this section on the ZPD, Vygotsky's (1978) assertion that assistance may be provided by "collaboration with more capable peers" (p.86) introduced the notion of collaboration. The above discussion and the suggestion of consideration of the notion 'instructional conversations' implies an approach to learning as a participatory process, where mutual contributions to the dialogue and cooperative activities characterise the development of understanding. The lack of "recognition among educators of this social process, of the many ways in which an experienced learner can share knowledge with a less advanced learner, limits the intellectual development of many students, their capabilities are viewed as biologically determined rather than socially facilitated" (John-Steiner and Soubberman, 1978, p.126). In traditional learning contexts, silence in learners is preferred, and the notion of peer co-operation is limited, leading to competition between rather than collaboration.

Hillerbrand (1989) refers to a number of the advantages of collaborative learning:

- the trainee's verbalization of cognitive processes to peers;
- the use of language which is more understandable to peers;
- the fostering of cognitive rehearsal;
- the ability of equals to decode nonverbal cues in their peers which indicate confusion;
- increased motivation to acquire and use skills demonstrated by peers;
- and increased perceptions of self-efficacy.

The PSG interactions in this study seem to demonstrate these features. Much research in the field of collaborative activity has, however, been related to more experienced learners assisting less experienced learners; and there has tended to be mostly positive support for this form of peer collaboration in the literature. In the PSG, however, there is a greater measure of equality between peers than is common in studies of peer tutoring or mentoring.

When there is an experiential difference between peers, the question of the influence of the peer collaboration on the more experienced learner has not necessarily been fully considered. Rogoff (1990) comments that in the peer-tutoring literature there seems to be "at least as much benefit for the tutor ... Skilled partners gain an understanding not only of the topic, but also of the

process of communication" (p. 205). Tudge (1990), however, conducted intricate studies into this issue when children were engaged in peer collaboration, and demonstrated the potential for regression, not only progress, in the more competent partners when engaged in collaboration. Tudge's (1990) findings led to suggestions for successful collaborative work: the need for it to be carefully structured, and to take into consideration peers' levels of competence. Furthermore, Tudge (1990) noted that participants' motivation is an important variable, and that there is the need for feedback to be built into the process.

Consideration of PSG in the light of the above suggestions for successful collaboration indicates the following: the process was carefully structured, and the participants were already at a level of competence where they were functioning independently to a certain extent. With regard to motivation, the trainees spoke of their commitment to the PSG process, as evidenced by their regular attendance. There were also references to the PSG in ISV sessions, with supervisors asking about PSG suggestions - thus there is the potential for some feedback to occur, in the event of trainees speaking about their experience of PSG in ISV. Also, there will be a form of feedback from client responses to PSG suggestions tried out in the casework, but reporting back on these has not been built in to the PSG structure. After the ten PSG sessions, it was suggested, during the focus group discussion, that opportunity for such feedback on presenters' progress in the ten cases already presented be made, and the group met at a later stage to engage in this.

With regard to the 'more skilled' peers' experiences, it does appear that the trainees perceived as more competent (by their peers), did not benefit as much from the suggestions in PSG than others reported to have benefited. PSG's 9 and 10, in which two of the trainees perceived as more competent by their peers presented, were both more problematic processes, partly due to the nature of the casework problems presented, but also due to problems in the discussion phase, with fewer peers participating and the dialogue not flowing smoothly. This does seem to indicate that more competent trainees may not benefit as much from peer suggestions, and will need individual supervisors who are able to challenge them, and be responsive to their particular needs. Nevertheless, the trainees who presented in PSG's 9 and 10 reported some benefits from PSG, related to doing the presentations (thus 'hearing' themselves argue for their approach) as

well as their arguing of their perspectives in other PSG discussions, supporting Rogoff's (1990) comments above.

Bruffee (1993) defines collaborative learning as "a reacculturative process that helps students become members of knowledge communities whose common property is different from the common property of the knowledge communities they already belong to" (p. 3). This understanding of the value of collaborative learning would appear to make links to the earlier discussion regarding spontaneous and schooled concepts (5.2.2), and has relevance to the flow diagram in figure 4.4 in which professional language was separate from personal competencies before the internship experience, but these are shown as integrated as an outcome of the internship. The PSG would play an important role in enabling such a process to take place.

The above comments highlight the active nature of the learner in a collaborative approach, (although even in 'transmission' modes of learning, Vygotsky would assert that the learner is active in internalising aspects of the speech events). In PSG, the presenter makes decisions about the nature of the presentation, formulates and seeks answers to his own questions. Peer discussion is then used as a resource to confirm, supplement and/or shift the presenter's thinking, and there is opportunity to talk through new ideas. In ISV, decisions about the content of the sessions are determined by both the trainee and supervisor, with variations in the degree of direction from each between one supervisor and the next. However, the supervisor seems to have a far greater influence over the questions to be asked, related to the case, and seems to have more power to determine the changing foci of the discussion. On the whole there seem to be fewer features of collaboration evident in ISV, with the supervisor being placed in a position to provide answers. There is little evidence of supervisors reporting on their thinking processes related to the suggestions given, which diminishes the opportunity for the trainee to be exposed to the metacognitive processes of the 'expert'. Furthermore, trainees do not necessarily stop to clarify their understandings or challenge the views of the supervisor.

John-Steiner and Souberman (1978) note that "...Vygotsky rejects the concept of linear development and incorporates into his conceptualization both evolutionary and revolutionary change. The recognition of these two interrelated forms of development is for him a necessary

component of scientific thought" (p.122). It would appear that the combination of ISV and PSG offers a greater number of opportunities for trainees to be assisted in their zones of proximal development: since there are the potentials for participants to both add to current levels of understanding, and to incorporate new possibilities into their repertoires for understanding the processes of psychotherapy, through expanded exposure to social activities in the two forms of supervision, in which these issues are debated. This discussion also highlights individual's levels of development as reflective of the sociocultural frameworks which have been supportive or constraining of the individual's learning, rather than as solely reflective of individual capacities.

5.4 THE SUBJECTIVE NATURE OF LEARNING

In the diagrammatic representation of results in figure 4.4, the sense of self efficacy which is linked to the subjective experience of trainees was proposed as a central theme. The concept of subjective experience is broad, with contributions from a variety of perspectives and disciplines. The focus in this sub-section will be on the subjective experience of learning, from the theoretical perspective of Vygotsky and neo-Vygotskians, with examples drawn from the participants' reports of their experiences in supervision.

The unique nature of learning for each individual derives from the concepts related to internalisation proposed by Vygotsky (1978). The process of internalisation of the interpsychological to become intrapsychological was described in section 5.1.3. It was emphasised that the process was not a direct transfer from external to internal, but that during the process, transformation occurred, implying qualitative changes from external to inner speech and thinking. Wertsch and Stone (1985) state: "Vygotsky argued that there is an inherent relationship between external and internal activity, but that it is a *genetic* or *developmental* relationship in which the major issue is how external processes are *transformed* to *create* internal processes" (p.163, italics in original); and continue "Vygotsky's account of semiotic mechanisms provide the bridge that connects the external with the internal and the social with the individual" (p.164). Thus, the individual's cumulative social interactions and internalisation of these provide the constituents of higher psychological functions.

Drawing from Marx, Vygotsky (1981, in Wertsch and Stone, 1985) notes “that humans’ psychological nature represents the aggregate of internalized social relations that have become functions for the individual and forms of his/her structure” (p.164). The individual gains increasing control over sign forms which originate in the social and become part of internal structures and functions, however, Vygotsky (1981, in Wertsch and Stone, 1985) maintains that “their nature remains quasi-social” (p.166): that is, “the concepts used in mental processes are provided by the speech community in which one has developed” (Wertsch and Stone, 1985, p.171). In contrast to views of cognition which map the results of social interactions onto an existent structure, the Vygotskian argument is that the meaning system of language is a social formation which plays an “active role in the creation of consciousness” (Wertsch and Stone, 1985, p.171).

The development of the capacity to engage in “facilitative reflection” (Ronnestad and Skovolt, 1993, p.397) or “reflective self-awareness” (Edwards and Mercer, 1987, p.165), crucial metacognitive skills, are underlined by a number of writers. Bruner (1986, in Edwards and Mercer, 1987) describes it as follows: “Much of the process of education consists of being able to distance oneself in some way from what one knows by being able to reflect on one’s knowledge” (p. 165). Ronnestad and Skovolt (1993) identify reflection as an important method to be used throughout the training of psychologists, and Edwards and Mercer (1987) identify this skill as a “function of the development of self in relation to others ... in which we achieve higher-order perspectives on our own knowledge and position ... through interacting and talking with others” (p. 165). It would seem that in my study, there was little evidence of ISV promoting such reflective activity, however the nature of the PSG structure makes such reflection more possible.

The internalised sign forms not only lead to metacognitive functioning, associations between ideas, and deepening understanding of concepts, but also influence the individual’s behaviour. Referring to Janet’s “fundamental law of psychology”, Vygotsky supports a key premise of object relations theory: “children begin to use the same forms of behavior in relation to themselves that others initially used in relation to them” (1981, in Wertsch and Stone, 1985, p.165). In the process of egocentric speech becoming internalised, the child learns to differentiate between the “self-regulative, planning function of speech as opposed to its social, communicative function”

(Wertsch and Stone, 1985, p.172). Thus inner speech becomes self-regulatory and plays an important role in planning and acting in the world. In the context of supervision, the internalisation of supervisory events and functions will have important impacts on self-supervision and the regulation of activity.

Drawing from the work of Bakhtin (1981, in Rogoff, 1995), Rogoff (1995) uses the term *participatory appropriation* "to refer to the process by which individuals transform their understanding of and responsibility for activities through their own participation" (p.150, italics in original), leading to change in the individual which then prepares them for "subsequent involvement in related activities" (p.142). She uses this term in preference to 'internalisation' because it underlines the active nature of the participation of the learner, the dynamic nature of events and activities, and the interdependency of learner and educator and/or peers in roles which are "dynamically changing, and the specific processes by which they communicate and share in decision making are the substance of cognitive development" (p.151). Thus words, cultural resources and tools, in the active process of participation, are appropriated and adapted by the learner in uniquely individual ways; in contrast to views of learning which are static implying the 'acquisition' or 'transmission' of bits of knowledge which are somehow stored in memory.

In the previous paragraph, the participants' activity in various roles is also proposed as a contributor to cognitive development. The interns take on a variety of roles - varying between being a helper, to being the helped. In PSG, they may experience themselves as 'teaching', in helping their peers, and this experience of a new role might lead to experiencing a different sense of self. For Rogoff (1995), during the learning process, the "central question becomes how people participate in sociocultural activity and how their participation changes from being relatively peripheral ... observing and carrying out secondary roles, to sometimes being responsible for and managing activities" (p.157). This is clearly an apposite question regarding the development of trainees in supervision - how is greater participation and control of activities enabled? It would seem that PSG might contribute to taking more responsibility for management and developing a greater sense of agency in activities.

Trainees are likely to experience a tension between the roles of being professional and competent (in dealings with clients), and being a learner and trainee (in supervision, and in other decision-making aspects of the work settings). In section 4.6, a crucial aspect was identified as the trainee's construction of his role: active/passive; inept/competent; helped/helper. This was identified by one of the participants as *switching in and out of being the helper and being helped* (INT10). Thus participants' role constructions are important contributors to their levels of engagement in activities, and these are likely to vary according to the context.

Kingsley (1985) notes the difficulties of the transition from student to professional in an internship, and that a crucial turning point for her was the move from being dependant on her supervisor to provide a formulation of a child's difficulties to finding a formulation of the case for herself - since that was what the clients expected of her. She comments that the experience "nudged me over a fence I had been straddling between a view of myself as a student and a view of myself as a professional" (p. 94). The tensions in the interns' role will be further explored in 5.6.

The perspective of participatory appropriation also casts a different light on the "transfer of knowledge" (Rogoff, 1995, p.159). The trainee's approach to a situation will depend on their understanding of the purpose of the activity, and they will draw on previous experience of such situations, in order to work out how to manage the 'new' situation. The trainee's many previous experiences of the position of being learner will thus contribute. If most prior experiences are of having been dependent upon nourishment from the other, they might expect to take a more passive role; whereas if they have experienced the role of being a joint, active partner in learning, their approach is likely to be more active.

The above references are to experiences of learning which are strongly influenced by past interactions and contexts. These will have effects on the self-esteem of participants. People evaluate their perceptions of their current performance and efficacy according to expectations they have of their functioning. The discrepancy between the evaluation of current functioning and their ideal will determine their level of self-esteem (Lawrence, 1987). Taking a social constructionist view, low self esteem would be the result of the internalisation of negative self-

statements as a result of social experiences in which the person evaluated themselves negatively (or might even have internalised negative comments from others). Claxton (1998) proposes that consciousness is affected by beliefs about self efficacy, and gives an example of research which shows that “changing the sense of self” (p.126) led to changes in levels of performance and achievement of tasks. Self-esteem thus impacts on the level of confidence of the person as they engage in tasks, and low self esteem could have a negative effect on the taking on of responsibility or engagement in fresh challenges.

It would seem that supervision has the potential to affect self esteem both negatively and positively, and participants reported a number of experiences of ISV which led to negative self-evaluation impacting then on self confidence and feeling of self efficacy. This was identified in a study cited by Olsen and Stern (1990) where “the shame of self exposure and potential problems of self esteem as the supervisee becomes vulnerable in sharing cases” (p. 61) was identified in ISV. In my study, there was also a notable lack of positive feedback from ISV. For these participants, PSG was reported to play an important role in shifting self esteem as they realised they had valuable contributions to make, and as peers encouraged them in their casework. Thus, supervisors need to be particularly careful of mainly criticising without giving encouragement and positive feedback (Olsen and Stern, 1990), since interns experience high levels of anxiety as they engage in therapeutic work (Ronnestad and Skovolt, 1993), and their self-esteem is particularly vulnerable. Supervisors therefore need to explicitly make appropriately positive evaluations which interns might then internalise, (the participants seemed to be critical of reassurance which did not resonate with their experiences). PSG also seems to have an important role to play in building up self esteem and thus self confidence in working, through the provision of opportunities to internalise positive self statements.

A further psychological construct which has relevance here is that of identity. Cain (n.d., in Lave and Wenger, 1991) defines identity as “the way a person understands and views himself, and is viewed by others, a perception of self which is fairly constant” (p.81). This definition has clear links to the ideas explored above. Lave and Wenger (1991) continue that they believe that “learning and a sense of identity are inseparable: They are aspects of the same phenomenon” (p.115). During their training, interns are in the process of developing a professional identity.

Many of the influences cited above have an impact on this. Interns are in the process of being socialised into a profession, and in South Africa at this time, the profession is questioning its identity. Tensions in roles, such as that of being a trainee with little influence in the system versus that of autonomous professional assisting clients effectively, or that of being a psychologist entrenched in a medical and diagnostic type of model versus being a psychotherapist believing in accompanying clients' as they work towards solving their own problems, or that of working in an active problem-solving model versus taking a containing and more interpretive stance, will lead to the interns engaging in the questioning of their identity. These issues impact on interns' personal sense of efficacy, and confidence in working, and in two consecutive years were issues I noted in my research diary as central to interns' explorations in PSG in the first four months of training. The conflicting role experiences of interns will be further explored in 5.6.3 below.

In the case of the unfolding of the PSG process I recorded, there was evidence of interns' developing sense of themselves as professionals, and taking a more active role in the training setting, in three instances: as a result of a discussion in an early PSG, they changed the physical layout of the room in case conference in order that they would be more actively included in the discussions (and the room continued to be arranged in this way for the rest of the year); they also took a decision as a group to address the issue of the structuring of case conferences with the convenor; and when they identified a common problem with one of the more frequently referring schools in the area, approached the director to address the issues with the school management. They thus seemed to gain in confidence from the sense of group solidarity and encouragement of each other to address issues which impacted on both their learning and their professional work.

A further influence on subjective experience relates to the trainees' understanding of the role and outcome of the learning process. Lave and Wenger (1991) distinguish between two views of learning. They note the "fundamental contradiction between the use and exchange values of the outcome of learning, which manifests itself in conflicts between learning to know and learning to display knowledge for evaluation" (p.112). In training, given the entrenched sense of evaluation in supervision, the way in which the intern constructs their response to the learning context thus has relevance. There seems to be a higher risk in ISV, due to the evaluative

pressures of that context, for the trainee to wish to 'display knowledge', than in the PSG context. In the PSG context, there may be greater opportunity to display 'not knowing' in order to gain a better understanding of the phenomena at hand, and to strive for learning which will have practical and applicable utility.

In this sub-section, I have mentioned, rather briefly, a number of aspects of subjective experience which may have relevance to the supervisory context. Lektorsky (1999) highlights the complexity of the subjective experience of interactions as follows: "a complicated system of interactions between 'my own image of myself', 'the image of me by another', and 'the other's image of him- or herself'" (p.68). The flow diagram in figure 4.4 situates the subjective experience and processing thereof centrally, probably influenced by my immersion in Western notions of a "disengaged image of self" (Wertsch, 1991, p.69), which values self-determination and ideas of individual agency. There is no doubt that such a view underplays the tenets of social constructionism and runs the risk of becoming reductionistic.

I believe that the nature of subjective experience must be constantly seen in a dialectic with the context, and this provides a challenge for theorists. As Smolka, De Goes and Pino (1995) note in their challenging article *The constitution of the subject: a persistent question*, the main contribution of Vygotsky, Wallon and Bakhtin "lies in their interpretations of the reciprocal constitution of the subject and the other, related to the thesis of semiotic mediation" (p.182). This became a cautionary note to me, to keep the reciprocity of the self-other dialectic foregrounded, rather than to be too distracted by notions of subjectivity and self, notions which have dominated debates in Western psychology.

5. 5 INTERSUBJECTIVITY

The term 'intersubjectivity' has been frequently used in various branches of psychology and psychotherapy in the past two decades, and informs an influential approach to psychotherapy in the USA. This has led to the term having diverse connotations according to the particular theoretical emphasis in which it is used, and Smolka *et al.* (1995) recommend that current

conceptualisations need to be clarified and modified in order to assist in the operationalisation of the term and "advance the study of the process of social constitution" (p.173).

Vygotsky did not specifically use the term, but showed great interest in the social, interpsychological processes which exist in dialogues, and which in turn have influences on intrapsychological functioning. In referring to a particular type of intersubjective experience in *Thinking and Speech*, he draws from Tolstoy's writings to illustrate that when people live in "close psychological contact, ... communication by means of abbreviated speech is the rule rather than the exception" (1962, p.141). Thus the participants in such dialogue have extensive shared meanings, and elaboration of speech is reduced. He then goes on to explore difficulties in interpersonal communication and the potential for "total misunderstanding ... when people's thoughts wander off in different directions" (p.141). Such misunderstanding results from the differing internalisation of meanings previously established in the participants, associated with differing contexts and experience. Vygotsky (1962) thus refers to two extreme poles of the interactions: one where considerable abbreviation in conversation is possible due to the levels of shared meaning, and the other, when there is little shared meaning due to participants holding very divergent views, and not easily able to "grasp another's thought" (p.142). Vygotsky's (1962) discussion of this aspect of intersubjectivity raised questions for me regarding the degree to which meanings are shared in the two forms of supervision, and the influences on the resulting interactions (to be explored further below).

In the context of this discussion, the term 'intersubjectivity' will be used following Wertsch (1985a), who asserts that "(i)ntersubjectivity exists when interlocutors share some aspect of their situation definitions ... this overlap may occur at several levels ..." (p.159). Drawing from the work of Rommetveit (1979, in Wertsch, 1985a), Wertsch states that various levels or states of intersubjectivity exist between interlocutors, according to the degree to which their private worlds can be transcended in order to communicate. The variables which will influence the degree of intersubjectivity will be the participants' already established perspectives, the meaning(s) associated with a referent, what is taken for granted, the situational definitions, the intentions underpinning utterances, confidence in the other's communicative abilities, the ability to establish and maintain intersubjectivity.

With regard to ISV and PSG, the above variables can be seen to have been influential in various ways. In ISV, the differing perspectives, experiences and worldviews between trainees and supervisors would have some influence on their interactions. Then, the degree to which the participants had shared understandings or constructions of the supervisory interaction and task, would also have had some impact on the participation. In this regard, Olsen and Stern (1990) refer to the influence of the “congruence between what supervisees desire and what supervisors deliver” (p.60). Furthermore, the intentions of participants in certain utterances were often not made clear. Thus, given that much of this goes 'unsaid' in ISV, the risk of intersubjective understanding being compromised is high.

In PSG, both the formal structure, and the way in which the activity was constructed, provided assistance to the establishment of intersubjectivity - i.e. explicit structuring provides for a greater base of shared understanding of the purpose of the task. The feature of peer 'equality' led to diminished anxieties related to authority, leading to freer interchange. There seemed to be more evidence of presenters asking for clarification of discussion, if they felt unsure of what was meant, than in ISV. The variables which may have had impact on the level of intersubjectivity in each session would relate to the levels of trust of peers by the presenter, and the interpretation of peers' intentions in making comments (whether supportive or critical).

Tudge (1992) defines intersubjectivity as “the process whereby two participants in a task who begin with different understandings of it arrive at shared understanding in the course of communication” (p.1365). Tudge’s use of the term is based on the view that individuals come to a task, problem, or conversation with their own subjective ways of making sense of it. If they then discuss their differing viewpoints, shared understanding may be attained. Certain variables will impact on the degree to which intersubjectivity will be realised. These include: the degree of shared experiences; understandings of the task; motivation of the participants to strive towards shared understandings; the influence of the power differential between participants.

Martinez and Holloway (1997) note the “the dynamics of power and involvement” as “critical elements in creating an environment that engenders the trust and mutuality” (p.347) required for

effective supervision, and recommend awareness-raising in supervisory contexts regarding these issues.

Mercer (1994) explains that Newman, Griffin and Cole (1989, in Mercer, 1994) use the term 'appropriation' "to explain the pedagogic function of a particular kind of discourse event whereby one person takes up another person's remark and offers it back, modified, into the discourse" (p.105). In ISV's there seemed to be greater evidence of the use of clarification (see figure 4.3), where supervisors may paraphrase or reconstruct a trainee's remark, and ISV offers the potential for this to be developed further. However, the utility of this seems to be mediated by the trainee's feelings of safety in the situation, as well as the supervisor's ability to take the trainee's perspective rather than moulding the case material into their own theoretical paradigm.

Edwards and Mercer (1987) note that an important process in education is the establishment of 'joint understandings' between educator and learner as they engage in educational discourse over the course of time. The potential of ISV lies in the fact that the process is one-to-one rather than with a group of learners, thus the supervisor as 'educator' could enable a greater measure of joint understanding than in other educational settings. The fact that ISV is ongoing, with the relationship generally being established over some weeks or months, means that shared understandings may develop and grow. PSG is also ongoing, but the focus shifts from one participant to the next each week, and the nature of the structure and relationships differ from ISV.

Mercer (1994) notes that the very existence of the ZPD "is determined by the intersubjectivity of understanding of 'teacher' and 'learner'" (p.102). It would seem that the onus is on the educator, in a more formally constructed learning context, to strive for improved intersubjectivity. Thus this would be a responsibility of the supervisor in ISV, given her more powerful position. Supervisors need to make much more explicit the structuring of ISV, and take more time to establish shared understandings (as evidenced most in ISV10).

Bruner (1985) states that in all forms of knowledge acquisition there exists "a crucial match between a *support system* in the social environment and an *acquisition process* in the learner...

this match ... makes possible the transmission of culture, first as a set of connected ways of acting, perceiving, and talking, and then finally as a generative system of taking conscious thought, using the instruments of reflection that the culture 'stores' as theories..." (p.28, italics in original). This quotation highlights the important influence of support in learning contexts, and then summarises a Vygotskian view of the way in which learning is embedded in society.

Thus far, this analysis has not foregrounded affective aspects of supervision; since Vygotsky himself did not explore affect, even though he identified "the need to integrate affective and intellectual phenomena" (Wertsch, 1985a, p.189). However, Vygotsky's view was that affect "provides the integrating and motivational forces for consciousness" (Wertsch, 1985a, p.189), and in the previous and this sub-section the raising of such issues as motivation, self-esteem and confidence have embedded affective components. Training in psychotherapy is noted for the unusual emotional demands it makes on trainees (Lederman, 1982).

It is clear, particularly from the transcript of the focus group in my study, that participants experienced strong affective reactions to supervision. Ronnestad and Skovolt (1993) note that in ISV, students have learnt to "conceal their self-doubts" and are "often able to conceal their anxiety" (p. 398) due to interpersonal skillfulness. Thus students affective reactions may not be evident to the supervisor. It seems that PSG offered the opportunity to express some of these reactions to their work and to supervision. The experience of support for the interns was reportedly varied in ISV, but was strongly felt in PSG, a further advantage of its value as an adjunct to ISV.

Psychodynamic approaches to supervision place a far greater emphasis on the affective components of learning. Theorists who take an intersubjective stance construe "core psychic processes as inseparable from a relational matrix" and "the fundamental operation of mind as based on its striving for relational connection and communication" (Dunn, 1995, p.723-4). Such approaches would seem to resonate with Vygotskian emphases on the importance of the interactional matrix, and I believe signal the potential for further exploration, and consideration of ways in which psychodynamic notions and Vygotsky's understandings of the operation of intersubjective processes in speaking and thinking might be considered as complementary.

Very recently, explorations of links between object relations theory and Vygotsky's notions of sign mediation have begun to emerge in the literature (Leiman, 1999; Ryle, 1999). Drawing from Winnicott, Leiman (1999) writes of the 'third area', the potential space in which transitional phenomena have great importance, and states that "(t)he concept of mediation is enriched by emotional aspects and by the idea of the third area, where reality is found creatively" (p.427). The literature has shown that there are noteworthy overlaps between effective relational factors in the therapeutic situation, and those in the supervisory situation. Such factors include the ability of the helper to gain an understanding of the subjective world of the helpee, the recipient's readiness for particular interventions, and the pacing of the interactions. It is clear that the interpersonal relationship is very important in setting the scene for supervision which is helpful and constructive, just as the relationship is identified as a key element in psychotherapy.

However, in contrast to therapy, the intern has little choice as to whom should supervise - the supervisor is often assigned, and unlike therapy the intern is not in the position to discontinue or terminate. Thus when interns find the interactions problematic, they need to find other ways of continuing, for example 'managing' their supervisor - sometimes constructively so that they can benefit from the interactions; at other times by being evasive and or selective regarding their material, missing sessions, or being compliant on the surface yet going their own way in practice.

One of the potential features of the supervisory interaction noted in section 2.2.3, and reported by the presenters as a potential influencing factor in PSG's 9 and 10 (although not termed as such), is that of parallel process. Cooper and Gustafson (1985) note this feature as one which underlines the complexity of the educational task: teaching about the psychology of relationships in a relationship context. The students' conscious plans for learning an approach must dovetail with their covert or unconscious observations about how these principles work in the here and now (p. 13).

It is clear that the possible parallel process confounds the group discussion in both PSG's 9 and 10, and the participants are not able to identify or work with such a complex process. It is likely that a part of this difficulty results from their lack of experience of the acknowledgement of the phenomenon and the processing thereof in ISV. In three of the ISV's analysed, processing of interpersonal material by the supervisor is minimal, confirming Ivey's (1992) concerns that in

much supervision in South Africa, there is little “systematic attunement to the unconscious interactional nuances” (p. 44) of either the therapeutic or the supervisory relationship.

The brief discussion in the above four paragraphs signal potential areas for future research and theorising. Lektorsky (1999) writes of the necessity “to study specific features of intersubjective relations connected with activity” (p.68). This sub-section merely flags these concepts as worthy of further study and theorising, and I believe that ISV and PSG need to be studied more closely and rigorously in order to flesh out the complexity of the intersubjective nature of the learning. Lektorsky (1999) continues that a genuine dialogue

is not a simple transformation of a co-interlocutor in accordance with the aims and plans of another; it includes the self-realization of the participants at the same time. Successful communicative activity presupposes taking into account the position and values of the other, an ability to look at oneself from this position and to perform an 'inner dialogue'... (p.68)

In ISV, working towards the establishment and maintenance of a constructive working relationship needs to be seen as a priority for the supervisor, and Gallimore and Tharp (1990) note that productive instructional conversations require “highly refined interpersonal competencies in combination with a solid grasp of the substantive knowledge to be taught” (pp.198-9). These issues thus highlight the need for supervisor training in South Africa, since so much of the challenge of supervision as an enterprise is embedded in the educational-interactional complexity which the discussion thus far has highlighted.

5.6 CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES

“Vygotsky argues that because historical conditions which determine to a large extent the opportunities for human experience are changing, there can be no universal schema that adequately represents the dynamic relation between internal and external aspects of development” (John-Steiner & Soubberman, 1978, p.125). This leads to functional systems within each individual which are unique and the rich diversity which exists across cultures and times. The location of psychological processes within a sociocultural setting, and the inextricable interrelatedness of the external and the internal, have been an implicit feature of the discussion

thus far. The aim of this section is to foreground certain of the contextual influences which have relevance to this study (represented by the two outer rings of figure 4.1).

Moll and Greenberg (1990) state that “the proposal that human thinking must be understood in its concrete social and historical circumstances” is “one of the most interesting and important contributions of Vygotskian psychology” (p.319). They refer to Luria’s distinction between the Vygotskian approach and traditional psychology that the origins of consciousness are not sought intrapsychologically but rather “in the external processes of social life, in the social-historical forms of human existence ... in humans’ actual relationship with reality, in their social history, which is closely tied to labor and language” (1982, in Moll and Greenberg, 1990, p.319). This section therefore considers the findings in the context of the relevant work and experiential settings of this study. Gallimore and Tharp (1990) emphasise that “all performance assistance is embedded in complex organizations” (p.187).

The training context of this study is the final year of professional training in psychology, the internship. The notion of internship has strong comparisons to apprenticeships. As mentioned in 5.3, a number of researchers influenced by Vygotsky have investigated means by which novices or trainees are inducted into roles by more experienced practitioners (e.g. Lave and Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1995). Lave and Wenger (1991) extend the notion of apprenticeship from “narrow ‘craft’ based views” (p.63) to include much of the learning which occurs “wherever high levels of knowledge and skill are in demand (e.g., medicine, law, the academy ...)” (p.63). The work of Lave and Wenger (1991) therefore has some relevance to this internship setting, since these trainees are experiencing a type of apprenticeship.

One of the key concepts identified by Lave and Wenger (1991) is the education-work interface. Tensions are inherent in the internship setting, since trainees are in transition from a principally educational setting to a work setting. These tensions are to be considered below. The work setting is primarily directed toward induction into a profession, and influential constraints are therefore also imposed by the profession, also to be discussed further below. The diversity of prior learning experiences of trainees as well as the influences of the complex socio-political-historical milieu of South Africa, which impacts on the contexts, will also be considered.

5.6.1 Schooling and labour

It is important to note that Vygotsky and his colleagues were strongly influenced by Marxian theory and explanatory principles of social phenomena which cannot be reduced to an aggregate of separate parts. This led to the choice of 'the unit of an activity' as the focus of study. Thus, the function of the 'unit of an activity', "is to orient the subject to the world of objects" and is thus "a system with its own structure" (Wertsch *et al.* 1984, p.154). The relevance of these ideas to this study lies in the consideration of the activity systems in which these interns are involved in the training setting.

The two activity systems which have relevance to this discussion are those of formal education and of work. These are distinguished from each other by the overall motive of the activity: that of education being learning, whereas that of work being production. Wertsch *et al.* (1984) note that in education "students are encouraged to take over responsibility for tasks even when they are not yet able to perform them correctly. Because the emphasis on learning and independent functioning predominates over the emphasis on flawless task performance, errors are expected and sometimes even encouraged" (p.155). This is contrasted by Wertsch *et al.* (1984) with tasks related to economic activity "where the emphasis is on error-free performance", since tasks contribute to smooth functioning of a system of production. "This does not mean that learning does not occur or is discouraged; it simply means that a learner's performance is monitored closely and that independent functioning is not encouraged until it is likely to be error free" (p. 155). Lave and Wenger (1991) note that much close monitoring of task performance occurs in forms of apprenticeship, since it is tied to economic production.

The above distinction has an important influence on the internship settings in this study. During the first year of Masters-level (M1) study, the learning process is foregrounded and casework performance is closely monitored to enable errors to be remedied. The trainees are not then working in a system where 'production' in terms of the number of cases managed at any one time, and efficiency in terms of time taken over a case, are at issue. In the internship year, a major shift in emphasis occurs. The SC setting in particular is part of the service rendering division of the university, and interns are paid for their work. Service provision and production (in terms of

number of clients seen, and efficiency in terms of number of sessions required for treatment) become of far greater importance. It is presumed that training would have provided skills for base level competence, and smooth functioning and adequate performance are expected, with the learning process therefore backgrounded for much of the time. In the other training setting, CGC, the developmental process of shifting from M1 to internship is more graded, and payment for services rendered is minimal, since the CGC is allied to an academic department. At SC, pressure of work means that interns are expected to function effectively from early in the year, and there is little opportunity for mutual collaboration in work with individual clients.

The tensions inherent in the move from learning focus to service delivery focus are not explicitly tackled or negotiated, and the resulting tensions will be explored further below. There are different experiences from those expected by the interns, who might still view the major purpose of their year to be learning rather than service delivery, with potential impacts on intern motivation. Furthermore, the pressure for service delivery means that there are occurrences of interns feeling a sense of pressure of time and sense of being under surveillance as administrative staff strive to meet client needs and question the interns' commitments. Furthermore there are complaints from interns of heavy caseloads, minimal time for reflection and learning, with individual supervisors focussing on a number of cases superficially (in contrast to the PSG experience of focus on one case), and feelings of being exploited. Lave and Wenger (1991) report on similar issues to these in certain other apprenticeship settings.

Kingsley (1985) speaks of the difficulties of adjusting to an internship setting, one being the "change in the rules for success" (p.94). She reflects that the "qualities that made some of us stars in graduate school may not be valued currency in the clinic. On the other hand, some who were considered less-than-stellar in graduate school may bloom in an environment where the expectations are different" (p. 94). Such adjustments in the work setting may impact on interns' self-esteem and self confidence.

A further source of tension for interns relates to their identity and status in the work setting - whereas a number had prior work experience and had functioned competently in those settings, in this context they are of relatively low status. Hanks (in Lave and Wenger, 1991) reports that

trainees in such positions need to simultaneously perform several roles: "status subordinate, learning practitioner, sole responsible agent ..., aspiring expert ... each implying a different sort of responsibility ... and a different interactive involvement" (p.23). Their positioning, "at the edge of a larger process" (Hanks, in Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.23) in the organisation, may impact on both their sense of agency and ability to take initiative; and there may not be transfer of previous work roles into this setting.

Another tension may arise when interns do develop competencies, they may feel resentment towards permanent staff (who are better paid and may seem to be doing less). Lave and Wenger (1991) alert readers to the possibility of competition between permanent workers, who are located more centrally, and trainees who are located more peripherally but are seen to be moving more towards the centre. Thus the role and positioning of the interns strongly influences their ways of acting in the workplace.

Lave and Wenger (1991) identify "the inherently problematic character of the social reproduction of communities of practice" (p.57). These include firstly "conflict between forces that support processes of learning and those that work against them" (p.57). An example of such a conflict is that trainees come in with fresh ideas and theoretical insights which some supervisors might seek to optimise, whereas other supervisors might feel resentful or threatened by not having been party to such learning, and may thus be dismissive. Secondly, "communities of practice are engaged in the generative process of producing their own future", and forces which are promoting of change and transformation, as well as competing forces which are for the maintenance of the status quo must be considered. There have been complaints from the interns that although they might negotiate for change, and make proposals, little seems to shift - they feel that there is inertia in the system, and resistance to change. This underlines Lave and Wenger's (1991) idea of 'reproductive cycles' which "constitute and reconstitute practice over time" (p.58).

The above points highlight the contradictory nature of the social context within which the learning process for interns is embedded, and a number of the conflicts inherent in the experience. Consideration of apprenticeships in a number of different contexts led to Lave and Wenger (1991) suggesting a number of central characteristics which need consideration in the

shift for trainees from positions of peripheral participation to more centralised roles. These include: "the structuring resources that shape the process and content of learning possibilities"; the need for "'transparency' of the sociopolitical organization of practice"; "the relation of newcomers to the discourse of practice"; and "how identity and motivation are generated as newcomers move toward full participation" (p.91). Such considerations would make a valuable contribution to understandings of the 'community of practice' in internship settings.

5.6.2. The education system

Reference has been made to the pervasive influence of views of learning as the transmission of knowledge (seen as an entity) from 'expert' to learner, referred to as the 'recitation script' by Tharp and Gallimore (1988). Wertsch (1990) writes of the prominence of the voice of 'decontextualized rationality' in formal education.

Gallimore and Tharp (1990) note that little interactive teaching occurs even in classrooms rated as being more effective. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) give two reasons why assisted performance is absent in schools: educators are not in close touch with learner's construction of the task; and such approaches are not incorporated into teacher training because their implementation requires a high level of both understanding of the subject matter and teacher educators being assisted themselves, through modelling and coaching, to change their practice. These issues have relevance to education in South Africa, which is still largely influenced by traditional models, even though the discourse of educational reform has shifted since the democratic elections of 1994.

The interns in this study would have been exposed to at least 12 school years and least 5 years at a university where education was dominated by the 'recitation script'. In such contexts, learners expect to be passive and silent for much of the time, everyday experience has little relevance or links are not made, learners are not expected to re-organise and critically appraise the material, the asking of questions is often actively discouraged, learners lack confidence in expressing themselves, competition with peers is encouraged and collaboration often actively discouraged as 'cheating'. This form of education is described by Edwards and Mercer (1987) as

induction “into an established, ready-made culture” (p.164). The context of South African education over the past fifty years, has not only dominated by the above approach, but was also constrained politically by the policy of Christian National Education - in which authority is located in a higher power, and obedience and reproduction valued. The system was designed to keep the majority oppressed and especially not to encourage voices which challenge or think for themselves. This system had a pernicious and destructive influence on creative and divergent thinking, set peers against each other, and rewarded only those who conformed. Edwards and Mercer (1987) note how much more difficult it is for educators to work towards “developing creative and autonomous participants in a culture which is not ready-made but continually in the making” (p. 164). Educators may slip into the “easier demands of power and expedience” which is “supported by an ideology which encourages” leaving learners “to discover things for themselves” (p. 164).

The influential discoveries in the field of adult education have also had limited impact on broader university education in South Africa. Although there may be certain small groups who have engaged with findings regarding collaborative learning (Bruffee, 1993), and faced into some of the challenges of induction of students into knowledge communities, many academics are appointed and work from within confines of their disciplinary boundaries, and have had little exposure to or opportunity to engage in the discourse of higher education practice. Much teaching practice in universities is still entrenched in the previous system as lecturers engage with the multiple challenges of the changing student population, and where little support for education development is available due to financial constraints.

Such influences have had wide-reaching implications for learners. The former structured education system provided some measure of security for learners, a comfortable dependency on the voices of authority to provide the answers. Thus learners faced with challenges of constructing meaning for themselves might experience anxiety and resistance. This is illustrated by some of the focus group expressions of frustrations with ISV - the desire for the supervisor to 'pass on' knowledge, rather than an awareness of own their responsibility to work at understanding, and to do additional reading. The PSG might provide a supportive environment for such shifts.

Not only trainees, but also supervisors are emerging from this educational system, and will be at various stages of insight into and freeing themselves from the seduction of being the authority figure. They will have had little exposure to progressive education practice, and will not necessarily be conscious of the need for making the structuring of interactions explicit or their intentions transparent. I am aware of the need to be sympathetic to the 'plight' of supervisors - they are expected to be competent to engage in supervision after 3 years of practice, without training or support, Thus they are also thrown in at the deep end in very much the same way as interns are!

The intentions of most supervisors are to be helpful and of assistance, but the means of optimising supervisory opportunities are unlikely to have been provided by their own experience of the education system or their training. Their own training is likely to have reflected the entrenched hierarchical system rather than being enabling and about the mutual construction of meaning. Thus, the need for training of supervisors is again highlighted.

Hersh (1984) outlined four principles from adult education which he believed should be foregrounded in the training of supervisors:

- i) the problem-centred rather than subject-centred nature of adult education;
- ii) the shift in students' self-concepts from dependency towards autonomy, impacting on self-direction and motivation;
- iii) the students' accumulated life experiences which are potentially rich resources from which educators can draw; and
- iv) adults' greater awareness of their own learning needs (although they are seldom asked).

In this study, the PSG interactions drew from certain of these principles, but the whole of the context of training needs to be underpinned by these, in order to provide optimal learning experiences for trainees.

5.6.3 Professional training

As noted in chapter one, the profession of psychology is also emerging from the divisions and segregation of the apartheid era, and striving to re-constitute its structures and training requirements in line with international trends and to meet local requirements. In the ongoing debate, supervision as a context for learning has not been identified as in need of consideration. Supervision seems to be uncritically taken as a given and thus the induction into particular ways of thinking is likely to continue to be reproductive of the status quo rather than entering into a transformative discourse.

Bakhtin (1981, in Moro, 1999) proposes the concept of sublanguages or 'social languages' which he defines as "... dialects, characteristic group behaviors, professional jargons ... languages of authorities, ... language that serves the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day" (p.170). This underlines the need to deconstruct the interactive forces which influence language and discourse in the profession of psychology. The interns have been subject to a multiplicity of active forces in their formation as novices in the profession of psychology. They will experience the tensions of these forces as they become acculturated into this particular knowledge community. Ronnestad and Skovolt (1993) identified the tensions inherent in the internship stage where the trainee "vacillates between feeling confident and professionally insecure" (p. 400). They continue by locating the difficulties in the fact that the trainee "has now actively assimilated information from many sources but has still not had enough time to accommodate and find her own way of behaving professionally. Thus, the tension is, in part, a function of belonging, but not totally belonging to the profession" (p. 400). Thus, trainees are in a transitional phase, and will need to grapple with identity issues related to the induction process into the profession (Worthington, 1987).

Whilst the proposed new training framework and principles (referred to in section 1.2) seem more inclusive, more open for flexible interpretation by training institutions in order to enable more relevant training in the South African context, the risk is that the old will again be reproduced. One of the potential forces of reproduction is likely to be the continued engagement in supervision of practice in an unexamined way. The profession is still largely in the control of

the 'old-timers' (Lave and Wenger, 1991) in whom particular worldviews and ideas of 'what has worked' are entrenched. This signals the need for dialogue and ongoing debate in order to challenge methods which are taken for granted, and to respond to the pressures from a changing socio-cultural milieu.

One of the key issues which needs to be debated is that of authority. Traditional hierarchical supervision (still preferred to peer and peer-group supervision in recent documents from the Professional Board for Psychology in South Africa) leads to ambivalent feelings towards the supervisor as an authority figure since it promotes dependency in supervisees, who also want to function as autonomous professionals (Lederman, 1982). The shift from supervisors as the purveyors of knowledge to a more open stance with the supervisor as 'partial learner' (Gonzalez, 1997) is a radical one - requiring a shift in the epistemological constructions of supervisors' roles and functions. The challenge then is for supervisors to be willing to consider alternate 'ways of being' in supervision and to be open to their authority being challenged by such notions.

The potential of PSG seems to be the provision of a way of opening up such discourse. Moro (1999) writes, with reference to Bakhtin's theory of utterance, that "speech is an activity to create interfaces between diverse utterances, between different voices, and between various social languages" (p.171). It is important for participants to be sensitised to and aware of the privileging of certain voices over others, and of ways in which minoritised voices may be enabled to speak. This is especially so in the professional arena of psychology where 'power over' is established in the realm of discourse.

Bruffee (1993) discusses the 'authoritative and authorizing' discourse of professions which are located in some or other interpretive community. He goes on to identify tensions between and the differing agendas of academic and public professionals. He notes that the role of academics is to theorise and to teach the professional language whereas the role of public professionals is in doing - to apply their knowledge to the day to day problems of living: "whereas what academic professionals do for us is to reacculturate our children and ourselves, what public professionals do for us is to intercede between us and arcane but practical and obdurate realities ... They fix things" (p. 133). As noted earlier in the section which addressed the education-work interface,

internships are located at the interstice of these two activities, and the tensions of reforming training in South Africa will need to take note of these tensions. The profession needs academics to engage in undertaking the training of psychotherapists, since neither the professional body nor individuals can fund training in separate institutes, thus the profession needs to continually be in dialogue with the training settings in order to work on some of the tensions identified in this section.

5.6.4 Multicultural context

Given the multicultural nature of the South African population, it might seem surprising that this theme has not been foregrounded in some way in this study. In fact, discussion on the topic has been virtually absent. Billig (1987) reminds us to be concerned also about what is absent in the data. The question which emerges is: Are racial and ethnic difficulties really non-issues, or are they absent in this context because they are too powerful to be addressed openly? It is possible that they are non-issues because the fragile nature of an emerging society working towards greater racial harmony means that it is still too early to address these issues more openly, leading to a form of denial. Furthermore, it is possible that some form of minoritising of such discourse occurs in the profession, given the professions' stance as having been transformed. I believe that such issues will need to emerge far more actively, if psychotherapeutic practice is to become more deeply multicultural, and such issues would need to be the focus of other research.

It also needs to be noted here that the cultural framework of education in South Africa promotes a Western view of individualised, unassisted, competitive learning, and the profession seems to reward the same sort of individualised practice. An African way of being is far more rooted in community and collaborative practice, thus it might be that for psychotherapy to become more relevant and acceptable to a wider range of people, that co-operative and collaborative practices will need to be examined more closely.

5.7 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

To conclude this chapter, it would be difficult to summarise the multitude of concepts and ideas contained herein, and section 5.1 describes the central themes which have been explored. I have therefore chosen to use quotations from three sources to highlight certain important themes addressed in this discussion chapter.

In the first quotation Bruner (1985) refers to three kinds of concepts "needed in order to carry out a Vygotskian project on 'learning by transaction'" which he describes as the "entry into a culture via induction by more skilled members" (p. 25):

- i) props or instruments which make it possible to go beyond present level of development to higher ground or new consciousness: in the case of this study, these are provided by the two forms of supervision;
- ii) "some specification of the kinds of processes" that make the learner "receptive to ... transactional learning" p. 25): in this case, these processes have been described in section 4.7 and theorised in this chapter. The answer to the question of how receptive trainees are to ISV or PSG seems to relate to the differences in structure between the two (the differing authority and interactive structures seem to lead to differing levels of motivation);
- iii) "procedures that the more proficient partner ... uses in order to ease the way" (p. 25) for the learner. In this case the means are through language, and assistance in the ZPD.

Thus, this discussion chapter has endeavoured to clarify and discuss the props, processes and procedures which enable cognitive development in trainees: to enable the linking of 'declarative' and 'procedural' knowledge in the words of Hillerbrand (1989).

Secondly, Lektorsky (1999) states: "I would like to stress that according to Vygotsky, human activity presupposes not only the process of internalisation ... but also the process of externalisation ... Human beings ... are essentially creative beings" (p.66). In the first part of the chapter (sections 5.2 to 5.4), the focus tended to be on the processes of internalisation, of transforming the experiences of interaction into concept development and deepened understanding. The second part of the chapter (sections 5.5 to 5.6) focussed far more on

interaction and the context, related to externalisation. Thus it is necessary to see all of the processes explored in this chapter as working in reciprocal and iterative ways with each other, rather than being isolated as they have needed to be for the purpose of the discussion which needed to be written in a linear form.

The challenge of writing this chapter has thus been that of breaking down complex, interactive and intertwined processes into parts for description; but not in a reductive way, and realising that reciprocal influences between parts are in continual interplay. Lektorsky (1999) writes further:

The processes of production, cognition, and interindividual communication therefore appear as closely interconnected and interpenetrating. The primary mode of existence of many familiar phenomena is that in which their subjective form is connected with the 'space' of these interindividual, intersubjective relations (p.67).

It is thus necessary to continually ground the phenomena identified within the relevant contexts, and to see that the social and individual as indivisible in the formation of mind.

Lave and Wenger (1991) reiterate these ideas by stating that "learning must be understood with respect to practice as a whole, with its multiplicity of relations - both within the community and with the world at large" (p.114). This underlines the challenge and complexity of the task of striving to understand learning, and this chapter has represented my attempt at deepening understandings of learning in the context of supervision of trainee psychotherapists.

The following chapter concludes this dissertation by reflecting on this endeavour, considering the significance and implications of this study, describing some of its limitations, and making recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

In many of the accounts of qualitative research which I have read, the researcher speaks of the serendipitous convergence of a number of seemingly disparate factors which give impetus to the research, and enable the researcher to move on in creative ways. Before engaging in a more formal reflection on the contents of this dissertation, or commenting on the limitations of the study and possible future research directions, I would like to acknowledge the converging forces which enabled me to embark on this study.

Firstly, my own experiences of supervision (both positive and negative), both as a trainee and as a practitioner, combined with my enjoyment of supervising interns in their final year of training, led to my speculating about what contributed to learning in supervision, and what made supervision successful or unsuccessful?

Then, since my work for a number of years has been at the interface of theory in educational psychology and theory in psychotherapy, (as a trainer of school counsellors and school psychologists), I have dabbled with ideas related to Vygotsky's theory, (prompted more firmly by being asked to teach a module entitled 'Psychology of Learning and Teaching', along with a colleague who had designed the module with a firm focus on the work of Vygotsky).

Since I was aware that if I was to complete this study, I needed to engage in research which was legitimately a part of my daily work, I reflected on which aspects of my work I most enjoyed, and decided that the field of supervision should be my focus. I was then introduced by a colleague to the work of Skovolt and Ronnestad (1992b), and found their approach and methodology refreshing and stimulating.

As we planned for 1998 in the CGC, I was aware that our resources for providing adequate supervision would be stretched, since that year we would have an unusually large intake of interns (nine, rather than the four or five to which we had become accustomed). I had speculated

for a number of years about the utility of the form of the 'Supervision Case Study' approach, with which I had worked as a facilitator of a group of ministers who used it to reflect on their pastoral work (referred to in section 1.3), as a possible means of providing supervision to interns.

I thus discussed my ideas with colleagues, and began my literature search in the area of peer group supervision. I found it surprising that so little had been written in the literature in this regard, and realised that the topic seemed to be worthy of further study. As I trawled the literature for examples of structured group supervision (since I only had a single page outline of the 'Supervision Case Study'), I came across the model and study of Wilbur *et al.*, and was excited to read of the similarities with the 'Supervision Case Study'.

These were some of the threads which wove together leading to the planning and implementation of the PSG process and the evolving research process.

6.1 REFLECTIONS ON THE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

As noted above, some of the contributing motivations for undertaking this study were pragmatic: we needed to explore ways of increasing supervision to interns without further staff resource implications to the CGC; and I needed to engage in a study which was legitimately a part of my day to day work. However, as the study progressed, the core of the study became much more theoretical: as I engaged in using grounded theory methodology, so the relevance of Vygotsky's (1962, 1978) writings became more evident to me, and this led to my eventual deeper engagement with Vygotskian theory in order to deepen my understanding of the learning process in supervision. It would seem that the resultant discussion of the theory and its location in the context might have broader relevance to the training of psychotherapists, and I hope it will make a contribution to a debate in the professional context in South Africa which I believe is long overdue: that of the training of supervisors and the consideration of various models of supervision and their contributions to the development of competent practitioners.

Tennyson and Strom (1986), referring to the work of Schon (1983, in Tennyson and Strom, 1986), on the reflective practitioner, write the following:

According to cognitive developmentalists, the reasoning skills and dispositions related to moral responsibility are best acquired in formal and informal environments in which there is opportunity for critical reflection and dialogue about common problems. Critical reflection means thinking about what one is doing, that is turning thought back on one's actions and the understanding implicit in those actions" (p. 299).

It seemed to me that one of the overall purposes in supervision should be rooted in such an approach to learning, and I hoped that in studying the forms of supervision as described in this dissertation, I might better understand means of developing such reasoning in the trainees with whom we were working.

The literature review of group and peer-group supervision underlined the need for research into various forms of this mode of supervision, and for approaches which were sensitive to the "initial state of scientific inquiry", advising that studies should be "explanatory rather than confirmatory" (Wilbur *et al.*, 1994, p. 264). Such advice seemed to be confirmed by the inconclusive findings of those studies which had attempted to use empirical, criterion referenced approaches, in contrast to the positive reports of participants in the studies. An approach which strived to "systematically investigate the process of group supervision" (Wilbur *et al.*, 1994, p. 276) thus seemed advisable

I thus undertook the study of PSG as described in Chapter 4, and will reflect on the findings in the light of the key considerations for peer group supervision, previously outlined section 2.6, below:

- the group size (nine participants) seemed workable, although a slightly smaller number (six to seven) would probably have facilitated more cycles of PSG; the fact that members were of equal status in terms of level of training seemed facilitative, since they were grappling with many similar issues;
- the participants were at similar levels of counselling skill training, however other work experience may have enhanced certain participants' interactive skills;
- leadership was managed by rotating the role of facilitator, but participants' facilitation skills generally needed further development;

- the goals set were circumscribed by the RFA statement, and were generally achievable; the overall goal of providing the presenter with support appeared to be largely achieved in the sessions;
- the structuring of the process seemed to be facilitative, and participants reported positive responses to the structure - once they'd learnt it, it became a 'given';
- the discussion seemed to be most beneficial when the RFA was task-focussed rather than process-focussed.
- further training of participants appeared to be required in the skills of facilitation, and the possibility of presenters more explicitly linking of case issues to theoretical paradigms was suggested;
- participants were motivated to engage in the full cycle of ten sessions, however the process did not continue beyond September possibly linked to reported overall decrease in intern motivation and increased resistance to co-operate due to systemic tensions in the one training setting spilling over;
- there was no form of evaluation included in PSG;
- organisational factors were on the whole supportive of PSG, once the process was underway, however, the stresses in one of the settings led to difficulties in continuing the process beyond the first cycle.

The PSG also seemed to serve important social and emotional functions, affirming the point made by Worthington (1987) that "support and encouragement were especially useful ... during the internship year" (p. 73). Wilbur *et al.* (1991) note the value of structure as enhancing of interpersonal behaviour at early stages in a group's development, and this seems to be confirmed by this group, however, they also note that later in a group process the positive effects of structure are reduced, and it may even "impede the group process" (p. 99). A longer term study would be needed in order to report on such issues, however.

Overall consideration of the PSG process leads to my concluding that the structure has promise for further development. This study seems to support Abels' (1977) thesis that one needs to trust group interactions to be the 'teacher', and Kadushin's (1992) assertion that some trainees find a group situation a more comfortable learning environment. The PSG group offers exposure to a variety of different cases and approaches, experiences of dialogue which allow for a range of

perspectives, the opportunity to define issues in the trainees' own words and to explore and actively construct meanings at their own pace, collective problem-solving and participants having a say in what is to be learned.

Borders (1989) proposed with regard to supervision research that a moratorium be placed on developing 'new and improved' descriptive models, on the sole use of self-reports, and on research in strictly academic settings. This research has conformed with these recommendations: it was built on a model proposed and developed elsewhere, using slightly different structuring (with regard to a supervisor not being present); it relied not only on participant reports, but recorded the actual 'in-supervision' events; and although allied to an academic setting, the participants were dealing with casework from clinic settings, no different from interns' work in other internship settings. Borders (1991) in supporting the notion of peer supervision groups noted that "successful experiences may encourage students to pursue peer supervision in subsequent work settings" (p. 248). I have been pleased to note that during this year (2000), a number of the PSG group of 1998, now in their second year of practice as psychologists, have re-instituted a PSG process along with other peers of similar experience level, and I am hoping that they will be willing to report on their experience of the group, given their post-training status. Furthermore, a group of local private practitioners have approached me for training in this approach - thus signalling the potential of this approach for ongoing professional supervision. Munson (1984) noted the value of ongoing supervision as an 'insurance policy' against 'burnout', and this model offers one option of supervision to the practitioner, given many practitioners preferences for peer supervision (Lewis *et al.*, 1988) and also in areas where there is limited ISV available.

Although peer supervision has been found to be widely used by practitioners (Lewis *et al.*, 1988), it appears to have been formally used to a very limited extent in training contexts. Hardcastle (1991) favours models which are less authority-oriented, recommending the exploration of team and peer co-operation, and it is possible that the PSG model, given its clear structure which aims to minimise some of the disadvantages which are associated with the complexity of group processes, has the potential to increase the opportunities for peer collaboration in training.

As the study unfolded, I made a decision in consultation with my supervisor, that in order to compare PSG with ISV, I should not only rely on participants' reports as originally planned, but should record ISV sessions which 'matched' certain of the PSG sessions. This decision led to the generation of data which I believe enhanced the study, and enabled comparisons to be made between actual supervision events. The findings of the comparative analysis were discussed in section 4.5, and various differences were noted in such categories as structuring, the presentations, the expressed purpose of supervision, questioning, strategies and suggestions, interactions, facilitation of the process, and response to supervision. The relative contributions and limitations of PSG and ISV were then tabulated. It thus seems that the two processes differ in varying ways, and that both hold the potential to make valuable contributions to the learning process. The means by which these contributions might be made were then examined. It would seem that PSG is a valuable adjunct to ISV in training, and this conclusion supports Mercer's (1994) assertion that "(d)ifferent kinds of conversational activities offer different ways of engaging with knowledge and developing understanding" (p. 19).

In the literature review, it was noted that both Kadushin (1992) and Kaplan (1983), along with other authors, support the value of dual supervision (either group- or peer- along with ISV) over the use of only traditional supervision. It would seem that this study affirms these views (although there has not been a comparison group to add empirical rigour to this conclusion). Mercer (1994) contends that "the process of constructing knowledge is one in which power and influence are inevitably exerted, and sometimes even contested" (p. 19). It is possible that the experience of other forms of supervision alongside ISV leads to a dilution of the power and authority of the supervisor, and enables the trainee to more actively play a role in constructing meanings.

In the final sections of the data analysis, a consideration of strategies which might promote learning evident in the two forms of supervision evolves into an exploration of the processes which seem to underpin these strategies. The central role played by speaking and dialogue was highlighted, the way in which the learning process is understood was explored, and the location of locus of control was considered. The support - challenge balance and the influence of interactions were also identified. The findings are therefore supportive of a view of learning in

which the content is co-constructed, where the purposes and structuring of activities are explicitly addressed, and where language is viewed as a crucial tool for discovery and the deepening of understandings. Finally, a model and narrative account of the effects of the experience of the two forms of supervision are constructed, taking the trainees' perspective, and locating the trainees' sense of self-efficacy centrally. It is my hope that the final three sections of the findings will have value to supervisors wishing to improve their practice. As Holloway (1995) states with reference to her model, I hope that my study will raise questions about "what each of us does as a supervisor rather than to tell a supervisor what to think and what to do" (p. 8).

As noted in section 1.2, the examination of supervisory practice is in its infancy in South Africa, and there is little evidence of debate about the training of supervisors. Professional developments in South Africa in this regard are therefore lagging behind those in the USA and the UK. For example, Blair and Peake (1995) record the fact that "the National Council of Schools of Professional Psychology has included supervision as one of the six core competency areas identified as essential to the training of a professional psychologist" (p. 125). I hope that this study will make a contribution in this regard in South Africa, since it is important, in this time of limited financial resources, that training opportunities be optimised.

Furthermore, the current educational discourse in South Africa is dominated by debates about the outcomes of education, and there are expectations that aims, means of instruction and assessment are made more explicit, and the practice of supervision in academic settings will not be exempt from these processes. Supervisors will be well advised to be more active in considering their practice in the light of these developments. Ronnestad and Skovolt (1993) refer to research which illustrates the qualitatively different reasoning processes and foci of expert practitioners and novices, and note that it is a challenge for the "senior practitioner ... to adjust one's knowledge and make it more usable for the beginner" (p. 399). Holloway (1992) also notes that supervisors need knowledge of instructional principles. These statements give further weight to the argument for the training of supervisors, and this study could perhaps make some contribution to such an endeavour. Referring to collaborative approaches to learning, Bruffee (1993) notes that in university education we have only recently "begun to develop the means to replace traditional foundational cognitive epistemology with another understanding of knowledge

equally powerful and more appropriate to present and future needs” (p. 171). It is imperative that supervisors consider such approaches to learning, in order to optimise the opportunities they have to enable trainees to develop in the one-to-one and small group context.

References in section 2.7 and the extended discussion in Chapter 5 have demonstrated the way in which theory from the fields of educational and cognitive psychology might profitably be used to deepen understandings of learning processes in supervision. I believe that the work of Vygotsky (1962, 1978) has illuminated a number of the key issues which emerged in the findings of this study, and that engagement with the work of activity theorists might cast further light on these phenomena. Furthermore, the very recent work exploring links between the theories of Vygotsky and Winnicott (1971) would appear to hold promise with regard to the understanding of the operation of interactional variables in supervision.

With regard to the methodology employed in this study, Holloway (1992) remarked that the “supervisory process as reflected in discourse has been of interest to a small group of researchers” (p. 205). Both Holloway (1995) and Skovolt and Ronnestad (1992b) have used qualitative approaches to good effect, and the value of dialogue as a data source is that demonstrates the meeting of two worlds of experience leading to a product which is creative and takes the participants beyond the place to which either would have moved alone. Grounded theory methodology seemed to hold much promise since Addison (1989, 1992) and Charmaz (1994) had used it in medical settings to good effect. In the case of this study, it proved to be useful, but challenging, given the constraints of my observations, and the fact that I was dealing with supervisory interactions rather than with interviews as my main sources of data. Also, since I was mainly working alone, it was not possible to engage in the team discussion which is evident in other examples of grounded theory. The approach of grounded theory is, however, flexible enough to permit the adaptation of other techniques in the development of an approach suited to the material, and at times I used techniques drawn from conversational analysis in order to illustrate my discussion. The ongoing reflective process of engaging with the data, with questions being re-examined and reformulated through the process, proved to be rewarding in terms of the emergent findings, and I look forward to trainees from other groups commenting on the utility and ‘fit’ of the model which resulted in 4.8.

In essence, this study recommends a shift away from the focus on traditional, hierarchical approaches to supervision to a consideration of the inclusion collaborative approaches which are based on philosophies of the construction of knowledge. In the methodology used, the study also demonstrated an inductive theory-building approach in contrast to other more deductive positivistic approaches. In both the collaborative learning and grounded theory approaches, there are limited examples of similar work, and as a researcher I often felt the anxiety of 'charting new waters'. However, the process has also felt creative and exciting at times, and my hope is that it will give impetus to further associated work.

6.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Since the study has been of an exploratory nature with the purpose of generating ideas and theory, the conclusions drawn have been tentative and are open to further exploration and adaptation. The study has many limitations, based on the circumscribed nature of the number of participants, the setting, the time frame, and the methodology used.

This study involved one group of interns, over a six month period, and the data collected consisted of the material from 9 PSG sessions, 5 ISV sessions, 1 focus group discussion and 3 individual interviews. Clearly an expansion of the study to other groups of trainees in other settings would have broadened the potential sources of variability in the data. Furthermore, a longer term approach, perhaps tracking the trainees over the two year period of their masters level training, and including greater participant detail along with narrative accounts of their subjective experiences at various stages, would have led to a far better account of their progress over the course of training.

The study purposely took the interns' perspective, since a great deal more research in the area of supervision has focussed on supervisors' perspectives, however this leads to the risk of the findings being rather one-sided. A more comprehensive study, including the reflections of the supervisors, and their opinions on the emergent findings, would have led to a more balanced view.

Robiner and Schofield (1990) note that almost all the supervision literature has focussed on the experiences of novices rather than more advanced practitioners. I acknowledge that this is a limitation of my study, however the difficulties of accessing practitioners who largely work in private practice in South Africa must also be noted.

It was also unfortunate that I was only able to work on the research for very limited periods of time during 1998, thus when I moved into further data analysis, some of the interns had moved on, and in the individual interviews which were six months after the last PSG, the interns found it difficult to remember some of the detail of their experiences (even though they were able to refer to the transcripts of the supervision sessions in which they had been the presenter).

A further limitation was my dependence on audio-tapes of the supervision processes. Video-taping in order to consider non-verbal and other interactive cues, and the gathering of accounts of the experience of supervision sessions from the presenter (and individual supervisor where relevant), as soon as possible after the session would have enhanced the data collected. The transcription of audio-tapes leads to the 'smoothing over' of gaps in interactional processes, and naturalistic observation would also have been helpful in gaining a fuller account. Also, the method of transcription used was not as rigorous as those used in forms of discourse analysis, thus more comprehensive transcriptions might have led to other interpretations emerging from the data.

I also need to mention the limitations of my own training as a qualitative researcher, and believe that more experienced researchers might very well analyse the data differently. Purists might argue that I have been too eclectic in my data analysis, and I acknowledge this as a possible limitation, however, I believe the test will come when others critique the work for its relevance to the experience of trainees. I have however, at times, been concerned that my analysis might still be too superficial, and look forward to working on the data with researchers steeped in the traditions of discourse analysis in order to develop the analysis further.

As an evaluative study, my work also has limitations. It is possible that the techniques of action research might have been better employed in a more formative study, or that I might have

employed other methods of evaluation in order to not only gain participants' views, but also to gather data from criterion-referenced measures. As noted above, more formal inclusion of the perspectives of supervisors would also have enhanced the study.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is an evident need for further research into a number of the issues already mentioned in this chapter. Furthermore, given that there have only been two theses on the topic of supervision of psychotherapy in South Africa to date, there is a pressing need for further research to be undertaken, whether in the form of replicating studies from other countries, evaluating the relevance of models of supervision already developed, or to investigate current experiences of trainees and/or practitioners.

With regard to PSG, the model investigated in this study seems to have the potential for further research and development. It would be interesting to track the process of a group over a longer period of time, with additional opportunities for trouble-shooting, and training in use of the model effectively. It would also be interesting to evaluate the utility of the model with trainees earlier in their training, with the possibility of using a comparison group exposed only to traditional supervision, to assess the contributions it might make. Furthermore, the utility of the model for practitioners also needs to be evaluated.

Then, given the need for training of counsellors in South Africa, and the changes in professional training which will lead to counsellors emerging after a four year first degree, the evaluation of various models of supervision in such contexts will be of great importance. The one PSG study of paraprofessionals located indicated that it was not as positively received at that level as at higher levels of training (Meyerstein, 1977). Furthermore, Bradley (1989) suggests that group supervision "represents a median level of supervision that presumes prior experience ... in individual supervision and that is preparatory to peer supervision" (p. 412). Research into PSG at novice levels would then prove to be very interesting.

There is no evidence of investigations of various forms of group supervision in South Africa, even though I suspect it is relatively widely used. Holloway (1992) asks the question: "What unique contribution does group supervision make ...?" (p. 206). Thus research into group supervision (with a supervisor present), establishing extent of its use, the types of models used, the forms of interaction, and the resultant effects of such supervision would be of value, particularly given the constraints on staff time in many training settings.

The limited nature of my investigation of the transcripts of ISV has alerted me to the need for a far more extensive examination of supervisory interactions. Close-grained analyses of the dialogues in order to examine the nature of the language usage and the philosophies underpinning the approaches would be of great value, particularly to inform the profession regarding the training needs of supervisors. Another idea for research would be to study the work of one supervisor with a number of different trainees in order to consider interactions, and the commonalities and differences across cases. A development on from such research would also be research into pre-training ISV, engagement in training interventions, and then post-training ISV, in order to evaluate the effects of training. Further research might also evaluate the comparative effects of different approaches to training.

More broadly, narrative and longitudinal accounts of the developmental process of psychotherapists in South Africa (similar to the work of Skovolt and Ronnestad, 1992b), is also necessary, as training institutes begin to emerge, and the competition between various training settings increases. Furthermore, in depth probing of the way in which external supervisory processes become internalised by practitioners, would also be of interest.

Then, the employment of other research methods, including surveys and well designed quantitative studies could result in valuable data being gathered regarding aspects of supervision in South Africa.

Lambert and Arnold (1987) conclude their review of research with the following:

Like psychotherapy research, research on supervision presents one method of understanding efforts to facilitate human growth and action. One may not expect any easy

answers from research, but creative efforts to seriously study psychotherapy supervision are bound to give rise to even more interesting questions and concerns than might be obtained without such efforts (p.223).

This quotation highlights the difficulties associated with research into psychotherapy supervision, a necessary endeavour if psychotherapeutic training practice is to advance. It also notes the questions and concerns which emerge from research, as evidenced by the discussion in the above two sections.

6.4 FINAL COMMENT

It is my hope that this thesis has provided a way for the voices of trainee psychotherapists to be heard, since their voices were so often neglected in earlier supervision research. In the foregrounding of the issues and concerns with which they have to grapple, it is my hope that in the making of policy regarding training, the policy-makers will give careful consideration to the needs of the consumers of their policy. There are often gaps between the policy created and real-world practice, as evidenced by the current challenge to the Professional Board of Psychology from almost one third of the registered psychologists in South Africa.

I am aware that the transforming of practice in education and training is a long-term undertaking, since established practice is rooted in the hidden influences of power and authority, however, I believe that the development of processes of ownership of and responsibility for learning are worthy causes. The value of collaborative endeavours lies in group energies and efforts, which if harnessed, can lead to substantive change. I gained great encouragement from the commitment and motivation I experienced from the participants in this study: it reminded me that people choosing careers in psychotherapy are willing to go the extra mile in their own development in order to enable them to be of assistance to others.

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APPENDIX A

To: Interns '98

Summary of our agreement for peer supervision group:

1. 9 sessions starting on 13 March - the need for all to be present at each agreed session unless absence unavoidable.
2. Roster of presenters and facilitators to be drawn up with dates, each person to have the opportunity to fill both roles.
3. Start promptly at 8:15 each meeting - group process takes approximately an hour (maybe slightly less), leaving last 15 mins (9:15 - 9:30) for any other needs to be raised.
4. Jacqui to be present at first 2 or 3 sessions, as observer and to support facilitator in the process aspects - will not join in the feedback, or contribute to the discussion.
5. Audiotaping of a couple of sessions is permissible, videotape would only be used if all participants comfortable (perhaps later in the process?)
6. Each participant is prepared to take an hour of CFC time to write up their reflections on experiences of supervision up to this point. What has been helpful/unhelpful, useful/not useful? Have differences in supervisor style affected your experiences? Have your expectations of approach and attitudes to supervision changed? (If so, how and why?) What do you hope to gain from supervision this year?
Please separate out individual and group supervision in your write-up, and hand in by 13/3/98.
7. Some participants (volunteers) will be interviewed at the beginning of the process, and further interviews will be negotiated.
8. Anonymity of all comments/responses will be safeguarded, and a focus group held after the 9 sessions to discuss the process and emerging findings.

This is an integrative model of supervision, developed by Wilbur et al (1991), which synthesises three concepts which have been found to be useful in training of therapists' skills. The three aspects relate to task orientation, personal growth and integration of personal and practice issues.

The phases of the model are listed below. Each phase requires 10 to 15 minutes of group time, and a group facilitator takes the responsibility for timekeeping. There is one presenter who has prepared material for the session.

PHASE ONE: Presentation and Request-for-Assistance Statement

These are the initial questions the presenter uses to frame the presentation: What are the facts? What was the process? What is the issue that you see you want help with?

The information may be in the form of a written case analysis concerning a counselling session or portions of an audio- or videotape.

Following the presentation of the summary information, the presenter completes a Request-for-Assistance Statement which specifies whether assistance is needed with regard to skill development, personal growth or integrative issues.

PHASE TWO: Questioning Period and Identification of Focus

Supervision group members question the presenter in order to obtain additional information and/or to better understand / clarify issues with regard to the Request-for-Assistance Statement. This is done by using a round-robin technique, where each group member asks one question; the cycle of questioning may be repeated.

The Focus is identified from the Request-for-Assistance Statement:

- 1) If skill development is requested, the focus of the group will be on the task.
- 2) If it has a personal growth nature, the goal is to increase personal insight and affective sensitivity.
- 3) If the integration of beliefs/ attitudes with a particular issue is presented, the focus will be on ways of considering the presenter's dilemma.

The identification of focus will impact on the next phase.

PHASE THREE: Feedback statements and discussion

During this phase, the presenter is instructed to remain silent and listen, ie. no responses to feedback are made - the presenter may, however, make notes. It is helpful in this phase to talk of the presenter in the third person, so s/he does not feel the need to respond.

After a short time for reflection, the round robin technique is again used and group members are encouraged to make productive suggestions. These suggestions need to be phrased as "I ..." statements. The facilitator must not engage in the feedback process, but needs to monitor the group process (discouraging judgemental comments and overly harsh criticism, and keeping the discussion to the identified focus).

A **pause period** then follows (about 5 mins), to give the presenter time to process the feedback. It is recommended that the presenter does not engage in conversation/discussion at this time.

PHASE FOUR: Presenter's response

The presenter responds to the feedback with regard to its utility, and is encouraged to say why the feedback was/was not beneficial.

The facilitator may allow an optional discussion period following the completion of the four phases, should time allow.

APPENDIX C

TO: All participants in the Interns' Peer supervision group

An update and request:

Firstly, thank you all for your participation in the process thus far. I have been transcribing the tapes, and have found these very helpful thus far. You will have been told that at this stage, I am needing X to present a second time, so there will be at least one more group meeting. We will then need to have a group discussion regarding your experience of the process as a group, and decide whether the process should continue, and whether any changes in format are needed.

Then, with regard to my researching the process, my research design has changed since we first spoke, due to my having further discussions with my supervisor. My proposed design is as follows: "to compare the content and process of peer-group supervision sessions with that of individual supervision sessions where the same case will be presented. Audio recordings of 4 intern psychologists during both modes of supervision will be made, and a pair-wise analysis of the transcripts will be undertaken by the researcher" (extract from my research proposal). This means that for 4 of you, I will use both the peer s/v tape and an individual s/v tape (some of you will already have been asked to do this). Once I have done the initial transcriptions and analyses, I would then request one more individual interview with each of the 4 to discuss my initial findings and to explore their experience of the two modalities of supervision further.

So, to my request: please will you each fill in the attached biographical questionnaire (in order to include some of the detail in my write-up). Please return these forms to me by internal mail.

If you have any problems with or questions about the research process, please let me know.

Thanks very much
Jacqui

APPENDIX C

Interns peer supervision group: Biographical questionnaire

Name:

Age:

Schools attended (& years):

Undergraduate degree (university, dates completed & majors):

Other training (diplomas, etc):

Honours or equivalent (university, year(s) & subjects):

Masters degree (university, year(s) & specialisations):

Work experience (before &/or during years prior to Masters):

During & post Masters experience in counselling and psychotherapy (other than internship):

In the realm of counselling and therapy, where do you believe you have appropriate competence (ie. areas in which you feel able to practice without further training?)

APPENDIX D

CASE PRESENTED	RFA'S/QUESTIONING	DISCUSSION	FEEDBACK
<p>2). Female, 8; English Second Language;(CFC) REF: Aggression, school difficulties, enuresis Family History: Abusive 3 children, different fathers. Recent move, mother in new relationship. Mother: limited insight or ability to nurture. Index patient: Lack of imagination, difficulty responding to material, rigidity, controlling of others.</p>	<p>1). Limited time - how to proceed using play modality. 2). How to include child's support system. (Strategies - ? skill development?) 13 x questions regarding aggression; signs of abuse; relationship with mother's new man (index patient and mother); sister's relationship; former home and parent's divorce; stability of current situation; number of sessions.</p> <p>3 x comments: clarifying understanding (including "loving her to death" and "where we can find men like this")</p>	<p>1). Around whether play therapy can help because of environment and short number of sessions. Suggestion to then refer on and limited stimuli eg: Sceno - debate ways to access imagination. <u>Est</u>/maintaining frame - but concern regarding changing therapy. 2) Regarding filial therapy and including mother, even if in limited way, perhaps separate from Index patient's therapy. 3). Question regarding including of sister and 'uncle' and family type intervention. Question regarding mother continuing and <u>his</u> agenda 4). 2nd Question - facilitator interjects: Question regarding church, teacher, oldest sister (but ?relationship with baby). 5). Back to intervention with 'uncle' 6). Question regarding 'uncle's' family and X_non-verbal responses. 7). Back to therapy to continue - referral on.</p>	<p>1). Concern regarding working with this mother therefore unsure of mother's capacity for filial work. 2). Liked idea of family therapy. 3). Question how to empower mother. 4). Concern regarding bringing in sister - ? Fragility / giving to much responsibility. 5). Support containing space, and limited specific stimuli 6). Idea of church seems good. Concern regarding teacher's motives. 7). Anyone willing to do a classroom observation? 8). Oldest sister- limited time available.</p> <p>Overall says found helpful.</p>

		<p>8). Mother and <u>path</u> attachment. Question mother's depression.</p> <p>9). Facilitator then asks for comments regarding client's handling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- able to connect- mother continue coming- complexity of case.	
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<u>CASE PRESENTED</u>	<u>RFA'S/QUESTIONING</u>	<u>DISCUSSION</u>	<u>FEEDBACK</u>
<p>3). Male, 19; 2nd year, (SCC) Counselling needed because mother died 4 years back - ? Coping <u>depersonal / 2</u> - defense religion, important on maternal side - Jehovah Witness(only male in family) Fa = alcoholic Some <u>Rx</u> drug - depression absent / <u>evong church</u>. Therapy = difficult - exhausted, helpless after; silences; switches out when talks of mother. But experiences mother-type people as not meeting his needs. Girlfriend idealised.</p>	<p>1). Mode of working - Object Relations or Cognitive because depressed, that is - theoretical framework // skills. 2). Personal growth - difficult with "mothering in therapy" 27 Questions = in Question 3 statements = Phase Relationship with mother - 4 Dream relationship with mother Age at her death Speculating <u>enmeshed?</u> Terms schizo and mania (2x) Mother's last <u>mother / ashes</u> Mother's faith (3) Behaviour when depersonal</p> <p>Other therapy - why, time 1 statement Guilt regarding mother's death Living arrangements then and now Tension mother and father Relationship with girlfriend? Relationship with friend? Relationship with grandmother / other family females Other activities <u>Therapy - related</u> Mother transference attendance</p>	<p>1).Difficulty of Object relations - suggest Cognitive Behavioural Therapy - depression. 2). Transference of mother's relationship - Object relations work with it VS. fuzzy boundaries, dreams = valuable. 3). Difficulty of separating mothering issue. 4). Circle back to CBT therefore difficulty talking re: mother - suggestion to work with CBT manifestly but use O.R. to understand. 5). Suggestion - narrative approach regarding self - construction. 6). Circle back to support. 7). Role of religion - ambivalence because father's behaviour yet promise of heaven. 8). Mother's death as unfinished business. 9). Primitive splitting - trapped in relationship with mother, influences relationship with girlfriend 10). ? Friend's perceptions (few) 11). Use of other rituals - face issues.</p>	<p>1). Helpful - CBT and OR 2). ? Rituals suggestions 3). Comments regarding therapy as mothering - helpful. 4).? Further explanation of narrative approach - given by <u>X</u> = re-storying 5).Details regarding funeral and need for some faith. 6). Relationship with mother now clearer - needs to separate, not be in present - film suggested. 7). Presence of mother - tolerate until he's ready - time needed, but never allowed self to process. 8). Need for external object to live for - but is achieving better this year.</p> <p>In this feedback, the discussion continues, seems fruitful.</p>

CASE PRESENTED	RFA QUESTIONING	DISCUSSION	FEEDBACK
<p>4). Female, 18; different religion (SCC). (Same race group) Client from traditional extended family, first to UNW, has to take on child - minding role - conflict because boyfriend in Jhb., pressurising to move there, be with his seemingly more loving family and work. (Not be dependent on her parents) and her parents wanting her to complete degree before thoughts of marriage. Therefore double - bind because wants to please on both sides ? Level of depression.</p>	<p>Did not arrive to sixth session (possibly end of contract). Regular attendance up to then. - ?<u>Task / Transference Focus</u></p> <p>Questions regarding case/biographical details : 9</p> <p>Comments regarding case details : 3</p> <p>Questions regarding therapy process : 4</p> <p>Question to clarify RFA : 1</p> <p>(Facilitator interrupted questioning and seems quite (mis)directive!</p>	<p>A very good sense of dialogue / interchanges between participants - (all contribute).</p> <p>1). 4 contributors debate client in context of separation - individuation conflicts and possibly not wanting to disappoint therapist's expectations by not deciding but therapist pushing too fast (maybe)</p> <hr/> <p>Facilitator appropriately comment regarding 'you' statements.</p> <hr/> <p>2). Hypothesis re; embarrassed because exposed to much in previous session.</p> <p>3). Empathy with therapist concerns "doing wrong" whereas reasons may be practical (examples).</p> <p>4). Question regarding contacting Did Not Arrive clients.</p> <p>5). More positive framing of client making her own decision; <u>wait don't hypothesise</u></p> <hr/> <p>1 Participant asks to repeat RFA, another member responds.</p> <hr/> <p>6). Cultural explanation given by peer of same culture, group ask re: details; individuation/enmeshment - comments</p> <p>3). Recycle to this topic - suggestion of different self talk because DNA's hook critical self-talk.</p>	<p>(Longest feedback) - Quite useful both external reflection of her inner debates but also new ideas. "All these hypotheses have a resonance for me".</p> <p>"I think she did feel quite pressured or an expectation to move the stuckness".</p> <p>"My sense of needing to move the stuckness at the last session".</p> <p>"It could have been quite a big step.."</p> <p>"I think that letting go is a healthy thing"....Some responsibility because I do feel I did push".</p> <p>"Felt quite good...nice to hear that articulated....wait and see what happens".</p> <p>Cross - cultural issues needing attention. "It really is quite a struggle working in that interface between cultures".</p> <p>COMMENTS: "But...whole issue of self...for me it was at a deeper level". LAST COMMENT: But this DNA decision might inhibit</p>

	<p>4). Recycle to not phoning 5)Recycle to client making own choices. 4). 1 x reference to own supervision re: phoning. 5). Use of case material to give example and relate to presenting issue of lack of autonomy. 6). Recycle to cultural systemic issues and imposing Western mindset. 7). Suggestion of possibly solution. 6). Recycle to debate round culture - disagreement and empathy with client's position (from culture - near peer)</p>	<p>return because she might fear what therapist thinks / be awkward (link to phoning).</p> <p>Acknowledges need to “be more aware of where she was at which I don’t think I did too well”</p> <p>Important “the way we go about doing it” RE: culture “encapsulation”.</p>
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CASE PRESENTED	RFA'S/QUESTIONING	DISCUSSIONS	FEEDBACK
<p>5). Female, 15; Gr 5, mentally retarded (CFC). Born when mother was 15; father killed 3 years ago; lived with grandmother in Pietermaritzburg. School problems, behaviour problems especially promiscuity, faulty memory, Borderline I.Q., needing Zulu school</p>	<p>1). Decision-making re how to proceed after assessment.</p> <p>Questions regarding case / biographical details :21</p> <p>Comment regarding case details: 1</p> <p>Questions regarding intervention: 2</p>	<p>1). School placement / lack of resources especially for Zulu first language.</p> <p>2). Client Needs: Social skills training, sexuality education, vs sexually transmitted diseases, Structure: behaviour programme. Therapy not recommended.</p> <p>3). Parenting identification for possible intervention, but concerns regarding mother's insight.</p> <p>4)Empathy with client, suggest school intervention.</p> <p>1). Recycle to possible school placements and need for information, possible sources.</p> <p>3). Recycle to parents, giving more skills.</p> <p>5). Discussion regarding possible aetiology and problem of teenage pregnancy.</p> <p>3).Recycle to mother - expectations and commitment.</p> <p>2). Recycle to other interventions and client limitations <i>cf?</i> therapy.</p> <p>6). Reference to another case - equivalent diagnosis of mental retardation and resultant needs.</p> <p>5). Recycle to possible birth/congenital cause and lack of history.</p> <p>Raises issue with regard to M2's lack of knowledge of Special Education /</p>	<p>Very short -</p> <p>- M1 says "I had no answers, nothing to say to them".</p> <p>- Therefore behavioural issues / school issues - material.</p> <p>- Need to help both child and parents.</p>

		<p>Raises issues with regards to M2's lack of knowledge of Special Education / diagnosis of mental retardation.</p> <p>Also issues regarding history taking and probing of parents.</p> <p>Oscillation between some wanting to empathise with client / parents and others more pragmatic.</p>	
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CASE PRESENTED	RFA'S / QUESTIONING	DISCUSSION	FEEDBACK
<p>6). Female, 19; different culture (SCC). Issues with regard to university life different to family. Aggression and control issues. Also family has identity issues - 2 different religions and break away from families of origin. REF: Wants to assert herself, but powerless at home - tension of different worldviews / personas in different settings.</p>	<p>1). How to handle case - religious /cross - cultural issues. - identity and family tensions</p> <p>Therapist feels stuck “ I don’t know how to work with this case”.</p> <p>Questions re case details: 24</p> <p>Comment regarding case details (someone same background) : 3</p> <p>Question regarding therapist understanding of role of therapy : 2</p>	<p>1). Toughness of situation - 2 x empathic statements - initial discussion emphasises complexity of client’s family/cultural issues - <u>difficulty / difference?</u> Of intervention. - Advice for therapist “ be there for her” - i.e. supportive role - therapeutic stance.</p> <p>2). Helping client also to understand where parents’ attitude comes from; but not neglecting client’s sense of aloneness.</p> <p>3). Back to therapeutic stance of being “actively non-active”.</p> <p>4). Reflection regarding problem a number of clients have normalising =</p> <p>5). Issue of late adolescent individuation and identity and difficulty of conflicting contexts = ongoing struggle.</p> <p>6). Suggestion regarding strategies to deal with parent.</p>	<p>1). Agreement with need to take non-directive stance.</p> <p>2). Supportive normalising - seeing situation in broader context. (*IMPORTANT: Usefulness of some peers having emerged from similar conflicts).</p> <p>3). Adds information regarding reflections to client from parents’ perspective - gives support to a therapeutic stance already taken.</p> <p>4). Consideration of strategies to deal with parent.</p> <p>5). Indications of no longer ‘feeling stuck’: “ It has given me an idea how to move from where I am with her”.</p>

CASE PRESENTED	RFA'S/QUESTIONING	DISCUSSION	FEEDBACK
<p>7). Male, 7 years old; Grade 2 (CFC). REF: by principal: 1). Socialising with adults ,not peers. 2). Sexual abuse 3). Mother seemingly passive in above. Difficulty connecting with mother; school very active role but problematic.</p>	<p>1). How to get mother more involved? 2). How to work in play therapy with child resistant to play - just wants to talk? 3). How to deal with school and practicalities of therapy.</p> <p>Questions regarding case details:16</p> <p>(Child's characteristics; details regarding contact with mother; mother's attitudes, characteristics; school and their responsibility; baby and mother; family support; aftercare arrangements).</p> <p>Questions regarding therapy details: 10 How started, number and detail of sessions; capacity to engage; any assessment.</p> <p>6 Statements 4= interpretations of behaviour; 1=factual;1 = interpretation of school attitude.</p>	<p>1). Discussion around approaches to play assessment, ways of engaging child; including 2 peers referring to own experiences with difficult play cases. 2). Brief comment regarding school disempowering mother. 3). Discussion of strategies to deal with school, teacher, aftercare. 4). Recycling to dealing with abused children and some discussion of child's framing of coming to CFC. 5). Recycling to dealing with school over therapy arrangements (and one refers to own experience with school). 6). Strategies for involving mother - using phone, letter; empathy with mother's position. 7). Recycle back to school's excess of referrals; difficulties with principal, and another peer reflects on similar experience. Decision to ask for intervention from CFC management; but recognition of care in dealing with school to keep co-operation.</p>	<p>1). School strategies - social training, star chart, reinforce group involvement, <u>play</u>. 2). Use of puppets, reframing, aim to get her to play - PLAY as a positive experience. 3)Contact with mother - empathy, letters, phone calls. 4). Ambivalent regarding structured / unstructured play. 5). Says twice that discussion was very helpful.</p>

<u>CASE PRESENTED</u>	<u>RFA'S / QUESTIONING</u>	<u>DISCUSSION</u>	<u>FEEDBACK</u>
<p>8). Female, approx. 20 years old; varsity, (SCC). Primary issue - family related especially father; mother seems distant; older brother deceased. Then new boyfriend; different culture - deceit and difficulties with family and evolved into relationship problems with him. Case complicated by social contacts because mutual friends - disclosure to therapist of information not raised in therapy.</p>	<p>Complex case, what needs to be handled first? (Also issues of boundaries and confidentiality (- <u>cf</u> files and client concern))</p> <p>Questions regarding case/biographical details: 25</p> <p>Comment regarding case details: 13</p> <p>Questions of interventions thus far: 5</p>	<p>1). Discussed contamination of therapy because of other contacts and therapist's role - need to be more upfront, but also questioning such a stance.</p> <p>2). Concerns regarding client opting out of responsibility and later consequences of that. (See 4)</p> <p>3). Transference - dumping everything on therapist.</p> <p>4). Concerns regarding client's 'calmness' - query feeling overwhelmed and possible depressive reaction.</p> <p>5). Therapist's role possibly in psychoeducative way - some specific suggestions (and a strategic suggestion).</p> <p>6). Identify priority for support system to be strengthened for client and exploration of possibilities in family / extended family (presenter drawn in for 3 biographical questions).</p> <p>5). Recycling to therapist's role - psychoeducational, support; suggested contact of other professionals.</p> <p>3). Recycling to transference and then to (1) being upfront to friends.</p> <p>292</p>	<p>1). Found suggestions helpful</p> <p>a). psychoeducational in terms of options.</p> <p>b). Link to other professionals.</p> <p>2). Argued against being upfront regarding issues with friends because fears of destroying trust and losing client.</p> <p>3). Extensive discussion regarding developing support - concerns regarding both family members' capacity / agendas and friends' capacity.</p> <p>4). Recycle to initial agreement regarding contacting other professionals - <u>now?</u> concerns regarding facilitating.</p> <p>5). Recycle to psychoeducational and friends (Cursive.....)</p>

<u>CASE PRESENTED</u>	<u>RFA'S/QUESTIONING</u>	<u>DISCUSSION</u>	<u>FEEDBACK</u>
<p>9). Female, 26; (SCC). REF: Question depression; break-up with boyfriend; mother issues. Parents - moved countries, conflict and separation. Father died (when Index patient age 12). 91 - 93 B.A. 95 Honours 94,96 - 97 Work experience Low self esteem, guilt, current behaviour - content of 12 sessions.</p>	<p>1). Understanding of Transference/Counter transference. 2). Work with “all or nothing type thinking’ - feeling stuck.</p> <p>Questions regarding case/biographical details : 16</p> <p>Questions regarding therapy : 3</p>	<p>1). About client’s way of constructing relationships and reasons for <u>depression/dependence on relationship with boyfriend. ?/</u> 2). Systemic issues - suggestion of a strategic approach and normalising experimenting -type behaviour. 3). Too much rational “talk about talk” - need to shift. 4). Refer to another client with similar mother issues - struggle for control. 5). Shift back to (1) and (2) regarding role modelling possibilities, expectations and script for abandonment.</p>	<p>1). *cursive* Strategic ideas = helpful with regards to shifting thinking. 2). Helpful to consider abandonment and possibility of that impacting on therapy.</p>

<u>CASE PRESENTED</u>	<u>RFA'S/QUESTIONING</u>	<u>DISCUSSION</u>	<u>FEEDBACK</u>
<p>10). Family therapy - (CFC). <u>External</u> system and number of therapists involved. 2 teenage girls - index patient's - sexual abuse. Aim of group therapy - to open up communication difficulties with attendance and making session arrangements. Shift has been away from abuse issues.</p>	<p>1). How to proceed in terms of treatment centre mandate / seeming over-service of system.* 2). What is presenter's role as therapist? *Clash with personal system of understanding cases.</p> <p>Questions regarding case/biographical details: 7</p> <p>*Comments regarding case details: 5</p> <p>Intervention details = 7</p> <p><i>*Extensive comments from another therapist = 7 and answers questions versus presented doing so. Facilitator intervenes because issues don't related to presenter.</i></p>	<p>1). Initial lengthy discussion regarding treatment centre's mandate; issues of referral, crisis intervention and staffing are discussed. 2). Complexity of elements in this case and basic systemic issue. 3). Suggestion of possibly working with dyads, triads, and referral. 4). Recycle to systemic discussion regarding abuse - "abuse becomes a container" and staffing of child-line. 5). Discussion of this family system as dominated by matriarchs. 6). Query whether presenter can make headway given power of system. 7). Information given regarding index patients' wanting to be part of the group therapy. 8). Question regarding suitability of family work at this stage - Link to (3) and suggestion to split into subsystems - but resources makes this problematic. 9). End with comment regarding possible referral resources.</p>	<p>(EXTENSIVE).</p> <p>1). "We need clear boundaries for our work...the <u>nub</u> of the issue for me". 2). Initial request was to do marital therapy. Therapist chose to do family work (new information) <u>?because?</u> wanted to work in limited scope. 3). Abuse as the container - accepted - seems illustrated in case; but also paradoxically Child - line by its name highlights the abuse issue. 4). System enmeshed, hence choice of family therapy and also levels of secretiveness therefore rejects idea of subsystems. 5). Concerned regarding referring on but some possibility. 6). Ends with reflection on theoretical basis of systems theory as inclusive and uses interns' own work environment as example.</p>

APPENDIX E

Descriptive summary of PSG6 - ISV6

The therapist:

N. is a female in her mid-twenties. She attended high school at a 'progressive' private school. She did both her undergraduate and postgraduate training, in counselling psychology, at the university concerned in the study, and has little other work experience. She is an assertive person with quite well-developed ideas about her preferred mode of working therapeutically (an active stance in a cognitive-behavioural framework).

The case:

The client is a female student from a different cultural group from the therapist. The major issue seems to be conflict between (and within) the family & the varsity context. The family is still rooted in traditional approaches to women's positions, and this is the first family member who has come to varsity; but this is complicated even more by two religious traditions within the family which has led to some sense of alienation from extended family structures. The client wants to establish her own identity, and assert herself, but is feeling powerless at home; and feels the stress of needing to behave in two opposing ways in the home and student settings.

The PSG RFA:

The therapist reports feeling stuck with how to proceed. She is aware that she should not be directive; and the complexities of the religious, cultural and identity issues concern her. (To an extent this is a combination of RFA categories 1 & 2 - skill related but also has impact on personal stance of therapist)

The PSG discussion and N.'s feedback:

Initially my impression of the discussion was that it seemed to be a disjointed collage of ideas, however, re-consideration seems to indicate that comments reflect the situation which is complex, and this impacts on N.'s difficulties in finding ways to intervene.

- Some of the comments on the complexity are couched in phrases which seem empathic to the client's position: "it's a very tough situation" & "Quite hard really"; and the need for the therapist to consider "alternative worldviews about the family". These seem to be brought together in a longer statement from one of the peers (who comes from a similar cultural background as the client) which in essence gives advice: "the most N. can do is just be there for her ... understand her, ... support her". After a digression into two other themes, another peer suggests: "the thing is to be very actively non-active; you can't take one position or the other". N. agrees with the need to take a non-directive stance in her feedback: "I shouldn't go and change her or anything".
- Another theme relates to helping the client understand where the parents' attitude comes from, and not neglecting the client's sense of aloneness; this suggestion is prefaced by "I've got a client that's in exactly the same position". This seems to enable N. to say in her feedback that she has put the perspective to her client that "the whole extended family is actually quite threatened by her".
- A number of the interns reflect that they have clients in similar situations and one says "It seems a quite common problem ... A lot of people present with". ie. This may play a role of normalising for both the therapist concerned, and indirectly related to her work with the client. N. agrees with possibly normalising the situation "so that she knows that her situation is not bad or wierd ... that other people go through it as well"
- A further emergent issue is of late adolescent individuation and identity development, made more difficult by the conflicting messages in different contexts, and that this is an ongoing developmental issue.
- A suggestion of a strategy for dealing with the client's more problematic parent is made- this is given consideration by N. as possibly useful.

- N. reports that the input has been "valuable" and "it has given me an idea of how to move from where I'm at with her". it thus seems as if she is no longer feeling stuck (which she reported in her RFA).

To summarise: N. has a very active, problem-oriented style of therapy, but realises that it is inappropriate to this case. A different sort of approach is required from her, and that leads to her experiencing this as a struggle. She seems that in this cross-cultural work it would be an imposition of a different worldview. Also, N. as therapist possibly gained a sense of herself not being alone - other peers had similar cases. So, it doesn't seem as if PSG generated a host of new ideas; but rather that some of the suggestions were confirmatory of her approach; or to make more clearly some links to developmental theory (in terms of individuation/identity issues).

The ISV process

- First presentation of this case to ISV. N. takes control of the case presentation (quite explicitly - response to supervisor's question "I'll come to that"), which takes up the first quarter of the session. N seems to need to take some control of her presentation, and presents some aspects of the case which emerged in the PSG discussion.

- In the second quarter of the session, the supervisor takes more active probing role though, when she starts to ask some countertransference-type questions - I wondered whether N. was ready or prepared for these, because her presentation falters a little; and seems to be driven by sv's agenda (which is not explicit in the words used). There is no reference to what N. might be asking/requesting (ie. seems to take power away from N. to determine her own learnings) until last quarter of ISV.

- The supervisor initiates a discussion regarding the client's personality. It may be that the supervisor was probing N.'s ability to characterise a client and this could have an evaluative dimension. The positive side of this strategy might be to open up the possibility of N. shifting or filling out her perception of the client; but N. is hesitant and becomes less fluent, indicating some difficulties with this strategy. This leads to the supervisor reflecting on N's feeling of stuckness (which mirrors N's RFA in the PSG). The supervisor perhaps senses N's difficulty with this change in approach, and modifies it by a better phrasing of the questioning, which is clearer in terms of her aims as supervisor, and may be seen as less evaluative: "let's just go back a little bit, I'm still trying to get a sense of who she is and a feeling for her. If you're putting yourself in her place, sensing the world as she experiences it, what does it feel like to be her?" Thus the supervisor senses the difficulties N. is experiencing and changes her approach. This enables N. to phrase her sense of the client differently, and her laughter might indicate relief that the supervisor accepts her answer. The supervisor then makes a summarising comment which shows her more in touch with the client's frame of reference (this may be a strategy to model a way of giving words to an empathic position). This enables N. to talk about her difficulty working with the client and the impact of the client's home context in the working together (and imposing a particular approach which may be problematic in the home).

- The supervisor then introduces another change in tack by asking about the mother (much of the discussion thus far has focussed on the father); and evaluates the mother as "quite a powerful woman" and speculates how the mother might be a role model. They then move onto a discussion of the family system in interaction, and the way in which the client is reduced to feeling very young within it. The supervisor's style becomes much more exploratory, enabling N. to seem to participate more confidently and say that, with regard to her family the client "gets very frustrated by it, ... she feels she needs to assert herself more ..." The supervisor uses 'mms' in an encouraging way. From a content perspective this section seems to have the potential to be helpful, but I'm not sure how much it is in touch with N.'s needs regarding assistance with the case. (I wondered whether this was a case of being 'force fed' a particular way of working?)

- The supervisor then shifts again in the last quarter, first asking what the client wants from therapy, and then "what do you feel you'd like to get out of talking about it?" ie. a type of RFA. N. seems to find it

difficult to respond to this at this point, ending with "so to find a way she can exist in both worlds without challenging". But the supervisor does not probe this. She gives advice, suggesting an approach where the client imagines various scenarios and their consequences. N's response is overt agreement, and an interruption to say she's done some of it; however, a little further on shows her uncertainty about using this approach in "so it's quite safe with her to actually just explore the whole thing ... rather than just sort of entrenching ideas in her head you know?" It feels like N. is placing herself in a one-down position, but wanting further clarity. The supervisor phrases the technique as exploratory, and N. responds "because I'm very wary of umm **empowering** her to go against umm which really is in case she ends up ... totally ostracised". The supervisor then responds reassuring her of the client being sensible.

- There are two evaluative comments from the supervisor at this point regarding N's handling of the case as "very positive". N. then responds with a comment which seems to originate from PSG rather than from the supervisor's advice: "...I think I'm trying to do, just to normalise her situation you know..." The supervisor then adapts that comment to her suggestions of questioning as exploratory, and then moves towards closure. She then asks N whether she enjoys seeing the client, but N seems reluctant to reopen countertransference-type talking or prolong the session, so she comments briefly and moves instead to her role: "just to not do it for her but to let her do it for herself". The supervisor picks up on this and closes by saying "so you've got to restrain yourself and just take a step back ... and just explore together".

On face value, the ISV seems to offer new perspectives, and provides a fuller exploration of the case than PSG. PSG looks a little superficial and disjointed. However, N.'s comments after and some of the speech signs within ISV and PSG feedback indicate that her experience was of the PSG as more helpful. The PSG stays much more with her, her experience & peers formulation of some of the case issues. It seems as if she was able to hear that, whereas she wasn't ready for the fuller explanations given in ISV. Perhaps she didn't feel secure enough in her own understandings, or in her relationship with the ISV. Was the supervisor 'hearing' where N. was at enough before moving on? This raises the issues of pacing and readiness - both issues regarding interpretations in therapy as well.

Descriptive summary of psv - isv 7

The therapist:

O. is in her mid-twenties. She did all her training at a neighbouring university, and majored in social work. She undertook a one year social work internship, and had experience working in a rehabilitation centre. Her M1 was a theoretical course, so she had to do an additional 6 month practical training prior to undertaking this internship. She generally displays a positive attitude to the training site and supervision, and is willing to be up-front when experiencing difficulties. She does not state a preference for one therapeutic mode over another.

The case

A seven year-old female referred by her school after she had reported an instance of sexual abuse; the school are also concerned about her difficulties socialising with her peers - she tends to seek attention from her teachers; her mother seems to have taken a passive role, with the school reporting the abuse, and prompting the referral. The therapist experiences difficulties drawing the mom into the process, and initially cannot conduct a traditional intake interview. The therapist and child are from two different cultural groups - issue is raised in case material of ISV but not in PSG.

The PSG RFA's:

- 1) How to get the mother more involved?
- 2) How to work in a play modality with a child who doesn't want to play - she just wants to talk?

3) How to deal with the school regarding their roles; and organising the practicalities of getting the child to and from therapy?

The PSG discussion and O.'s feedback responses:

The content of the discussion seems connected and coherent even though there are instances of re-cycling back to issues not completely covered, but from differing perspectives. The discussion seems both complex and full to me as the listener/reader.

- From a theoretical perspective, the initial part of the PSG discussion had the potential to be problematic. The first topic was around approaches to play assessment, and starting off play therapy. At the beginning of the year I had presented a whole workshop on play assessment to this group, yet it seemed from both the presenter's approach and some of the interns' comments that this had not been remembered. This is partially taken up by one of the members of the group (and she remarked to me afterwards that she was amazed at the lack of remembering of that workshop). A part of turning this issue into a constructive discussion came from one of the interns who reflected on a similar difficult case where his client is "eleven, going on forty". In this case the therapist is strictly led by the client: "the activity will be dictated by her ... if she's rolling the ball, hey it's therapy". Both of these comments evoked laughter from the group and I think this enabled a possible conflict to be worked through. This was then followed by another peer talking about similar difficulties in a case and the use of a much more structured approach eg. using metaphorical stories, and collaborative discovery. In her feedback, O. reflects that the suggestions of different ways of approaching play therapy were helpful, although she says she's "two-minded about the structured/unstructured approach to therapy, but the suggestion that possibly the aim is to get her to play, I like a lot,... a good place for her to start".

- The peer who gave the examples of a more structured approach above then continues to talk about her experience of a mother who resisted any type of involvement ending with "and basically your hands are tied, there's not a lot that you can do". This statement could be seen as passive, but might also have been construed as empathic. This then seems to signal comments from another peer who views the school as having disempowered the mom, and that some strategies for involving her need to be tried. After a number of turns on other topics occurs (3 & 4 below), the discussion returns to strategies for involving the mother by using phone and/or letter, progress reports, and being encouraging, showing empathy to the mother regarding her position. This is developed further by a peer saying "it just could be, not that she doesn't care, but that she feels terribly guilty and is absolutely scared to even face something". Then an exploration of ways of joining with the mother takes place, the reasoning is if she's not involved, what develops in play therapy is "just going to get eroded...". This culminates in one of the contributors saying "you go all the way back to good old Maslow's hierarchy and these moms simply don't have the time, the money, the energy, to be present...". In her feedback, O. takes the suggestions of contact with the mother, saying "I think a very empathic stance with mom is very useful, and I'm going to start doing that as well".

- The discussion then moves on to strategies to deal with the school - greater contact with her teacher and the person running the aftercare with suggestions of some sort of behaviour modification for independent work in class and socialising with other children. After some digression (mentioned below), the thought that the school "have abdicated so much here, just leaving it for someone else to deal with" is broached, and related to the difficulties getting the client to and from therapy. A warning against being "too cavalier with the school" emerges because "we now have a responsibility to this little girl in her own right" (note the taking of a 'we' stance which would seem to indicate solidarity with the presenter). The suggestion of a greater involvement of the school is clarified; and another intern reflects on difficulties she's experienced with the same school principal being demanding, ending in "I'd be like dead scared of getting her. I think to get the mom involved somehow ...that's really first prize I think". After re-cycling to strategies for involving the mother discussed above, the topic returns to the school with "sounds like it's a principal that needs to be sidelined very energetically". This is tempered again with a call for diplomacy, but concerns are raised about the number of referrals and the way they are handled by the school. This appears to be a difficulty a number of interns have experienced and one summarises by saying "I just acknowledge the referral, I say to

him, 'okay, I'll deal with the parents, and I got a call the other day saying what's happening you know, I said we discussed it with the parents and we just agreed we'd deal with it at home.' I think you've got to be quite careful getting to aggressive ... he could be a fire-spitting dragon" this leads to a lot of laughter. The discussion then ends with a suggestion that CGC management take up the issues with the school to encourage co-operation and not the dumping of problems. O.'s feedback indicates that the suggestions of "giving the responsibility for social training back to the school" and the star chart idea are "quite useful and I'll try that out".

- Half-way through the discussion, one participant refers to one of the RFA's: "the other question was how to work with the child who's disclosing abuse, and doesn't want to play" followed immediately with a response: "I'd try getting her to tell the story with puppets again" and then another suggestion about using the colour of the anger. This then leads to a long pause and then the question "Why does she think she's here?" and an interchange which indicates that they want a response from O., the presenter, and one says "Oh come on talk ..." to which O. replies "I'm not quite sure why she's here, but I did sort of ask her if she was scared to be here initially, and she said no..." The first questioner then says "'coz I wondered what she thought she was coming to see". This is the one example where the flow of the discussion seems more disjointed. It is interesting that one of the discussants rather than the facilitator brings up an RFA and then 4 turns later requests a break in the 'rules' amid general group laughter; however, O. is not able to be that helpful, and the discussion moves away. Related to the above response to the RFA, in the feedback, O. says "I also like the idea of when she relates a story to me of using the puppets ... I'll introduce that, and take her through that again, reframing the experience." She thus fills out the idea given- it possibly reminded her of a strategy that may be used when dealing with child abuse.

- Finally, O. comments both at the beginning of her feedback and at the end that the discussion was very helpful.

The ISV process

My initial reaction to the session was that it felt like a check-up on what was happening in the case. The session seems quite disjointed, it seems to go back and forth between themes. There is some sense of the supervisor (S) wanting a factual account of what's happening in the sessions, but S. tries to get O. to deepen her reflections, in order to articulate her aims and goals; as well as to think about case management.

On further examination, there seem to be a variety of S. questions and statements, which seem to indicate that the sv is trying to achieve a number of goals such as support, a greater understanding of the process for herself, challenging O. to think more broadly than the issues of the moment and to think longer term. There thus seems to be an oscillation between challenge and support.

The session starts with O. expressing discomfort at being taped, and S. responds reassuringly "I'm the one who's being listened to, having the tables turned on me here."

There appear to be 6 phases in this session. The first starts with O. talking about her last session and that there had been a shift towards more play. This is the 2nd presentation of this client and S. identifies her as "your pseudo-mature little girl". As O. recounts the session details, the S. intersperses questions which probe factual details before asking about O.'s reflections, intentions and goals. As O. responds, showing some hesitancy, S. adds in words which seem supportive, going along with O.'s formulation. The section ends with S. summarising her interpretation of the child's material "Sometimes it's scary to be a child, sometimes it's scary not to know the answers ... remember what we said, this whole thing ... protecting her against her vulnerability in the situation."

2nd phase: S. immediately then switches to asking whether O. had made a recording, which leads O. to speak about her brief meeting earlier that day with the mother (who hadn't signed consent for recording); in which O. followed up on the PSG suggestions of a letter and notebook to the mom. This move is supported

and taken further by S's conjecture of how to draw the mom in, and the child's response to communication with mom. O. has some concerns because she reports the client had said to her early on: "...don't tell mom, will you promise not to tell mom what I'm saying'...", so she asks about issues of trust. S. mimics how she might approach it with the girl in the next session: "...mommy got the book, did you read the book together, and you've brought the book back to me, not shall we write to mommy, what shall we write?" to keep a sense of openness rather than secrecy. O. concludes this section saying "I'll take my lead from her", thus asserting her need to be responsive to the client.

3rd phase: O. then takes the lead regarding her chief concern of the moment which relates to frame management: the client had not been picked up after the last session which had necessitated O. waiting with her and then taking her to her aftercare. S. recommends contact with the teacher to clarify arrangements since it had been awkward for O. relating to the child outside of the therapy session. S. reflects after their interchange: "you can see now the reason for keeping the frame, and again the difficulty of working with a child in this way" (where the school takes responsibility for practicalities).

4th phase: S. then asks O. to go back to the content of the session. As O. introduces the beginning of the session, S. asks "so you feel it was the right thing to take this child into therapy even though the situation isn't ideal?" O. responds in the affirmative, and adds reflections about having made a commitment to the child (which might have been foregrounded from the PSG discussion). She then describes the games played in the last session and the client's need to win. S. asks about her reflections to the child, but mentions her need to see a tape to assess the timing of the interventions, even though O. says the timing seems okay.

S. then starts to question and comment about the development of a relationship in the context of time-limited therapy, however, O. then seems to remember details of the frame break context where the child became preoccupied with O. being of a different race group, and the child wanting to be the same; and O. responding "it's okay to be different". S. then asks O. what she thinks about "the situation", and O. responds that there seems to be progress in that the client is now playing games, however the S. tempers this with "so she knows that in order to please you in that room, she's got to play games?" S. then returns to the issue of O. having given a time limit to the number of sessions. S. expresses concern because this is a needy child, and that O. will need to work "vigorously in trying to engage mother in the process... and disengage the school from an over-involvement". S. ends this part by being explicit: "that's why I'm wanting you to be very aware of what your goals are in working with her ...what purpose the therapy can serve, if you're going to have to stop at 8 weeks, because we think it's the right thing... we're going to have to be careful about how we manage the sessions..." (note the shift from 'you' to 'we'). In this S. seems to be 'troubleshooting' by looking ahead.

5th phase: The next theme begins when S. asks about the PSG group. O. responds that it was helpful "...just finding out how other people in a similar situation would have done"; she then repeats the PSG suggestions around involving the mom, and that the school need to be helping with the social skills and that she should meet with the teacher. The S. is supportive of these saying about the school: "giving them something to do which is more in line with what their role is because that is where she is with other children".

6th phase: O. then moves the discussion on into its final phase by raising the issue of another referral being given directly to her by a teacher rather than through the normal referral procedure. S. responds with some factual details about the limited psychological support available to schools, and then affirms O. by saying: "you come over as somebody who is approachable and amenable that can work with them and I think it's nice to see that you've been asserting yourself ..." S. then suggests taking a more active role herself in meeting with the school, and asks the intern to set up a staff meeting the following week to discuss the issue. They end the session by a recap of the strategy for the beginning of the next session with the client.

Descriptive summary of PSG-ISV9

The therapist:

P. is in her early thirties. She first qualified as a teacher, at a teachers' college, and then went on to complete her first degree by correspondence through UNISA. She undertook her post-graduate studies at UNP - a B.Ed (Ed Psy) part time, and then a M.Ed (Ed Psy) full time. She has had 7 years teaching experience in primary schools. She prefers to work in a cognitive-behavioural mode, but at the time of the sessions was acknowledging the limitations of such an approach for dealing with transference material, and certain types of content which emerge in therapy. She was expressing a desire to explore material from a psychodynamic perspective.

The case:

The client is a female post-graduate student in her mid-twenties. She presented initially as depressed and was being treated medically. She was concerned about the influence of a family background of parental conflict and separations, and one parent died in her early adolescence. The client was grappling with feelings of guilt and low self-esteem. She had been seen for 12 sessions prior to the psv presentation, and the current issues related to interpersonal relations.

The PSG RFA's:

- 1) To increase understanding of the transference issues related to the client missing the last session and the reasons for that. (From later interview: "The supervision I was getting at the time wasn't dynamically oriented, so I turned to the group to assist me in that regard".)
- 2) How to work with the 'all or nothing' type of thinking that the client seemed to exhibit.
- 3) Feeling stuck with the case - needing to work out a way forward.

The PSG discussion and P.'s feedback responses:

Analysing this discussion is difficult due to the quality of the recording. Parts of the discussion are indistinct, thus detailed close analysis is not possible. However, I decided to include the material since the isv and discussion with the therapist at a later stage both yield valuable material.

The PSG seems to have a 'stop-start' nature, with lengthy periods of silence. The PSG is also characterised by contributions chiefly from two of the peers rather than the whole group, (which raises questions about what inhibited the other peers from contributing).

- The discussion begins with some speculating about ways in which the client's current relationship issues were related to earlier family dynamics, and possible re-enactment of those.
- The discussion then moves to some strategic alternatives for working therapeutically with the client, to challenge 'all or nothing' type of thinking. P. states in her feedback that these strategic ideas might be helpful. These suggestions are then followed by two silences of about 30sec each.
- The topic then moves specifically on to the types of material in the sessions, and one of the peers says "everything's like in the head, rational talk about talk...", that the client has been very psychologised by her previous therapies, and needed to be shifted to a feeling level. A reference to a strategy used with another client is made. This is followed by another silence.
- The possible role modelling of her parents and behaviour patterns that the parental pathologies evoked in the client as a child are then raised, e.g. a 'script for abandonment' and 'struggle for control', with reference again to peers' work with other clients, and to a resource book which had

been found helpful. In her feedback, P. reflects that the idea of abandonment may have had an impact on therapy.

P. reflected on her experiences of the silences in INT9. She found these "a bit unnerving", but also did a lot of processing around them:

"coming from wondering whether I had phrased the RFA's correctly, or constructed them too broadly, making it difficult to answer them; to wondering whether it was related to difficulties I had experienced working at C; to wondering whether I was asking them to work in a framework that wasn't too familiar to most of them. I'm aware that a lot of interns are not that au fait with working in psychodynamic theory. So I did a lot of processing. But the fact that Q & C did contribute quite a bit was quite affirming. I think they're seen by the group to be quite theoretically inclined, they have a good theoretical base. Q was quite interested in the case and spoke to me about it later, so it was quite affirming; although at the time quite unnerving,... It might also have been some of my own stuckness that maybe the group was feeling, I'm not sure." P. seems to have resolved the issue around the lack of flow in the discussion by understanding (from INT9):

" at the end that perhaps it was a difficult case and I was asking them to use a theory that they weren't really familiar with. I know in my own development thinking dynamically is only something I've begun to do quite recently and that might affect other people's paths as well."

The ISV process:

This session seems to be part of a process where it is much more possible to stay close to the session by session material because there is continuity. As a whole, the session seems to recycle again and again to particular issues without seeming to move on, in the last phase S. summarises this by saying: "I need to check how you're feeling because we've touched on a whole lot of things, and we've kind of touched them and left them, touched them and left them... it's quite reflective of the very process of therapy ... a lot going on". The ISV thus seems to represent a parallel process to the therapy. The S is quite active in striving to find ways to shift perspectives, but this does not seem to be that helpful to P. who seems to find this frustrating. Perhaps what S. misses is the affective side of P.'s functioning - it stays all in the head, all talk?

Much of the first quarter of ISV is a reporting of the content of the last two therapy sessions. P. seems to take control, presenting the material, and raising two RFA's during this time. Initially, P. phrases some of the material using 'we' to refer to decisions they had made in previous ISV's. S. shows surprise at case developments in her first two comments, and then punctuates P.'s presentation with 3 reflective-type statements before asking one question related to the content of one of the client's responses. P.'s presentation ends with a re-phrasing of the earlier two RFA's: "How do I make sense of it in terms of what's happened to all of our sessions? And is it testing me and my reaction to her?"

In the next quarter, S. seems to take a more active role in trying to assist P. to understand the dynamics of the therapy. S. initially responds to the RFA's by saying that all of P.'s hypotheses have merit, thus seeming to confirm P.'s formulating of the case. S. then seems to make a more interpretative comment: "...it sounds like she was beginning to have problems with the sessions themselves ... maybe they're kinda getting to close to who she is ..." P. responds by seeming self-criticism: "perhaps ... I've moved too quickly?" S. immediately responds by saying "... I'm not

commenting on how you've managed it,...", and goes on a couple of turns later by seeming to reassure P: "If somebody has pathology or things that they play out, they play them out regardless..."

A little further on, S. reveals her unsureness of how to work with the client's material, which is then re-stated by P.: "Where do I take it?..." P. then moves back into the previous session's content and her own responses to the client. These are not picked up on by S. who then asks a content-related question.

At about half way, S. takes greater control and tries to shift to a different perspective on the case by saying: "...we probably need to think in terms of a diagnosis here..." (Note the use of 'we' again, this time by S.) S. gives reasons for the consideration of diagnosis because this influences intervention and case management. The interchange between S. and P. is more active with S. giving various suggestions for consideration by P., and P. expressing her unsureness. S. seems to take a more forceful stance, using "Okay, ..." to preface a number of her questions and statements. S. then moves on to strive to deepen her own understanding of the client's view of the issues. P. seems to agree with S.'s formulation, and then speaks of her own feelings of being upset, and verbalises her own reflections. P. says "there's obviously a lot of countertransference happening", but S. uses only a minimal encourager rather than probing P.'s concerns. This seems to lead to P. going back into the client's constructions (where S.'s emphases have been) and S. formulates her understanding of the client's dynamics. (This interchange may indicate to P. that S. is unwilling/unable to assist in probing countertransference issues).

P. seems to take more control of the interchanges in the last quarter, beginning by asking for direction: "in terms of where I go with the case...?" S. responds first by reassuring P. about the therapeutic alliance to which P. responds with agreement, but then asks for evaluative comment: "...your thoughts on what I'm doing ...?" S. responds with comments prefaced by "what is important is what you're comfortable with ..." and then expresses her concern that P.'s chosen approach is "...going to be quite a rough ride ...". After a couple of turns, S. makes what seem to be empathic comments that the sessions "might be quite a strain on you ... the pace is just so fast" but immediately follows with "...maybe you're not staying long enough with...", a comment which P. interrupts as she agrees and gives more detail of her difficulties since the client brings so much material.

S. seems then to go off topic and prompts a brief discussion of recording of the session material, before making the comments referred to in the second paragraph of this section. This leads to P. reflecting that the process of talking has led to some shift in her view of the current issues which she had seen as "being a passing phase but now I'm wondering." This leads S. to formulate the case in her preferred mode of working (TA) (to which there had been earlier allusions). P. seems to end off the session quite quickly at this point, perhaps not responding to or wanting to explore this formulation further.

Descriptive summary of PSG-ISV10

The therapist:

Q. is a male in his early thirties. He first qualified and worked as a journalist, and also has a diploma in financial markets. He studied his first degree at one university, honours at another, and then did his M1 year at the university where this study took place. His interests are in longer term psychodynamic work and family therapy, but he is becoming more interested in strategic approaches, narrative therapy and applications of social constructionism in therapeutic work.

The recording of PSG is a unique one in that Q. had been the person who first presented in psv1, so this was his second experience of PSG. He comments on this in our later interview: "Ja, you see I had a funny relationship with the PSG coz I did the first one you remember, and I found that a bit frustrating as well, but it was nice coz I really got into the meat of it, for me you know, got to think out loud why I wanted to do what I wanted to do, which I'd never got to do till then, and it was quite nice for me to be able to do that. To actually say it, and to be able to find the flaws in my own argument as I was saying, and then work through those as well, but the second one was more frustrating so it's a funny thing, I'm reflecting on one session but I actually had two sessions of PSG group".

The case:

An extended family system is presented. Two teenage girls were the initial IP's following sexual abuse. A number of therapists had been working with elements of the system, and Q. has become involved seeing all the members of the system in group family therapy. The aim of the therapy has been to improve communication. Q. has experienced difficulties making arrangements to see the group, and with the attendance of one of the parents.

The psv RFA's:

1. How to proceed further in relation to the treatment centre mandate which is to deal with the sequelae of abuse. (This family system seems to be over-serviced).

2. What is the presenter's role as therapist (clash between instructions to him and his personal understanding of working with family systems).

(Note: The facilitator seems to focus mainly on RFA 1, and I wonder whether she heard the second RFA - on the tape, Q. interjects it straight after the facilitator's comment at the end of his presentation:

Fac: So we all now understand the case. Basically, J. is asking about X. Centre's role in this case.

Q: And what my role is to an extent

Fac: Are there any questions?)

PSG presentation: seems ordered and full; though some cycling between case details and Q.'s concerns. Presenter's tone - underlying anger and frustration, particularly at one of the family members; confirmed in INT10:

J:... you seem to be quite angry at that point around that person...is that a correct interpretation?

Q: Ja, ja could be frustrated, annoyed that he was scuppering the whole process... Ja, he really riled me terribly, mostly after this session

One of the features of Q.'s presentation is his use of much more figurative language than is evident in other presentations. Q. presents the case as "a big balls-up basically" (1st sentence). (And other examples : 'bad okes'; 'thick as thieves').

One of Q.'s main concerns appears to relate to the way he was pressured into taking on the group family therapy (next excerpt from the PSG):

Q: The way it presented was, this family came and they were, the 2 girls were given therapy, the mother was given individual therapy. They were enrolled in group family therapy like extended group therapy, that's what I got involved in, I came in the second session of that, and they also wanted marital therapy, the remaining couple that exists there, they wanted marital therapy. So they had potentially four, potentially five shrinks involved in this one thing...

(From INT10) *Q: I felt like being dragged into something that I didn't have any role in, and then I had to function as a cog in a machine that I wasn't agreeing with, one of six therapists in the case.*

The PSG discussion and Q.'s feedback responses:

The fact that one of the other peers has been intervening in this case at the level of individual work with the two girls who reported the abuse makes the PSG more complex. Once the PSG moves into the questioning phase, this complexity emerges in that she provides some of the answers to the peers' questions, and adds further case details of which Q. was not aware. Q. describes his experience of this in INT10:

Q: I've been an ardent reader of social constructionism in the past two years, and it always strikes me very forcefully that in those sorts of settings you define the reality of the case by what you say about it, and I think much of the reality of my case was defined by other people in PSG, we had some doing that, so and I felt like hey whose reality are we going to buy here?

The facilitator intervenes towards the end of the questioning section:

Fac: The way the discussion's gone it seems that issues are not related to where Q. is any more (group laughter) I think we should move on to the discussion

(However this seems not to be immediately noted by the other peer who is involved in the case, because she continues)

Peer1: I don't know if this is helpful ... (and proceeds to give more case details, ending with)... So I mean it does appear to be over-serviced, but how do you deal with families like this where there are so many bits?

Peer2: (who again moves the focus back to Q.) Q. have you got any sense that you could build a defence into these victims by therapy?

Q: It'd be long hard work, that's my sense now.

Peer2: Mmm.

Fac: Okay we're into the discussion and we'll be talking about the questions (group laughter).

The first part of the discussion then continues around the X.Centre more generally, which does relate to the first RFA about the centre's mandate, but not to the case specifically. It is after 16 turns (some of which are comprehensive comments) that one of the peers says:

Peer3: ... the way you look at this case, it has just so many elements involved ...and to expect Q. to sort of take the ten pieces and look at them, it's virtually impossible.

Peer2: I don't know, if you say that X.Centre's role is therapeutic, then I don't think it's a systems

problem, and the answer to a systems problem is to pull them all in and work with them. But I think where I'm hearing Q.'s concern is that it's like deep-seated, long-term, umm. (This peer seems to do the facilitator's work her - shift of focus to Q., and when the discussion goes off to more general issues, again:)

Peer2: But if we go back to Q.'s involvement in this system ... (and goes into case material)

Overall, the discussion is cyclic, moving away from Q.'s issues, then being brought back again by one of the peer comments, over 3 cycles. The peers do seem to respond to both of Q.'s RFA's - quite generally though, without discussing more specifically the impact on Q. (ie. empathy with his position is not clearly evident). The last 15 turns concern the therapeutic modality involved:

Peer4: I want to ask a very stupid question, should family therapy have been done at this stage, or could we have worked with the dyads first ...? (and 3 turns later:)

Peer3: So my feeling is, if Q. is to get anywhere, then simultaneously the subsystems need to be looked at.

The discussion does seem to be connected, and has some sense of flow in terms of content, but it is not necessarily helpful to Q. Q. reflects on the discussion by commenting that he's not sure he articulated his concerns clearly enough but then in response to my asking whether this case was suited to PSG he says (from INT10):

Q:I would like to say that I don't know why it should be precluded, that sort of complex case, because I think the mandate that I gave to the group was not that complicated, it was a bit fuzzy but it wasn't really complicated, it was how do I understand my role in this system, and I think the group was more inclined to say well let's talk about the case, not how you view the system. I don't think it was complicated, but it was just a bit sort of obtuse in some way.

(He then goes on to say what he would have liked in the discussion):

Q:I think in retrospect, if somebody else had brought a similar sort of thing I would have liked, we would have got really into the thing, so what is your role, you don't need to play everybody else's tune, your responsibility is to this family, what can you do for this family.

4 peers are very involved in discussion and contributing throughout, 1 does not contribute at all (I had left the group by this stage - at the end of her internship). There was some evidence of empathy for Q.- but because the discussion gets sidetracked for substantive periods, Q.'s issues are not necessarily foregrounded. The peers do draw from other experiences - e.g. "container for abuse", and "divorce issues...", but also get quite mired in the details of this case.

There is limited discussion of the dynamics in the case - one example is reference to a 'big numzaan', and links to family systems theory. One of the suggestions from a peer is for the system to be split into dyads and triads, to facilitate the treatment. There do appear to be some tensions in the discussion, related to a peer's dominance and discussion of her own issues both with case & with X.Centre. Suggestions were made regarding establishing boundaries for this work - but nothing happened in response to this:

(From INT10) *J:Could we just go to the feedback on p.7. I think what B. said is we need clear boundaries for our work at XCentre. Did that lead to anything? The action - was there some further action subsequent to this?*

Q: It didn't lead to any further input, no.

Q.'s feedback was lengthy in comparison to others. He reflected on the usefulness of the boundaries comment; and the idea of abuse as a container; he defended whole system approach rather than using dyads and triads - showing a preference for keeping the whole group going. As an example of his approach, he

refers to the intern group(M2's) (cf. parallel process): (last para of PSG10):

Q: I mean just on another level, like a theoretical level, systemic therapy as I understand it or I like to think about it involves all the immediate players in something, so if we were going to have therapy with the M2's, we would, if we wanted to be like, or the M2's in their year of functioning, we would have to include to be kind of candid, people like the people we work with theoretically, like the counsellors at SCC or R. or M. perhaps you know 'coz that's, so that's why I'm reluctant also to try and split off parts of it

The facilitation of the session was problematic(see second paragraph of this section), and also the following comment from INT10: *The facilitation didn't seem to happen quite honestly in that session for me ... it felt like it was all a bit loose cannonish*

PSG mirroring case dynamics:

One of the dynamics of this case is the lack of male involvement in the family. It must be noted that in the PSG process, Q. is the only male, and the discussion is therefore solely amongst the females. (How much does Q. experience a parallel process in PSG?

Also, in INT10 Q. reflects about his choice of case:

Q: It was very knotty in terms of how I deal with institutional structures which surrounded it. You know I think I've got lots of personal issues with how you deal with conflict in an institutional setting I always have difficulties with that in workplaces and that's reared it's head. So, um, it sparked off this anxiety, this thing of, oh there're all sorts of other psychologists involved, they're telling me I should be doing this. I disagree with what they're telling me I should be doing, how do I actually deal with this? How do I respond to them in a way that's professional and firm, that's not smashing through boundaries that are inappropriate (laughs) or something as an intern.

J: So it really did feed in to a number of the power dynamics that you were experiencing at the time. (Q: ja, ja, ja, - at intervals)

Q: And about, uh I suppose I also had a bit of curiosity about how other people felt with the same sort of thing when they are hauled in as interns and told now you do therapy with this family and this kid and this mother and there are 5 other things going on in parallel, and you think what actually am I doing then, is it your place to ask and say well I suggest actually we don't, do you just kind of do it, or how do you broach that. I think that was part of my struggle explaining my role in the whole system.

J: Do you think that the PSG session assisted you in any way towards that?

Q: I think the PSG mirrored that frankly.

J: It did feel like that, there were a whole lot of people taking all sorts of perspectives, and you didn't come to any closure or any further decision.

Q: The whole session felt largely not very useful for me, I think it was, I was quite stuck in a lot of annoyance about the way it proceeded, the session rather than the content so much, I think the way that it proceeded mirrored the institutional struggles that I was in and I certainly didn't process it consciously at the time, I think that now in retrospect.

J: Certainly that's one of the things that has sprung out at me as I look at the case, is that it feels like there's a parallel of what's happening broadly, in the session, in terms of the way that the boundaries shift and change, and people just going off on different tangents, not staying with the focus.

Learning from PSG: Q. does not seem to note new learnings, but did reflect in INT10 that talking about the case aloud enabled him to consider his position.

(From INT10) *J: Going through your feedback, it seems to me that it's just a re-statement in different words of a lot of your concerns. It wasn't as if you were coming to new learnings in a sense. Do you want to just skim it and see? Anything that comes to mind.*

Q: Ja, I think that was my experience

J: However it might have been part of a longer process.

Q: Ja, I think I don't really understand much of what I said here to be quite honest I don't know what's going on here. But certainly my memory of it corresponds.

Also, he has moved to smaller system work 5 weeks later - perhaps permission for it, though not in favour of that approach at this stage! Thus it is possible that PSG contributed to the shifts which can be seen 5 weeks later (in ISV), though the feedback response from Q. seems to be a re-statement of concerns rather than reflections on anything new.

The ISV process

This occurs about 5 weeks after the PSG process due to Q. going away to work on the Health train for two weeks, and the supervisor (S.) starts by stating:

S: So the story you told the group is going to be slightly different from the story we're going to hear?

It is notable that the family therapy has moved quite substantially from the PSG presentation since the family themselves suggested they should not meet for a while as a whole group, and Q. is seeing the one nuclear family which is part of the original group. Thus, although Q. seemed opposed to seeing subsystems at the end of PSG, this has occurred as a result of a whole group decision.

The ISV process seems to move through phases. The initial phase seems to be related to the content of the sessions and the way in which Q. has responded to the complexity of the system. It seems as if S. is striving to get as full a sense of the details as possible - although she'd briefly heard about the case a number of weeks previously, this is the first time she's been made aware of the details. In the initial phase Q. uses some of his idiosyncratic turns of phrase eg. "he sounds like a skabenga", "mama supremo's", "he's been shunted off", "like big cheese here", "he screws up", "a coup on that front". He also refers to his initial co-therapist who left suddenly:

Q: T. got offered a nice job in B. and buggered off, so it was me ...

After about a third of the time, the S. asks:

S: Now if you had a questions to ask about this, what's your question? (After Q.'s response, she then re-states his concern in different words, and then comments on his response)

S: Didn't you say that when all three sections were ready, then the whole circus would get together again? (Q: Kindof) So you're part of the circus, your act has to be ready as well, (Q: ja,ja,ja) so are you saying when will that be, how will you know when everyone's ready?

In the questioning of Q.'s concerns about his role related to the XCentre mandate, S. asks for some clarity about CFC-XCentre relationship since she is an external supervisor. She then questions and comments on his concerns from a systemic perspective (at about the mid-point of the process). Q. seems more able to express his anger about the case (*Q: Sometimes I feel what the hell am I doing there*), which enables him to identify a countertransference-type position:

Q: I feel like I've become a bit of a, go out on a limb, a bit of a like a daddy for this whole thing... (gives more case details) (And S. replies, ending on a more empathic note):

S: What do big daddies do in situations like this? I mean it looks as if it's quite overwhelming.

Q.'s tone of voice changes as if he feels relief, the empathic comments seeming to deepen his understanding of the way in which he's experienced systemic pressure; and S. comments on clients' interpretations of therapists' words. S. wraps up this part of the discussion by saying:

S: You see Q. I mean look how complicated it is. You said to us earlier, you said men are scarce, well in you come and you're a man, and so they're all going to try and get you for what you've got ... (leading into an interpretation of the family's response to them not having regular contact with Q).

S. then shifts to empathise with the one woman with whom Q. seems to be angry, enabling him to make a

more empathic comment. S. then responds with:

S: ...there's huge power struggles going on and I'm just wondering, do you feel as if you're being caught somewhere?

Thus enabling Q. to talk at more length about his role in the system. She then asks him a goal-related question:

S: What's your fantasy, what would you like to do?

and they move in to more therapy content-related material again, with further empathy for one of the women being expressed by S. - and which Q. seems to hear; followed by a suggestion for Q. to discuss with her. Q. feels able to then oppose involvement of more therapists, and makes some suggestions himself for a way forward, and S. supports his suggested approach, which enables him to give more detail about working with the only man in the system.

In the last third S. more actively works with Q.'s own feelings and responses starting with a question:

S: Does it leave you feeling mixey inside?

Q: Ja, it's helleva like, the sessions have been tough. Tuesday's are long days so maybe that's part of it but yissus they're hard work ... (and goes on to give details, with S. making a comment).

S: It feels as though you've entered this system

Q: Ja, I have

S: You've entered it

Q: And now I'm feeling like a dad now

S: I know, and maybe another pressure that you're feeling is that you've got limited time with the whole caboodle coz it's only how many months? Two and a bit, and I don't know, are you feeling pressured to get to a certain point with them by the time you go?

Q: I'm feeling pressure to at least resolve now these mounting disputes between them, these big tensions

...

S: And you know that you may not? It's possible it won't happen

Q: Ja, I think so

S: And it's possible that they would have taken some steps towards that but you may have to leave before it's sort of like polished, and maybe that's part of the mess (Q: saying ja at intervals)

Q: You see you've opened a can of worms here. I mean they were functioning before; nobody could say anything about anything that really counts, but they were functioning. Now, everybody's started to say stuff and it's threatening to fall apart at the seams. [...]

S: Have you thought about what you want to happen next, where you go in terms of continued work as a therapist?

Q: You mean when I leave, somebody else takes it over?

S: Well, ja, I don't know if you've thought about whether someone would take it over.

Q: Haven't really thought about it at all.

S: I'm just worrying, because if they have a sense that there's limited time and you have a sense that there's limited time, which is all true, I wonder what, how you're going to deal with, [...] And I suppose listening to you and actually feeling quite a lot of anxiety myself as I listen, I'm wondering whether, how, whether it's realistic or fair of you to put that pressure on yourself to get it to a certain stable point. I'm not sure whether handling the instability of your departure is going to have to be something of the process that you guys will have to go through together. I don't know, 'coz if it's a can of worms that's opened, you know, the worms might be half way out and starting to climb down the edge, and some of them might be on the table, some of them still at the bottom of the can (Q. laughs) when you leave...

S. seems to use her empathising with Q.'s position to enable him to identify further issues that are of concern to him, and then moves him on to looking at his goals. The discussion then moves into Q.'s 'learning through experience' of this family's dynamics, and a linking of a S. suggested strategy to theory - using S.'s own reflections on her use of an outside commentator.

The final section seems to be a 'tying up of loose ends' in terms both of Q. in relation to the other dominant therapist, which S. reflects on as "boundaryless kind of things"; and regarding the 'family' group members not in the therapy at present. She then asks:

S: ...has this been useful? Are there things we've left that you need to...

Q: I still feel ambiguous about the wisdom of splitting them off like this and now bringing them back and how to negotiate that, umm but I think it's done anyway, I can't do a great deal more about it, I mean maybe a nice productive way of distilling something out of it is this exactly, now I know exactly what its like because I've had like people tell me things that they wouldn't tell other people and it's difficult to talk about these things to all the other people I've heard them and ...

Q: And you'd take it back to how they couldn't talk, 'coz that's where it all began.

The control processes in the session seem to shift, with S. seeming to follow Q.'s lead for the first third, but then taking a more direction oriented position with different sorts of questions and comments once she asks him what his question is. It does seem as if Q. ascribes status to S., and certainly seems to hear her input - and she uses her ability to empathise at what seem to be important moments.

S. uses a variety of questions, reflections, and statements in which she strives both to hear the clients' perspectives and Q.'s position. She seems to time her comments sensitively enabling Q. to feel his concerns are heard, and placing him in a position to view members of the family differently too. There are instances of changes in his tone of voice - he is able to express frustration, and then move on to being able to propose a way forward - seemingly to take back some power in terms of the direction to take.

S. also seems to show concern for Q. in all of this - she does not seem to make evaluative comments, but seems to be supportive. She takes on an active stance after hearing the case details, but is not directive in terms of what he must do. The pair seem to have established a working relationship in which there is mutual respect.

Summary of ISV suggestions:

(i) she suggests that Q. re-frames his sense of the process:

S: I mean not a causal thing or any smart stuff like that, but you're saying is it something that really should be carrying on if it's not about abuse, is that what you're asking? I'm not dealing with the abuse so is it legitimate? (Q: Ja) You see I don't know Xcentre's rules about that or whether they have any, but in terms of, if you think of how all families come to us usually by means of an identified patient or problem, usually one person sort of dressed in black, the troublemaker or something, this is the same thing, this whole system has arrived because something happened. But it doesn't mean that that something is necessarily the place for the focus to happen in order to restore the health. Do you know what I mean, so maybe its okay.

(ii) She encourages him to look at the way the system is encouraging him to take on a role:

S: And another question, are therapists meant to be big daddies or what?

Q: My kind of style is not to be ay. I mean I just feel uncomfortable...

S: Maybe Q., that's why it's feeling like it's such a load because it's something that's happening. Somehow they've done something to you, that's making you be a therapist in a way that you're really not accustomed to working?

(iii) She suggests that he talk with the one mother who has been left without therapeutic support due to a number of circumstances, one being that the large group no longer meets, to explore how she can get further support.

(iv) She encourages him to have realistic expectations about what might be achieved:

S: ...And that's going to be hard but it might be part of work in this case you might have to face. (Q: ja) Which is not to say that your fantasies for the next 8, 10 weeks need to get limited; but they've been a long time setting up this system (Q: years, ja), I'm not sure it's going to come apart, it's quite a long time to suddenly change radically I don't think, and as I say that very thing, I'm thinking ja, likely probably the room for most movement is in that family that you're working with right now. But the meeting where perhaps everybody comes together again will also have to include, and what are we going to do?

Q: Ja, I've been very up front right from early on, like tenth of December I'm out of here, so we'll need to set realistic goals...

(v) She suggests that he speak to the family about the way they've been using him to continue their way of (mis)communicating

Q: That's probably in a nutshell my chief anxiety, bring this whole lot together...

S: And say look I know what it's like being in your family now, see what's happened to me, you're going to have to tell them your story, maybe. (Q: Ja, ja, ja) I don't know how much sense it will make to them, but.

Q: (in a pensive tone) That's true hey, ja, it'll be a good way of putting it back to them, I now know what it really feels like

S: And they might actually in listening to what it feels like for you, they might recognise bits and pieces of their own story, which, I'm sure they will, I mean you try tell the story and get lower and lower and lower in the chair, and you get higher and higher, you come up with a new feeling, but it feels as it weighs you down, that's what I'm saying. It is weighing you down...

(vi) She also suggests the possibility of bringing in an outside consultant, as she has sometimes done in similar circumstances:

S:... You know what I've done sometimes, I'm a master or a mistress of becoming part of a system, and not noticing you've been doing it, I mean it's happened to me about 3 times in the last 4 years, I call in a consultant to observe us.

Q: Ja, a la Whitaker.

S: Oh does he do that? I've forgotten all my theory, and it can be quite fantastic to have someone completely outside come in and just observe one session and make you know sort of comments on what's happening here. I don't know, to think about as a possibility when you get everyone back together. And if you do decide to do that for them, to tell them what it's like for you, it might be useful to have someone to track from the outside. And I'm not sure who you would get to do that, whether you'd get someone from outside or inside varsity, I'm not sure who would be prepared to do that.

Q: That's quite a nice idea 'coz it would also take some of the load off me.

The supervisor is able to cast Q.'s experience and understanding of the individual's experience in a different light by questioning Q. about the events, for example exposing the fact that the woman's therapy ended prematurely:

S: So why's she been dropped?

Q: Because she elected to

S: Not from your therapy, but everybody else got somebody else

Q: Oh, okay, because X. stopped working, finished her internship.

S: Bad reason for ending therapy. Isn't that the threat to the work you're doing ...(she) has got nobody? And you feel as if

Q: May be part of it, ja

S: It feels like she's out there on a limb ...She's got absolutely nobody ...So I'm wondering if something doesn't need to be negotiated with her about her position ...

The supervisor uses one-line comments and questions to encourage Q. to take on some alternative perspectives, or to look at the case from other angles. For example:

Q: ...this case is very complicated, I think that's what makes me feel so unsure about it, it's just so technically unusual...

S: Tell me what's unusual about it?

A further example is:

Q: ... I've lost track

S: What's your fantasy, what would you like to do?

APPENDIX F

Reading guide for pairwise analysis of PSG and ISV:

1. What structuring is evident in the material?
2. Consider the presentation phase in terms of content, fluency and formulation.
3. What is the purpose of the supervision session?
4. Consider the questioning and probing from the perspectives of their form and content.
5. What strategies are used in the discussion phase, and what suggestions are made?
6. Describe and evaluate the nature of the interpersonal interactions.
7. Consider the efficacy of the facilitation of the process.
8. What is the response of the intern to the supervision?

APPENDIX G

Comparative analysis of 4 cases of psg-isv:

In order to compare PSG with individual supervision, recordings of four ISV sessions, which corresponded with the casework presented in PSG, were made. It must be noted here that each of the ISV sessions followed after the presentation of the case at a PSG session, so ISV will have been influenced by PSG to some extent. Also, the ISV sessions were contrived to the extent that the request for a recording for the purposes of my research was made. The material in the ISV sessions is nevertheless valuable, in terms of the variation in approach between four different supervisors, and the variations in interactions between each intern and her/his respective supervisor. A comparison of the two processes thus became possible.

Each PSG and ISV transcript is complex and dense, and a descriptive summary of the content of both the PSG and ISV in each of four pairs, including some of my speculations related to the material, is to be found in the Appendix (Appendices ? - ?). These have been provided in order to enable the reader to gain a sense of the content and process of each, with pertinent excerpts included. Inclusion of the raw transcript material is not possible, in order to protect its confidentiality.

In order to compare the two modes of supervision, I constructed a reading guide which enabled me to compare aspects of each mode. The reading guide may be found in Appendix E. In the section below, I present the results of the pairwise comparison.

PSG6 - ISV6

1. Case presentation: The length of the initial case presentations is similar, however N. presents a denser version of the case material (more case details) in ISV, possibly because this is after the PSG and results from some of the questions asked by her peers. The case is of a client from a different cultural group where there are complex family issues and life-stage challenges.

N.'s style differs in that in PSG she is quite explicit about her own uncertainties regarding how to proceed, whereas in ISV she presents only the case details. In PSG she states:

- What I need here is a sense of how to handle this case, there's a lot of [...] issues involved, and I don't know how to work with it, [...] I'm stuck, I don't know what to do, I don't know how to work with this case.

PSG seems to offer N. the opportunity to express some of her internal dialoguing regarding her approach (NB for discussion regarding learning process); this does not seem to be as evident in ISV where her presentation seems more formal. There are indications in ISV that N. wants to present the case without interruptions from the supervisor (she presents firmly without breaks in the flow, and when the supervisor interjects a question, she responds "I'll get to that" and continues with her presentation). She does not seem to be able to talk about her difficulties with the case in the same way in ISV.

2. Structure: There seem to be some similarities between the overall structure of both modes: case detail presentation followed by a period of questioning, followed by a more discursive interaction. In ISV, however, the structure appears to be implicit rather than explicit. The supervisor takes more control over the structure and process of discussion because she interjects questions at

various points, sometimes changing the direction of the dialogue, and seems to want to enter the **client's** frame of reference, seemingly to gain as complete as possible a sense of the client's background and issues.

The discussion phases are very different in quality and tone - in ISV N. interjects at times, adding on to the supervisor's sentences, possibly to cut the supervisor's speculating short, and ends the longest supervisor section by saying: "And I sort of have said that you know, sort of, I think I tried to show her [...]", thus seeming to want to indicate to the supervisor that she has done some of what is being suggested. In the PSG, the discussion considers both the client's and N.'s positions, and the comments and suggestions seem more cautious than in ISV.

3. Goals: The RFA occurs at the end of the case presentation in PSG (see the excerpt in 1. above), where N. expresses being stuck and not knowing how to proceed. The feeling of stuckness emerges indirectly in ISV: N. is describing the client's feelings and the supervisor reflects "so with her you feel that stuckness", but then does not explicitly tackle this in relation to the intern's feelings as therapist, rather going on with further questions to fill out her own picture of the client as a person. This might be an indication of the tension felt by supervisors in that they feel the need to try to gain as full an understanding of the case as possible, but there may be a tension between that need and the intern's needs (for discussion chapter).

The supervisor asks a direct RFA-type question in the last quarter of ISV, but at this stage of the supervision session, N. seems to find it difficult to articulate what she needs:

- S: And you, what are your issues here? What do you feel you'd like to get out of talking about it?

N: Umm, what my issue, um, I'm just looking at the way, um the whole thing presents, and I'm just thinking there's nothing you know that really, I mean I can always say [...gives case details...], so to find a way she can exist in both worlds without challenging, you know, um.

The intern's hesitancy and disfluencies would seem to indicate possible surprise at the question at this stage of the ISV.

The intentions or goals of ISV are not explicit, though the supervisor does seem to expect some sort of case formulation: after the first quarter, the supervisor asks:

- S: What sort of impression have you got of her? [...] try and give me a sense of how she is.

N. seems to find this question difficult to respond to, her reply being halting and hesitant, so three turns later the supervisor asks again:

- S: And more as a personality, how do you feel when you're with her, what kind of sense do you get?

The intern's difficulty with this type of questioning is evident in her responses, and there may have been an implicit evaluative element in the supervisor's questioning. The supervisor senses N.'s difficulty, and assists N. in verbalising her description and the client's dynamics. The interchange that follows seems to have the potential to be helpful, but may not be in touch with N.'s experience, and the supervisor's explicit purpose in following this course of questioning is not clear. The interchanges also do not allow enough time for N. to reflect, and she may have felt rushed during this time.

In contrast, the intentions of PSG are more explicit in terms of providing support, and this is evident in the discussion phase where the peers reflect on N.'s role.

4. Questioning: In PSG there was an extensive use of the questioning period (it was substantially longer than the discussion phase), and illustrates the peers striving to gain a fuller picture of the case details. The parallel in ISV might be to the supervisor's case detail questioning (up to half her questions were of this nature); thus in both forms, participants were wanting to 'fill out' their understanding of the case.

In PSG the majority of questions relate to case details whereas in ISV there is a greater variety in the types of questions asked. A number of questions in ISV seem to be probing N.'s understanding of the client's dynamics, and some questions relate to N.'s experience of working with the client. The probing nature of some of the ISV questions contrasts with the more factual type of questions in PSG.

5. Strategies used in the discussion: In PSG, the participants empathise both with the client's difficulties within the family (this is assisted by some of the participants coming from the same cultural background as the client), and with N.'s position as therapist. Examples of comments are:

- It's a very very tough situation
- Quite hard really

The participants encourage N. to take a supportive and containing stance:

- P1: [...] the most that N. can do is just be there for her, and understand that it's very difficult [...] understand her, support her [...]
- P2: And to perhaps help her understand her role [...]

Three of the peers reflect on their experience with clients having similar difficulties. Theoretically, the participants also locate the client's difficulties within a developmental framework, identifying a struggle with individuation.

In ISV, the supervisor seems to be encouraging a more analytical style of thinking in order to promote a better understanding of the client's personality, however the theoretical input is implicit rather than openly stated. N. finds some difficulty in responding to these questions, and the supervisor senses this and offers suggestions of ways to think about the client. In certain phases, the supervisor uses a more tentative style of probing and reflecting, possibly modelling a way of exploring issues, however N. does not seem to find this helpful. In the focus group N. states:

- individual supervision you've got somebody who's already working in a certain mindset [...] you suddenly come with another mindset and that's where I felt not heard you know because I felt I'm being channelled into a certain way of thinking there was no theory, or no theoretical input to sort of assist me, whatever, wherever I'm coming from and enhance it [...] It was either, you follow how I as supervisor work or ja, so.

(NB. for discussion - clashes between intern & s/v & impact on s/v process; s/v entering intern's paradigm - see focus gp p.3)

Suggestions for the therapist: The PSG suggestions seem to revolve around 'staying' with the client and are focused on the present. One suggestion relates to a strategy to try and enable the client to understand her problematic parent better. There is evidence of some PSG comments not being fully developed. In the focus group discussion, N. remarked that during PSG she got "a clear picture of how to proceed" whereas in ISV she was "still stuck somewhere there, what do I do, [...] you just end up not knowing what on earth you're supposed to do next". The ISV

suggestions are more speculative and revolve around the client imagining a variety of scenarios (thus seeming more future-oriented), as well as trying to draw in the unproblematic parent more. N. States in the focus group that her preference is "working in the present" and that in ISV "there's a bit of a clash and sometimes you're not heard [...] you start to feel quite disillusioned with supervision itself". The supervisor's suggestions of strategies do not therefore seem to have been in touch with where N. was at the time, and were thus disregarded. It must be noted that at the end of ISV, the supervisor makes similar suggestions to some given in PSG: "so you've got to restrain yourself, just take a step back" and "step back and she's got to do it and just explore together", but at that stage N. does not seem to take note of them. (For discussion - pacing of suggestions; interns' readiness for incorporating new ideas/shifts in thinking)

This pair of transcripts seems to illustrate the tension between support/empathy and challenge. Also this intern seems to have some difficulty with speculation, and I wonder how much is do to with her speaking English as her second language.

6. Interactions: In the PSG I have a sense of a group working together towards a common goal, with the peers building progressively on each others' comments. In th ISV interactions, N. is hesitant at times, and seems to take a one-down position later in the session. It is possible that N. felt defensive at times, because she could not respond confidently to the supervisor's comments, and may have sensed the supervisor initially as too probing. The interaction at times falters, and when the supervisor senses this, she provides words for N. The supervisor also makes certain evaluative comments, for example: "...it sounds like where you're working is very positive..."

The peers show empathy for N.'s role and concerns, whereas the supervisor does not seem as empathic initially. This may be linked to N. being less explicit in ISV than PSG regarding her uncertainties as therapist with the client concerned.

7. Facilitation: In ISV, the control of the session is firmly in the supervisor's hands, even though N. asserts herself during her presentation. The PSG seems to involve most of the participants in an egalitarian way, with little input from the facilitator, and there is no one dominant voice. It would seem, from N.'s reflections later that she felt her peers were much more in touch with her needs.

8. Response to supervision: In PSG, N. agrees with the suggestions given. She also confirms that she has attempted one of the suggested approaches (as she does in ISV - see below). She states that PSG has given her ideas "of how to move from where I'm at with her", and affirms this further in the focus group.

In ISV, N. responds to one of the supervisor's suggestions by saying that she'd already tried it: "And I sort of have said that you know ...", which the supervisor evaluates as positive two turns later. N. then goes on to seemingly question the supervisor's suggestions of exploring different scenarios with the client: "So it's quite safe with her to actually just explore the whole thing rather than just sortof entrenching ideas in her head, you know?" This seems to signal N. having doubts about the suggestions. In the focus group discussion N. is much firmer about being dismissive of her supervisor's suggestions (see 6. above). (For discussion - being able to question/challenge suggestions in s/v)

PSG7 - ISV7

1. Presentation: This was not the first presentation of the material in ISV. This illustrates the potential of ISV for a different sense of continuity, when compared to PSG, regarding case material, and the development of the intern-supervisor relationship. In PSG, although the relationship between peers develops, there is discontinuity due to a different presenter each week. The PSG presentation is thus more detailed, giving the background to the referral and linked to the RFA's. The ISV launches straight into details of the last therapy session, and there is no clear presentation phase.

2. The overall structure of the two forms differs noticeably. In ISV the supervisor is very directive regarding the content to be explored: questioning O. both on specific session details and then more generally regarding O.'s case management. The supervisor also seems to go off in different directions, and then return at a later stage to a theme which emerged earlier. The supervisor is thus very active, and a reading of the data raises questions whether O. may have experienced the loss of a sense of agency, however, this was not O.'s subjective experience (she reflected later that she "enjoyed learning what each supervisor had to offer"). O. does seem to be able to be assertive about her own questions at about a third of the way and towards the end, and the supervisor responds accordingly. In an individual interview, O. remarks that she experienced the two forms as complementing each other very well: "I never really thought of them as separate". PSG seems to move at a slower pace, and seems more openly supportive of O.

Questions may be posed regarding the reasons for the supervisor's active style: O. in her presentation seems to show some anxiety, or an attitude of seeking assistance, does this 'hook' a more active stance from the sv? or is this the sv's general style? or is it time pressures which lead to this?

(For discussion chapter) The structure of psv7 seems to provide a good example of Billig's comments re the structure and form being backgrounded when the content is focused on the issue at hand (ref. in discussion to Billig pp 104-8 re "... the possibility that the content affects the form in unpredictable ways.")

3. The time sequence of PSG and ISV seem to have an impact on the RFA's. Two of the PSV RFA's do not arise in ISV - perhaps O. feels they were adequately covered in PSG. In ISV O. asks two explicit RFA's - one near the beginning, the other near the end, however the discussion does not seem to be as firmly driven by the intern's RFA's as in PSG.

The implicit goals of ISV seem broader, including: considerations of therapy goals, taking the institutional context and relationships into account, developing the intern's planning and decision-making process by raising possibilities for the progress of therapy and future challenges in the therapy related to case management. One explicit comment from the supervisor is: "that's why I'm wanting you to be very aware of what your goals are in working with her...". There is also evidence in ISV of the supervisor wanting to check on the intern's performance. In the ISV there seems to be an oscillation between support for the intern and challenge to think more broadly about case issues.

In both forms of supervision, O. is able to express an openness to others' suggestions, and is willing to reveal her lack of expertise in the area. (She does not seem to be defensive, or feeling the need to demonstrate competence). This may be a part of enabling both peers and her

supervisor to make helpful contributions.

4. Questioning: During the PSG questioning phase, there was a noticeable diversity of peer questions or comments: in some regards there was a similar pattern to other PSG's: a large number of questions were related to case or therapy details, and comments were also made; however there was also evidence of peers making interpretive statements, and asking questions in the discussion phase (which are unique to this PSG).

In ISV there is also a diversity of supervisor questions and statements, some of which are exploratory, and others which seem to link into the supervisor goals described in 3 above.

5. Strategies: In both PSG and ISV there are a variety of strategies used in the discussion phase. Peers draw extensively from work with similar client issues and from working with the same school on other cases. There is an example of peers referring to theory to help in understanding a part of the mother's dynamics. In ISV the references to theory are more subtle. (For discussion: How much of the richness relates to the intern's openness to hearing from others, and willingness to consider alternatives - not needing to defend her position? ie. related to intern's attitude).

In both PSG and ISV, there some examples of laughter (in PSG related to an example given by the presenter, to a peer's examples - the peer almost seems to make an exaggerated statement to provoke this; and to the involvement in the discussion 'breaking' the rules of the structure). In ISV there are two examples where both laugh at session details; there is also evidence of O. punctuating some of her statements with a laugh.

In both PSG and ISV, there is evidence of participants using 'we' when talking about O.'s work (not including where supervisor or peers refer to the school's position from a 'we' perspective). Examples:

- P1: ...we now have a responsibility to this little girl in her own right, we've embarked on a relationship... (+ two further 'we' statements)
- S:...remember what we said, this whole thing is protective...(referring to previous supervision)
- S:...because we think it's the right thing [...] we're going to have to be careful about how we manage the sessions [...]
- S: ... so maybe what we need is a staff meeting (referring to the group)

(Discussion around the dialogic strategy of using 'we').

In ISV there are examples of some quite specific modelling of a way to broach issues with the client. (For discussion:Modelling of approaches, more generally in some of the sv approaches & specifically in this case).

In PSG there are a number of suggestions of material which could be used; and when interviewed, O. reflected on the value of the wider variety of suggestions from peers than in ISV. ISV seems to build on the suggestions of the PSG, with the supervisor asking explicitly about the PSG suggestions, and supporting these. The content of the ISV is more focused on striving to understand the client's constructions of meaning. The complementing of PSg with ISV seems supported by considering these differences.

Both PSG and ISV refer to the broader relationship between CFC and the school concerned, and the need for a more active and protective stance from the CFC management in this regard. This

illustrates the potential role of PSG in providing solidarity and team approaches to problems. (for discussion) This highlights another role that PSG has played - a group realisation of common problems which then results in some sort of mobilising for action in appropriate ways.

6. Interactions: There is evidence in both PSG and ISV of participants working well together. In PSG there is the potential for conflict of ideas to emerge, but this is resolved by peers giving their own examples rather than passing judgements on O.'s chosen approach.

In ISV there is the sense that the intern and supervisor have developed a good working relationship, illustrated by a relaxed mode of functioning. There is, however, a sense of the supervisor playing an evaluative role in that she asks about the recording of material and the timing of the intern's reflections. The phrasing of these does seem to be quite client-centred rather than solely related to evaluation (For discussion - the tension of focus - client or intern)

7. Facilitation: The formal facilitation in PSG is very limited, but there is little need for facilitator intervention because the discussion flows smoothly. There is however an example of one of the peers taking on the facilitator's role by introducing a second RFA. (For discussion: The role of others in the group taking on a facilitation role)

As mentioned in 2 above, the supervisor's facilitation of the session does not seem to be orderly, with a re-cycling to early themes at later stages. However, there seems to be a good balance between the supervisor probing and supporting. The supervisor makes some positive evaluative statements eg. " you come over as somebody who is approachable and amenable and that can work with them..."

8. Response to supervision: O. comments twice on the helpfulness of the PSG in the response phase. She also experienced PSG as a "more comfortable environment"; and reflected that PSG offered the opportunity to go into more depth and explore more questions because there was more time available. With regard to ISV, she reflected on its helpfulness in the individual interview, even though the time was shorter, and more generally said:

- I often remember something that my supervisor might have told me that was like so useful, I can't imagine that this comment she made then, I'm remembering now or using it now.

9. Other: At the beginning of ISV, there is an indication of the supervisor's response to being taped; and this was raised again in informal group meeting with supervisors in March 1999.

(for discussion) PSV7: I also felt some anger at the lack of remembering of my workshop when initially transcribing the tape, and know that had I been present I might have taken a directive and evaluative approach, and interjected too early, which would probably have inhibited group discussion; however the way in which the group eventually resolved the issue seems to me to have been constructive).

PSG9 - ISV9

1. Presentation: The ISV is clearly part of an ongoing process, so the material presented is closer to the session by session detail in contrast to PSG which gives much more biographical material and is very comprehensive. P. seemed to prepare well for both PSG and ISV, and her presentation dominates the first part of ISV.

2. Structure: The supervisor's questions in the first half of ISV seem similar to the PSG pattern in that they are mainly case related. Once the interchange in ISV becomes more of a discussion, the supervisor makes some interpretations (as some of the peers had done in PSG). The discussion in ISV becomes more firmly dominated by the supervisor's concerns and suggestions, some of which arose in PSG, but in a less direct manner.

One of the features of this PSG is the extent of the silences during both the questioning, and more importantly during the discussion phase. This would seem to indicate peers finding difficulty in contributing.

3. The RFA's in PSG and ISV are similar (possibly an indication that P. did not make much progress from the PSV discussion, since the ISV was more than a week later).

The goals of ISV are implicit. One commonality seems to be that both PSG and ISV strive to provide some support for P. In ISV, the supervisor is brought up to date with case developments; P. is aware that she needs to ask questions and requests guidance but also hypothesises about possible answers. The supervisor seems to have a sense of her responsibility to oversee case management and to provide solutions.

4. Questioning: The PSG questioning is not extensive, and the silence during this period was "a bit unnerving" for P., leading to her wondering why it had occurred. However, P. reflected later in an interview that she had anticipated the sorts of questions that might be asked:

- I had also thought about a lot of the questions they might like to ask and included a lot of those details.

In ISV, there is less questioning than in other ISV's or the PSG. There are a limited number of case detail questions. Some are reflective questions enabling P. to continue talking, and others seem to be rhetorical, not really requiring an answer. It is noteworthy that the supervisor uses few open-ended questions, at times preferring to half-answer the questions she asks.

5. Strategies: The PSG discussion offers alternative ways of thinking about the case from a dynamic perspective, and places P.'s experience of the client within the context of the client's developmental history and issues. The discussion also raises possible strategic alternatives to consider, and there is reference to a book which P. might find helpful. The suggestions in PSG are of a more general nature than in ISV, with two peers giving their own case examples as illustrations and making suggestions from other theoretical paradigms. The ISV suggestions relate quite specifically to the case content, and to cognitive re-framing (tending to stay with the more cognitive approach that P. had followed earlier) as well as a T.A. formulation.

In ISV P. seems to be self-critical, and the supervisor is quick to counter those statements. Midway through ISV, the supervisor proposes that they should consider a formal diagnosis, and uses 'we' to frame her statements at this point - perhaps in order to promote a sense of working together.

It is notable that both PSG and ISV do not seem to adequately address the countertransference issues raised as questions by P., and the supervisor in ISV merely responds with 'mmm' in four instances where P. is indicating the need for feedback. In PSG, there appears to be slightly more consideration of P.'s interactions with the client, and P. reflects later that after PSG, one of the

peers had continued a discussion on the case with her. She also reflects that in PSG "it might also have been some of my own stuckness that maybe the group was feeling"; this might also have impacted on ISV - the supervisor reflects at the end that they seem to have circled around a number of issues (cf. parallel process).

P.'s comments regarding the comparison of the two modes:(From INT9)

- "Psv has felt more helpful, and I'm not sure why [...] (in ISV) I would simply present a case and I often felt she felt pressured to make a comment or provide some sort of theory that was quite different from where I was thinking. I think in this particular case, she tried to get me to work within um, ...(J:T.A.), and at the time it felt like an idea, but that was not where I needed to go. I needed to understand these dynamically and at that stage of my development I was becoming more dynamically oriented, excited and interested and wanting to step back and look at it from that perspective [...]"

6. Interactions: There appear to be difficulties in the interactions in both PSG and in ISV. PSG is punctuated by periods of silence, and a number of peers do not participate at all. In ISV, P. seems to ask for assistance, but there is evidence of the supervisor not hearing some of P.'s questions, or not responding to P.'s specific requests. There appear to be evaluative elements in ISV (P. asks the supervisor's opinions on her approach). It is possible that P. does not allow her supervisor enough time to respond to some of her questions, in that she goes on with her own hypotheses at times. (Raises the question of how much of the interactive difficulty relates to P.'s manner and desire to hear the input)

P. reflected on her experience of the interaction with her supervisor:

- I think I had a difficult relationship with my supervisor where I felt that our supervision had got into a rigid, inflexible routine [...] Often I felt that the supervisor and I were on such different wavelengths that we weren't reaching each other and as a result ISV had been quite a difficult time. I often felt like I was merely meeting her for a sort of quota where I had to be seen to go like once a week and chat about a case and I didn't see the benefit of it. Whereas PSG I was able to present it, know that I was being listened to because of the structure of it was that people had to listen and couldn't interject and that was quite an affirming experience and then ask the questions and know the group were going to stick with it, particularly P1 & P2 who have similar interests. Quite a lot of differences. I've been quite disappointed with ISV generally, um, just in that I don't think we're heard enough.

7. Facilitation: The levels of facilitation of the PSG were limited to introduction of the various phases. There was no evidence of the facilitator trying to involve more of the participants in the process.

In ISV, the supervisor allows P. to take the lead during the first half, becoming more assertive regarding the direction of the dialogue from the mid-point onwards. I have a sense of the supervisor having some difficulty with understanding P.'s questions, or perhaps feeling unable to provide the assistance P. is requesting. P. experiences the supervisor's approach as follows:

- "you've been taken down another road that's somebody else's construction of your case instead of working within your own construction, the supervisor trying to understand how you've tried to construct it and to work within that construction, rather than their own.

And I think it's quite contradictory at some times and talking to some of my colleagues that's an experience they've had..."

The supervisor indicates some awareness of the difficulties towards the end of the session, but seems unsure of a way to address these.

8. Response to supervision: P. found her experiences of both PSG and ISV problematic. On listening to the two, I was left with a sense that ISV had the potential to be more helpful, but this was not P.'s experience. She felt better heard in PSG, and less of a sense of an imposition of a framework which she did not believe was helpful to her. (This highlights the limitations of considering transcripts alone without inputs from participants - of course this analysis would have been even further improved with supervisor's comments)

PSG10 - ISV10

1. Presentation: The PSG presentation is ordered and comprehensive, although it is not overly formal in that Q. mixes the case details with his concerns. He uses a great deal of figurative language, part of his style which he reflects (in INT10) is to "try and make things visual, I find that I process them better". The ISV takes place 5 weeks on from the PSG. There is nevertheless some sense of continuity between the two, with ISV starting with a reference to PSG; however in ISV, Q. seems more calm (less as if he's putting on a performance).

2. Structure: There seem to be similarities between the structure of the two, and some continuities (eg. mention of boundary issues, Q. expressing annoyance). There is a 'presentation' phase in ISV during which the supervisor asks some questions for clarification, but the flow does not seem to be affected by these. The ISV questioning seems to flow more from a theoretical perspective which enables the supervisor to re-phrase his RFA's more specifically; for this supervisor, theory underpins a great deal; in PSG there is limited theorising, though there is some reference to systems theory and to abuse as a 'container'.

There are marked differences in the discussion phases of PSG & ISV. There is some potential for Q. to reflect during PSG discussion, but it is possible that his frustration at the derailing of the discussion by another peer distracts him. The discussion in ISV seems more in touch with Q.'s perspectives and thus more enabling for him. Q. is fully included and seems to be enabled to talk through his position in the family system at length, and eventually makes his own suggestions for a way forward (seemingly enabled by the way in which the supervisor manages the interchanges).

Since the PSG discussion does not focus mainly on Q.'s position, the potential for learning is more confined to his presentation and feedback. In INT10 he reflects:

Q: I mean I think I [...] put my case very differently when I'm know I'm being treated as somebody who has as much case to make as my supervisor, and that was the case I think in PSG that we knew, we're pretty much equals here you can argue your case, and if it washes, you know, or you can take a certain line [...] it's about trust on some level I suppose.

However, Q. reflects on the history and structure of ISV perhaps being a safer space than PSG for him in INT10:

Q: ...I found I could take comfort from ISV in the structure that it all rested in, nestled in [...] and just sort of coast along with it or you could try to jimmy with it, [...] it was quite comfortable to just stay with it [...]

Whereas, he found PSG a less safe space:

Q:[...] it put more responsibility on me and I felt like I had to carry much more in PSG [...] I knew at the end I had to go back to the case, my peers could go off home or whatever, they don't carry the can for me.

3. The RFA's in the two forms are similar, however Q. feels that he did not state the PSG RFA's clearly enough, and it is possible that the interactions at the end of the questioning period meant that his RFA's were not foregrounded. In ISV, the RFA's determine the focus, and change to an extent during phases of the discussion as Q. gets further in touch with his experience of the case. The goals of ISV are not explicitly stated at any point, however the pair seem to have worked out a method of working which seems to be beneficial to Q.

4. Questions: There is a marked difference in the number and quality of the questioning, with the ISV questioning seeming much more beneficial to Q.

During the PSG questioning, a peer also working on the case interjects with case material in order to clarify certain issues, and it becomes clear that Q. has not been given all the case information; there is thus some tension, and the facilitator remarks "[...] it seems that the issues are not related to where Q. is any more (laughter) I think we should move on to the discussion". The questioning period is thus shortened, and more questions emerge during the discussion as a result.

In ISV, the supervisor uses skilful questioning to probe Q.'s experience and understanding, it would seem that the supervisor is striving to gain insight into Q.'s constructions of meaning, in order to enable Q. to work with these.

5. Strategies: In PSG, the peers show some empathy for Q.'s position, but they get caught up in the complexities of such cases, limiting the extent to which Q. could feel support. Some links are made to family therapy perspectives and there is some discussion of boundary problems related to the work at XCentre, which Q. reports as helpful.

In ISV, the supervisor seems to use a playful style and mirrors Q's use of metaphor with her own (two key images are the 'circus' and 'can of worms'). The supervisor draws from her own casework experiences effectively. She is able to take the perspectives of other family members, perhaps because she is not as caught up in dealing with the family, and this strategy enables Q. to shift his insights. She also seems much more focused on Q.'s experience than was evident in PSG, fully acknowledging the interactive nature of therapy and its impact on the therapist's role and functioning thus referring to ideas from family systems theory.

In PSG the two suggestions were: the possibility of referring on aspects of the work were considered; and splitting of the whole system into sub-systems to facilitate working. Q. is reluctant to consider these at the time, but they may have had some subsequent impact since he is dealing with a subsystem, as suggested in PSG, by the time of the ISV.

In ISV, the supervisor provides a greater variety of suggestions, based on careful consideration of case details first:

(i) she suggests that Q. re-frames his sense of the process;

(ii) she encourages him to look at the way the system is encouraging him to take on the role of 'bid daddy':

- (iii) she suggests that he talk with the one family member, to explore how she can get further support;
- (iv) she encourages him to have realistic expectations about what might be achieved in the short time remaining;
- (v) she suggests that he speak to the family about the way they've been using him to continue their way of (mis)communicating;
- (vi) she also suggests the possibility of bringing in an outside consultant, as she has sometimes done in similar circumstances.

6. Interactions: The supervisor in ISV seems to combine empathy and some interpretive comments with her probing, thus Q. does not seem to need to be on any sort of defensive. It would seem as if Q. ascribes status to his supervisor, and he seems to be able to hear and respond to her (possibly because he has a sense of being heard by her?) Q. seems to show much more energy later in ISV in response to the development of the dialogue. It is the nature of the ISV interaction which seems to enable shifts to be made for Q.

(NB. see my comments in res. diary of 12/11/98 related to Billig reading)

There are marked relational differences in PSG compared to ISV. In PSG, Q. had been one of the main contributors to the discussion phase in other sessions. Since he is required to be silent, the discussion is dominated by another peer who is distracted by her own issues and concerns related to both the case and the institutional context. Whilst another peer does strive, on three occasions, to re-focus the discussion onto Q.'s questions, the discussion moves away again each time. This might indicate the strength of the concerns with the broader context, but is not helpful to Q. on the whole; his gains from PSG being confined more to his own presentation and responses.

There does not appear to be evidence of an evaluative element in ISV, and Q. seems able to use ISV to be very open and frank. In INT10, Q reflects that in PSG (and probably this refers also to this ISV):

Q: ...I think I argue very differently or put my case very differently when I know I'm being treated as somebody who has as much case to make as my sv...

Q. also reflects on the history and structure of ISV perhaps being a safer space than PSG for him in INT10:

Q: ...I found I could take comfort from ISV in the structure that it all rested in, nestled in ... and just sort of coast along with it or you could try to jimmy with it, and it's quite scary ... it was quite comfortable to just stay with it...

Whereas, he found PSG a less safe space:

Q:...it put more responsibility on me and I felt like I had to carry much more in psv ...I knew at the end I had to go back to the case, my peers could go off home or whatever, they don't carry the can for me.

And further, in response to my asking whether PSG was a space where he could be vulnerable:

Q: ...I don't think it was a space to be vulnerable at all ... We're kind of equals here, here we have to switch in and out of the role of being the helper and the helped, that's not what we know of sv, we're the helped in sv. We're the sort of willing inept you know ...

7. Facilitation: In PSG, the facilitation is problematic (termed by Q. as 'loose cannonish'). This is not because the facilitator did not try, but may be a reflection of the dynamics in the system at that time. The facilitator does attempt to steer the questioning back to Q. but is not assertive enough, and one of the other peers takes over this role, particularly in the discussion where the facilitator

is silent. Thus, Q.'s RFA's are not foregrounded enough, even though there are attempts at this.

In contrast, the facilitation of the process in ISV promotes the learning process (ref again to structure underlying content). Initially the supervisor follows Q.'s lead, gaining as full a picture of the details as possible. She then uses one line comments and questions to enable Q. to consider other ways of constructing meaning and his role in the system. She is supportive and empathic to Q., enabling him to come to case decisions.

8. Response to supervision: In PSG, Q.'s feedback is much lengthier than in other cases. This may be to do with Q. asserting his own experience after the focus having been lost, and is also an example of him using the opportunity to talk through his understandings. There is evidence of Q. developing his understandings during the ISV, and he reflects (in ISV10) that this supervisor had made a great deal "of space available for processing individual reactions".

More generally, reflecting on supervision over the year, Q. comments that in much of the ISV he experienced, the power differentials were problematic (although this does not seem to apply to this particular supervisor):

J: ...Interesting your comment about talking through in a particular way and as you talk through perhaps hearing some of the flaws or some of the difficulties. I would sense that that might be one of the potentials of both types of sv.

Q: I think less from the other one because the structure really mitigates against you arguing your case, it's like an attorney trying to argue a supreme court case, it doesn't happen you've got to be an advocate to get up there and argue; like that's what happens in isv - you're the idiot by definition I think (laughs), you know.

J: So structurally you feel that power differential enormously.

Q: I'm exaggerating perhaps, but I know in some cases in isv last year, I was immanently better read than my supervisor on the case I was doing, in the modality I was choosing, and yet I had to follow the prescription of the sv, that's what they would deem appropriate, and it wasn't as if we'd thrashed it out as equals and come to some negotiated agreement and I would proceed with the case, it was definitely something being imposed upon me, there's no doubt about that in my view, and it varied from sv to sv obviously but there certainly was a sense of that.

APPENDIX H

Focus group discussion: 11/9/98

J: It is a good almost 6 months since first we met about peer supervision. What I thought might be helpful, and what we agreed at that initial meeting was that we'd have a time to feedback, to discuss your experiences of peer s/v, and the model for training. I've got a couple of questions that I'd like to ask you because I've managed now to listen to all the peer s/v tapes, and just to ask some general and some specific things about the content. But before I do that perhaps I should ask you for your initial comments or impressions of peer s/v as a part of your training, as a part of your supervision. We'll begin with open discussion first of all.

M: For me it was quite useful in terms of like come up with a case you discuss it and then you ask questions, because sometimes you are like stuck and you don't know where to go for, it gives each and everyone of us to comment and to clarify some questions that we have. And I find it more useful than the case conference because at the case conference we more sort of more experienced people and whether they realise it, that you don't get what you were looking for because it drags, it goes on and on, and some people are coming up with their experiences and sometimes even diverting from the original question. And I found that I gained more from the peer s/v than the case conference.

J: So to summarise what you're saying M. is though the case conference has more experienced people there often the questions that you need answered are not answered in that particular forum.

M: And it drags sometime before, even if you do get an answer but its not a clear picture, like here you get like, I know we're not that experienced, but I find that I've actually gained a lot from us. And it was quite like everybody's free not like control, what you say, even if you're not sure what you're saying is right, but we actually gained that confidence. I think it also helped me because when I went to present at case conference, I knew what sort of information to present and how to present it through the peer s/v.

J: So did you use the peer s/v almost as a preparation for the case conference? M: mm J: Thanks, M.

L: I think just following on what M. said I thought the structure turned out to be quite useful, in terms of keeping a direction and getting our questions answered. So even though it seemed a bit rigid when you first heard about it, I think it's a very useful model.

J: Yes, that was going to be one of my questions, so I'll come back to the structure, I don't want to mess up this initial discussion, but it's interesting that you found the structure useful.

I: Ja, it was an experience that all of us had.

R: I think for me I found peer s/v the suggestions much more practical, and I found I felt much more supported here than in individual s/v.

J: Is that so?

R: I felt here I was being heard, and I felt that people here people were understanding where I was coming from, they were able to empathise with that, where in individual s/v I felt really lost. I think in terms of I'm thinking of the case that I presented, after sitting here and everybody listening to me, I felt that the suggestions gave me a bit more direction, a bit more clarity at that stage where I should go, as compared to what I got in individual s/v. I think that what helped is that people really understood, they were able to come to me later and say you know this case is really very difficult, and that kinda helped a bit, so the support that you got was very helpful.

J: So what you're identifying then is the support from your group who both could empathise with

your position and sense where you need assistance.

R: And their suggestions are much more practical and grounded than the airy fairy stuff that I got.

J: The airy fairy stuff of?

R: Of telling me that all you have to do is this and relax and things will happen, you know containment. At that stage I wanted a bit more practical stuff which I got from here in terms of where to go at that stage.

N: Ja, to just follow on from what A., said I'd agree with what she's saying. After peer s/v you leave with a sense of I know what to do now, that's how it felt for me, whereas in individual s/v it was sort of just what have you done, what are you doing, oh; it just leaves you not knowing are you going forward, are you going backwards. And when I presented here, at the end of the day you get a clear picture of how to proceed, so that was very very helpful for me. And ja also the fact that you present it to your peers and they know where you're coming from, and you're coming from more or less the same kind of mode of functioning, and it became much easier to present as M. said, and ja, a way forward is actually quite clear, whereas individual s/v, you sort of left s/v and you were still stuck somewhere there, what do I do, what was done in s/v, you just end up not knowing what on earth you're supposed to do next.

J: So one of the things you're saying N. is that here it was more pragmatic, down to earth, step by step help with where you need to go, in comparison with individual s/v where you felt left somewhere in the air?

N: Ja, umm, ja I think it's probably has a lot to do with where one is now in terms of experience, I mean I don't know, but I know I'm a sort of a person who's in a way tends to be in a way focussed on case management, you know, and ja, sort of working in the present and work with what you have and move along and sometimes when you go to individual s/v there's a bit of a clash and sometimes you're not heard, in terms of where you're coming from, and you walk out feeling very much unheard and to a point where you start to feel quite disillusioned with s/v itself, you know, it becomes a bit of a drag when you think oh you have to go to supervision (laughs), it gets to that stage.

I: I think maybe I can add to that. I think maybe what happened here which was really good for me was that there was a cross-pollination of theoretical frameworks and a freshness of approach and an openness to a whole lot of different ideas and I'm thinking particularly when you say case management and present focussed. There are people like J. who are very into strategic interventions and social constructionist approaches. And that kind of freshness from each other is much more helpful, well I found it much more helpful than individual s/v where individual s/v is okay but its mostly just containing, saying ja you're ok carry on, just do what you're doing, without kind of any theoretical input which I think we got here.

P: I think what perhaps all of you are saying is what I felt. I felt so free here, it's a free forum and very empowering in that, in that we kind of moved away from this supervisors or lecturers have this kind of immutable truth, whereas here it was say we've got it, and we have the solutions, and I found that very refreshing and quite freeing, and very empowering in terms of saying ja to access this kind of knowledge. That was very helpful for me, I found it a very empowering sort of process. Also in that maybe some misconceptions arising make some ??? (noise) It was also nice from a social point of view, we never really get together as a group and when the tape is switched off, sometimes we laughed, it was also very refreshing 'coz we never have that opportunity to get together.

J: I'd like to come back to that point if I may, but can I just pick up on two things that B. and C. have said. N. you said that you feel almost disillusioned with individual s/v, can you try to pinpoint what feeds into that in inverted commas disillusionment?

N: I guess I. mentioned it, but just to say that with peer s/v you in a way different if I may call

them schools or theorists different perspectives, whereas individual s/v you've got somebody who's already working in a certain mindset and it became kind of an issue when you suddenly come with another mindset, and that's where I felt not heard you know because I felt I'm being channelled into a certain way of thinking there was no theory, or no theoretical input to sort of assist me, whatever, wherever I'm coming from and enhance it, take it further, you know improve on it. It was either, you follow how I as supervisor work or ja so.

J: So is it that it's possible and this is, I'm hypothesising, that the supervisor comes with their particular paradigm and doesn't try to work from where you're coming from and your paradigm? There's not a sense of saying ok let's hear what your paradigm is and develop that further, but rather an imposition of another one. (group murmuring assent)

N: Ja, ja and the fact that even if they do try and understand your paradigm, there's no sort of, um it's ok, I understand that's good, that's fine, end of story, there's no questions in terms of how did you get to that, why that, why that, and sort of have you looked at so and so have you considered, ja, you could tell you know it's just somebody working in a certain paradigm and probably having no idea on the idea on the paradigm you're bringing in.

I: I think all year I've been very hungry for some kind of theoretical input, for somebody to force me to formulate according to this theory or that theory (yes), and to think clearly within a case, and put it in some kind of case formulation, put it in different paradigms, and as N. says in individual s/v you can say well this is what I'm doing, but you don't get pushed forward at all, and here I felt as if we did push each other to think more clearly into whatever framework the person was talking about, and I didn't get that in individual s/v. I got acceptance, but not being moved on, challenged, or backup reading.

J: So would that be a general sort of feeling that one of the things you would like is further theoretical input, backup reading, that sort of thing.

P: One experience I had at the beginning of the year was where I was often criticised, and it felt like a criticism for the way I was reacting to a particular client, but at no stage, and I asked often I can't understand why I'm reacting in that way, there was no sort of shift in the theoretical paradigm why am I reacting to that client in that particular way, very disempowering.

M: Mm, I had the same experience.

J: You say you had the same M?

M: Mm.

J: In individual s/v if you were feeling disempowered, or you were feeling that you weren't getting answers for your questions, what stopped you from being able to ask for that do you think?

I: I did ask a couple of times, and I was given a book on TA, which I wasn't impressed with. I was looking for a more up to date reading, but I ..

P: I felt very conscious of the hierarchical difference. (M:me too) Clearly, s/v, intern, and there being quite a chism between, and often feeling that if I asked something more, I'm either going to get assessed on it or ... (laughter). Ja, it felt there was a big gap, whereas it wasn't here we were all equals and ja.

L: Ja, I think that hierarchy made a big difference. I think it also explains our experiences at case conference, hierarchical difference. Ja, it was much more, it facilitated a lot more umm engagement, challenge, it was a much more comfortable and safe space to actually grow and explore, ja. And very enabling.

N: Ja, it's quite amazing the issue of threat because umm no sooner had I voiced that one needed a theoretical input you know, and then the next supervision the first 20 minutes were how it was not so necessary that theoretical input was, so some kind of a blackmail, when you're given a whole 20 minute blurb because you have come with you are going to ask something theoretical, or something kind of right back and what's the point. So that's ja, that's what fires individual s/v

for me, ja this is from very personal experience, umm then I started viewing myself as am I always the dissenter here, you know toe the norm and backoff, and that's why I'm saying I had that feeling of being disillusioned 'coz I would go in listen agree, walk out and do something totally opposite to whatever went in individual s/v. But ja, whenever I did voice it out there'd be a long 20 minute speech

I: Rather than being heard

N: Ja rather than being heard, so I really felt unheard.

P: I also had that experience of being like the dissenter, almost wanting to say actually that approach that you've suggested doesn't quite fit my way of working, ja.

M: I even felt like you know when it's time for s/v if you can run away or do something else during that time, especially during the first 3 months of my s/v I felt like inexperienced, and incompetent, not knowing what I'm doing is right or wrong, and being criticised was the worst of all, and when I come to peer s/v even if I'm not sure of something I'm more than welcome to say it and then I know I'm going to get positive feedback that's how I felt.

J: So you're identifying that in some cases in individual s/v it felt as if your actual experiential position as a beginner therapist was not being heard, am I getting that sense?

I: I never really felt that, but maybe that's because I'm older, I did feel.

J: You felt as if you were heard C?

I: Ja, I think it's a function of age, though.

L: More that, I felt I was heard in terms of some of those feelings of insecurity about being a beginner therapist, but the thing about theoretical input and paradigm, that was still there, I did feel heard, but.

J: I suppose one of the differences was that you were in different indiv. s/v's. That would also ...

I: And both of the supervisions were different, as well

N: Ja, 'coz now I think we're referring to the particular case we were presenting here, and individual s/v. Ja, that's in reference to that, ja our other individual s/v was quite exactly for me, what I exactly needed, a lot of theoretical input, a lot of books to read, and umm, enhancing the technique, you know I thought and she said, oh no maybe do it this way, and maybe do it that way, I quite enjoyed that.

I: Ja, likewise my other supervision was much more umm.

J: Could we go to some of the more specific areas that I'd like to ask your opinions on? The one is to go back to the structure used. I'm aware that when we first looked at the structure, people might have felt ooh I don't know if I quite like this. Ja, could I just hear from you how you experienced the structured approach to peer supervision?

I: I was very resistant to it at the beginning, I thought this is really going to be really stiff and contrived and it's going to inhibit rather than facilitate exploration, but in actual fact the opposit was true. It was really a facilitative structure which meant that everyone was heard, that we kept to time quite well, and by the end of the time we actually were so familiar with the structure we just did it anyway, it became a natural process, and it was a very useful structure, as far as I can think.

N: Ja, I must say I also didn't see the point of it from the beginning, and I think it helped quite a lot in terms of putting us into focus and like T was talking about so that we don't all go astray, and actually leave the question behind and start discussing, there were times where we strayed, and you got facilitators saying ay, back to the structure, and it actually we get somewhere, that's exactly how we were able to actually get somewhere in assisting the person, and get the person to actually shift from where they are stuck. Otherwise I think if there wasn't any structure it would have been no difference from case conference, you just take different directions and ask questions for the sake of asking questions and you know.

I: And the loudest voice has the answers, (assent)

P: What I enjoyed about the structure was that it kinda so everybody had an opportunity to share no-one really dominated it, just such an equal process, everybody was heard.

J: So it feels like there's a general sense of consensus that the structure was helpful? (Ja) Any thoughts about why such a structure, I mean you've mentioned some of them, but why such a structure might be necessary?

N: I suppose to mention that you know the part about where people dominate is how we talk to you as a presenter and they talk about themselves. I like that because it doesn't open a floor for argument, you know where you start defending your point, oh but this and this and this, which also would throw the whole thing aside. It actually gives you who has presented the opportunity to listen to what is being said to you, and the people who are giving you input to think about what they're saying, and to give constructive input because they know that there's somebody sitting there and just listening, ja, and you sort of think well I have to say something that's going to be useful because so and so over here, you've got that thing that I'm listened to. That's how I felt.

I: And it was useful to have a formal thing that gave everyone a voice 'coz often in case conferences I feel that there's an awful lot that's unsaid that I wish I could from particular people that actually don't bother to open their mouths at case conference. And here we had the chance for them to open their mouths.

N: And it was focussed on the case, because the reason why you find that maybe case conferences people hardly say much is that the topic just sort of runs away, you know from the actual question, so that even if you wanted to say something you're no longer, you know you no longer have ideas about what the people are discussing, you know you can't fit into that argument. Whereas if we were still here you would have some input, so I think the structure prevented that from happening. You know everybody was able to contribute because the topic was very focused and we stayed with the topic.

M: And I also enjoyed the part where the presenter will like feedback on what their focus, their nucleus, gained something from the discussion. And it felt like people were gaining something from our suggestions, and I think I felt good about that.

P: You don't always get that feeling from case conference (laughter).

J: Those 3 categories of the r.f.a. statements. Any comments on those?

R: I think sometimes it was a bit difficult to place questions into one of those categories, I think ja, some of us would have a problem with that. But most of the time it was fine.

L: Maybe it might be useful to actually expand the categories, because actually the process of trying to decide where it fits also helped focus you, and focus the way you were questioned.

I: Although it was a bit ??

J: So what you're saying it might be worth for me to look at the way you phrased your questions, and see how we could look at those r.f.a. categories differently, that certainly has been my sense listening to the tapes, that those were a bit false, or somehow the division ...

I: Got a bit blurred

J: Could I ask whether there were any downsides to ps/v, whether there were any times where you felt angry, upset, disillusioned, were there any downsides that you experienced.

R: Personally, no

P: I'm concerned about the fact that because, and I don't have the solution to it, but in terms of the fact that misconceptions could arise from this where you get a group consensus, a group type thing taking place and people go away with a misconception, um there was one particular place where I found that the group decision could have been problematic, and everybody went away with that idea, but it almost contrasts with what I liked about this was not having this supervisor/lecturer feeding in with kind of 'truth' that we all had to take. So I was a bit concerned

that misconceptions might arise, and also because we come from the same university, the same learning structure, ja, that might be problematic, I don't know if anyone felt the same. (silence)

I: I actually experienced a diversity rather than group consensus (L:ok), um, I never remember a time of feeling that's a group decision and that's what that therapist has to do. It felt more to me like an exploration with diverse opinions and the therapist was free to pick up what they were comfortable with, but I might have missed what you are talking about.

J: Ja, I would imagine if you were to ask a group of supervisors their fears about a process like this, they might very well be voicing that. It would be interesting for me to hear which particular decision you were concerned about, I'm not sure whether you want to talk about that or not?

P: Ja, um I'd be happy to. It was O.'s particular case where she decided to see the child in the playroom and no assessment had taken place I'd felt concerned she'd taken or that the group had agreed with taking a child straight into the playroom and not really doing some sort of a play assessment whether this child was suitable to that particular structure, play structure. And the group sort of came up with a group consensus that it was okay, ja, and that raised some concerns for me around this particular process that hadn't really been ja fleshed out. I'm not sure whether anyone else was concerned about that particular issue, but it just raised a lot of concerns for me.

J: Ja, I suppose it raises the whole idea of play assessment, because I think for some forms of therapy, you just go straight into the therapy, for others there is a definite structure to how to engage in a therapeutic process.

L: I think ja, umm, just reflecting on that one, the idea of play assessment had come in, and it was discussed and kindof played with, so I still had a sense that there was a kindof variety and a diversity of opinion that came out of that issue.

J: I must say though although you are all working in this setting and some of you came through the M1 programme, one of the things that's really struck me about looking at your background, you know you gave me that autobiographical stuff, is that there's an incredible diversity in this group, you know just looking at the training backgrounds and experiential backgrounds. It's for me I think just in looking at it, it must have been a real plus.

I: A very enriching experience (assent), you don't even have to think of background, just look at our cultural diversity, that was an incredibly helpful 'coz we talk about multicultural in therapy a lot. And it really was a helpful process.

J: I believe that's been a real plus of working with you as a group. To give that input and, and a real plus of having this opportunity to test out this model.

P: Ja, I don't know if anyone else felt the need for some kind of feedback from the therapist. I remember the case that you presented R., and as I often wondered did your client come back? (laughter) I mean we've been here for an hour and we get quite involved in the particular therapist, I don't know maybe feedback from that particular person may have been quite helpful. I'm not sure what purpose it would have served, but? (laughter)

J: Would there be value in a session where each person gives a 4, 5 months down the line feedback on their case, I wonder?

(General assent) I: I think there would be great value in that because then we could look at what kind of suggestions came up and what route the therapist chose and how that, what were the outcomes.

N: It wouldn't be an hour.

J: That might be quite useful to plan, it feels as if there's a group consensus about that idea, that we get together and just have a feedback from each person about the client and where the case has gone, what was helpful and what not, a number of months down the line. So perhaps something that could plot - I'll star that so we can come back to that. Just a couple more questions about the actual structure. One of my questions is about facilitating, each of you had a chance to

facilitate, how that was, and N. you've already spoken about the value of feeding back without participating in the discussion, where you sit and listen to the feedback (N: laughs), you laugh?

I: There's too many control freaks in this (general laughter). Being a facilitator and boxing everyone.

N: Don't you like me as a facilitator?

I: You and Q.

N: Yes, Q. and I?

J: Are we talking about a different sort of a learning experience then, being a facilitator, I just wonder?

N: Ja, I suppose it was really.

I: We recognised each other's personal styles (great mirth again), the directive and the non-directive.

J: So facilitating gave you a chance to take out the finger and wag it? (laughter)

P: That caused lots of fun around.

I: The only frustration I had as a facilitator was not being able to participate (murmurs of agreement), but I think that that's important, it's important to have somebody outside of the session who is keeping an eye on things. 'coz that was probably the only reason that it ran smoothly. I think if the facilitator was allowed or tempted to participate probably the process would become messy.

J: So you saw that as a valuable part of the structure rather than an inhibiting part of the structure? (assent)

N: And I think it was actually useful to actually have a facilitator for the process to go on, otherwise I think a lot of time would have been lost over little, non-significant issues, so ja it gave it some sort of, what's the word

P: Structure (laughter)

N: It just sort of got the process going to know there's somebody watching over time, um, ja.

L: Who gets it started, umm.

J: And then the presence of this tape recorder - I must just check where we are.

I: You hear it click.

J: Thanks, the presence of the tape recorder, what are thoughts about that, might it have been different without a tape recorder present?

I: You know what I think would have happened is that we would have been less focussed. We would have been much more tempted to chat and bring in inconsequentials and not to think about what we were saying and, it was, at the beginning perhaps it was a little inhibiting but as time went on I think it became a mechanism to focus us rather than to inhibit us.

P: It's almost like a big brother watching (laughter)

J: Big sister (more laughter)

I: We know J.'s going to go over this.

N: Ja, but I mean it was in no way it intimidating. I think it just became part of the process. Became another facilitator (laughter). And I's saying it directed us.

M: In the beginning I found it uncomfortable, but as time went on it was quite okay.

J: My final question is any other spinoffs of peer s/v? We've heard some in the general discussion.

I: I think for me it's been a very useful exercise, and it's something I'd really like to see introduced at SC. And we've actually started motivating for that already. I think it would be usefule not only at CGC but at SC to have two opportunities a week to discuss different cases, it would be really good.

J: So you would actually like to see more time spent in this kind of activity? (ja)

One of the things I'm looking at, one of the questions in my mind is what is its value as a learning

activity? And I just wonder what you think it might add to SC? What is it that enhances, or makes it a learning activity?

I: For me it was the freshness of theoretical input that came around this time, which I think maybe could be even more, could be focussed even more if we encouraged each other, or were encouraged to formulate according to theories to be specific about them, to bring readings, to pool our collective resources around a particular theory. I would have liked it to have even more of a theoretical focus than it had. So you would say, okay I've formulated this case in an object relations framework and this is the way I've been looking at it and to actually be more focussed, but we did get some of that which was enjoyable, and that was for me the learning part of it.

N: Ja, I mean if it becomes part of the structure within SC, it could also be some form of a way for us to even have a slot where we actually do some form of reading presentations, take a particular theory, narrative therapy and just come and present it, ja for that hour, so it could be a forum for that to keep us abreast with theory, or to even invite people, lecturers or people to come in and give us some theoretical input, or something, or be present when one presents a case.

L: I'd like to keep that as a separate thing, keep peer s/v as it has been run, and maybe kind of that can be facilitated in a separate slot, theory and to discuss papers.

I: Ja, I think the hierarchical thing might slip in again if we have lecturers present. it might kind of inhibit you. But then I hear what you're saying because I would like some more input from the psych. dept and your dept on theoretical issues.

N: Ja, as I'm saying that we have nothing of that up to now, it just seemed to be the avenue where you could have it you know, so like I get quite despondent. (silence)

I: I think the other spinoff was probably just as P. said getting us together. I mean we quite often had lunch on a Friday, ja it's quite a nice bonding sort of an exercise.

P: And also, gave us an opportunity to cathart (laughter)

N: I was about to say that.

P: Got rid of quite a lot of aggression.

N: I was about to say that, just remembering when P. was having quite a tough time at XCentre, ja, after the tape recorder was switched off she just sort of poured it out and it was used in a way as that, you know after all that then people would sort of take out whatever's been happening over the week. Even in R.'s case, she, ja it was quite a difficult one, she also had that space to take it all out, and got support.

I: Ja, which you might remember at the beginning we were looking for and we had that.

J: So what we are saying then is having that spare 15 minutes is important in terms of having a time to cathart, or to do whatever is necessary, to talk about whatever is necessary.

P: Ja, I think the group got quite mobilised. I remember you guys talking about an SC issue you go down and, as a result of the discussion here you can do something, it might have been around peer supervision.

L: And also the energy of re-structuring the room kind of came from here as well, we all just went in and did it.

P: That's right

L: So it did ...

J: So it enabled a sort of a solidarity to develop? (Mm) So the final question then is how do we go ahead? We still have another 3 months. There was a suggestion that we have a feedback session where each person has a chance to feedback to the group about the case about their particular case that they presented here and what's happened. Sounds as if it could be quite useful, and any reflections back on the process. And then there's also the possibility of continuing and bringing in a bit of theoretical stuff as I. suggested, perhaps formulating a case, starting to think a little more theoretically, seeing the discussion around that. Would you see that still in the structure though I.?

N: Ja, and let Q. know and T.

J: And I have tapes available as well, ~~just to tape record it~~, because I think it would be a useful time to review the process for all the ~~tape recordings~~ that I have.

(Arrangements made).

APPENDIX I

Linking of form and content of learning

FORM	CONTENT
* Explicit structuring (of interactions)	Greater clarity of purpose
* Intentions of interaction specified	Expectations clarified
* Equal status of participants	Openness of expression Taking responsibility for own decisions
* Hierarchical differences	Following advice; shared responsibility
* Presentation in context of intentional listening	Ordering of ideas; evaluation of presentation
* Open-ended, exploratory possibilities	Clarify thoughts, consider questioning
* Listening to others' perspectives without critique of self	Open to hearing other ideas
* RFA - focussed discussion	Exploratory generation of alternatives
* Variety of theoretical	Openness to other views perspectives Evaluation of alternatives
* Inputs 'matched' to interns'	Decreased dissonance, level of understanding Increased incorporation of ideas
* Practical, step by step suggestions	Greater understanding of explanations
* Examples of similar experiences	Reassurance; workable ideas
* Identifying with presenter's difficulties	Encouragement
* Client-centred focus (some ISV's)	Deepened empathy with client
* Use of metaphor, playfulness	Shifts perspective; includes affect
* Challenging/ arguing a point	Clarifies ideas; proposes alternatives; builds confidence
* Probing of personal reactions in a safe space (some ISV's)	Gain greater personal insight
* Summarise main points	Making of links; distilling of key ideas
* Feedback	Evaluate progress

NB. Potential for PSG to enable a growing autonomy - interactions explicate knowledge as construction rather than as transmitted.

