

The use and application of knowledge in practice: the lived experiences of social workers in adult services.

Anthony E Hesketh

University of Salford,

School of Health and Society,

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of the Degree of the Professional Doctorate, 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	7
ABSTRACT	8
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	10
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	11
CHAPTER 1	12
1.1 INTRODUCTION	12
1.2 SETTING THE SCENE	14
1.3 THE REQUIREMENTS OF A KNOWLEDGE BASED PROFESSION.....	14
1.4 PROFESSIONS AND KNOWLEDGE.....	15
1.5 HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND SOCIAL WORK?	18
1.6 UNCERTAINTY, COMPLEXITY, AMBIGUITY: THE STUFF OF SOCIAL WORK?	21
1.7 CRISES IN SOCIAL WORK	24
1.8 EFFECTS ON SOCIAL WORK WITH ADULTS.	26
1.9 POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION.....	27
1.10 ABSENT VOICES	31
1.11 SUMMARY	33
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	34
2.1 KNOWLEDGE AND THEORY IN SOCIAL WORK.....	34
2.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THEORY AND KNOWLEDGE	34
2.3 THE DESIRABILITY OF A DISTINCT SOCIAL WORK KNOWLEDGE	39
2.4 FOUNDATIONAL BELIEFS	39
2.5 TYPOLOGIES AND TAXONOMIES.....	43
2.6 ECLECTICISM/SELECTIVITY/CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT?	47
2.7 THEORY /PRACTICE DILEMMA	50
2.8 THEORIES OF PRACTICE VERSUS PRACTICE THEORIES?.....	51
2.9 PROBLEMS WITH PRACTICE	53
2.10 EVIDENCE BASED KNOWLEDGE.....	56
2.11 PRACTICE BASED KNOWLEDGE.....	59
2.12 IS THERE AN APPLICATION PROBLEM?	65

2.13 PRACTITIONER VOICES.....	70
2.14 SUMMARY.....	73
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY.....	75
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	75
3.2 THE USE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH.....	75
3.3 EPISTEMOLOGY AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE.....	76
3.4 INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS (IPA).....	78
3.5 ROLE OF RESEARCHER. REFLEXIVITY AND POSITIONALITY.....	87
3.6 POSTMODERN INFLUENCES ON RESEARCHER AND STUDY.....	91
3.7 RECRUITMENT.....	94
3.8 PARTICIPATION.....	95
3.9 DATA PROTECTION ISSUES.....	97
3.10 INFORMED CONSENT.....	97
3.11 INTERVIEW DESIGN.....	99
3.12 DATA ANALYSIS.....	100
3.13 SUMMARY.....	104
CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS.....	106
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	106
4.2 ANALYSIS OF THEMES.....	107
4.3 SUPERORDINATE THEME ONE: A COMPLEX PROCESS	
A. LACK OF PREPARATION.....	108
B. TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE AVAILABLE TO SOCIAL WORKERS.....	112
C. ALL TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS.....	120
D. SUPPORT AND COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE.....	124
E. BARRIERS.....	126
4.4 SUPERORDINATE THEME TWO: USE OF KNOWLEDGE	
A. LACK OF CONSCIOUS AWARENESS.....	128
B. STATUS OF SOCIAL WORK WITH ADULTS.....	129
C. KNOWLEDGE TO UNDERSTAND.....	132
D. KNOWLEDGE TO SUBVERT.....	135
E. KNOWLEDGE TO DEMONSTRATE PROFICIENCY.....	137
4.5 SUPERORDINATE THEME THREE: PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE	

A. FEAR AND APPREHENSION	139
B. THE IDEAL V. THE REAL WORLD	140
C. THE MISSING LINK- THE SOCIAL WORKER.....	142
D. PRACTICE WISDOM	147
4.6 SUMMARY.....	150
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION.....	152
5.1 INTRODUCTION	152
5.2 SUPERORDINATE THEME ONE: A COMPLEX PROCESS	
A. LACK OF PREPARATION	152
B. TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE: FORMAL, PROCEDURAL, LIFE EXPERIENCE	161
C. ALL TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS	166
D. SUPPORT AND COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE	169
E. BARRIERS.....	174
5.3 SUPERORDINATE THEME TWO: USE OF KNOWLEDGE	
A. LACK OF CONSCIOUS AWARENESS.....	177
B. STATUS OF SOCIAL WORK WITH ADULTS	179
C. KNOWLEDGE TO UNDERSTAND.....	181
D. KNOWLEDGE TO SUBVERT	185
E. KNOWLEDGE TO DEMONSTRATE PROFICIENCY	187
5.4 SUPERORDINATE THEME THREE: PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE	
A. FEAR AND APPREHENSION	191
B. THE IDEAL V. THE REAL WORLD	193
C. THE MISSING LINK- THE SOCIAL WORKER.....	196
D. PRACTICE WISDOM	203
5.5 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS	209
5.6 SUMMARY.....	212
CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION	215
6.1 INTRODUCTION	215
6.2 OVERVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS RELATING TO THE RESEARCH QUEST	215
6.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE	218
6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	219
6.5 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE	219

THESIS REFERENCES.....	221
APPENDIX 1 UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER.....	283
APPENDIX 2 PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL.....	284
APPENDIX 3 PARTICIPANT INVITATION LETTER AND INFORMATION LEAFLET	285
APPENDIX 4 PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM	289
APPENDIX 5 INTERVIEW GUIDE	290
APPENDIX 6 LANCASHIRE COUNCIL APPROVAL LETTER.....	292
APPENDIX 7 LIVERPOOL COUNCIL APPROVAL LETTER.....	293
APPENDIX 8 KNOWSLEY COUNCIL APPROVAL LETTER.....	294
APPENDIX 9 SEFTON COUNCIL APPROVAL LETTER	296
APPENDIX 10 EXAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW	297
APPENDIX 11 EXAMPLE OF INTERVIEW LOG	315
APPENDIX 12 MARTHA: DEVELOPING EMERGENT THEMES	317
APPENDIX 13 LITERATURE SEARCH.....	322

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1. SUPERORDINATE THEMES SUPPORTED BY SUBORDINATE THEMES IDENTIFIED FROM THE CONVERSATIONS 108

FIGURE 2. KOLB’S LEARNING CYCLE 164

FIGURE 3. TRIANGULAR REPRESENTATION OF THEORY, PRACTICE AND THE SOCIAL WORKER.....201

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1 LIST OF PARTICIPANTS 96

TABLE 2 TYPOLOGIES AND TAXONOMIES OF KNOWLEDGE FOR SOCIAL WORK 162

Declaration

I confirm that this thesis and the research reported within it, comprises my own work. It was written and submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of the Degree of Professional Doctorate, 2018.

Abstract

This purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of social workers in adult social services in the United Kingdom, as they use and apply knowledge in practice. This is situated within the wider debate as to what might comprise the knowledge base for practice, how practitioners use knowledge and the issues they face in its application to practice.

In some ways, this relationship between knowledge and practice lies at the very core of social work itself and it can be argued that it is this which makes it distinctive. Many writers continue to acknowledge the 'theory/practice dichotomy', which can be considered as an unacceptable gap, a disjuncture between what is taught or learned and what is practised. Knowledge is seen as the domain of the academic and practice of the social worker. Much of the work in this area highlights the views and opinions of academics with little attention given to the experiences of practitioners who remain a relatively under-researched professional group.

This qualitative study using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) presents an in-depth, idiographic analysis of the lived experiences of social workers in the adult field who discussed their experiences of the use and development of knowledge in their practice. Findings offer insights into what the social workers experienced as challenging, from both the increased complexity and pace of their workload with efforts to understand and intervene in the lives of their service users. The essence of the experience was condensed into three superordinate themes which emerged from the data;

- A Complex Process.
- The Use of Knowledge/Functionality.
- 'Putting it into Practice'.

Detailing different aspects of the social workers' experiences, the themes highlighted the complexity of impressions of the nature and type of knowledge used in practice, the various ways in which knowledge is used and the struggles to articulate and find a language to explain the issues faced in applying knowledge.

As no previous study has considered the use and application of knowledge by practitioners in the adult sector in this way, the research findings provide new insights by hearing the voices of the participants enabling them to convey their understanding of what they perceive are the issues facing them in this important area of their practice.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this project would not have been possible without the initial help offered to me by the University of Salford and later Edgehill University, for which I am very grateful. There are many people who have helped me in the preparation and writing of this thesis. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisors, Professor Allison Brettle, Dr Michaela Rogers for their valued advice, support, encouragement, understanding and patience. I am also very thankful to my earlier supervisor, Dr Elaine Ball, for her guidance, advice and support.

In addition, I would like to offer particular gratitude to the participants who contributed their personal insights and experiences unconditionally in addition to their time to make this project possible.

Special thanks must also go to Dr. Christian Griffiths for his support, friendship and practice assistance, Dr. Edith Stein for inspiration and my sisters Marie Gilchrist and Theresa Butler for their encouragement.

This thesis is dedicated to my late parents, Ellen and Ernest Hesketh and Aunts Theresa and Kathleen Molloy.

Abbreviations

CoP Community of Practice

DoE Department of Education

DoH Department of Health

EBP Evidence Based Practice

HCPC Health and Care Professions Council

HEI Higher Education Institute

IPA Interpretative phenomenological analysis

KSSS Knowledge and Skills Statement for Adults

PCF Professional Capability Framework

PW Practice Wisdom

Chapter 1.

1.1 Introduction

This introductory chapter will outline the purpose and rationale for this study and present a brief personal reflection on my chosen research project. The remainder of the chapter will examine the context in which the debates about knowledge use and application take place. These include an overview of issues around the nature of professions and the involvement of knowledge; the ways in which social work is understood; the social and political context in which practice with adults is carried out and the absence of the practitioner voice in these debates.

This purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of social workers in adult social services as they use and apply knowledge in practice. In this research 'lived experience' is understood and captured in the recognition of the recurrent themes underlying the experience of using and applying knowledge in practice. The objectives are;

- i) To explore the types of knowledge which social workers use in practice
- ii) To consider the origins and purpose of such knowledge
- iii) To examine the often referred to 'gap' or 'space' between theory and practice and whether it is real or imagined

Ferguson (2004) talks about the difference between the "liquid" and "solid" worlds of social work. The knowledge using/making/applying to practice element is part of this 'liquid world'– the transient, effervescent world of practice – rather than the "solid" world of bureaucratic policy and procedure. The focus of this research study is to get an insider view, on the experiences of practitioners who are involved in the daily business of selecting and using knowledge to assist the people with whom they work. This study will help to inform the social work profession of what is taking place in this process as experienced by the practitioner. Thus it aims to provide an original contribution to the literature on the use and application of knowledge in social work practice with adults.

The study too considers these objectives in the context of the wider debates about as to what might comprise the knowledge base for practice and as well as how theory and knowledge might be used and applied.

To some degree, research always reflects the view or perspective of the researcher despite the calls for impartiality and rationality in the pursuit of knowledge. One's world view is moulded by one's personal biography and thus researchers should be open about the experiences that have influenced their personal and professional development in order that the reader understands the position whence the research comes.

With a few brief exceptions I have always worked with and on behalf of adults in the field of social work, probation practice and education and my interest in how social workers use and develop knowledge is longstanding. It goes back to my own social work student days when we were required to write essays for university tutors which applied theory to practice to demonstrate our competency as a practitioner. I recall at least a few occasions writing of fictitious people as I could easily make theory 'fit' practice in people who did not exist in the real world. I had total control of these cases' circumstances which were amended to show that various theoretical frameworks were used to intervene appropriately, in ways which suited my university tutors. We were taught 'social work theory' as a discrete entity but there was little attempt to demonstrate its relationship to practice or how to use knowledge in practice. I presume the teachers thought we would 'pick it up' on placements by the time old method of 'sitting next to Nellie' which was adapted to social work and given the title 'observation'. I certainly experienced a sense of uncertainty and bewilderment regarding the limitations of my knowledge which was experience of a gap between what was known and what needed to be known. However, at that time I considered it more the consequence of a personal intellectual deficit rather than from an intrinsic problem with the nature and use of knowledge. When later supervising social workers the ongoing disconnect between the two areas continued to be apparent when asked about applying theory to practice. They often had difficulty in giving a coherent response and invariably the issue was noted in appraisals as an area for 'further development'. Again, it was assumed the problem lay with the practitioner's limitations rather than a feature of knowledge application per se.

These issues have continued to actively preoccupy my interest during my fifteen years teaching on the various social work qualifying programmes. They raise questions not only about the nature and purpose of social work education but

concerns relating to the apparent problems with theory and practice. After experiencing both sides of the social work world, academic and practice, I am more bewildered at the divide between them which compounds the issues between theory and practice. The central figure of the practitioner is largely missing from the debates and this thesis aims to rectify this omission to some small extent.

1.2 Setting the Scene

Initially the chapter addresses the nature of a profession and the relationship between professional status and knowledge. It will then move onto a consideration of the contested nature and purpose of social work before moving on to a discussion of the more recent neoliberal ideology which dominates the terrain in which social work with adults is practised. The negative impact of this ideology and the attendant new public managerialism on social work will then be discussed including the debates around the configuration of social work education. Finally consideration will be given to the 'absent voices' in the debates about social work, those of the practitioners themselves whose experiences of these issues are manifold but marginal in the discussions.

1.3 The requirements of a knowledge-based profession

The main aim of the thesis is to understand how social workers in the adult sector apply knowledge and theory in practice. This is situated within the wider debate as to what might comprise the knowledge base for practice and as well as how theory and knowledge might be used. In some ways, this relationship, between theory and practice, lies at the very core of social work itself and it can be argued that it is this which makes it distinctive. As Thompson (2000b) has argued:

“The relationship between theory and practice can be seen as a direct parallel with that between thinking and doing. It hinges on the question, ‘how do knowledge and thought influence or inform our actions?’” (Thompson 2000b p.4)

This is important as social workers in England have been legally required since 2007 to register, firstly with the General Social Care Council and after 2012, with its successor, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC 2017) and adhere to

the HCPC Standards of Proficiency. The standards set out what a social worker in England should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their social work training. These are threshold standards considered necessary by the HCPC to protect the public and once registered social workers must continue to meet them. Standard 13 (HCPC, 2017, p12) states that the social worker must understand “the key concepts of the knowledge base relevant to their profession” and “understand them in relation to social work practice, social work theory, social work models and interventions”. More recently, the Knowledge and Skills Statements for Adults (KSSA DoH 2015) sets out what the knowledge and competency of a social worker with adults should be following their first year in employment (KSSA DoH 2015). The document emphasises that:

“Social workers need to apply a wide range of knowledge and skills to understand and build relationships, and work directly with individuals, their families and carers to enable and empower them to achieve best outcomes.” (Knowledge and Skills Statement for Adults 2015, DOH p.2).

In addition, the KSSA places a strong emphasis on the role of employers and the training and support they must provide to deliver quality social workers.

1.4 Professions and Knowledge

The status of social work as a profession has been the subject of considerable debate since at least 1915 when Flexner questioned the nature of its knowledge base which he and others held to be one of the defining features of professions (Rogowski 2010).

‘Professions would fall short of attaining intellectuality if they employed, mainly or even largely, knowledge and experience that is generally accessible, if they drew, that is only on the usually available sources of information’ (Flexner 1915 p.579).

He considered that professions mainly involve ‘intellectual operations... (and) ...derive their raw material from science and learning’ (Flexner 1915 p.581). Later Amitai Etzioni categorised social work as a ‘semi’ rather than a ‘mature’ profession partly because ‘there is less of a specialised body of knowledge’ demonstrating his view that a codified body of knowledge germane to practice is considered an

essential feature of any profession (Etzioni, 1969). In the U.K. context, the term 'bureau professional' has also been used in to describe the nature of British social work as a 'state-mediated'—and hence politically dominated—profession (LyMBERY 2014). Green (2006 p.251) further notes that some academics argue that because social work has conceded ideological control of its profession, this is leading to the 'diminution and proletarianism of social work'. Hugman (1991) maintains that social work, like many professions, is in a trilateral, symbiotic relationship with the state and service user but with the state exercising significantly more power than with the other two parties.

The work of a profession, coupled with the knowledge used to realise this work, are crucial characteristics of all professions. They are the foundational ways by which they legitimate themselves from one another and the process by which they legitimate their activities in the larger society and culture. (Abbot 1988). These views tend to remain based on concerns about the lack of a clear and discrete knowledge base. Unfavourable comparisons to medicine are usually made which is always held to be at the apex of the professional hierarchy with its esoteric body of knowledge which only the initiated can understand and utilise. This apparent fragility in its epistemology still undermines the credibility of social work in the eyes of some current authors who consider that:

“social work tends to be an incoherent set of theories and techniques without a systematic structure.....and in terms of (its) theories and knowledge, (it) leads to unsystematic pluralism of mutually exclusive models, and in the final instance to dogmatism” (Goppner and Hamalainen 2007 p.280 and p.282).

The issue is complicated as social work knowledge may be acquired by different means and knowledge is frequently identified by its source. Social workers frequently use knowledge from a wide variety of sources such as law, sociology and psychology. It is the combination of types of knowledge, which increases the difficulty in defining what social work knowledge actually is.

Such criticisms appear valid in the sense that social work does not currently have and is unlikely to develop a discipline specific knowledge base. However, it perhaps needs to embrace a more credible evaluation of the benchmarks constituting professional status. As noted, medicine is most often considered the archetypal

profession by many yet it too lacks a unique body of knowledge as it borrows heavily from anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, and communication theory which are hardly discipline specific. Thyer (2002) argues that knowledge does not recognise discipline –specific boundaries:

”Empirically validated knowledge does not belong to any single discipline or profession- it belongs to all of science, and to all those fields which base their practices on scientific findings” (Thyer 2002 p.109).

Illich’s political critique (1972) challenged the power and mystery of what he referred to as ‘disabling professions’ in which professional experts classify and legitimate the ‘problems’ with which they engage. He questioned why we hold the professions in awe and allow them to set up what are in effect monopolies whereby they claim legitimacy as the interpreter, protector and supplier of a special, this-worldly interest of the public at large. With his critique in mind, one wonders why social work would wish to acquire the status of professional at all. In this vein, Parker and Doel (2013, p.7) suggest that the question should be not ‘is social work a profession’ to ‘what might professional social work look like?’

Edwards (2010), considering the problems with older ideas about professionalism, maintains that there needs to be a revitalised version of being professional in the public sector. She emphasises knowledge in practice as a resource to be acknowledged and utilised at work on complex problems.

The role of knowledge in imbuing professional status is highly contested particularly with the increased acceptance of various types of knowledge which are not based explicitly on science notably, experiential knowledge, expert based knowledge, service user knowledge (Trinder in Fawcett et al 2000). However the various types of knowledge share a commonality in that ‘they are developed in social contexts and within different group and institutional dynamics’ (Bilic.2014 p1260). Thus knowledge is directly associated with the social and historical context in which it is created and a sociology of knowledge “must concern itself with whatever passes for ‘knowledge’ in a society, regardless of the ultimate validity or invalidity by (whatever criteria) of such ‘knowledge’” (Berger and Luckmann 1966 p.15).

A more positive and contemporary approach to recognising the complexity of a profession is offered by Parker and Doel (2013). They argue that: 'professionalism is ultimately about identity' which includes:

“an appreciation of the particular mix of knowledge, values and skills that come first from a formal education in social work and then develop through regular activity in work that requires the social work title and continue to be developed through professional supervision” (Parker and Doel 2013 p.212).

This approach would also acknowledge the special expertise that service users, and carers bring to the project with the overall aim of bringing about change at 'personal, collective and social levels' (Parker and Doel 2013 p.212). This would highlight the social and moral character of the profession rather than relying solely on knowledge.

1.5 How do we understand social work?

Social work has been seen as located at the intersection of 'personal troubles' and 'public ills' (Mills 1959) but this is one of the few statements that is generally accepted about its nature. At the outset, it is important to note that the definition and function of social work is contested and hard to define as it varies in the time and place it is practiced. (Cree 2011, Jones 2014, Mackay and Zufferey, 2014 McLaughlin 2008). Indeed, social work has continually been subject to competing claims of definition and practice as various interested parties have fought to have control over what social work is, and what it might be. The reasons for this are manifold with a distinction often made between broader descriptions of social work as an 'activity' and more limited ones of social work as a 'professional occupation' (Askeland and Payne 2001). Moreover there is lack of consensus on what is actually meant by social work amongst the political elites, media, and service users and carers, educators, employers and practitioners (Askeland and Payne 2001). This is further complicated by the evolving nature of social work in the 21st century. Thompson (2000b p.13) maintains that 'social work is what social workers do' with Cree (2003) arguing that:

“We should not expect to find unanimity in books about social work, or even in accounts of social workers. Social work is always subject to competing claims of definition and practice, and cannot be separated from the society in which it is located.... Rather social work has to be seen as a collection of

competing and contradictory discourses that come together at a particular moment in time to frame the task of social work” (Cree 2003 p.3/4)

Indeed similarly, Howe (1986 p.160) argues that ‘social work has no essential nature’ and is therefore produced by the context in which it is performed. Hence the shape of social work practice is effected and influenced by the expectations of its role in each agency and country in which it practises (Baginsky 2014).

In this view, social work is a social construction which is necessarily subject to a process of ‘validation’ (Askeland and Payne 2001) which means social work is validated by a process of legitimation from diverse and contradictory definitions and traditions.

In the UK, ‘social work looked directly to the state for its legitimization’ (Jones 1999 p.48). The context, specifically the formation of the social services in 1971, recommended by the Seebohm Report in 1968, was the key factor in the creation of what is commonly called a ‘bureau professional’ identity. This is often referred to as the distinctive organisational regime of the post war welfare state in which ‘the dominant modes of coordination were those of rational administration and professional discretion’ (Clarke 1996 p.48). This was a double edged sword in the sense that whilst the profile of social work is undoubtedly raised, its nature and identity was conferred on it by legislation which established the context in which social work was practised. (Harris 1998). Dustin (2007 p.49) notes this reliance on the state has led it to be ‘vulnerable to fluctuating political ideologies’ ,whereby ‘the state’s very ability to define and create the work of the personal social services denied the occupation itself control over the content of its own practice’ (Howe 1986 p.146). Hence the bureau professional identity of social workers has been largely bestowed by ‘political fiat’ (Reade 1987 p126 cited in Dustin 2007 p 49) not by the professional expertise or specialist knowledge claims. Thus it can be seen that social work as a professional project is ‘contingent on context’ (McDonald 2003 p191). The project did not ‘orchestrate its own genesis and development’ and moreover, it is located as part of ‘a considerably more encompassing range of political and social processes that occurred more or less at the same time in the western industrialized countries’ (McDonald et al 2003 p.195).

The complex nature of social work, both in its practice and theory, is reflected in the debate about the nature of social work practice. There are two main conceptualisations in this area. Firstly that social work is mainly a rational-technical activity in which scientific data resulting from scientific research and objective research knowledge is applied to explain the issues confronted by social workers. An alternative vision proffers that social work is a practical-moral activity, in which the crucial element is not the application of theory and research knowledge but the artistry and craft of the delivering practitioner. This complexity of social work, both theoretical and in practice is mirrored in the ongoing conversation which has polarised between evidence based practices and more reflective based processes. Indeed social work as we shall see, has been described as founded on two cultures, on the one hand academic research knowledge and on the other practice experience (Sheppard et al. 2000; Sheldon 1979).

The unpredictability of human nature and relationships may be posited as a main reason for the way that knowledge in social work is considered complex and the increasing desire for evidence based practice on the part of some commentators. However Payne (1998) amongst others, is critical of such approaches which he argues, promote only a limited range of practice which can be tested. Moreover it is considered that much social work practice is too multifaceted and the demands placed on practitioners too variable to be restricted in such a manner (Payne 1998; Sheppard et al. 2000).

This interaction between evidenced based approaches and political ideologies has further complicated the relationship between theory and practice application. To the earlier problems with knowledge is added the problems of the nature of evidence. This involves its validity and applicability along with the ability and capacity of practitioners to assess the merits and limitations of what counts as evidence. One possible route away from such an impasse may be found in the redevelopment of a new identity of a social worker as applied social scientist as envisioned in the Croisdale Appleby Report (2014) as well as professional and practitioner.

A further area that has affected the nature and development of social work is the political push for integration of health and social care in policy, research and practice across a variety of health and social care settings. This appears motivated not by

any ideological concern but by cost savings through such integration. There are however significant variations between social work and health across a range of areas such as their theoretical understandings of need, knowledge base, ethical motivations and research traditions (Barnes, Green and Hopton 2007). Indeed some fear that the integration of social work into a health dominated service, with its different concerns, knowledge bases, and more positivist methodologies, has damaged the unique input which social work can contribute to multi-disciplinary work. Moreover, the role and identity of social work may be significantly affected by the integration agendas as although the title of social worker is now protected by law:

‘it is feared that the ingredients that make social work unique could be lost amid the blurring of professional boundaries’ (Community Care , 17 June 2004).

1.6 Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity: The stuff of social work?

Social work has often been described as a ‘modernist project’ borne out of the upheavals of rapid industrialisation and social dislocation (Parton 2009). The idea of the ‘modern’ or modernity refers to the social, intellectual, cultural, economic and political changes that arose in the West as a result of the Enlightenment in the mid eighteenth century. As Fawcett notes (2013):

“These rested on strong notions of order and the belief in unity and included an acceptance of the importance and inevitability of progress, the belief that rational scientific objective facts will continue to be revealed and that incontrovertible and essential truths relating not only to science but also to social and psychological phenomena that will be continued to be discovered.” (Fawcett 2013 p.148)

The main characteristic of modernity is this quest to create reliable and dependable foundations for knowledge by which there is greater certainty about some aspect of the physical or social world which can bestow a sense of truth about that knowledge. (Parton in Adams et al. 2009). It produced ‘a dominant logical-positivist rationality that raised reason to an ontological status’ and asserts that reason, objectivity, neutrality and systematic enquiry are the means to understand nature and society (Williams and Sewpaul 2004 p.556). Moreover Howe (1994) suggests that not only was social work borne out of the modernist search for objective knowledge, certainty

and order but the three conventional fundamentals of social work which are 'care, control and cure might be recognised as particular manifestations of modernity's three great projects ...(of) 'the beautiful .., the true ..and the good' (Howe 1994 p.518). He argues that:

"In its own way, social work has pursued the beautiful (aesthetics), the good (ethics) and the true (science) as it attempts to bring about a pleasing quality of life and a just society by using the insights of the social sciences" (Howe 1994 p.518)

The advent and effect of postmodern thought, however, often referred to as the 'postmodern turn' in the western world (Geertz 1988) has challenged modernist ideas and raised questions for understanding the social world. Postmodernism is hard to define as it has many guises and positions leading Lyotard (cited in McGowan 1991 p.184) to suggest that the 'postmodern and modern cannot be distinguished from each other temporally.... they exist simultaneously, referring to two different responses to modernity.' The main element which enables a distinctive movement to be identified as postmodern is the demise of metanarratives, the grand ideologies which control the individual, whether they be religious or secular. (Hugman 2003; Sim 1999; Woods 1999). This demise suggests the end of an era marked by the incredulity towards universal, overarching explanations of the social world such as the idea of 'human nature' that applies to all people (Hugman 2003). With this loss of the authority in universal perspectives, postmodernism asserts the 'micronarrative', the flexible, provisional, floating, plural, contingent and uncertain nature of social life (Irving 1999). Parton (in Adams et al. 2009) suggests that the elements so fundamental to modernity, notably the belief in progress, science and rationality, the pursuit of order and control are being challenged by a series of disturbing events and occurrences. He considers that these are partly connected to the key socio-economic, political and cultural upheavals that have transformed the contemporary landscape in terms of:

- Globalisation
- The increasing significance of the media and the growing networks of information technology
- The changes on modes of consumption and production

- The increased awareness of risk and uncertainty.
(Parton and Marshall 1998)

Not surprisingly therefore, social work is frequently described as dealing with uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (Parton 1998). However, this is not only as a result of the socio-political landscape but also greater awareness that the nature of the work involves dealing with people at important transition phases of their lives and the interventions are:

‘Characterised by intersections between multiple variables which are difficult to disentangle. Consequently it is tricky to predict with any degree of certainty how a particular judgement or course of action will impact and so whether any intervention will ‘work’” (Fish and Hardy 2015 p.S101).

Our social existence consists of countless features that are frequently either hard to predict or unpredictable. Social work is practised in social systems which are ‘necessarily peopled’ (Archer 1998 p.190) and therefore intrinsically inter-subjective which makes it almost impossible to predict outcomes or propose the right answer or method. Consequently, the fundamental nature of our social world renders it hard to construct social work wholly on knowing as knowing suggests a predictable world (Blom 2009). Obviously, experience may remind us that certain approaches performed well in some situations but it cannot disguise the unique complexities in every new encounter.

For the most part, social work’s inability to assure us of the efficacy of its practice mirrors ‘the status of knowledge upon which practice rests (uncertainty) and the lack of consensus (ambiguity) regarding its aims, methods and achievements and how we might establish these ‘(Fish and Hardy 2015 p.S101). Thus, there is a need to acknowledge that ambiguity, uncertainty and complexity lie at the core of social work practice or to use Sheppard’s words, they are ‘the nature of the beast’ (Sheppard 2006 p.204). There is, however, another element to the notion of uncertainty which Turner and Rojek (2001) identify as ‘vulnerability’, the vulnerability of our embodiment. However Turner and Rojek (2001 p.xi) affirm that it has positive features as it evokes ‘an openness to the world and our capacity to respond to that openness in ways that are creative and transformative’. They contend, moreover, that vulnerability has the power to unite human beings because of its ubiquity and

centrality to humanity. Thus, in this meaning, uncertainty is borne out of one's own bodily vulnerability, and conveying both positive and negative opportunities (Fook 2007).

1.7 Crises in social work

Related to the issues of the ontology of social work, there is a common perception of a crisis in social work but with little agreement about the nature or resolution of the problem (Jones et al. 2004). Whether there is indeed a crisis in social work or not is contentious. However, for those that are believers, the exact nature of the crisis is perhaps contingent on the orientation of the particular observer (Asquith et al. 2005).

Sibeon (1987) argued from a sociological position that social work has been plagued with three empirically interrelated concerns which are a significant and perennial problem for the profession. These concerns are the relationship of theory to practice, the politics of welfare and professional and organisational structures and the relation of these to service-delivery issues.

Others see the crisis as a more recent phenomenon caused by the growth of neo liberal ideology which gained the upper hand in the 1980s with the Tory government under Margaret Thatcher (Rogowski 2010; Dustin, 2007). This is not to say that Thatcher was the first proponent of neoliberal ideology but that her party campaigned in, and won the 1979 election on a platform of distrust of public services.

To Thatcher, the welfare state was 'the corrupt brake on progress' (Rapley 2004, p.79) which had established 'a culture of dependency that undermined independence and sapped entrepreneurialism, thereby restricting economic growth and damaging competitiveness' (Miller 2004a p, 24). Nevertheless neoliberal thinking has continued to be the dominant political and economic force since that time influencing Tory, and all subsequent governments (McDonald et al., 2008). Neoliberalism, which brought business principles into social work (Lymbery 1998; Carey and Foster 2013) is indeed described as a 'collective thought' introducing welfare cost cutting and a commitment to the pre-eminence of the market in the

social arena (Mirowski 2014, p43). The foremost consequences for social work of the changes in governance and welfare thinking has been the development of the mixed economies of care services at the local level.

Indeed the National Health Service and Community Care Act (1990) introduced the marketization of services with the purchaser/provider split in what was then single social services departments within the control of local authorities. The purpose was to represent the competition of the marketplace with purchasers and providers within social services operating 'quasi markets'. This was in the belief that the market would herald new consumer oriented services focused on economy efficiency and effectiveness. The aim was to extend the market principle to encourage both private and voluntary involvement in the provision of services on the premise that the 'market can deliver better and cheaper services than government' (Healy, 1998 p.32). Although neoliberalism is, in historical terms, a relatively 'new kid on the block', it seems to be so entrenched in the more advanced economies as in the UK that it seems to have taken on 'the status of business as usual' (Glyn 2006 p vii).

Bourdieu (1998 p.95) argues that the neoliberal discourse is unlike other discourses and that its strength lies not in any internal mechanisms of its own: "it is a 'strong discourse' which is so strong and so hard to fight because it has behind it all the powers of a world of power relations". Related to the rise of neoliberal economic thinking, was the ascendancy of the New Public Management (NPM) which proposes how public services are configured and delivered. The relationship between neoliberal economics and NPM is depicted by Clarke (2004) as one where:

'managerialism embodied this (neoliberal) decision making calculus in its commitment to a rational , ruthless, business –like view of organisational and policy choices' (Clarke 2004 p.36).

Theorists such as Hayek and Friedman maintained that the indifference to cost necessitated managers who would impose market discipline in order to develop efficiency, innovation and effective services (O'Brien and Penna 1998). They considered that the state's dependence on professional expertise to assess and distribute resources involved both a misguided confidence in the concept of

expertise and an unacceptable application of power over citizens (Rogowski 2011). The aim therefore, is a slimmed down, minimal state in which any public activity is decreased and, if at all, exercised according to business principles of efficiency.

1.8 Effects on social work with adults

These changes in the political landscape affecting social work with adults can be viewed as a sceptical attempt at the deprofessionalisation and depoliticalisation of social work (Harlow et al. 2013 and Butler and Pugh 2004). Indeed many consider that the concept of care management itself has consigned social work with adults in the public sector, to a mainly administrative task in a mixed economy of care where a strict interpretation of eligibility criteria is used to control expenditure (Green 2006). To save money, many local authorities employ unqualified staff as 'care managers' to assess and develop care packages instead of social workers (Professional Social Work April 2014, p.7). It is claimed that these developments have themselves reduced the opportunities for more in depth work with service users which is now confined to the organisation of care packages to meet mainly physical needs (Rogowski 2010). Hence social workers are not encouraged to deal with more emotional and psychological needs which are often presented in later life. As Jones (2014) states:

“The danger is that the emphasis on eligibility criteria ...and resource allocation systems trump the human interaction which is important in discussing with people, often at a point of personal change and crisis, how they might want to choose to shape their lives.” (Jones 2014, p.496)

This reductionist style of practice was criticised by Munro (2011) in her report on children's services but it can undoubtedly be related to adult services too:

“Too much prescription of practice, which diminishes professional responsibility for judgements and decisions, has an unintended consequence of reducing the job satisfaction, self-esteem and sense of personal responsibility” (Munro, 2011, p.140)

Indeed Rogowski (2015 p97) too confirms that 'practitioners have become increasingly embroiled in bureaucracy and subjected to managerial constraints

aimed at rationing resources and assessing/managing risk, rather than meeting need'. The advent of neoliberalism has seen the growth and near obsession with risk assessment in social work where practitioners are charged with monitoring risk which includes the complex task of determining levels of anticipated risk. Webb (2006) argues that safety and security are now crucial features in contemporary social work which has substituted its concern with need with that of risk as the principal discourse.

Undoubtedly it can be argued that social work with older adults has always been considered a low priority. However Carey (2016) maintains that social work with older people is progressively endangered in the UK caused by the neoliberal reforms of all governments since 1979. Furthermore some recent policy developments such as the current personalisation agenda offers no definitive role for qualified social workers (Lymbery 2012; Lymbery 2014) and duties once the preserve of social work, notably assessments and the planning and implementation of care, are often shared by other workers in other fields. Carey (2016) notes that;

“If social work retains a presence within ‘post welfare’ domains, this tends to coalesce around a narrow focus upon safeguarding, supply side resource rationing, risk aversion, facilitating informal carers and self-help or playing a limited and largely administrative role in larger arenas of welfare such as health care” (Carey 2016 p.345).

This potential change in the social work role has implications for the training and education of social workers and the ‘fast track’ programmes, which we discuss below, are contentious in many quarters in that they offer shortened training with a truncated educational input.

1.9 Political involvement in social work education

The contemporary social work profession, impacted by a neoliberal and managerialist culture has to balance both management and welfare. The very future of social work is critical in the context of a continually changing environment where it faces privatisation and an expansion in rationing for adult services. As Cree (1995 p.153) has noted ‘history shows that social work has always been up for grabs; its task and future direction by no means self-evident’.

Social work is well and truly in the public eye but the attention is generally focused on where social work has gone wrong and why it needs to change. The tragic death of Peter Connelly in 2007 and the subsequent child protection review (Laming Report 2009) led to the Social Work Task Force (SWTF 2009) report on the state of social work in England. Various recommendations were made notably on the education of student social workers, newly qualified practitioners and the professional development of experienced social workers. The body created to take forward and develop the changes, the Social Work Reform Board, (SWRB 2011) introduced the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) within which lie the nine core domains which highlight a developmental approach to learning with an emphasis on professional knowledge and values. The previous approach to learning such as the 'key role' approach and earlier 'competencies' had been much maligned due to their stress on skill acquisition and performance rather than on knowledge and understanding. (Dominelli 1996, Lymbery 2001 Humphrey 2006). As a consequence of the development of the PCF, Higgins et al (2016 p.5) maintain that it can be seen as a 'professional turn' away from instrumental approaches to learning.

However, despite the 'professional turn' the nature and purpose of social work still appears uncertain in the light of recent policy developments. This can be seen in the two separate reviews completed in 2014 for the Department of Education (Sir Martin Narey) and Department of Health (David Croisdale –Appleby). Both these reports about the education of social workers offer different visions of social work and represent the ongoing debate about its role and status.

The Narey Report (2014) was commissioned by the then Minister for Education Michael Gove who vouched to eradicate the 'dogma' that saw graduates being encouraged to see service users as 'victims of social injustice' and inequalities (Gove, 2013). Narey's remit was limited to Children's Services, seemingly on the basis that there is no longer a single social work profession in England. Furthermore his understanding of social work emphasises quite a restricted perspective on children and families' social work, centred on safety rather than wider considerations of welfare and wellbeing (Higgins et al. 2016). Narey offered only anecdotal evidence for social work education being dominated by left-wing thinking and excessive softness towards problem families. Not surprisingly, the report was

particularly critical of social work education's alleged disproportionate attention on anti-discriminatory practice at 'the expense of understanding practicalities of the job' (Narey 2014 p.11) and promoted an instrumental technical expertise:

“to equip social work students for an occupational role in children's services and one devoid of any challenging political content or concern for social justice” (Bamford 2015 p.38).

The Croisdale Appleby report however commissioned by Norman Lamb , the then Care and Support Minister within the Coalition Government was asked among other things, to review the case for genericism versus specialisation in qualifying courses and was not confined to Children's Services. He concluded that generic education should continue for qualifying awards and that specialism was more appropriate post qualification as social workers were developing their expertise. Importantly for this study, he recognised that:

“Social work education is an extraordinarily complex subject because it draws upon a wide range of other academic disciplines and synthesises from those disciplines, its own chosen set of beliefs, precepts, ideologies, doctrines and authority.....as a profession, social work requires its practitioners to understand intricate and often seemingly impenetrable behaviours and situations, whilst not having the same level of objective scientific support for their analysis and conclusions to assist them ... as have, for example, medical and other clinical practitioners.... The nature of social work is coping with contradictory and partial information....” (Croisdale Appleby 2014 p.15)

Thus he acknowledges the intellectual foundation in effective social work practice and that the aim of its qualifying programmes is to provide practitioners with theoretical knowledge and practical capability to carry out high quality work. Hence education must display 'authentic pedagogical evidence' (Croisdale –Appleby (2014 p.87) that it will deliver substantial knowledge of the elemental theoretical framework for social work. He argues that 'both theory informing practice and practice informing theory' are inescapably linked and necessary for a robust education (Croisdale – Appleby2014 p.15).This needs to be conveyed in a new way through the three roles of a social worker as a *practitioner* who can communicate, assess, plan and work collaboratively; as a *professional* utilising appropriate ethical and legal principles; and finally as a *social scientist*, “able to understand and apply to their social work

practice, the relevant principles, methods and knowledge of social work; seeking to further the understanding of social work through evidence gathering and through research” (Croisdale –Appleby 2014 p 15). He sees social work as a single profession and the role of the practitioner is not only to safeguard and protect but to enable service users’ (Croisdale Appleby 2014 p.14).

Other enterprises promoted by the Department of Education (DoE) may herald the future course of social work education with growing importance given to fast-track training. Again the developments led by the government, not by the profession, are determining the agenda. Social work educators on the whole wish to maintain the current generic qualification leaving students free to specialise in the area of their choice post qualification (Association of Professors of Social Work and Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee 2014). However, the voices of some employers and policymakers have called for specialist pathways within the generic degree or even for the development of different qualifying degrees for adults and children’s social work (Narey 2014; Social Work Task Force 2009). ‘Step Up to Social Work’, a post graduate fast track programme pilot which ran for the first time in 2010 is now established. Other fast-track schemes, such as ‘Frontline’, a training scheme for children’s social workers was introduced in 2014 and ‘Think Ahead’ has started as a new route into social work, for those wishing to work in the mental health field. In England, social work academics have voiced concerns about the reduced role of education and the limited approach to practice within such schemes (Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee and Association of Professors of Social work 2013).

The differences between the two approaches of Narey (2013) and Croisdale-Appleby (2014) to social work demonstrate the divergence between a limited, cautious and legalistic approach to social work and a wider, empowering project designed to promote human flourishing. These visions of Narey with his instrumental technical expertise and Croisdale –Appleby with his call for a social worker to be a practitioner, professional, and social scientist are difficult to reconcile (Worsley 2018).

These debates about the future configuration of social work education are interesting in themselves but none of the three main approaches Frontline, Step Up and Think Ahead nor the Narey and Croisdale Appleby Reports appear to be explicitly concerned with curricula per se. Rather they seem concerned with the structure of delivery. There are signs in these that there is a shift away from knowledge content to the method, structure and assessment of it. However there are some visible shifts in the 'content' that exist for a more central control – especially as Frontline, with its systemic approach, will be looking to deliver one quarter of the social work children's workforce in the coming years (Worsley 2018).

Hence the 'narrow and process-driven nature ... of teaching' seems to mirror the limited practice in the profession' imposed by the neoliberal agenda. (Preston & Aslett, 2014). Clearly the struggle for the 'soul of social work' is ongoing and the future direction of the profession is uncertain (Higgins 2015 p.13).

1.10 Absent Voices

This research was designed to listen to and explore the voices of social work practitioners in that space where they try to make sense of, use and apply the knowledge that they use in practice. Social work as a profession has a history going back to the 1970s in listening to the voices of the people who use their services. Mayer and Timms in 'The Client Speaks' (1970) recorded the opinions of clients highlighting their views about the ability of social work to help or hinder them. This listening has gained momentum in acknowledging the importance of giving service users a respected voice in influencing the nature of the interventions of which they are the objects. This has been promoted by a number of important drivers notably the contrasting influences of free market consumerism, (or the top down approach of the 1990s) (Ferguson 2008) and the resistance movements founded by disability activists (or bottom up approaches) of enabling participation in order to enhance the quality and efficacy of service provision (Oliver 1990). For Ferguson (2008), the resistance or 'bottom up' approaches are more radical and critical than the consumerist ones aiming instead to bring about change and social justice rather than settling for the status quo.

The emergence of participatory and emancipatory approaches to social work research have arisen as a way of 'letting the client speak' and the 'search for subjugated knowledge' (Hartmann 1992). This is most often exemplified in the lives of service users whose ways of knowing are also less likely to be bestowed with recognition or legitimacy in the face of the 'dominant truth' (Pease 2002 p.141). These approaches highlight the debate about the various types of knowledge which are suppressed or marginalised because they belong to the very groups who are marginal or excluded by unequal power relations (Trinder 2000). Thus research becomes not only a way of producing knowledge but of highlighting and privileging previously hidden knowledge in order to bring about change.

The idea of listening to the voice of the practitioner is novel and hardly features in the many erudite tomes written by social work academics, most of whom are far removed from the 'swampy lowlands of practice' (Schön 1983, p.42). Interestingly, the depiction of the 'swampy lowlands' have contributed to debates calling for a more eclectic approach to knowledge generation which is an essential element of the job. Clearly closer engagement with practitioners in the research process will help to fill a crucial gap in what we know and how we think about it. Practitioners who are in many ways on the receiving end of social work theory and knowledge building are likely to be better located in producing critical questions and insights than the academics who are far removed from social work practices. Furthermore the study was not designed to undermine or question the value of social work practitioners. Rather as an academic in a professional discipline, one has 'insider' status which bestows an important part to play in researching how practice is realised in certain settings (Shaw and Gould 2000). The aim of such action is to understand it in order to 'describe and illuminate it.....rather than promote or undermine it' (Hall, Slembrouck and Sarangi 2006 p.10). Thus practitioners' experiences form an important part of this thesis.

The political and epistemic landscape coupled with the internal debates within social work about its nature and purpose has contributed to concerns about its future status and development. Thus it is commonly held that the profession is in a state of flux and as Green and Clarke (2016) conclude:

'The years ahead look likely to be challenging times for social work, requiring a good critical understanding of the profession within the broader welfare state, as a basis for standing up for its professional principles' (Green and Clarke 2016 p.174).

1.11 Summary

This chapter has examined the current challenges facing social work in a neoliberal context. The nature, development and utility of the profession, are mainly controlled by the contemporary political and economic discourses which are often alien to social work's spirit and values. The critical voices of the profession have been marginalised from the debates, resorting often to what Ferguson and Woodhead (2009) call 'guerrilla warfare'. This background is vital in setting the context for the research as it directly effects the 'lived experience' of practitioners as they seek to use and apply knowledge in practice. The following chapter focuses on the review of the literature relating to this topic to situate the research and highlight gaps for exploration.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

'Practice is an untidy, unpredictable business. The best that social work can do is to be wise about this uncertainty and complexity.' (Howe, 2009 p.193)

2.1 Knowledge and Theory in Social Work

The aim of this literature review is to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic and its context, and to identify apparent gaps in the current knowledge that require further exploration (Brettell & Grant, 2003). The review will offer a critique of the studies found relating to the research, providing a context for this study. Although the volume of literature relating to the topic is extensive ranging over 40 years, much of which is still relevant. It was decided to synthesise the literature according to themes which provided a context to the study and related to the study aims and objectives. These themes are:

- An overview of theory and knowledge
- The desirability of a distinct social work knowledge
- Foundational beliefs
- Typologies and taxonomies
- Eclecticism
- Theory/practice dilemma
- Theories of practice versus practice theories
- Problems with practice
- Evidence-based knowledge
- Practice based knowledge
- Is there an application problem?
- Practitioner voices

2.2 An overview of theory and knowledge

One main issue for social work in the literature appears to be the efficacy of the sources of knowledge. The terms 'knowledge' and 'theory' are constantly used in social work literature, in both journals and more practice oriented literature but the distinction is unclear because they are seldom defined. This leads Fisher and Somerton (2000 p.388) to suggest the difference between knowledge and theory in particular is 'comparable to distinguishing between cheese and Stilton'. Accordingly

in the Oxford Dictionary, 'knowledge' is defined as 'facts, information and skills acquired through experience of education; the theoretical and practical understanding of a subject' (Oxford Dictionary 2011) and theory as 'a generalised set of ideas that describes and explains our knowledge of the world around us in an organised way' (Payne 2015 p.5). This can be extended to clarify theory's remit as:

“Theorising entails trying to understand the constituent parts of any social phenomenon and understand how the parts relate to one another, to enable explanations of the social behaviour of individuals affected by the phenomenon...” (Pierson and Thomas 2013 p.238).

Theory can also be discussed in terms of formal and informal theory (Thompson 2010), with the former more defined and explicit than the latter. Informal theory as described by Argyris and Schon (1974) refers to the informal propositions, beliefs, perspectives and attitudes that people have about the world. However unlike formal theory which is subject to analysis, criticism and testing, informal theory remains private, implicit and not thoroughly tested (Eraut, 1994). This knowledge is defined as practical theory by Carr and Kemmis (1986), and informal theory by Usher and Bryant (1989). It 'forms' practice and enables practitioners to make sense of what they are doing. Thompson (2010 p.4) notes that informal theory generally utilises formal theory either directly or indirectly, and he adds it “is also mixed with 'practice wisdom' which is the knowledge that has been developed from more reflective approaches to practice over the years”. Both types of theory are considered useful in practice but neither should be accepted uncritically as each have shortcomings and limitations.

In social sciences, it is common to distinguish between grand theories, such as Marxism in which theory seeks to deliver a comprehensive conceptual scheme; middle range theories which are about particular facets of society (e.g. labelling theory) or undertaking practice in social work, for example, systems theory (Payne 2015). Pierson and Thomas (2013, p.239) add a third entity, micro theories which are 'modest in scale, about smaller social entities with few variables to deal with'. Barbour (1984 p.558) however, after grand and middle range theories refers to the third as 'anything learned in university rather than on the practice placement' thus confirming the problem which practitioners and students have about defining theory.

Wilson (2002) argues for a difference to be made between knowledge and information. For him, knowledge is described as what we know:

“Knowledge involves the mental processes of comprehension, understanding and learning that go on in the mind and only in the mind, however much they involve interaction with the world outside the mind, and interaction with others” (Wilson 2002 p.2).

He maintains that we can only convey what we know by emitting messages of various kinds - oral, written, graphic, pictorial, by 'body language'. Wilson (2002) further considers that such messages do not carry 'knowledge', rather

“they constitute 'information', which a knowing mind may assimilate, understand, comprehend and incorporate into its own knowledge structures” (Wilson 2002 p.2).

The relationship between Information and knowledge can seem vague. To Nonaka (1994), knowledge and information are both about meaning in the sense that both are context-specific and relational and are similar in some aspects. However information is more factual while knowledge contains the additional component of understanding either through education or experience and knowledge is always about action – the knowledge is teleological (Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995).

Kekwaletswe (2007) also reminds us that these structures of knowledge and information are not identical for the individual emitting the message and the receiver, because each person's knowledge structures are contextual and are 'biographically determined' (Schutz 1962 p.94). Consequently, the knowledge constructed from the messages can never be precisely the same as the knowledge base from which the messages were emitted (Wilson 2002). This is important when considering the relationship of theory or knowledge to practice as the one of the issues effecting the integration process.

Witkin (1991 p.41) suggests that as well as being contextual, knowledge is relational in the sense that knowledge is never produced external to 'relationships that give it meaning and authorise its status. No information is inherently knowledge without legitimation within some tradition or community'. He further highlights the contribution to the understanding of knowledge by Foucault's ideas about

power/knowledge which is pervasive in much of the literature of social work (Fook 2000, Pease and Fook (eds) 1999, Dominelli 2002). To Foucault, 'power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations' (Foucault 1977 p.27). Foucault appears to suggest that power/knowledge are not in binary relationship to support or contain one another. They merge and are observable as power/knowledge as entities but are inextricably related. To Foucault (1977) knowledge is always an exercise of power and power always a function of knowledge. Not surprisingly, Foucault sees knowledge, like power, not as a possession but as a thing produced in relationships. He argues that "knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting" (Foucault 1984a p.88 in Rabinow (Ed)). The purpose then of knowledge is to cut and destabilise much of what is taken as knowledge, the fixed truths and foundational knowledges which pass as truth. "Cutting"- resistance, criticism, struggle, and dispersion - performs this work through the appearance of:

"particular, local, regional knowledge, a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity and which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything around it" (Foucault 1980 p.82).

Thus power can be a positive force in producing new ways of understanding, knowledge and resistance to hegemonic discourses.

Along with the discussions about definitions of the main terms, a point needs to be made about the issues of truth and validity. Danermark (2006) usefully considers these issues in the context of meta-theoretical assumptions which he has organised into three comprehensive categories: external realism, anti-realism and critical realism.

The position of external realism holds that the external world is real independent of the observer and that we can find knowledge of this reality with the use of science through observations, experience, experiment and scientific reasoning. In this approach, knowledge is independent of context and science aims to give a literally true account of the world where to accept a theory is to believe it is (approximately) true. This is often posited as the foundation for the notion of evidence-based practice (Blom 2009).

Anti-realism however assumes that nothing exists outside the mind, or that we would have no access to a mind-independent reality even if it may exist. Reality is thus what we construct through language and culture and 'it is not possible to determine true knowledge about an independent social reality. Our knowledge is subjective and context dependent.' (Blom 2009 p.167).

Critical realism on the other hand is a philosophical approach associated with Roy Bhaskar that combines a general philosophy of science with a philosophy of social science to describe an interface between the natural and social worlds (Lopez and Potter 2001). It posits reality exists independent of the human observer but because the underlying social rules and mechanisms are created by humans, knowledge about reality is socially influenced by the context. This is in contrast to the anti-realist position which affirms that knowledge about reality is determined by the context (Collier, 1994). Blom (2009) argues that the consequences of the critical realist strand for social work:

“..is that it is possible to have a realistic ontological view of the social reality, and at the same time take into account that the context influences our outlook on reality” (Blom 2009 p.167).

Hence there is an awareness that knowledge does not exist apart from our subjective interpretation and our social and cultural context, language, history and experiences influences that interpretation. Wilson et al. (2008 p.97) recognise 'a commitment to subjectivity as an inevitable, unavoidable and necessary component of understanding' in what they describe as such 'social constructivist understandings of knowledge'. Hence the earlier description of 'biographically determined' processes involved in knowledge making and understanding (Schutz 1962 p.94).

2.3 The desirability of a distinct social work knowledge

Undoubtedly social work needs to use and rely on relevant knowledge, especially as it is charged with the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children and adults who are often at risk of harm, exploitation or detention (Shaw 2016).

Arguments about the types or categories of social work knowledge continue to reflect the wide assortment of disciplines from which it is drawn, creating what is essentially an interdisciplinary profession. Social work has attempted to create a knowledge base from various sources which it has tried to develop into a holistic and integrated approach to practice underpinned by a particular value base and commitment to anti-oppressive practice. However the unsettled nature of social work itself leads to some confusion and ambiguity about the type of knowledge base that is required. Payne (2001) argues that the very idea of a base of knowledge is debatable as it suggests that it is knowledge that is indispensable and upon which is an 'organised superstructure of professional activity' (p135). Indeed as Rode (2017) suggests such a knowledge base would make social work static and unable to discover solutions for the ever-changing social problems it faces daily.

2.4 Foundational beliefs

The expansion of a professional knowledge base in social work has been largely influenced by knowledge from other disciplines in the social science mainly due to the social work's twin focus on the individual and society. These include notably psychology, social policy, phenomenology, sociology, philosophy and organisational and communications theory as well as being effected by cultural and historic developments. Payne (2015), Hardiker and Barker (1981) and numerous other writers consider that these disciplines provide the foundational knowledge for social work. Although there is considerable overlap in some areas amongst these subjects, they have contributed various ideas, methods, theories to social work without which it would have been fatally impoverished. In addition, social work knowledge has been influenced by the popularity of various sub groups from the main social sciences' body. These include psychoanalytical and psycho-social theories from the 1920s to the 1950s, behavioural approaches in the 1960s and

1970s and systems and ecological models in the 1970s and 1980s (Drury Hudson 1997).

In the 1990s, a different approach came to light with, as Langan (2011) notes, the growth of a distinctive therapeutic outlook under the auspices of 'New Labour's therapeutic turn' and the development of 'positive psychology'. 'This new wave of therapeutic entrepreneurs' writes Langan (2011, p163) had a major impact on the current social policy circles which she suggests led to a 'process of colonisation of social work training by the nostrums of mentoring, coaching and leadership derived from US corporations' (2011 p.163).

The twenty first century has seen a continuation of neoliberal policies in social welfare and in adult care particularly. The mantra of personalisation and direct payments are dominant with their call for individuals to control their own lives with devolved budgets and personal responsibility for their own wellbeing. Personalisation is a social care approach where every person who receives support, whether provided by statutory services or funded by themselves, will have choice and control over the shape of that support in all care settings (Gardner 2014). While it is often associated with direct payments and personal budgets, under which service users receive money to choose the services that they receive, personalisation is also supposed to entail that services are tailored to the needs of every individual, rather than delivered in a one-size-fits-all fashion.

Interestingly, Ferguson (2008) highlights that the ideas did not arise from practitioners or service users but from the New Labour think tank 'Demos'. It is linked with the neoliberal reforms of the Thatcher era and the concept of consumerism. Although promoted as an attempt to increase choice and control, there is little doubt that its prime motivation is to reduce costs on the state by increasing the care given by family and friends. The recent Care Act 2014 too stresses the importance of informal carers to promote independence and presumably reduce greater dependence on the state by cared for people. However as Leonard (cited in Rogowski 2010) argues this apparent independence merely amounts to dependence on the market who now provide most of the social care required.

Hence money not social work theory has become the main consideration for practitioners along with risk management and safeguarding boards given statutory basis with the Care Act 2014. 'Working within resource constraints has become the accepted practice' (Bamford 2015, p.75).

This excursion into the changing interests of, and influences on, social work in the last 50 years or so, raises a number of issues pertaining to the foundations on which knowledge is based. We can see a variety of knowledges used simultaneously or consecutively in the short survey which one can infer are part of the 'knowledge base' of social work.

The idea of foundational beliefs are an important role in professional and indeed social life and Wittgenstein (1969 para 162) refers to them as the 'substratum of all my enquiring and asserting' providing a fixed point of reference. This foundationalism is an essential element of the conversation relating to forms of professional knowledge as precursors and contextual features in knowledge construction processes (Hothersall 2016). However Hothersall (2016 p 8) argues that we need to regard the epistemological construct of foundationalism as 'pluralistic in order to negate the argument about whether knowledge X is more important than knowledge Y given the increasing move towards interdisciplinary practice'. Moreover non essentialist foundational beliefs are changeable and flexible 'to reflect the interface between ontology and epistemology to represent the nature of the world as we understand it' (Hothersall 2016 p.8).

In relation to social work, Stevenson (1971 p226) noted many years ago that 'to try to build a social work house on the shifting sands of social sciences theory is asking for trouble'. She argued for the abandonment of the idea of a knowledge base or 'body of knowledge' which denoted a fixed, inflexible entity into a 'frame', or tent like structure, which can be constructed or reconstructed as necessary. As noted earlier similar views are held by Payne (2001 p.135) who rejects the idea of a knowledge that 'we cannot do without'. He suggests that within social sciences, 'the role of knowledge is more of a process of social construction than the establishment of irrefutable and universal laws of social behaviour' (Payne 2001, p.145). He argues for a recognition of 'knowledge biases 'to understand the way knowledge is

used in practice, thus valuing practice more highly than academic constructions of knowledge' (Payne 2001 p.134).

Although difficult to pin down the exact nature of the knowledge base of social work, Sheppard (1998) proposes that we cannot only consider theoretical validity, that is, whether in epistemological terms, a type of knowledge is valid. He argues that also practice validity is also crucial as a way of evaluating evidence and information, in order to assess whether "the knowledge used is capable of being utilised in a way consistent with the nature and limits of social work" (Sheppard 1998 p.772). Parton (2000) however queries such a view:

"What is it about social work that makes it distinctive from other professional practices, for example law, medicine, therapy? And is there something about practice knowledge which differentiates it from attempts simply to apply knowledge from other disciplines, for example the social sciences, to a particular area of social and professional activity?" (Parton 2000, p.450).

Certainly the various knowledge traditions lead to competing claims as to the worth, authority and function of different forms of knowledge. Habermas (1972 cited in Gray and Schubert 2013) reminds us that knowledge needs to assist various human concerns and purposes. Hence diverse types of knowledge are required for different purposes:

"Empirical-analytical knowledge is needed to answer scientific problems, historical-hermeneutical knowledge is needed to explain human experience and search for meaning, while critically reflective knowledge is needed for self-examination" (Gray and Schubert 2013 p.341).

Alongside the lack of consensus about how knowledge should be constituted, there is some understanding that whatever knowledge may be, it comes in different forms or to use Sheppard's (2004 p.42) words: 'the rather startling truth is that there are indeed different types or forms of knowledge'. This can lead to confusion that causes difficulties for practitioners to 'articulate what they know' (Kjørstad, 2008: 1221), mindful of the larger milieu in which knowledge is produced. Clearly the need for assistance was recognised to 'mapthe knowledge landscape and (offer) signposts through this dense jungle...in ways that avoid the danger of(giving) directions....' (Matthews, Harvey & Trevithick, 2003 p.179). The social worker's task

is to discover how to choose and use diverse knowledge in a judicious, critical way, and assess their fitness for purpose.

2.5 Typologies and Taxonomies

Various typologies and taxonomies have been put forward which distinguish between knowledge types and knowledge sources, notably Pawson et al. 2003; Trevithick (2008); Drury Hudson (1997) and Osmond (2005) all of which are the work of academics and are essentially opinion pieces (Table 2.) Pawson et al. (2003) under the auspices of the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) took a pragmatic stance in attempting to create a classificatory framework for understanding knowledge in social work and assessing its relative utility. The review considered:

- Where the knowledge comes from?
- Who does the knowledge belong to?
- How is the value of knowledge assessed? (Higham 2010 p.10)

They argue for a scheme of knowledge classification according to the knowledge source. This consists of 'policy, organisational, research, practitioner and user, each of which has equal value though their availability as product differs greatly' (Pawson et al 2003 p.4), that is not all knowledge is equally good or useful for practice. Hence they set out to develop provisional criteria for assessing the efficacy and quality of knowledge. This is undertaken through a common framework known through the acronym TAPUPAS: transparency, accuracy, purposivity, utility, propriety, accessibility and specificity (Pawson et al 2003 p.4ff). These quality standards are taken as determining the status which is assigned to a knowledge claim within a specific context (Evans and Hardy 2010).

The development of these quality standards is suggestive of a belief that criteria are needed to help in deciding if knowledge claims are appropriate and useful in a specific situation, and these are not indisputable. However, there is no reference to any criteria against which the components of TAPUPAS should be considered or applied (Evans and Hardy 2010). Hence although it attempts to offer clarity and a rational basis to knowledge claims, it has offered nothing to suggest why TAPUPAS is so fundamental for this process. It appears that social workers would firstly need

the ability and competence of critically appraising competing knowledge claims by grappling with the strengths and weaknesses of the methods used and the knowledge produced.

Drury Hudson (1997) argues that the professional knowledge base of social work is:

“the accumulated information or understanding derived from research, practice or experiences considered to contribute to the profession’s understanding of its work and that serves as a guide to practice’ (Drury Hudson 1997 p.37-38)

She identifies from the literature five main knowledge forms including, theoretical, empirical, procedural, practice wisdom and personal knowledge. These represent claims to different knowledge types each outlined in an effort to differentiate their essential components and their interconnectedness.

Trevithick (2008 p.1212) has a similar but revised view, containing theoretical knowledge (theory), factual knowledge (research) and practice knowledge which she describes as ‘the way that theoretical and factual knowledge can be used to inform effective practice’ (Trevithick 2008 p.1226). Although Trevithick emphasises the value of practice based knowledge which she considers should be integrated into research, Drury–Hudson maintains it is not as suitable as more academic framed knowledge. This divergence of opinion again illustrates the contested nature of the criteria on how to appraise practice knowledge.

Another attempt at classification is Osmond (2005) who argues that a large range of knowledge was needed by social workers to carry out their task effectively. These included organisational knowledge (of own and other agencies duties and powers), moral knowledge (to guide in situations where personal and professional values are prevalent) and practice knowledge. Kjørstad (2008) reduced these categories to practice and research based knowledge. Kazi however (2000) adds to the discussion in considering the cognitive processes present in social work decision making and clarifies between what he terms product knowledge (outcomes) and process knowledge.

There seems a large degree of overlap between these various positions and interestingly between the practice knowledge (Trevithick 2008 and Osmund 2005), personal knowledge, practice wisdom (Drury Hudson 1997), and practitioner knowledge (Pawson et al. 2003). While there are ongoing debates about the precise nature of these types of knowledge, it seems that they are possibly referring to the same thing. The knowledge entitled 'practice wisdom or 'practitioner' or 'practice knowledge' is that discussed later which deploys a mixture of lay and professional theorising within the notion of 'expertise' or 'wisdom' (Hall et al., 1997, 1999; Riemann, 2005; Scourfield & Pithouse, 2006).

Similarly the area of policy knowledge which is the organisational, legislative, and policy context within which social work operates is subsumed in Trevithick's 'factual knowledge', Drury Hudson's procedural knowledge, Osmund's organisational knowledge and Pawson et al's 'policy' and 'organisational' knowledge. This includes social policy which examines the development, organization and current policy frameworks in key areas such as housing, health care, education and personal social services. It also incorporates regulations, codes, guidance, duties and powers developed by the government in support of legislation which highlight the expectations placed on local authorities (Brammer, 2015, p. 481). The latter are based on social policy but are translated into agency policies.

Social work does not operate in a vacuum and the practitioner cannot function legitimately in an organisational setting without knowledge of policies and procedures:

"Social work is empowered, guided and controlled by its legal mandate. This mandate is made up of three elements. The first is organizational, in that most social work in the UK is practised from within the structures of the statutory social services. The second is functional, in that the law determines the powers and duties with which social work is endowed. The third is procedural, in that the law largely determines the nature and extent of social work accountability, both to service users and to the community generally (Roberts and Preston-Shoot, 2000, p. 183).

Nevertheless, there has been a propensity for the policy/organizational context to be regarded as a lesser realm of knowledge and subsidiary to the main responsibilities and tasks of social work. However social work's role and functions

stem primarily from its official bureaucratic and legal powers and responsibilities, not only its helping, caring and protecting function which in fact spring from the legal mandate (Drury Hudson 1999). This has often led to certain tensions to arise between professional autonomy and the settings within which social work practice takes place. Indeed social work is often viewed as 'caught in the middle' (Thompson 2000a p.5) which highlights that social work is situated at the intersection of what are often referred to "personal troubles and public ills" (Mills 1959). Conflicts have arisen over the neoliberal policies and the introduction of market forces to social care which many practitioners consider disadvantageous to service users. The research of studies such as by Broadhurst et al. (2010) demonstrate how the policy of social work organisations could be contrary to social work practice where organisations lacked the same goals and values as social workers. As a result of such policy and procedural knowledge, practitioners could adopt either a "strategic compliance" where their principles were subjugated in favour of the organisation (Hoyle and Wallace, 2005, p.162) and/or turn to disguised compliance and indulge in acts of resistance (Ferguson and Lavalette 2006) to which we return in Chapter Five.

It is important that research into knowledge use in practice had been undertaken but this has been largely by 'opinion survey' after the event (Payne, 2001). Payne (2001) argues:

'This must be seen as inadequate in giving a picture of actual usage of ideas when research showed that much use of knowledge was inexplicit and that recall and opinion might be effected by impression management, idealization (whether positive or negative), and political objective' (Payne 2001 p.138)

The problems associated with such a variety of knowledge types is not only that much use is inexplicit but that they are hard to understand and synthesise, let alone apply in practice (Hardiker & Barker (2015). Indeed Hardiker & Barker (2015) consider that a better and more perspicuous approach would be for social work knowledge to be combined and developed into "practice theories" which are innovative types of thinking about how social work is actually carried out.

2.6 Eclecticism/Selectivity/Critical Engagement?

The problems with the choice of useful epistemology for social work depends on who is doing the choosing and on what basis they are doing so. This in turn suggests that the use of theory and research is not value free but dependent on who has the power and authority to select appropriate knowledge. This is related to postmodern thought in its questioning of whose knowledge is legitimate and what forms of creating and expressing it are privileged. As referred to earlier, in Foucault's view (1980), knowledge is connected to power and has the position of truth 'and applied in the real world, has constraining, regulating and disciplining effects' (Humphries 2008):

"Truth isn't outside of power...truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true" (Foucault 1980 cited in Humphries 2008 p.131).

Social work contains numerous theories, models, and methods of practice which are extensively reviewed in the pages of its literature. These include, among others, task-centred, feminist, behaviourist, ecological, solution-focused, relationship-based, structural, narrative, radical and anti-racist approaches (Payne, 2015; Howe, 2009; Stepney and Ford 2000; Healy 2014; Teater 2014). The problem, however, is that these theories are often discussed in ways which suggest they are comprehensive frameworks on how to make sense of the world or as models to apply to specific situations (Payne in Adams, Dominelli and Payne 1998). Indeed, the breadth and depth of the many theories and methods requires the processes of analysis, interpretation and negotiation in order to choose an appropriate approach to suit the case. Howe (2002) recognizes this as fertile terrain for social work theorising as:

"rather than bemoan the number and range of theories, the practitioner needs to acknowledge that the diversity reflects the subtlety and complexity of the human condition" (Howe 2002 pp.83/4)

The need for explanatory theories in social work is important in the face of the uncertainty and complexity that practitioners deal with daily in their work. However the issue to be addressed is how the social worker identifies which theory/theories to utilise and how does he/she use them? Payne (in Adams, Dominelli and Payne 1998 p.99) suggests that they can be applied in ‘three different ways: selectivity, eclecticism and critical engagement’.

Selectivity recommends that one or one set of allied theories be selected and used in all the situations in which practitioners intervene. This would be the case when, for example, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, is used by all practitioners in a service. There are benefits to this approach particularly in terms of greater expertise and consistency in practice. However, theoretical issues arise in terms of trying to use one theory in a diverse array of human predicaments (Payne in Adams, Dominelli and Payne 1998).

If theory cannot offer guidelines, there is however a penchant for an eclectic use to be made of theories. This involves a highly selective use of only those elements of theory which are considered to be of practical use. This eclecticism in social work is a conceptual attitude that does not hold strictly to a single paradigm or set of assumptions. Rather it draws upon multiple theories, methods, or ideas to gain complementary insights or applies different theories in particular cases. Forte (2014 p.22) argues that social workers need to develop a pluralistic theoretical orientation and he promotes theoretical pluralism since “there are competing explanations rather than one single or dominant explanation available to understand human behaviour and the environment”.

Thus it is perhaps unavoidable that the presence of numerous theories can both compete and complement each other as they vie for the attention of the practitioner. This idea that theories can both compete and/or complement each other to assist understanding has strengthened eclecticism as a modus operandi of many practitioners. However, this is often carried out without conventions determining how or which theories were combined. However as Sheldon (1978) notes:

“There are many instances of completely and logically opposed views of the same problem coexisting peacefully with each other, either explicitly in the social work curriculum, or implicitly in chosen forms of practice” (Sheldon 1978 p.9)

On many UK social work degree programmes, the various theories are usually taught consecutively in one university module often named 'Skills and Methods'. Whilst in practice, the choice of theory to use is ultimately left to the student or practitioner. Sheldon (1987) considers that this approach is seriously questionable as it propagates a practice where knowledge is merely amassed, rather than examined and improved.

“Unless we too begin to develop a common perspective on evidence; a set of criteria by which we can evaluate the claims which a particular concept or theory may have on our attention as practitioners, then our discipline will stagnate under a mass of literature entitled: An Introduction to Social Work...” (Sheldon 1987, p.11).

He continues:

“If we have no established criteria against which to judge the validity, reliability and practical utility of concepts, then it is difficult to know what is safe to let go of” (Sheldon 1987, p.11).

This assortment of theories can make it confusing for practitioners to assess which theory they should utilise in a specific situation or case as obviously one theoretical framework cannot explain/assist the breadth of human experience dealt with by social workers (Roscoe, Carson and Madoc-Jones 2011).

Payne (2015, p.53) describes two focuses for eclecticism and he affirms the usefulness of this approach in practice emphasising how practitioners can adopt and use theories together, perhaps 'all at once or perhaps successively' or use 'different theories in different cases'. Munroe (2002) has similar views arguing that practitioners need not adopt only one theoretical approach as:

“...we are more often choosing between theories that are complementary rather than conflicting. One intervention may focus, for example, on improving an abusive mother's parenting skills while another may be trying to reduce her social isolation. The effectiveness of one does not rule out the value of the other” (Munroe 2002 p.469).

Payne's third approach in using theories to help in reflection is by way of 'critical engagement'. This involves the process of employing theory critically against one another. As Payne (2009) writes:

Many social work theories offer criticisms of other theories. Differences between theories can help critical reflection in practice by enabling alternative and opposing theories to criticise practice that used a particular theory". (Payne 2009 p.101)

By engaging with the various theories and considering their alternative perspectives on a given situation or event, the practitioner can learn to critique and develop his/her own practice in the light of multiple theoretical perspectives.

2.7 Theory/Practice Dilemma

The apparent space or gap between theory and practice is a common theme in much of the literature of social work and some attention is given to that terrain which straddles that 'swampy lowlands' (Schön 1983 p.43) between the real and the ideal. However, it is debatable if such a gap is real or imagined.

The literature on the development of knowledge sharing between the academy and practice is extensive (Kitawaga and Lightowler 2013). One paper highlights twenty seven expressions or words used to describe the concepts of knowledge transfer and utilisation with terms such as knowledge translation, knowledge transfer, knowledge integration and knowledge mobilisation (Larrivee, Hamelin-Brabant and Lessard 2012). Indeed it is apparent that for many years, various attempts have been made to develop approaches to create a synthesis of academic and practice knowledges yet there are few attempts at securing a meaningful definition of what such a synthesis would resemble. Gibbons and Gray (2002 p.539) write:

" ...integrated learning means integration of theory and practice, the individual and social, art and science, field and classroom"

The relationship between theory and practice in social work has been much debated since the beginnings of social work in the nineteenth century. As already noted, in its desire to be seen as a profession, social work has sought to demonstrate its reliance on a body of knowledge which is one of the foremost traits of a practice to be defined as a profession. Indeed the efficacy of practice has been markedly connected with its reliance on theory to the extent that its valuation is based largely upon its use of theory in practice (Payne 2001). However past studies have

highlighted that social workers find it difficult to articulate clear accounts of their work and decisions made (Sheppard 1995a; Osmund and O'Connor 2006; McDonald 2008 et al). Many practitioners are often ambivalent towards theory (Howe 1987; Fook et al 2000). Sheldon and Chilvers (2000) note that some practitioners have problems in recognising theory and research that relate to practice. Furthermore the more erudite types of academic knowledge are rarely mentioned by social workers as significant on practice, although this may be partly owing to practitioners' inability to articulate theory and research knowledge (Drury-Hudson 1999; Osmond and O'Connor 2006).

Theory, for many practitioners, is more of an extravagance than a necessity and for others, it is discarded as authoritarian and unconnected to practice (Healey, 2000). There is evidence that there are obstacles to practitioner use of research knowledge in social work with Gray et al. (2013) highlighting the case load pressures, limited information technological skills, and inexperience of research practices tending to marginalise academic knowledge as irrelevant.

Other writers however, are sceptical of such views. Marsh and Fisher (2008 p.977) maintain that our understanding of knowledge use is based on the fallacy that practice is developed by knowledge that is created elsewhere, for example, in the academy or by policy makers. Rather they focus on the centrality of practitioner accounts of their work as the starting point for research, suggesting practitioners use a 'different language' which is not understood by researchers in academic surroundings. Payne (2007 p.95) too suggests that more research is required to examine the ways that practitioners 'incorporate , express and perform knowledge and evidence' as it is too easy to dismiss the issue as attributed to the failings of social workers.

2.8 Theories of Practice versus Practice Theories

The consideration of the relationship between theory and practice has tended to divide between those who emphasise the centrality of theory based on research in good practice and those who are critical of the possible effects of theory on social work practices. Rather they emphasise other forms of knowledge from the 'bottom

up' rather than 'top down' approaches to knowledge creation. The ones who promote a more academic, research oriented knowledge regard the gap or space between theory and practice as fundamentally problematic for social work practice and they lament the failure of practitioners to engage with research knowledge (Howe 1987; Sibeon 1991).

This conflict is perhaps inevitable, located in the two different conceptions of social work and its knowledge base, one technical, rationalist and objectivist and the other practical, moral and interpretivist in nature (Parton and O'Byrne 2000). Moreover, it seems practitioners do not always have the freedom to choose particular theories as some are favoured to others (Hardiker and Barker 2015) sometimes to the point of having a dominant grip over the knowledge base such as attachment theory in child care (White 1997). The preferences and predicaments confronted by practitioners in relation to the suitability of a particular knowledge's nature and utility, are worsened by the contested and shifting ground occupied by the social work generally.

Following Sibeon (1991), Beckett (2006) distinguishes between formal and informal theory with the former originating from an academic/research setting and the latter from practitioner ideas or events in the field. This is often referred to as 'practice wisdom' as it is often created via practice or personal experience (Doel and Shardlow 2005). Curnock and Hardiker (1979) refer to a similar division of 'theories of practice' relating to formally developed knowledge generally from the academy and informal 'practice theories' akin to the practice wisdom above. The latter they argue are:

“...the complex filtering processes in which social workers are engaged as they work with clients. Traditionally this has been referred to as 'practice wisdom', but we think that it can make a claim to a higher theoretical status than this. This is why we have been moving towards an understanding of 'practice theories' too” (Curnock and Hardiker 1979 p.172).

This reconceptualising of theory and practice is addressed by Usher and Bryant (1989) who argued that the traditional perception of theory and research applying or feeding into practice needs to be reviewed. This is required to permit new modes of thinking about these three components as equal in nature and degree without

favouring one over the others. They propose that practitioners need to transform their practice into praxis which is:

“...a form of practice which is both reflective and reflexive. The essence of being reflexive is that theory and practice are dialectically interrelated. Implicit theory is brought to consciousness and continually open to change in the light of practice, which itself changes as informal theory is modified. This process, therefore, clearly utilizes the hermeneutic circle of mutually-interactive backward and forward movement between understanding and action” (Usher and Bryant 1989 p.92/3).

Usher and Bryant (1989) also differentiate between formal and informal theory thus:

“This involves accepting that the purpose of formal theory is representation and explanation, and that of informal theory is judgement, interpretation and understanding” (Usher and Bryant 1989 p.9).

Such explorations highlight the idea that knowledge ‘is made rather than revealed’ (Taylor and White 2000) and creates an awareness of the constructedness of all claims, including our own’ (Hall 1997 p.250 cited in Taylor and White 2000 p.199). Whilst recognising the validity of diverse ways of knowing about the social world, the social worker, whether academic or practitioner, should be aware of the politics of knowledge. This notes that by way of ‘a hierarchy of credibility’ (Becker 1970) various groups or individuals situated in less powerful social locations may still be marginalised by the powerful groups whose habitus confers privileged and domination.

2.9 Problems with Practice

As highlighted earlier, other authors differentiate between theories *of* social work and theories *for* social work which distinguish between theories relating to the way social work is delivered with those which may explicate behaviours or situations. Sibeon (1989) develops this further and articulates a threefold understanding of

theories, notably, theories of what social work does, theories of how to do social work and theories of the client's milieu.

However, studies identified in the literature propose that social workers have difficulty in giving explanations of their work and the decisions they have made in their practice (Munro 1998; Osmund and O'Connor 2006). Moreover, they find it hard to identify theoretical perspectives and research findings that are relevant to social work (Carew 1979; Sheldon and Chivers 2000). Sheppard et al. (2000) also comments on several studies which have addressed the use of knowledge and reflection on knowledge in practice. They note that these studies:

“ ..have painted at best a picture of limited formal knowledge use in practice, and at worse, of such knowledge being of marginal importance... in the absence of conscious use of knowledge, others have resorted to a subconscious assimilation thesis whereby the absorption and use of knowledge is so ingrained and automatic that practitioners are unaware of its uses” (Sheppard et al 2000 p.171).

However, some authors consider that this limited lack of knowledge may relate to the perceived inadequacies of the theories. Rosen (1994) is one such writer who believes that practitioner failings in this area may result from the structure of knowledge which may inhibit its use in practice:

“To be useful professionally, theoretical or empirical generalisations need to be applicable beyond the specific instances (cases or study samples) on which they are based.thus, the very feature that renders knowledge statements professionally worthy (their generalisability) may be an obstacle to their use by practitioners in a specific practice situation” (Rosen1994 pp.562/3).

Kondrat (1992), Osmond and O'Connor (2004), Osmond, (2006) and Trevithick, (2008) consider that what is omitted from the theory –practice debate is empirical studies of knowledge from practice. What knowledge does the practitioner use, and how does she/he acquire it? What does the practitioner think and how does she/he go about creating thought and action? What does the competent practitioner know and how does she/he go about knowing “in” practice? (Schon 1987). These issues have had little consideration paid to them in the literature and yet they are essential in understanding the relationship between theory and practice (Dreyfus and Dreyfus

1998). In view of this omission, further research is required to engage with practitioners in order to shed light on these important issues.

Kondrat (1992)) argues that these sorts of empirical questions should be of primary concern rather than the usual starting point of what knowledge would be good for practice. These questions subvert the usual priority given to formal-technical scientific knowledge and treat the practical as a lesser way of knowing. As Van de Ven argues (2006 p.805) 'rather than regard practical reasoning and knowledge as a derivative of scientific knowledge, these questions address the epistemological status of 'practical knowledge 'as a distinct mode of knowing in its own right'. Kondrat (1992 p.239) too notes that it is only when this position is acknowledged that the practical can be located in conjunction with the scientific as constitutive parts of professional knowledge.

Scholarly or academic work and social work differ in the location, processes and reasons of their practices. The social worker is involved with the perennial problems associated with human living and thus their knowledge of practice is usually tailored, bespoke, experiential and pointed towards the dynamics of the specific event. Whereas scientific knowledge is accumulated by systematic study involving the pursuit of general principles that explain the physical world, and as Aram and Salipante (2003 p.1900) observe "the more context free, the more general and stronger the theory".

Both these types of knowledge representing different contexts and purposes are presented here as equally valid with as we can see, practical knowledge more use in specific situations and scientific knowledge more generalist in nature. The decline of the centrality of the scientific voice in knowledge production is related to the passing of the received view of positivism and logical empiricism in the philosophy of science. Thus it is argued that 'scientific knowledge cannot be known to be objective and true in absolute sense' (Van de Ven and Johnson 2006 p.806). This is related to the postmodern understanding of knowledge or research with its rejection of absolutes and espousal of knowledge as localised, partial and provisional.

This means that the practitioner involved in praxis, as a cog in a wheel, develops a different sort of knowledge that is critical to effective practice (Wenger 1998). In this

perspective, knowledge is transactional, open and essentially a social process. The practitioner has a standpoint within the problematic event and is in transaction with it (Schon 1983) which is a requirement for understanding it through action. Therefore, knowledge of practice is situationally constructed; it 'is in the action' (Schon 1983 p.56).

As can be seen, the issues relating to the nature and extent of the knowledge base of social work are longstanding as witnessed by the literature review and citations here going back over forty years. Hopefully their presence does not suggest an outdated literature search but an attempt to demonstrate the history and longevity of these issues in the social work profession in the UK.

2.10 Evidence-Based Knowledge

The social work literature has two main perspectives on knowledge creation, evidence-based practice (EBP) and practice-based knowledge (Thompson 2010). Firstly, some authors maintain that the evidence-based approach and the 'empirical practice movement (Reid 1994) view knowledge as an essential product obtained from logical scientific, reductionist research (Rosen, 2003; Reid 2002) and it is about laying down general principles, based on evidence, to reinforce guidance and methods in practice (McCracken and Marsh 2008).

The concept of evidence broadly construed, is anything presented in support of an assertion and is closely tied to epistemology, which considers the nature of knowledge and how it can be acquired. The Oxford English Dictionary states that evidence is 'something serving as proof' (OED 2011) while the Social Care Institute for Excellence (2015 p.16) suggests that 'evidence....is the product of research, defined as a form of structured enquiry capable of producing generalisable knowledge'. This definition infers greater significance to the term evidence as it relates it to 'structured enquiry' which suggests a formal, organised process which systematically creates knowledge which can be rolled out to a wider audience (Mathews and Crawford 2011). Such a view can contain assumptions that evidence can only be produced by scientific research and that this evidence can and should be the only sure foundation of practice. Thompson and Thompson (2008) note such a view that evidence is mainly developed by randomised controlled trials which are

hailed as the gold standard of research techniques. Evidence that is legitimised by 'scientific research' is often given a special position with regard to knowledge generation and is often seen as essential to practice.

Such formulations were attractive to the new public management espoused by the neoliberal administrations of the 1980s with their mantras of economy, efficiency and effectiveness (Trinder and Reynolds 2000). Some argue that this compromised adult social work in particular as under the impact of neoliberalism, it developed into largely the robotic endeavour of care management choreographed by the new public management (Healy 2012; Rogowski 2010; Lymbery, 2004).

This tendency towards evidence-based practice has had major consequences for social work in that the concept of 'evidence' has now colonised social work research and practice with calls for remedies to a variety of social problems such as youth offending and child protection (Stewart et al. 2011; Corby et al. 2012).

Indeed MacDonald (2008), one of the main supporters of EBP argues that:

"When professionals intervene in peoples' lives, they should do so on the basis of the best available evidence regarding the likely consequences of their actions. Put simply, they should be as confident as possible that what they do will i) bring about the changes sought, and ii) will do without adverse consequences" (MacDonald 2008 p.435).

Although such comments remind social workers that they need more than good intentions, some proponents of EBP tend to consider the application of knowledge as trouble free. However, as the origins of EBP come from medicine, the epistemological, ontological and methodological tenets of the approach favour a more quantitative and experimental natural sciences research. This is in contrast to the research tradition of social work which is more qualitative and small-scale in nature (Webb 2001).

With the development of EBP into social work, however, perspectives on EBP began to shift (Gray et al. 2009) with significant strides towards the incorporation of more qualitative types of understanding evidence. This was alongside the traditional systematic reviews and the 'gold standard' randomised control trials. Rubin and Bellamy (2012) from a social work standpoint, contend that more than one evidence hierarchy is required in the light of different sorts of research questions. Hence

qualitative approaches should be placed at the apex of evidence hierarchy where research issues and questions are more exploratory in nature (Rubin and Bellamy 2012).

Other proponents of EBP propose a more catholic, interpretive view of evidence that embraces qualitative research and practice evidence as well as randomised controlled trials (Gray et al. 2009). However, some authors consider that by expanding the hierarchy of evidence in this way does not solve the inherent flaws in EBP with its formulaic processes which ignores the unique features of both service users and practitioners (Nevo and Slonim-Nevo 2011; Epstein, 2009; Pawson et al. 2003; Wolpert et al. 2006). They propose the model of evidence informed practice (EIP) which implies, as Epstein (2009) notes:

“that practice knowledge and intervention decisions might be enriched by prior research but not limited to it. In this way, EIP is more inclusive than EBP.” (Epstein 2009 p.9)

This approach enjoins the social worker to have knowledge about findings from various forms of studies and to utilise them in practice in an integrative way that includes practice experience and judgement, service user views and values and the context of intervention (Nevo and Slonim-Nevo 2011, p 1193).

The reliance on the ‘scientific method’ as the best way to create knowledge of ‘what works’ (Dominelli 2005; Humphries, 2008) has, at times, a propensity to reject other ways of producing knowledge. Moreover, it may be argued that knowledge should be based on evidence but under the surface of the statement are all types of hidden assumptions about what counts as evidence, and who decides what is valid and what is not.

Although there is significant interest in evidence based practice, there is little shared understanding about the definition of EBP and its potentiality in social work. Webb (2001) has argued that it is not even ‘a single movement’ but has possibly two versions of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ approaches, with behaviourism accepted in the ‘hard’ version but not ‘uncritically accepted’ in the soft approach. Moreover he is highly critical of a particular deterministic version of rationality which underpins its foundational assumptions.

Some identify a narrow conception of evidence-based practice (McNeece and Thyer 2005) and others, broader approaches to it (Gambrill 2001, 2008). However, despite these possible variants, it is hard to ignore that EBP is based upon a positivistic orientation. Indeed critics such as Payne (2015) and Webb (2001) remain sceptical about its originating ideas based on optimal behaviour in a planned and systematically organised environment. Payne (2015) argues that the knowledge base of social work develops in a dynamic fashion and arises from the complex interaction between practitioners, service users and carers, researchers, policy makers etc. Furthermore, the research base for many areas of social work practice is under developed or contested and thus practitioners need to be vigilant about incorporating such 'evidence' into practice (Plath 2006 cited in Healy 2014; Dominelli 2005; Humphries 2008).

The literature abounds with suggestions that too little attention has been given to the contexts in which knowledge is produced and used (Gray & Schubert, 2013; Sheppard & Ryan, 2003; Osmond & O'Connor, 2006). Several have espoused a "critical best practice" approach (Ferguson, 2003; Jones et al., 2008; Gordon & Cooper, 2010) whose "core distinguishing feature....is detailed description and analysis of actual social work practice drawn from real events and cases" (Jones et al., p.3). The supporters of this approach maintain that they are not attempting to characterise an ideal type of practice but of actual authentic social work, which features the multifaceted and problematic nature of work that practitioners face daily.

2.11 Practice-Based Knowledge

In contrast, the other main perspective tends to highlight learning from practice (Sheppard et al. 2000; Fook 2000) and it focuses on the reflective practice of social workers (Schön 1983). Moreover, it emphasises their 'know how' in terms of the application of knowledge rather than merely emphasising their 'know what'. This subsists within a wider epistemological framework in which the production of practice knowledge needs to be positioned. This involves shifting ideas about the nature of knowledge and the connexion between theory and practice. Raelin (2007)

locates these shifts in the 'practice turn' in social work theory and the de-centring of knowledge. Rutter and Fischer (2013), in a related mode, write that:

"The application of knowledge is (therefore) highly contingent on context: and research knowledge competes with other, including powerful experiential, knowledge, as well as values, in guiding social care practice (Rutter and Fischer 2013 p.6-7).

With the rise of postmodern perspectives on knowledge, a shift to a pluralist epistemology took place which encompassed not only formal knowledge, but also tacit and intuitive, personal and creative types of knowledge emanating from experiences and practices. As Raelin (2007) states:

"through shared conversations with other local practitioners, using detailed language specific to a trade or a function, practitioners develop their understanding about how to engage with the task. Their knowledge is thus inherently social" (Raelin (2007 p. 498).

It is worth noting at this point that there is an abundance of synonyms for these kinds of knowledge, for tacit knowledge we read of 'know-how', skills, or personal or practical knowledge. Polanyi (1962 p.71) describes tacit knowledge in terms of 'knowing as an art, as a skill of the knower.' Whilst Eraut (2000 p.116) maintains that 'tacit knowledge has acquired a wide range of meanings' and Toom (2012 p.622) accepts that 'the phenomenon of tacit knowledge is implicit, diffuse, and elusive in nature and... is multifaceted'.

It is generally accepted that tacit knowledge is not consciously possessed, or able to be articulated by the practitioner in a propositional form but which yet regulates his/her activities Gerrans, (2005). Bourdieu described it as something 'which exists in a practical state in an agent's practice and not in their consciousness or rather in their discourse' and it is acquired by habituation (Bourdieu, 1977). This form of learning emphasises the formation of a person and demonstrates that knowledge is not acquired but developed. Ravetz (1971) argues that tacit knowledge is so embedded in the individual that it seems totally natural and thus it is a type of knowledge, that is embodied, embrained, and encultured (Blackler 1995). It implies that knowledge can be grounded in the tacit dimension of things that we cannot easily say, as in Polanyi's (1966: 4) famous phrase "we can know more than we can

tell” (Polanyi, 1966 p. 4). Indeed this is the reason why it is attached to the knower and is hard to express. Nonaka 1991 p.98) refers to it as “is deeply rooted in action and in an individual’s commitment to a specific context, craft or profession.”

This fundamental knowledge base of personal, tacit knowledge is used in our personal and working lives and it informs the everyday practices of professionals. Undoubtedly practitioners also engage with more formal and explicit knowledge in their interventions which can easily be recognised. However knowledge which merges the codified and the personal enables individuals to deal with complex situations in more fitting and adaptive ways (Morrison 2009). Eraut (2004) too recognises that tacit knowledge is the vehicle which enables codified knowledge to be modified to fit individual situations.

These approaches place the social worker in the centre of knowledge development and use rather than researchers or academic theoreticians. Indeed, literature from various professions such as social work (Sheppard 1998; Parton 2000), nursing (Litchfield 1999) and education (Eraut 1994) have recognised practice knowledge as ‘an epistemologically appropriate knowledge for practice that operates in conditions of uncertainty, ambiguity and indeterminacy’ (Morrison, 2009 p.6). In such fields, the rigorous use of empirical or theoretical knowledge is commonly considered as difficult. Morrison (2009) argues practice knowledge connects the academic-practice gap, by using both externally codified bodies of knowledge and this ‘internal knowledge’ that is produced in, and from, practice. This type of ‘internal knowledge’ is an important source of evidence which comprises practice wisdom, tacit knowledge (Schön 1983), intuition and artistry (Ruch 2005).

The duty is firmly placed on practitioners to use their subjective, reflective repertoire to interpret and assess the reliability, relevance, suitability of competing knowledge claims in specific situations or in particular problem areas (Taylor and White 2000, 2006; Doherty and White 2012). Clearly this approach puts greater emphasis on the process knowledge of sound analysis and judgement (Sheppard et al. 2000) and it identifies and values the social worker as the active developer and user of knowledge and theory alongside strong support for reflective practice as a ‘new epistemology of practice’ (Napier and Fook 2000).

The problem with knowledges of this type is that they cannot always be easily categorised and classified into a recognised knowledge base and therefore some process is required that can assess the extent to which ‘practice wisdom or craft knowledge inform knowledge creation, transferability and ultimately practice effectiveness’ (Trevithick 2008 p.1231). Hall et al. (2006) noted that:

“categorisation involves a set of processes which result in facts, opinions and circumstances being established as one type or category rather than another; for example this is a case of ‘failure to thrive’, not ‘delayed development’” (Hall et al. 2006 p.15).

Thus the present position leads to the situation where ‘the knowledge –development potential of practitioners is under exploited’ (Eraut 1994 p54) in that the voice of the practitioner is largely silent in the discourse of knowledge creation and use. Trevithick considers that this reflects the enduring problem that exists in the relationship between theory and practice and uncertainty about the relationship between knowledge and research (Trevithick 2008).

In addition, Kahnemann (2011 cited in Balkow and Erath 2014) argues against too much confidence in knowledge based on personal experience and intuition, highlighting what he refers to as ‘cognitive delusion’ whereby for example, social workers may over or underrate specific aspects of a client, leading to an unbalanced perspective. Furthermore, such an intuitive and individual process to acquire knowledge may not only lead to ‘cognitive delusion’ but to mental laziness or ‘self-exhaustion’ (Kahnemann 2011 cited in Balkow and Erath 2014). In this regard, a practitioner may be unable to contend with her/his own explanatory theories which might lead to ‘cognitive simplifications’, such as stereotypes, racism etc.

Reliance on ‘practice wisdom’ (discussed later in this chapter) to the exclusion of more formal knowledge may be considered foolhardy, as for a considerable time ‘the accepted wisdom took little or no account of the significance of discrimination in people’s lives, due to the individualistic focus of social work at the time’ (Thompson 2010 p.5). Schon (1992, p.62) maintains that systems and processes of intuitive knowing are ‘dynamically conservative, actively defended, actively resistant to change’. Lonergan (1958 p.179, p.419, p.237) also studied common sense, as a type of experiential knowledge, which is a gathering of incomplete

insights that remain 'within the familiar world of things'. For him, the level of common sense 'discourages the effort to understand' and this 'built in bias of common sense' can be an element of lived culture that undermines authentic culture. Indeed, Gallagher (2013 p.3) using insights from Wardhaugh and Wilding (1993) questions whether 'practice wisdom' or unquestioned 'common sense', which he notes is influential in some areas of social work, may have led to the 'corruption of care' and the 'installation and acceptance of abusive practices'. However, there are other voices in the debate about practice wisdom which suggest it is the flexible use of a combination of knowledge from variegated sources. Sheppard (1995a) conceptualised practice wisdom in a much deeper way. He defines it as:

" ..the accumulated knowledge social workers are able to bring to the consideration of individual cases and their practice in general. This would appear to have three main and distinct potential sources: knowledge gained from 'everyday life', derived from the process of living in society and interacting with others; knowledge gained from social science, specifically research and ideas; and knowledge gained from the conduct of social work practice. This latter involves two elements: knowledge gained through assessment and working with a number of cases involving the same problem and knowledge gained through work with other problems which possess dimensions, the knowledge of which is (potentially) transferable to the particular problem at hand" (Sheppard 1995a p.279)

This definition is interesting as it does not restrict practice wisdom to knowledge gained from practice and it acknowledges the many and varied sources of knowledge available to practice (O'Sullivan 2006). Moreover, Sheppard (1995a; 2000) argues that the professional knowledge claims of social work are augmented by attention to the processes involved in understanding rather accumulating stocks of knowledge, whether codified or non-codified. He argues that the emphasis on process works, to some degree, to bridge the gap between social science and social work. He notes too that the methods used by social researchers are partly modifications of the methodology of daily life, and that social workers, when engaging in practice, function rather like practical qualitative researchers. Hence practice wisdom can be seen to have a dual identity as both type of knowledge and part of the knowledge production processes.

Wenger's ideas about 'communities of practice' seem relevant in the discussion about practice wisdom. Such communities, where people come together in a joint venture, are said to create a shared collection of understandings and meanings, and participate in practices which both define and support the community (Wenger, 1998). He suggests that various paths can be taken through the 'community of practice', and that by their contribution, their professional identity is expressed and strengthened Wenger (1998 p.154). For Wenger, learning is fundamental to human identity and he emphasises learning as social participation where the individual is an active participant in the practices of social communities, and in the construction of his/her identity through these communities (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder 2002). Learning is a 'way of being in the social world, not a way of coming to know about it' (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.24).

This communitarian perspective could be effective in understanding the processes whereby various types of knowledges are produced and/or utilised. Indeed, as raised by the participants in my study, it is in within these settings, that informal, non-assessed professional learning can be facilitated and transmitted (Nicoll and Harrison, 2003; Yam, 2004). Furthermore, social workers can acquire and negotiate various 'repertoires', ways of being and of talking which facilitate such processes (Wenger 1998 p.153).

In order to appraise practice Taylor and White (2000) call for 'reflexivity' rather than solely reflective practice which may involve little more than 'benign introspection' and 'loose injunctions to think about what we are doing' (Woolgar 1988 p.22). They argue for practitioners to question their practice in a more incisive manner and to recognise and examine the manner in which practice obliges producing knowledge and categorizing experiences and situations.

Wieck (2000) proposes a greater recognition of the significance of practice wisdom and of a greater critique of academic knowledge:

"The profession's first voice is found most fully in what we have come to call practice wisdom, the accumulation of knowledge that is flavoured with the richness and intricacies of years of collective practice experience.... That is not to say that academic theory should be jettisoned. However it does not mean that we must evaluate that theory according to the standards of both values and utility" (Wieck 2000 pp.400-401).

Overall it appears that knowledge in social work is contested with little agreement between the different stances beyond a recognition of confusion and complexity. Thus the composition of a suitable knowledge base for social work remains an onerous and complex exercise (Gray and Schubert 2013; Taylor and White, 2006; Trevithick 2008 and 2012) and is complicated further by the inclusion of a newer type of knowledge, service user experience.

Warren and Boxall (2009 p.281) argue that “traditionally service users have been left out of the process of theorising and understanding their experiences, echoing their wider absence from the academy and processes of knowledge production.” Some, however, such as Deleuze and Zizek (2016) are sceptical about the claims of what is essentially identity politics. They claim that it is vital to maintain a link with universality and question whether any identity group, whether it be people with disabilities or a gay person have a monopoly on what it means to be disabled or gay. Such critics see the undermining of universality as calamitous with little emancipatory potential in relying or referring to one’s own particular identity as being beyond criticism or giving unique insight. In my research this type of knowledge was hardly referred to by the participants, suggesting that their voices are not only marginal in the academy but in practice too as a reliable source of knowledge.

2.12 Is there an application problem?

There has been extensive debate in the literature about the gap between theory and practice with some authors recognising the enduring ‘theory/practice dichotomy’ (Napier and Fook 2000; Habermas 1986; Payne 2015). Moreover, Thompson (2000b) illuminates the exact nature of these matters:

“There is an unacceptable gap between theory and practice, a disjuncture between what is taught or learned and what is practised...theory has come to be seen as the preserve of the academic and practice as the domain of the practitioner” (Thompson 2000b p.84).

Thompson (2010) considers that although it is inevitable that there will be some disparity between theory and practice due to their being highly complex entities, the

gap has been widened by the frequent disparagement of theory. The Narey Report (2014 p.30) on social work education in the UK argues that universities have been allowed to provide “too much theory, too much sociology and not enough about spotting things in a family which are wrong”. This sees social work as essentially a practical activity with an instrumental, outcome based view of knowledge in which theory is considered impractical or overly political (Hicks 2016).

This ‘anti-intellectualism’ of much British social work has perpetuated the fallacy of ‘theoryless practice’ which is ‘the mistaken notion that we can act in a professional capacity without drawing on some sort of framework of understanding –in other words, a theory’ (Thompson 2010 p.6). England (1986 p.6) partly blames this on social workers who “have not developed any tradition of intellectual scrutiny and criticism, and their thinking- in the job and in writing –is often lazy”. But as Howe (1987 p.9) reminds us ‘to show no interest in theory is to travel blind’.

One reason for the gap between theory and practice is what practitioners denote as ‘out of dated interventions’ suggesting that agency practices are outmoded in comparison with what is taught in the academy (Clapton et al. 2006). Also Payne (2015) refers to the lack of consensus about what social work theory is or should be and how it can fit with a specific case. Collingwood (2008) too mentions the tensions and contradictions which can happen when multiple positions are applied surrounding the numerous theories available for practice.

Pilalis (1986) argues that even the notion of integrating or translating theory to practice implies that theory and practice can exist apart. This is mirrored in the same way that Cartesian dualism separated mind from body which is often at the base of the ‘heart’ versus ‘head’ dilemma. She maintains that it is erroneous to consider social work practice as ever completely devoid of theory as practice has a social and institutional context with purpose. Thus it is difficult to argue that “social work action, even of the technical type, could ever be purposeless, ‘mindless’ action, the mere application of technical skills” (Rein and White 1981 p.32 in Pilalis 1986 p.89).

Curnock and Hardiker (1979) and Lee (1982) claimed that social work ‘practice’ is planned intervention, with social workers planning each intervention to fit with the client situation. Pilalis (1986 p.88) argues that ‘actions, if planned and justified, are inseparable from theory which provide the basis for the principles and purpose of

intervention'. Therefore as all meanings of practice involve some degree of purposive action, there is no practice without theory. If it is right that theory is permanently involved in practice, why, asks Pilalis (1986 p.89), are theory and practice seen as discrete entities "which have 'gaps' between them, which 'conflict' and which need to be integrated?"

The perceived gap between theory and practice is widely discussed concept in the literature with Hicks (2016) commenting on his own conceptual review that 65% of the studies discussed the theory/practice divide. The development of the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) by the HCPC, highlights that knowledge and skills development is continuous throughout the professional lifespan. Hence social work education must be seen more as the first element of that education rather than any definitive end stage. The PCF addresses by way of the nine domains, specific areas that social workers need across the various phases of professional development commencing with the student level to newly qualified social worker to the strategic social worker level. During this journey, whenever knowledge is applied, transferred, or integrated with practice, it is mainly done so in the 'field' (Cree et al 1998). Indeed, Goldstein (2001) too maintains that it is the field, as educational setting, 'where we can explore what specifically, students need to learn and know'.

More debates attempt to move beyond the areas of research/practice dichotomy to investigate the possible dissolution of the boundaries between science and practice. Gredig and Sommerfeld (2008 p.293) maintain that we need to rethink the idea of 'transcending the boundary' or bridging the gap between research theory and practice. They lean towards 'an intermediary social space in between science and practice in which professionals and researchers act' (Gredig and Sommerfeld 2008 p.294). In addition, the process of 'hybridisation' is highlighted which occurs in the context of action (Gredig and Sommerfeld 2008 p.295). Here, diverse types of knowledge combine to create a third domain and an unending cycle of knowledge production and use results as the process of using research leads to the development of new knowledge (Heinsch et al. 2016).

This aligns with Eraut's view (1994) that 'the interpretative use of an idea in a new context is in itself a minor act of knowledge creation' (Eraut 1994 cited in Trevithick

2008). This is often aligned to 'practitioner generated knowledge', a term about which Trevithick (2008 p.1231) argues we know little because we have insufficient knowledge about the theories and concepts that are utilised on a daily basis in social work. This is partially owing to the difficulty separating knowledge use from knowledge creation but also because social work practice has not yet been defined as a 'research site' (Preston-Shoot 2004 p.30).

The 'problem' of the theory/practice 'gap' also includes however, the view that the relationship between theory and practice should not be seen in terms of applying or integrating theory and practice but rather appreciating that theory can be generative, offering new insights and perspectives that can assist social workers to think and act differently (Parton 2000).

The literature questions the possibility of the direct application of knowledge to everyday problems (Clark, 1991, 1995; Lymbery, 2003; Mayhew, 1999; Parton, 2003; Williams et al. 1998). Schön's (1983 and 1987) musings on reflective practice recognises two hypotheses of the theory/ practice relationship. Firstly the 'techno-rational' approach where experts classify problems and deal with them by way of formal abstract theories. Hence experts are tasked with defining and constructing problems in complex situations. The other approach identifies expertise as the capacity to manage various sources of knowledge in order to gain a different perspective on the problem and seek its resolution. Theory is then simply a source of creativity for reframing problems and solutions.

As can be seen , the application of theory to practice is considered essential to effective social work practice but it is a process which is beset with tension (Parton 2000; Howe 1987) and with which many social workers appear to struggle (Fisher and Somerton 2000; Watson et al. 2002). However as Hicks (2016 p.404) argues there is a danger of presuming there is 'a divide, and that this divide, rather than the assumption, is the problem to be investigated'. It has been noted that many social workers and students are often reported to struggle in expressing the basis of their practice behaviour (Osmund, 2005; Rosen, 1994; Fisher and Somerton, 2000; McDonald et al. 2008; Gordon et al. 2009)). This can lead to ambiguity in the processes of service delivery and possible vague and indistinct practice behaviour (Osmund, 2005 p.897).

Whether there is a gap or not between theory and practice, it is recognised that practitioners and researchers 'operate on different playing fields and play by 'different rules of the game', (employ) different practices and (have) some attitudes and proclivities that are quite different from each group' (Anastas, 2014 p.576). How might then the social work profession promote a scholarly culture that values both research and practice expertise?

Various suggestions are put forward to practitioners, researchers and social service organisations to create a new 'entente cordiale' between them. To researchers, the call made for 'methodological pluralism' in scientific study by Kazdin (2008) to psychologists could well relate to social work. This could produce greater effort to utilise more accessible methods which may engage social workers more in the processes of research and conduct research in full collaboration between practitioners and researchers (Kazdin, 2008).

Amongst other things, practitioners are urged to adopt a scientific mindset with a critical and sceptical stance (Sommerfeld, 2013). This has been identified as an important element in addressing common mistakes in thinking about practice which are caused by adhering to the familiar in terms of ideas and ways of practising. Kazdin (2008) also proposes that, in whatever form, practitioners try to capture 'practice wisdom' that would otherwise be lost, what Schön (1983) refers to as knowledge that is 'implicit' in professional expertise (Anastas 2014).

The role of organisational structures in the 'entente cordiale' between theory and practice is seen as essential in rethinking the issues relating to their relationship. Johnson and Munch (2010 p.64) bemoan the absence of experienced practitioners in university social work departments thereby reducing the opportunities for networking and creating professional synergy. Liles (2007), too, laments that the academic and research demands placed on universities potentially lead to discarding 'the direct practice world behind'. However, 'sound research questions grow out of the well nurtured understandings of the contexts in which practice exists' (Klein and Bloom 1995 p.806). They acknowledge that research can be developed in tandem with practitioners but without universities who have significant social work experience amongst staff, the social work academy risks creating research

hypotheses which are incongruent with commonplace social work practices. (Johnson and Munch 2010).

The literature review identifies that the issues relating to the application of knowledge in practice have been debated over the last 40 years with problems remaining with contested knowledge bases, the efficacy and validity of the different types of knowledge and how to produce more synergy between the field of theory and practice. With few exceptions, the academic literature is essentially opinion based with little attempts to engage the collaboration of front line practitioners who grapple with the issues about which the academy ponders. Shardlow and Wallis' (2003) article on mapping comparative empirical studies of European social work, acknowledges that social work journals contain a high proportion of articles which are not from primary empirical research. This may partly be due to the expanding gulf between the academy and the social work workforce, 'with the preoccupations of academics rarely speaking to the condition of the front line' (Bamford 2015 p.74). Similar concerns are highlighted by Sin (2008) in that researchers frequently identify research subjects situated in areas of their own personal interest, which can compromise the significance of their research to social workers, policy directors or funders.

For Trevithick's (2008), it is essential to keep open a permanent conversation between practice and theory to ensure a collaborative dialogue and that knowledge is valid and useful in practice settings. Many authors notably, Gray et al., (2009); Parton, (2008); Rafferty & Steyaert, (2009) maintain that the drive for evidence-based practice is changing social work knowledge to some degree. This development is fuelled mainly by the researchers and academics in higher education which can lead to concerns about relevance and utility in practice settings.

2.13 Practitioner voices

This apparent lack of practitioner voices in shaping these debates about the nature and application of knowledge to practice is an important omission. Most authors who address these issues refer to the 'gap' in some form or other between theory and practice with admonitions to 'mind the gap' along with recommendations on

how to bridge it (Thompson, 2010; Pilalis, 1986). The bigger gap however is the vacuum at the centre of the debate of the silenced voices of practitioners.

Hicks' (2016) conceptual review of the literature on theory and social work found only just 18% of the 93 studies reviewed are based on empirical research which suggests that 'most of the work on theory and social work is either 'speculative or applied' (p.402).

This is particularly the case in empirical studies of social workers in the adult field. From the literature search there are only a handful of studies which are concerned with the use and application of knowledge since 1931 with experienced practitioners in the adult field. These are Karpf (1931) and Carew (1979), McDonald et al. (2008) and Gordon et al. (2009) amongst a handful that carry out research on practitioners investigating various topics. The others notably Marsh and Triseliotis (1996), Secker, (1993), Barbour (1984), Arnd-Caddigan and Pozzuto (2008), Fook, Ryan and Hawkins (2000), Drury Hudson (1996) and Osmond and O'Connor (2005) either focus on student or newly qualified social workers and/or their research is on child care social work.

Karpf (1931) examined whether social science was used explicitly or implicitly by caseworkers. By analysing practitioners case records, Karpf (1931, p.260) found that '... there (was) no extended treatment of the application of various sciences to social work. Similarly Carew (1979) started from a position of expectation of social workers using empirical knowledge and found:

'Only two of the participants thought that the part played by theory in practice was relatively unimportant. The rest of the participants considered it to be important, maintaining that it acts as a framework from which to practise (Carew 1979 p. 353).

However, his findings clearly demonstrated that his participants were not using theoretical knowledge as a basis for their activities to any significant extent, although his study indicated that if it could be proved that certain knowledge is useful, then they would use it.

The research undertaken by Gordon et al. (2009) and McDonald et al. (2008) is more recent and involved some social workers who practised with adult service

users had but again these studies had their limitations. The research by Gordon et al. (2009) usefully addressed three aims:

- What forms of evidence do social workers draw on in practice?
- How do social workers understand and draw upon knowledge evidence?
- What conditions (such as skills, training, values and organisational culture) support good practice in the use of evidence to inform practice?

Six practitioners were interviewed but only two were working with adults (one in a Community Care team and one supporting older carers of people with learning disabilities). Four were working with children and/or their carers. The social workers were all females and had been qualified for between one and 10 years. Each interview involved detailed discussion and analysis of one example of practice chosen by the practitioner. They were asked about the knowledge they used, the source of the knowledge, issues of accessing (or use) that knowledge and whether there were barriers to accessing (or using) knowledge.

Their findings demonstrated that the social workers used a variety of knowledge but there was little emphasis on research or academic knowledge. The most often mentioned source of knowledge was their past and current experience of working with service users and carers and some reliance on the team as a source of learning as well as regular supervision. Their findings also highlighted that there were perceived barriers to knowledge use in social work practice such as time constraints and limited opportunities due to work pressures.

However, there was no attention paid to the explicit use that knowledge is put to nor consideration of issues pertaining to the application of knowledge and the gap between theory and practice. Moreover they were chosen by their employers who identified them as exemplifying critical best practice in their day to day work. This undoubtedly introduces a bias in interpreting the result as the participants were chosen by the employer and therefore not randomly selected or anonymous. Clearly this has implications for the participants as they may have been more wary of how they responded and questions whether we would receive the full picture of their use in practice.

McDonald's et al. (2008) research took place in 2003 and concerned the impact on service provision and professional practice of neoliberal ideologies and managerialism. It sought to examine the question of what do practitioners use to work with and make sense of complex cases. Eighteen social workers and two occupational therapists, who were engaged across the range of adult work participated in the research. The research was commissioned by a local authority, and although the sample was opportunistic, it was selected to represent the range of local authority adult teams with regard to geographical areas, specialisms and settings. The study required participants to choose and explain a recent complex case which was problematic in relation to the sources of knowledge, the value base and its source, skills employed and the means of support. The findings highlighted that there were significant barriers to retaining and using professional knowledge identified at structural, management and practitioner levels. These included an absence of clear agency protocols for dealing with anticipated issues, a dissonance between working practices and social work education, poor quality supervision, and cases guided by procedural requirements rather than professional knowledge. Furthermore little explicit attention was paid to theory or personal and professional development and a lack of appropriate sources of advice for complex cases was noted. Again, similar to the study of Gordon et al. (2009) there was no consideration of how practitioners use knowledge or of other issues relating to the application of theory to practice. Nevertheless McDonald et al.'s (2008) findings achieved their aim of demonstrating the impact of the macro political and economic culture on practice as required by the commissioning authority.

2.14 Summary

This chapter has surveyed the literature on knowledge use and application and it has noted the debates on the types and legitimacy of various knowledge and problems or challenges with application. The relevance of existing research has provided a baseline of contemporary and historical information to contextualise the current study. Two main perspectives on knowledge creation, evidence-based practice and practice-based knowledge are highlighted which emanate from positivist and constructionist positions and the debates continue about the credibility and effectiveness of both positions. It is highlighted too that there is little empirical

investigation of how knowledge is conceptualised and used within social work from practitioners particularly among workers in the adult field of practice.

Interestingly, Winter and Cree (2016) note that:

“The literature from a quite diverse range of sources tends to confirm the view that ‘not nearly enough attention is given to the detail of what social workers actually do, where they do it and their experience of doing it’” (Winter and Cree, 2016, p.1175).

Indeed the editorial in the BJSW December 2017 lamented the dominance of ‘submissions over the past year or so of those that focus in one way or another on children’ possibly reflecting social work’s apparent preoccupation with child protection. They reminded readers that social work with adults is no ‘less complex and deserving of the attention of academia’ (Golightley and Holloway 2017).

For the purposes of this study it is clear that the experiences of social workers in the adult field have received little attention in the literature in regard to knowledge use (Trevithick, 2008). This is in the context of quite significant consideration of these issues in the academy for the past fifty years or more. This is a major gap which this thesis will address.

The following chapter will describe the methodological approach used in this investigation, defined by an interpretative phenomenological approach, which will demonstrate the ways this omission noted in Chapter Two will be addressed.

Chapter 3: Methodology.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will give an outline of why qualitative research was used and it contains a rationale as to why Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was selected to examine the research question and provide the analysis of the discussions. Details are also included about the protocols and processes for the collection and analysis of the participants' contributions.

3.2 The use of qualitative research

Qualitative research is used in research as a way of connecting with and exploring the lived experience of participants (McLaughlin 2012). My research aimed to discover the practitioners' views about the use and application of knowledge in practice and a qualitative framework seems well situated to examine these issues. Qualitative research has been influenced by interpretivism and as Punch (2005 p.134) argues 'it is not a single entity but an umbrella term which encompasses an enormous variety and ... it is a suite of multiple methodologies and research practices'. This is an appropriate choice as qualitative studies try to explain social phenomena through understanding the ways in which people 'make sense of their social worlds and (it) sees knowledge as historically and culturally situated' (Crotty 1998 p.67). The process of qualitative research involves learning from people rather than studying them, through the opportunity to interact utilising open and unstructured forms of communication (Spradley 1979).

Whereas quantitative research aims to minimise the researcher from the study through addressing issues of bias, qualitative research argues that this is neither possible nor necessarily desirable to do so as in some ways, it can be a valuable aspect of the research process. However, whilst conversational transactions offer valuable opportunities to construct understanding from the researched person's perspective, they also are an intrinsically subjective undertaking. This subjective nature of the process involves the unavoidable diffusion of beliefs, assumptions, values, emotions and theories within and across the research project which may

influence the way data are gathered, interpreted and disseminated. Hence within qualitative research, the role of the researcher is given significant attention.

3.3 Epistemology and theoretical framework

The integrated ontological and epistemological stance of the researcher is considered central to any methodological approach to ensure 'epistemological integrity' (Marshall and Rossman, 2010), providing a philosophical grounding for the study (Creswell, Hanson & Plano, 2007). It is important that at the outset researchers explicitly address their epistemological positions because they must demonstrate that their approach to knowledge acquisition, methodology and methods is consistent. My doctoral study will be underpinned by the epistemological position of 'constructionism' which consists of a range of approaches which treat what are usually thought of as independent, real objects as social or cultural 'constructs'. Indeed some constructionists even extend this stance to the natural world too. By embracing a constructionist epistemology, the research question is framed in terms of socially constructed events, arrangements and meanings as from this perspective:

"Internal constructs, meanings, motives, perceptions, understandings have real consequences, and to that extent this viewpoint represents a sharp challenge to the notion that it's only a world out there, a reality external to us that has consequences." (Dyson and Brown (2006 p.83)

This demonstrates that there are myriad aspects of the research subject to be understood which are provisional, incomplete and often messy with only a partial grasp on reality.

The theoretical perspective follows which means the philosophical position which lies behind the methodology. Crotty (1998) argues that when one examines a specific methodology, one discovers

'a complexus of assumptions buried within it. It is these assumptions that constitute one's theoretical perspective and they largely have to do with the world that the methodology envisages. Different ways of viewing the world shape different ways of researching the world" (Crotty 1998 p.66)

The theoretical perspective of interpretivism will be utilised within the research as it is supported by an idealist ontology and the epistemological framework of constructionism.

The interpretivist perspective acknowledges that views of reality may be influenced by various elements, whether it be social, political or cultural ones that support the development of such shared common understandings (Stryker 2002; Howell 2013). Thus from this perspective, social reality is the creation of how people collectively and individually make sense of, and/or interpret their social worlds in which they inhabit. (Smith 1989). The nature of this meaning making process is obviously not set in stone but rather it is capable of changing based upon a person's life experience and their sense making capabilities. Moreover the events in one's social life are clearly open to reconsideration as the person(s) revisits and reinterprets their own and others' actions in various and often contradictory ways (Biesta et al 2011).

A constructionist epistemology supports the interpretivist paradigm with its view that knowledge is socially constructed. In contrast to the positivist tradition, which stresses the option of objectively investigating an external reality by way of value neutral research processes, the interpretivist view maintains that there can be no 'brute facts' (Hudson 1997 p.77) on which to found knowledge or verify our positions. The 'brute facts' of the positivist tradition, 'identifiable acts, structures and institutions' are considered as objective whilst the 'values, beliefs and attitudes are considered as a subjective reality, an inferior status' (McLaughlin 2012 p.29). Thus the elements of meaning were consigned to the status of secondary versions of reality. In my research, designed to examine the views of social workers about knowledge application and use, the only way to explore these realities that subsists within the practitioners' minds was via subjective interaction to discover the impact that biography and experience have on the knowledge use faculties. The interpretivist approach with its emphasis on research as a subjective, interactive, and co-constructed activity involving both the researcher and the researched was the most appropriate way of addressing the issues (Guba and Lincoln 2005)

3.4 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

The study was planned to examine a phenomenon with which I have been involved as an educator and practitioner. Crotty (1998) recommends that the philosophical implications of a research question hold direct influence on the methodology chosen for a study. Interpretative Phenomenological analysis (IPA) was the methodology chosen for this research, and was derived from a philosophical approach linked to constructivism (Caelli 2001, Crotty 1998)

Understanding experience is at the core of social work practice but it is not often that the experience of practitioners themselves is explored in their use and application of knowledge in their daily practice. In line with the research aim, a qualitative approach was adopted and a range of qualitative methodologies were reflected upon including grounded theory and discourse analysis as well as the chosen IPA. This was in recognition that different research methods could have offered a variety of insights and were thus considered when planning this study.

Grounded Theory was considered as it involves a similar process to IPA with comparative analysis and categorizations developing from meticulous revisiting of the data. This aims to develop a theoretical account of a specific phenomenon (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) which emphasizes the building of inductive theories grounded in the data, and it is suited to studying individual or interpersonal processes and experiences (Charmaz, 2006). However, its major purpose of generating theory to generalize to a broader population is contrary to the aims of this study which was the examination of the participants' subjective experiences. Smith et al (2009) maintain that IPA is distinct from Grounded Theory in its concentration on an individual's experience and psychological world rather than social processes. While Grounded Theory is concerned with developing a theoretical, conceptual account or explanation of a social phenomenon or process, IPA offers full detailed interpretations of individuals' experiences (Smith et al 2009, Willig 2008). Hence IPA is a more nuanced analysis than Grounded Theory, which facilitates an intimate engagement with the phenomenon in order to uncover the experience of 'what it is like', rather than to generate theory. This allowed for a more interpretative and contextual description, specific to the interview setting and

cultivated a relationship between the researcher and participant, than Grounded Theory would allow (Smith, 2004).

Although the outcome of an IPA study may seem that the generation of theory is possible (Smith et al. 2009), Grounded Theory was not considered a suitable methodology for the thesis as the main aim was to develop a deeper understanding of practitioners' experiences of using and applying knowledge and not to generate theory.

Discourse Analysis was also considered as a possible methodology for the study. This focuses on how participants undertake their projects and make sense of their reality through the mediation and construct of language (Starks and Brown Trinidad 2007). The approach necessitates a close examination of language to explore the ways in which certain themes and issues are discussed (Burck 2005). The approach involves questions about language such as: what are the performative actions of this piece of talk? What accounts are participants endeavouring to construct in interaction with each other? How do these accounts change as contexts change? (Wetherell and White, 1992). Thus it involves an analysis of the ways in which discourses, whether verbal or text, constitute the social world. Willig (2008, p.94) summarises his view of the approach when stating that for discourse analysts, "language constructs rather than represents social reality". It concentrates on the function of language in the construction of social reality (Biggerstaff and Thompson 2008).

Thus the basic principle of discourse analysis is that language is used to construct forms of the social world that "language is not a neutral and transparent medium through which people are able to express themselves, but is constitutive" (Burck, 2005 p.248).

IPA, on the other hand, explores how people ascribe meaning to their experiences in their interactions with the environment (Smith, Jarman and Osborn, 1999) with a focus on comprehending an individual's experience of that reality. It therefore connects language to a participant's thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and actions in order to understand how they make sense of their experiences. Again in contrast to Discourse Analysis, IPA also recognises the primacy of the interpretative component in the researcher's engagement with the participant's account. It differs

too from Discourse Analysis in the role of cognition, (Smith et al. 2009) taking on an epistemological approach whereby, “through careful and explicit interpretative methodology, it becomes possible to access an individual's cognitive inner world” (Biggerstaff and Thompson 2008 p.5).

In view of my research questions which focus on the ways in which participants make sense of and perceive their lived experiences, I was mindful of Smith's (2011) view that the main difference between the two approaches is that while both focus on linguistics to varying degrees:

“IPA researchers talk to participants and analyse what they say in order to try to learn about how they are making sense of their experience, discourse analysts examine what participants say in order to learn about how they are constructing accounts of experience” (Smith, 2011 p. 10).

I thus decided to reject discourse analysis as a possible methodology as in line with the aims, the main focus of the thesis centres on the idiographic element of first person meaning making and perception, and not the discourses that influence that experience.

Consequently, due to the experiential character of the research question and my curiosity in the practitioners' experiences of the subject, IPA (Smith, 1996) was chosen as the most suitable approach. Overall this seemed the best fit with the objectives of the research as its ideographic focus, coupled with its phenomenological description (Smith et al 2009), was particularly helpful in highlighting how individuals make sense of their experiences and what the meaning may hold for them (Eatough & Smith, 2008). It was also felt to be the most appropriate way of interactively examining and interpreting those experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2008). This is particularly so when we remember that these experiences are unique to the participants' own life world and the process of interpretation is the only way we, as researchers, can understand them (Smith et al. 2009). Furthermore, the emphasis that IPA places on interpretation furnishes an opportunity for encountering new insights beyond the description proffered by the participant, which allows for the exploration of the complexities and meanings of their ideas and application of knowledge in practice.

On a similar note, Smith and Osborn (2003 p.53) maintain that IPA is 'especially useful when one is concerned with complexity, process or novelty' which is particularly germane given the lack of research on the practitioner experiences of knowledge use in the past.

IPA is concerned with human lived experience and suggests that experience can be understood through an examination of the meaning which people put upon it. It explores how people make sense of lived experience and is particularly concerned with "significant existential issues of considerable moment to the participants and the researchers" (Smith, 2004, p.49).

IPA's theoretical underpinnings mainly stem from the phenomenology which originated with Husserl's attempts to construct a philosophical approach to the study of experience, with hermeneutics (the theory of interpretation) and ideography, a concern with the particular case or unique individual." (Smith et al 2009).

Eatough and Smith (2008) maintain that IPA is a blending of two philosophic traditions, phenomenology and hermeneutics and Smith (2009 p.37) notes that 'without phenomenology there would be nothing to see or interpret and without the hermeneutics the phenomena would not be seen'.

IPA is often concerned with experience of a particular time or moment of significance to the person such as the experience of being disabled, or living with HIV. However its enduring focus is with ordinary everyday experience engaging with the significance of what has happened and trying to make sense of that experience. Eatough and Smith (2008) argue that IPA is concerned with the detailed examination of individual lived experience and how individuals make sense of the experience. Thus it is purposively idiographic, always starting with the particular and ensuring that any generalisations are based in this approach (Eatough and Smith 2017). The aim is to focus on people's experience and understanding of a particular phenomenon and it does not try to seek to understand the experience of the participants, but to acquire their perceptions and views of the experience that they have had.

The first philosophical foundation of IPA is 'Phenomenology' which deals with the variability and diversity of human experience (Willig, 2001). Its main goal being to describe a lived experience and it is believed that only those who have experienced phenomena can communicate them to the outside world. It is concerned with the ways 'how' an individual experiences a phenomenon, and the meanings that are ascribed or hidden within them. IPA is influenced by phenomenology in its aim to capture and explore the meanings that the participants assign to their experience of phenomena. Indeed Moran (2000, p.61) described phenomenology as 'an attempt to bring philosophy back from abstract metaphysical speculation...in order to come into contact with the matters themselves, with concrete lived experience'. Husserl (1859-1938), often referred to as the father of phenomenology, spurned the idea that an understanding of the world was based in empirical science. Rather he emphasised the importance of the 'life world' or lived experience. However, for research purposes, there are two main linked but different parallel types of phenomenology originating in the works of Husserl and Heidegger, namely, the *descriptive* or eidetic associated with the former and *interpretive* with the latter (or *hermeneutics* as it often called). Both of these types share some common features whilst varying significantly in other ways.

In the 'descriptive' typology, the aim is to describe a phenomenon's broad features instead of the individual's experiences (Giorgi 2008) in order to determine the meaning or essence of the phenomenon (Crotty 1998).

In phenomenology, embodied experience is the medium through which reality is understood. By deep exploration of individual experiences, phenomenological researchers try to comprehend the meaning and common elements or essences of an experience or event. They hold that it is only via embodied perception that the truth of the event, as an abstract thing is subjective and knowable. Meaning is created by the experience of moving through time and space. (Starks and Brown Trinidad 2010) By treating all the objects of our experience as phenomena, and disregarding whether they actually exist or not, our focus can be on the first person experience itself, what it means to be having that experience and the essential quality of our consciousness.

The objective of descriptive phenomenology is to 'describe things as they appear to consciousness' (Moran 2000) of which the latter is the medium between people and the world (Giorgi 2008). To Husserl, consciousness has intentionality and this means that all acts of consciousness are directed at objects, whether material or ideal. Moreover intentionality signifies the crucial relationship between conscious subjects and their objects:

Husserl's principal insight was that the condition of all human experience was consciousness. He attempted to demonstrate how to overcome personal biases which inhibit attaining the state of pure consciousness. In his 'Logical Investigations', Husserl (1970) described phenomenology as the 'science of consciousness' and focused on outlining the concept of intentionality and the meaning of lived experience from the first person viewpoint. A crucial tenet of Husserl's ideas about science emphasised the belief that the meaning of lived experiences may only be explored via one to one transactions between the researchers and researched (Wojnar and Swanson 2007). These transactions required active listening, interaction, and observation to produce depictions of reality more refined than previous understandings (Husserl 1970).

Husserl also upheld the ideal of 'transcendental subjectivity' (a sort of neutrality), as a condition of consciousness whereby the researcher is able to successfully vacate their own lived reality and thus be in a position to define the phenomenon in its pure universal sense (Wojnar and Swanson 2007). For Husserl, this state of neutrality or transcendental subjectivity can be achieved by using the method of 'bracketing'. This involves the bracketing off of personal past knowledge culture, context, history and all other theoretical knowledge and personal bias (Wojnar and Swanson 2007). The purpose of bracketing is not to influence the depiction of the phenomenon that is currently the object of the study (Tymieniecka, 2003). Husserl argues that only with bracketing would we get at the universal essence of a given phenomenon, as it presents itself to consciousness. His phenomenology aimed to transcend our everyday assumptions.

Husserl felt it was important to cast aside suppositions or preconceived ideas to develop valid 'pre reflective' data (Moran 2000). This way of looking beyond one's

presumptions and biases in phenomenology has been variously described as bracketing as we have seen but also, 'phenomenological reduction' or 'epoche'.

Husserl's goal was to create a schema for describing and classifying subjective experiences of what he called the 'life world' (Langenbach 1995). The life world is defined as the world in which we, as human beings, experience culture and society and it is the world of experiences as it is lived. This idea is shared by the various types of phenomenology, albeit with different emphases.

IPA takes on board Husserl's, (1970a) phenomenological perception but extends it further by incorporating the ideas of Heidegger (1962), Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Sartre (1957). IPA views each person taking part in research as being embedded, and immersed, in a world of objects and relationships, language, culture, tasks and concerns. Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) highlight that in contrast to the phenomenological practices of Husserl (1954/1970b; Welton 1999), IPA enables the researcher to concentrate more on an interpretative, and worldly position, with a specific focus on understanding the perspective of the individual's involvement in the lived world rather than descriptive commitments and transcendental interests of Husserl.

The second foundational cornerstone of IPA, developed in response to Husserl's work is the interpretive branch whose aim is to describe understand and interpret the experiences of participants. Indeed IPA does not aim for transcendent knowledge and its main protagonists, Heidegger, Gadamar and Ricoeur moved from Husserl's philosophical discipline with its focus on consciousness and essences towards expounding its existential and hermeneutic (interpretive) aspects (Moran 2000).

Heidegger attempted to address the question of the meaning of being and he believed that people are hermeneutic (interpretive) adept at finding significance and meaning in their own lives (Draucker 1999). Indeed Heidegger (1962 p.37) writes that 'the meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation'. However, interpretation is not a supplementary technique as it constitutes a basic and inexorable feature of our 'being in the world'. Interestingly, van Manen supported this view as he describes hermeneutic phenomenology as a

means of combining hermeneutics with phenomenology and in the combination it is both descriptive and interpretive (van Manen 1990). This is indeed a main difference between descriptive and hermeneutical phenomenology. To Heidegger, context was of central importance but to Husserl it was only of marginal interest. Heidegger's phenomenology is founded on the view that the understanding of people cannot take place in a vacuum, isolated from their culture, social context or historical epoch in which they live (Draucker 1999; Campbell in Small 2001).

As mentioned, in reflecting on human experience, Heidegger goes beyond the notions of consciousness and essences; rather he is interested in a phenomenology of being human and he introduced the concept of '*dasein*', the human way of being in the world; to recognise that people cannot withdraw themselves from contexts that influence their choices and give meaning to their lived experiences (Heidegger 1962 in Wojnar and Swanson 2007). *Dasein* means that being human is a situated activity, a situation in which things are encountered and managed (Reed and Ground 1997). Therefore as Campbell (2001) argues Heidegger's phenomenology seeks to examine the situatedness of the person's *dasein* in relation to the wider cultural, social, and political contexts, for *dasein* means that 'we are always embedded in a world of meaning' (van Manen and Adams 2010).

The suppositions relating to *dasein* and situatedness forms the basis for a sort of prior awareness or pre understanding about what is known or understood before interpretation. Heidegger (1962) talks about this as 'a forestructure of understanding' which is intimately connected with how one comprehends the world and that such understanding is aligned with how a person interprets the world. It is only by reflecting in such a manner during the interpretive process that they can more clearly access the forestructure of understanding held by the study participants (Benner 1994).

Hermeneutics differs from descriptive phenomenology also in that the researchers bring their own understanding and experiences to the research process. Whereas as noted previously, the descriptive form advocates 'bracketing' (Moran 2000) which is the suspension of the researcher's own preconceptions, beliefs or prejudices so that they do not influence the interpretation of the respondents' experience.

According, to Christensen, Johnson and Turner (2010), the main objective of a phenomenological study is to explain the meaning, structure and essence of the lived experience of person or group around a particular phenomenon in the hope of understanding human behaviour through the eyes of the study's participants. The German word, *verstehen*, is often used to describe this interpretive understanding of human interaction. This *weltanschauung* of the phenomenologists is connected with the belief that all perceptions and constructions are ultimately based in a particular perspective in time and space and as van Manen (1990) comments, 'phenomenology does not start with a theory but with a phenomenon under consideration.'

Ideography is the third major of influence on IPA as the latter is concerned with how a particular phenomenon is understood by the individual within their own socio-cultural milieu. The idiographic focus explores how a given person, in a given context, makes sense of a given phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2000). Consequently there is a commitment to the particular which requires a commitment to depth and detail, as well as an awareness for individuality and context (Smith et al., 2009). In view of the prominence given to idiography, IPA is understandably wary about claiming transferability of results to broader populations (Smith and Osborn, 2003). Thus any generalisability is possibly more theoretical than empirical and the discerning reader is urged to reflect on their own experiential knowledge base and seek implications for their own work (Smith et al. 2009 p.38). Indeed if studies are sufficiently insightful, they may encapsulate "what it is to be human at its most essential" (Smith et al. 2009 p.38; Wagstaff et al. 2014). In IPA, a person's experience of a phenomenon is unique, and located in context and although only small scale research is advised, Smith et al. (2009) maintain that delving deeper into the particulars also takes closer to the universal.

According to Smith et al. (2009), these three cornerstones result in the development of IPA into a particular form of interpretive phenomenology with the specific focus on the particular in which "the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to them" (Smith et al. 2009 p.3).

3.5 Role of researcher: reflexivity and positionality

Phenomenologists accept that researcher subjectivity is clearly connected with the research process due to the nature of data collection and analysis in qualitative research. Indeed, Smith and Osborne (2003) refer to a double hermeneutic in IPA: that is, the researcher making sense of the participant who is making sense of their experience: a narrative twice told. Hence the researcher has a dual role in the process, the result of which to provide an interpretation of how the researcher thinks the participant is thinking. As Smith et al. (2009) describe it: “the participant’s meaning-making is first-order, while the researcher’s sense-making is second-order” (p.36).

Clearly interviewing by discussions gave me the capacity to construct understanding from the point of view of the participant but as mentioned, it is also intrinsically subjective. Moreover the researcher is the means of analysis through all stages of a qualitative research project (Starks and Brown Trinidad 2007). However the issue to be discussed focuses mainly on how, and to what extent, researcher subjectivity should be involved in the phenomenological project. Giorgi (1994) argues that:

“nothing can be accomplished without subjectivity, so its elimination is not the solution. Rather how the subject is present is what matters and objectivity itself is an achievement of subjectivity” (Giorgi 1994 p.205).

However, the debate focuses on how much attention should one pay to foregrounding their own experience and reflexively investigating their own subjectivity. Husserl’s descriptive phenomenology appears to stress the reduction/bracketing/epoche as a way of making oneself as non-influential and neutral as possible but this is a complex issue with various interpretations of the bracketing reduction. Indeed, Giorgi (1994 p.212) maintains that the strategy of bracketing is a process in which “one simply refrains from positing altogether; one looks at the data with the attitude of relative ‘openness’”.

On the other hand, IPA, taking its lead from hermeneutic phenomenologists reject the possibility or desirability of bracketing researchers’ experience and worldview.

They posit that researchers need to recognise their pre-existing intellectual and personal baggage which then allows the possibility to explore and question them in the light of new evidence (Halling et al. 2006 in Fischer (Ed)). In my view I agree with Findlay (2009) who believes that it is imperative for researchers to bring a:

“critical self-awareness of their own subjectivity, vested interests, predilections and assumptions and to be conscious of how these may impact on the research process and findings” Findlay (2009 p.12).

It difficult to escape the conclusions that values intrude into all aspects of the research process, (including quantitative methods) from the decision to select a specific area to the formulations of the final conclusions. Indeed values are so pervasive that it is never likely that a researcher is working in a moral and objective vacuum. Hence Mies (1993 p.68) argues for a ‘conscious partiality’ in the process, thus identifying the area of subjectivity in the process to be significant.

Shaw (2004) maintains that the researcher must try to holistically engage with the research process which requires a commitment to reflect upon all strands of the process in their cultural and political contexts. He considers it essential to reflect upon one’s personal values and recognise a cultural bias is inherent in all methodologies. He avers that Western methodological paradigms are steeped in ideas of pluralism and liberal democracy and for this reason, he advises researchers to view research as a ‘cultural way of telling the truth’ (Shaw 2004 p.21). One brings one’s social background, gender, sexual orientation, cultural/religious heritage and developing identity to the research process and it is crucial to recognise that these have influenced my perspectives on the issues involved in research and social work generally.

This use and awareness of self in research is addressed by the idea of ‘reflexivity’ which recognises the many fragments of our identity which can wittingly or unwittingly affect the research process.

Reflexivity has been defined as:

“The practice of researchers being self-aware of their own beliefs, values and attitudes, and their personal effects on the setting they have studied and self-critical about their research methods and how they have been applied” (Payne and Payne, 2004 p.191).

Whilst Fook (2000) writing about social work research describes it as:

‘the ability to locate oneself squarely with a situation, to know and to take account of the influence of personal interpretation, position and action within a specific context’ (Fook 2000 p.117).

The concept of reflexivity has been much debated and it still remains a contested concept not least because some authors use ‘reflection’ and ‘reflexivity’ interchangeably in relation to practice and research (Bolton (2006). Wilson et al (2011) argues that reflection is about:

“Holistic thinking, which embraces facts and feelings, artistic and scientific understanding and subjective and objective perspectives’ (Wilson et al. 2011 p.13)

In a professional framework, reflection is connected to processes of learning and the development of expertise (Hood, 2018). However, reflexivity is a concept beyond reflection, and takes place in both practice and theory. To Cohen et al. (2000), reflexivity consists of:

“A self-conscious awareness of the effects that the participants as ...researchers are having on the research process, how their values, attitudes, perceptions, opinions, feelings etc. are feeding into the situation being studied.... The participants....as researchers need to apply to themselves the same critical scrutiny that they applying to others and to the research” (Cohen et al. 2000 p.239).

Reflexivity then goes beyond mere thinking about what we are doing and feeling in particular episodes of research to a more depth analysis of the ‘constitutive inseparability of knower and known’ (Pels 2000 p.2) which heightens the need for deeper critical thinking. The researcher is cognisant of the way that his or her actions/interventions contribute to (or create) the situation in which she/he is engaged; “they see simultaneously the objects/subjects of their gaze and the means by which those objects/subjects . . . are being constituted” (Davies et al. 2004 p.361).

The role of the researcher in research has been considered much in the literature and different paradigms suggest different approaches to the issue of either

minimising or enhancing the possible influence on the process. D’Cruz and Jones (2004) argue that:

“it is necessary for the researcher to make explicit his or her intellectual and ethical assumptions in justifying the methods as a way of demonstrating methodological rigour. We also emphasise the importance of reflexive and reflective practice in social work research to ensure that both paradigm and method are linked to account for the political and ethical dimensions in achieving social change” (D’Cruz and Jones, 2004 p.57).

Clearly there can be both negative and positive effects upon the research process and outcome. Fook (2001) however maintains that an overly subjective approach can promote academically rigorous social work research and she indicates how subjectivity informed her own research and practice:

“I was particularly motivated by the desire to reaffirm the nature and value of social work in a competitive context and I had become increasingly annoyed with trends, I believe reduced social work ...to a more psychologistic orientation. There was a sense in which I saw our research as crusading work, the results of which, should allow us to carve out a legitimate space for social work which I saw as a laudable aim in itself” (Fook, 2001 p.54).

Clearly this positive aspect of subjectivity needs to be weighed up carefully against a darker dimension which may allow bias into the process along with pseudo value neutrality. Notwithstanding the negative possibilities, it is crucial to acknowledge that a person’s own ‘weltanschauung’ and values effect the questions that preoccupy him or her. Therefore an ethical review of our own behaviour as researcher is important (Hardwick and Worsley 2011). In this study, through reflexivity, I reflected on my thoughts, actions, assumptions, and expectations in order to attune them to a conscious level and become aware of their influence on me during the research process (Jootun et al. 2009). The use of a reflexive stance thus assisted me to provide a rationale for research decisions and in turn vary the research process to generate relevant findings (Finlay and Gough, 2003).

Through my professional experience of practitioner and educator allied with previous experience of research, I was conscious of the need to reflexively engage with the material to reduce the likelihood of biasing my analysis. This was helped to

some degree by keeping an interview log (example appendix 11) where I recorded my thoughts and ideas after each interview to remind me of how I felt and thought throughout the interview schedules. The log helped me to record my presumptions and keep track of the development of my thinking and they were often read alongside listening to the transcripts. This gave me the opportunity to monitor my progress and recognise the development of attitudes, ideas and beliefs throughout the process (Lee, 2009).

3.6 Postmodern influences on researcher and study

From my earlier studies, I was introduced to post modernism which was revelatory with its 'incredulity towards metanarratives' and an anti-foundationalism which rejects the inclination to look for explanation in a single cause. (Lyotard 1984). This has remained a major influence on my intellectual development and thus has affected my choice of methodology for my research.

Clarke (2005) highlighted the loss of certainties with the postmodern turn and the emphasis on 'partialities, positionalities, complications, tensions, instabilities, irregularities, contradictions, heterogeneities, situatedness and fragmentation-complexities' within it. The postmodern acknowledgement of multiple ways of knowing assigned an importance to diversity in the sense of accepting and endorsing different perspectives including those previously marginalised. Howe (1994 p.524) noted the prominence given to diversity and posited that postmodernism 'feels comfortable with difference and multiplicity, variety and conflict'. Thus he argued that it should be feted as part of a 'polymorphous, non-unitary and non-consensual nature of much of the social world' which opened up possibilities for practice.

Of course some theorists see post modernism as a threat to social work with its rejection of metanarratives and its seemingly relativist nature which has no criteria to judge or measure inequalities. Lavalette and Ferguson (1999) argue that by rejecting metanarratives, social sciences and social work is unable to analyse the structural causes of oppression. Moreover by accepting multiple narratives as equally valid, social work's ability to differentiate between the voice of the oppressor and oppressed is seriously undermined. Equally the stress placed on the plurality

of interpretations, is likely to legitimate cultural relativism and disregard issues of power and domination.

This negative appraisal of the impact of postmodern thinking, although shared by many, does not take account of the many differences within postmodern theorisation which is not akin to an immovable rock like object but more like a fast flowing river. Roseneau (1991) argues that postmodernism should properly be understood as on a continuum from the sceptic to the affirmative. Sceptical postmodernism argues that all knowledge is contingent on a specific context and therefore evaluative criteria have no meaning. It views the universe as impossible to understand and it has a very limited role in social science of criticising and deconstruction. Indeed its very nihilistic attitude towards truth and other absolutes would preclude it from having any meaningful role in social work. However, Roseneau's (1991) affirmative postmodernism offers a more substantial contribution of revision and renewal to social sciences. Parton and Marshall (1998) argue that:

“It is interpretive and its focus is receptivity, dialogue, listening to and talking with the other. It reveals paradox, myth and enigma and it persuades by showing, reminding, hinting and evoking rather than by constructing theories and approximating truth. It is suggested that our focus should be narrative, fragmented fantasies and different stories. Social work takes on the guise of persuasive fiction or poetry” (Parton and Marshall 1998 p.245).

Fook and Pease (1999) recognise the strengths of a postmodern approach but aligned it more closely with other critical perspectives such as feminism and anti-racist approaches to develop the notion of critical postmodernism within which the understanding that world views are differentiated is incorporated with a concern to challenge oppression and disadvantage as a fundamental social work value. Indeed Fawcett (2000) considers that critical postmodernism is based upon both modern and postmodern insights which create a type of analysis that makes connections and explores tensions. Thus it uses elements from both these perspectives to develop forms of critical analysis that ‘critique, interrogate, deconstruct and discard foundational underpinnings for particular conceptual frames, yet facilitate the identification of inequalities and the mounting of effective challenges in particular contexts’ (Gray and Webb 2013a p.152).

Postmodernism is neither a design frame nor a method but it is a contemporary sensibility or an attitude to knowledge and enquiry which has influenced my perspectives and is related to a constructivist epistemology and an interpretivist theoretical perspective. My social identity is white British, late middle aged, quite socially conservative, politically left/liberal, and postmodern means that the contingency of my subjectivity is vital and adds a particular quality for good or ill to my study. These twin pillars of ethnocentrism (the assumption that my culture is at the centre of the universe) and ego centrality (the assumptions that the world revolves around me) needed to be in my conscious awareness for the research to be pursued fairly and transparent. If not, they would maintain the arrogance of our 'taken for granted' ways of thinking and the belief that our positions are true, superior and infallible. The research process required that I eradicate such stances by, among other things, 'defamiliarising the familiar and familiarizing... the unfamiliar'. (Bauman 2011 p.171).

Such strategies emphasise the need to recognise and value the difference of other lives and cultures and indeed the value of the difference of other viewpoints. Bauman urges us to think in novel ways about the world we live in, (by using metaphorical tools) in order to generate a different vision which makes the customary appear peculiarly unfamiliar, as it were being perceived for the very first time. By such methods, I was able to exhibit a degree of interpretive awareness and show that I recognised the subjectivity which I brought to the research process and that efforts were made to address the implications of my subjectivity.

Researchers may find these options available in other paradigms such as critical theory or feminism but undoubtedly they can be used as a means to examine alternatives to contemporary orthodoxies, and providing space to find different ways of reflecting upon pertinent issues.

The Research methods

3.7 Recruitment

The interpretative perspective considers that research is reliable if researchers can show 'interpretative awareness' in the way they carry out their research. They need

to demonstrate that they have recognised the subjectivity they bring to the process and that they have made attempts to examine the implications of their subjective positionality. The primary interest is the person's experience of the phenomenon and the sense they make of their experience rather than the structure of the phenomenon itself.

According to Hycner (1985 p.294), 'the phenomenon dictates the method (not vice versa) including even the type of participants'. Purposive sampling was felt to be necessary because it is the most important type of non-probability sampling, to identify the main participants (Welman and Kruger 1999). The figure of eight-ten participants was considered sufficient to gather enough information rich data to examine. Boyd (2001) suggests two to ten participants as sufficient to reach saturation and Creswell (1998 p.65) proposes up to ten participants for a phenomenological study.

The study aimed to identify and recruit people who could offer a significant perspective on the experience of using and applying knowledge in social work practice. Indeed participants were recruited because of their expertise in the phenomenon being explored.

Contact was made with the staff development/workforce planning officers of four local authority adult social care departments (LAASCDs) via email and telephone requesting permission and assistance in informing social workers in adult services of my research (appendix 2). After permission was granted (see appendices 6, 7, 8, 9), social workers who expressed an interest in participating in the study were sent a letter/email and an information leaflet (appendix 3) and asked to contact me within a specific period of time. This is not to suggest that the recruitment process proceeded easily and there were several challenges during the recruitment process. As the participants were very busy professionals, their availability was quite restricted and required considerable efforts in arranging mutually suitable times and venues. Finally ten social workers agreed to take part in the interviews which took place from March 2017 to July 2017.

3.8 Participation

The IPA methodology suggests that the social workers approached to take part in the research should be a “closely defined group for whom the research question will be significant” (Smith, 2008, p.56). Consequently, as indicated, purposive sampling was used with practitioners who had particular features which were necessary for the research project. These included criteria of:

- Registered with HCPC as qualified social worker
- Work in the adult field of social work
- Have at least 2 years’ experience post qualification.

Similar to any other research paradigms, ethical issues are equally important in IPA research and it was essential to follow and obtain ethical governance processes and permission from Salford University’s Ethics Committee and the 2016 ‘Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care (appendix 1). The central purpose of the latter is to make sure that participants are protected from the risks associated with research. ‘The dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing of participants must be the primary consideration in any research study’ (DOH 2005 2.2.1 Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care).

There were no significant risks presented by the research to the psychological well-being of the participants as it did not involve sensitive issues. As semi structured interviews were used, there was a small risk of disclosure but the questions proposed did not encourage discussion of very sensitive subjects and hence risk was considered to be low. There was however always a remote possibility that participants may feel uncomfortable with some aspects, topics or themes raised during the interviews/discussion. However, there was no evidence of discomfort or distress in any of the discussions.

As I only interviewed registered social workers, fellow professionals, in either their workplace or at the university, I did not foresee any risks to myself or participants and none were forthcoming. The participants are listed in table 1.

Table 1. List of participants

Participant	Sex	Years of experience	Professional location & experience
Rachel	Female	34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult and young offenders in both the Probation Service and Social Services • Placement coordinator for social work students • 'Access to records' role for a local authority • Freelance tutor and practice educator
Isabelle	Female	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning disability sector • Generic adult team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ older people ○ learning disability and mental health service users • Practice education and teaching
John	Male	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic adult team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ older people, ○ physical and learning disability service users
Barry	Male	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic adult team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ older people, ○ hospital discharges ○ learning disability service users
Polly	Female	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic adult team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ older people ○ mental health ○ drug & alcohol ○ physical & learning disability service users
Rowena	Female	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic adult team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ older people ○ hospital discharges ○ physical disability service users
Betty	Female	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital discharge team for adults • Experience mainly in older people's team
Paul	Male	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic adult team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ older people ○ mental health ○ drug & alcohol ○ physical & learning disability service users
Martha	Female	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic adult team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ older people ○ physical & learning disability service users

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved Mental Health Professional (Mental Health Act 1983 as amended 2007) • Best Interest Assessor (Mental Capacity Act 2005)
Sally	Female	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice educator • Generic adult experience • Child protection officer • Probation officer

3.9 Data protection Issues

I ensured that my research participants were provided with a research code, known only to me to ensure that their identity remained anonymous and confidential. In my previous and current roles, I am experienced in handling and anonymising sensitive data. Names and contact details of the participants have been stored on my password protected computer, accessed only by me. I used a digital recording which was downloaded onto my computer. In line with the University's data management policy, the transcribed interviews will be kept for three years then destroyed. Any publication of the data will continue to be written in a way so as to disguise the identity of the research participants involved. Data has not been used which can identify any participant unless prior consent has been obtained from the individual(s) involved. Once completed, consent forms were stored in a locked cabinet at the university. Participants were notified of the protocol regarding the data collection and storage including the fact that pseudonyms would be used in the transcriptions and the thesis.

3.10 Informed Consent

As face to face interviewing was used, informed consent was an essential prelude to starting the process. Based on Padgett's (2012) basic elements of informed consent, I developed a specific consent form (appendix 4) which was signed at the time consent was given. The main feature of informed consent included the following:

- A brief description of the study and its procedures as they involved participants

- Full identification of the researcher's identity including contact details
 - An assurance that participation is voluntary and the respondent has the right to withdraw at any time without penalty
 - An assurance of confidentiality
 - Any risks or benefits associated with participants in the study
- (Padgett 2012 p.35).

It is debatable however, if there is such a thing as 'informed consent'. Informed consent in research ethics is usually considered as the basis to respecting participant autonomy. This assertion is repeated ad nauseam in the literature but the meaning of 'autonomy' is problematic with privacy, independence, self-sufficiency, and choosing freely amongst its meaning.

The ethical importance of informed consent is to ensure that a research participant has not been deceived or coerced and has voluntarily agreed to take part. However such assumption ignores 'the potentially complex power dynamics that can operate around access and consent and especially where issues of gender and or ethnicity are manifest' (Miller and Bell 2012 p.63). The problems are compounded somewhat by the process which rightly requires the document to be signed prior to the interview signalling that a participant has given consent to be interviewed in line with the research aims. Such actions lend themselves to the legalistic, contractual approach embodied in this processes. Eisner (1991) suggested, 'the notion of informed consent implies that researchers are able to anticipate the events that will emerge in the field about which those to be observed are to be informed' (p. 215). However, the inductive, evolving nature of qualitative design impedes researchers from foreseeing where the study will go. It is impossible to predict whether the final research findings will resonate with the original aims. So what exactly is the participant consenting to? Participation in the sense of being interviewed? (Miller and Bell 2012).

The custom of gaining prior informed consent was established in relation to occasional interventions such as clinical trials. However, using qualitative research, perhaps we need to espouse a more sceptical attitude towards the idea of informed consent (Malone 2003). This would involve an attitude which protects the participant from emerging ethical dilemmas but also recognises the difficulty in composing an

unambiguous set of rules for operating such research. Perhaps a greater emphasis is required on consent in more qualitative research as a relational and sequential procedure rather than a contractual arrangement which endures throughout the research period (Katz and Fox 2004). This does not suggest an abandonment of the organizational responsibility of ethics but an acknowledgement that the 'ethical conduct of qualitative research ultimately depends upon the personal integrity and ethical education of the researcher' (Murphy and Dingwall 2007 p.22).

3.11 Interview Design

Individual interviews with social workers were used as these are the chosen method for much qualitative data collection. Moreover, they are most effective when participants have meaningful experience in the research issue and were willing to discuss it (Leonard, 2007). The purpose was therefore to have interactive conversations between the participants and myself and the sharing of lived experience translated through values, experiences and interpretations. This was to be undertaken in a manner which ensured that the material generated was able to meet the overall aim and objectives of the research

The interviews were semi-structured in that each interview was guided by the issues which the social workers brought up as relevant to them. However they also covered issues predetermined areas of interest based upon the extant literature and my own set questions based around 'the participants' feelings, experiences, beliefs and convictions about the theme in question' (Welman and Kruger 1999, p.196) (appendix 5). These included participant experiences of

- types of knowledge used in practice
- ways that knowledge is used in practice
- issues around applying knowledge in practice
- the formation of ongoing professional identity

There was also a short vignette used to facilitate discussion about the issues of knowledge use in practice in case exploratory questions needed more focus.

It is important for researchers using IPA to be aware that interviews are not 'neutral' ways of data collection (Rapley, 2001) but that the interviewer is understood to work with the participant in flexible collaboration, to identify and interpret the relevant meanings that are used to make sense of the topic (Reid et al. 2005).

The location of the interviews was mutually agreed by the researcher and the participants. A digital recorder was used to record the interviews and afterwards each interview was given a code and transcribed verbatim into a word document by a professional transcription service (Appendix 11). In order to maintain confidentiality and participant anonymity, all names used by participants were erased from the transcripts and audio recordings. All data will now be stored in a locked cupboard in my home and discarded after three years. The taped recordings have already been erased.

3.12 Data Analysis

All transcriptions were checked against the recordings of the interview for accuracy following which IPA was used to analyse transcripts. It is noteworthy that there is no one prescribed IPA methodology but the analysis involves progressing through several stages to identify themes (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

IPA analysis began with a close and repeated examination of the transcribed interviews (Smith et al., 1999) along with frequent listening to the voice-files. This enabled me to pursue the idiographic approach of looking at particular examples, leading to a more general categorisation of themes (Smith et al. 2009) with the aim of creating a comprehensive account of themes which have significance within the original transcripts. Thus, connections were made from the conversations, rather than from any pre-existing theoretical stance. The inductive and iterative procedures of IPA are intended to help the researcher to develop an initial 'insider's perspective' on the topic (Reid et al. 2005). This 'insider's perspective' is one element of the analytic process, the phenomenological, insider, element, in which participant voices and narratives are heard. These highlight the participants' world view, at the heart of the story. However central to IPA is the corresponding interpretative

account whereby attempts are made to decipher the participants' experiences and concerns, and to interpret them in a way that answers the research question. Thus the process involves a balance of 'emic' and 'etic' positions in IPA.

The transcripts were studied individually, by recording areas of interest, preliminary thoughts and tentative interpretations. This process was undertaken on a near continuous basis distinguishing emerging themes, documenting connections and collating them into subordinate themes. These sub themes were then grouped into a clusters of three superordinate themes (Smith et al. 2009).

At all steps of the data analysis process, the transcripts were constantly subjected to reflection and reconsideration to make sure that themes and connections related closely to the discussions with the participants. During this process, some themes were abandoned and others developed. Citations from the original discussions were used to represent all themes, but they were not chosen purely for their prevalence.

As Smith et al (1999, p.226) note:

“Other factors, including the richness of the particular passages which highlight the themes, and how the theme helps illuminate other aspects of the account, are also taken into account”.

The primary analysis was dependent on my interpretation as researcher. This verified the appropriateness of connections made between text and themes, appropriate clustering, and representation of the original content within final categories (Smith et al., 2009).

Only after the initial taped discussion has been analysed was the following one examined and so on until the analysis of all discussions was completed. It was only after the final analysis was completed that cross-case interrogation began as well as the development of superordinate themes.

The data analysis process centres on the understanding the meaning of the description of the phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) maintains that phenomenological analyses includes the following steps:

- Immersion

- Incubation
- Illumination
- Explication
- Creative synthesis

Interpretative analysis is really an iterative process of decontextualisation and recontextualisation (Morse and Field 1995). In the decontextualisation part, the data was separated from the original context of individual interviews and assigned codes to units of meaning in the transcribed accounts. Whilst in the recontextualisation episode the codes are examined for patterns after which the data is organised around themes drawn from across the cases.

Summary of data analysis process:

- After each interview, a log was completed to record feelings/thoughts (appendix 11)
- The recordings of interviews were typed by a professional transcription service.
- The transcripts were read and re-read and significant portions were scored.
- This noting followed the method suggested by Smith et al., (2009), using a hard copy of the transcript with wide margins. The significant portions were copied into the middle section of a three column table with exploratory comments to the left and emergent themes to the right (appendix 12)
- These exploratory section noted my observations, thoughts and feelings related to the contributions of the participant. Preliminary reflections about the contributions of the participants were included forming the initial stages of interpretation.
- Developing the themes involved identifying what was important to each participant at different stages of the transcript. Participants' descriptions were interpreted in an attempt to reflect, comprehend and embody personal meaning.
- The contributions of each participant was considered independently whereby it was possible to identify individual themes for each one. Following the analysis of each individual transcript, the process of bracketing was practised in an attempt to regain a sense of objectivity before commencing on the next transcript thus acknowledging the distinctiveness of each participant's experience.
- On completion of the analysis of individual interviews, patterns across cases were explored and themes identified from the ten participant contributions. These were organised into clusters of related sub themes which on examination and reflection were developed into the three main superordinate themes in line with the study's aims.

Interpretive work has been criticised for letting bias seep into the process and not remaining faithful to the participants' lived experience (Tripp- Reimer and Cohen in Duffy and Pender 1987). This was avoided by remaining within the hermeneutic circle described by Rapport and Wainwright (2006 p.87) as 'the manner in which interpretation through understanding is achieved by the circular process of continuous re-examination of propositions'. The process involved the constant revisiting of the coding framework and original transcripts leading to an expanding circle of ideas. Thus the use of the hermeneutic circle assisted in enabling the

interpretation of the data to be a representative and authentic witness of the participants' accounts.

The interpretative nature of my analysis was affected and developed by the combination of my personal and professional knowledge and experience aligned with the processes of the hermeneutical circle. Furthermore as referred to earlier, reflexivity within the research process recognised my position in the development of the interpretations, exposing the subjective values, understanding and perspectives within their creation of the analytical account (Finlay & Gough, 2008). This in turn, enabled a critical self-reflection to examine how my presence as researcher affected the participants and how my own position may also have influenced their interpretation of the resulting data (King and Horrocks 2011).

The 'hermeneutic circle' is clearly a metaphor for describing the analytic movement between the whole and the part, in which each gives the other meaning (Heidegger 1962). It is described by Smith et al. (2009) as the dynamic involving a non-linear style of thinking. Thus the process of IPA is an iterative procedure that involves repetition of steps to achieve the desired outcome. This engagement with the transcribed and taped discussions moved forwards and backwards and was fluctuating and dynamic. Therefore, the meaning of the text can be interpreted in various ways, which connect to each other and can involve various perspectives. Thus there is no individual reading of a work that can ever be completely definitive as its meaning and interpretation can always be read differently. The nature of the hermeneutic circle suggests that the researcher has only temporal understanding of the data and can never achieve a finite understanding of data as interpretation can never be exhausted (Ormiston and Schrift 1990).

3.13 Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to reflect and explain the theoretical underpinnings of my proposed study as well as providing some account of my subject positioning and reflexivity. My intentions were to utilise the framework outlined in Crotty (1998) to assist in providing a coherent structure to my research. Thus my epistemology was constructionist and my theoretical perspective was interpretivist which connected with the hermeneutical phenomenology of IPA. The process of engaging with the

data was described in detail in connection with the hermeneutic circle to demonstrate the minutiae of my progression. Hopefully my transparency in this process has assisted in clarifying the philosophical foundations, assumptions and procedures that framed the research.

The following chapter presents the key themes and elements derived from IPA using quotations from each interview to support interpretation.

Chapter 4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the findings of the ten transcribed interviews that were undertaken from March to July 2017 from ten participants, seven females and three males. All participants were employed in social services. All the participants have experience of working with adults in various fields such as older people, learning and physical disabilities, drug and alcohol, mental health, and access to records. The participants were recruited from four local authorities, namely Liverpool City Council, Knowsley, Sefton and Lancashire. (See table 1, Chapter Three for the list of participants). These authorities were chosen for ease of access and my familiarity with their structures as three of them are partner institutions to the university in which I worked.

While the interviewees' transcripts maintain their significant position in terms of data, the data set developed considerably from the analytical steps of IPA (Smith et al., 2009.) From these processes arose the bigger data set which was the outcome of the interpretative process by the researcher which is a core element of the method used.

The focus and method of IPA links with and examines everyday experience of the topic under consideration. Though it is acknowledged that philosophers have contributed immensely to discerning the process of considering lived experience, it is pertinent to recall the words of Halling (2008 p.145) who writes:

'In everyday life each of us is something of a phenomenologist insofar as we genuinely listen to the stories that people tell us and insofar as we pay attention to and reflect on our own perceptions' (Halling 2008 p.145).

The analysis here corresponds with the strictures of IPA and the themes from amongst the participants are exemplified by specific quotations from the individual participants (Smith et al., 2009). Even though the analysis of themes is mainly at group level, the point that the group level themes are nonetheless exemplified with actual examples taken from individuals, is the hallmark of IPA analysis (Smith et al. 2009).

Measuring the recurrence of themes from the data is essential and in particular, how the definition of 'recurrent' is decided upon. Smith et al (2009) note that there is no specific rule for calculating the presence of 'recurrence' but they suggest that for "an emergent or super-ordinate theme to be classified as recurrent, it must be present in at least a third to a half of all participant interviews" (Smith et al., 2009, p.107). Moreover they posit that such a procedure can be deemed as useful in augmenting the validity of the findings of a larger piece of work. As in most studies, there are various themes shared by all participants but undertaking IPA also involves discussing the relationships between these convergences and commonality with the divergent individual stances.

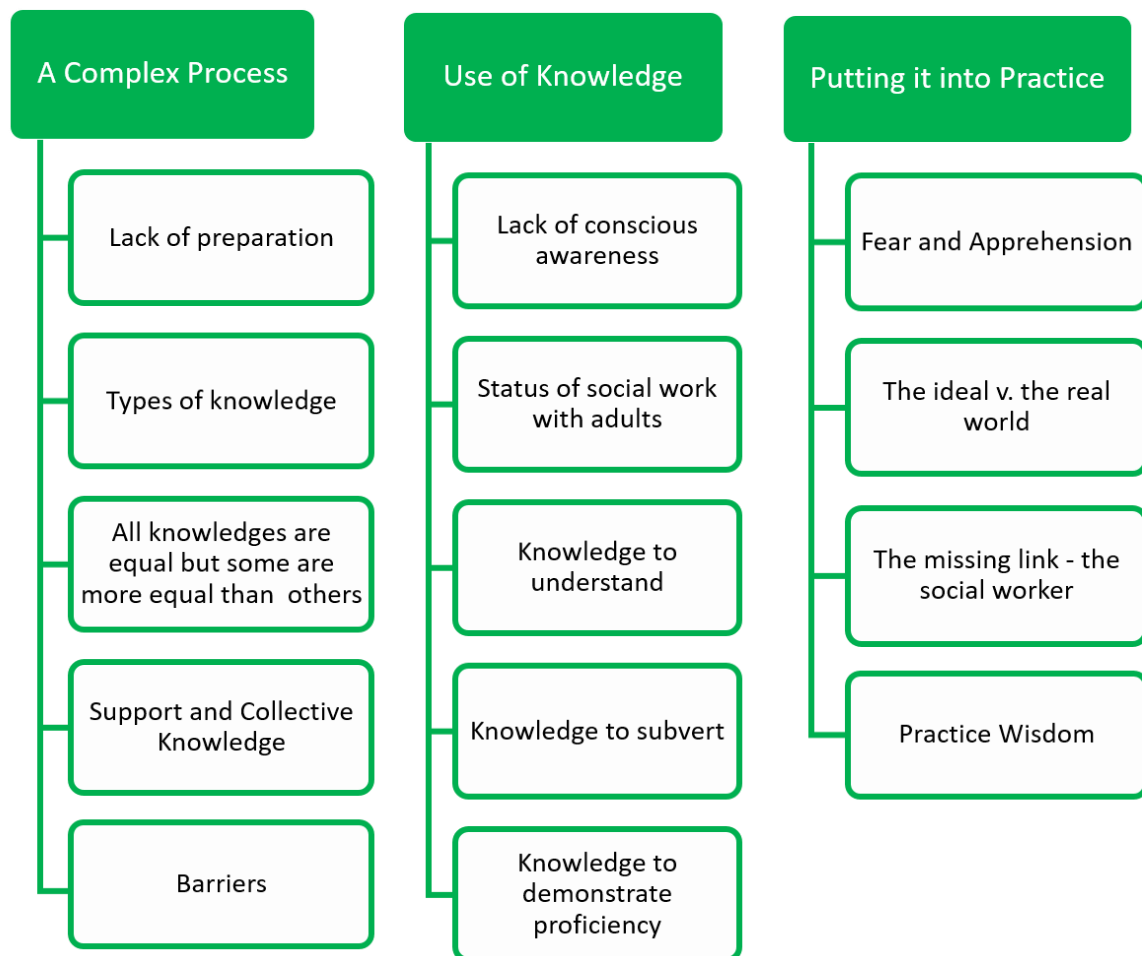
4.2 Analysis of themes

Initial analysis of the conversations involved the exploration of the transcript data, making comments for each individual's interview and identifying emergent themes.

As emergent themes were identified, superordinate themes were developed by utilising the IPA data analysis steps. Superordinate themes were then grouped into three main themes which emerged from the data of the 10 participants:

- A Complex Process.
- Use of Knowledge/Functionality.
- 'Putting it into Practice'.

Figure 1. Superordinate themes supported by subordinate themes identified from the conversations



4.3 Superordinate Theme One: A complex process

A) Lack of preparation

All participants considered that the application and use of knowledge in social work practice was a complex business. The general consensus was that social workers use and apply knowledge all the time but since completing professional training, the issue of the use and application of knowledge only raises its head occasionally via in house training or obligatory Continuing Professional Development.

Reflecting on their experience of professional life, some participants felt that their confusion with the knowledge issue resulted from the lack of adequate preparation on their training courses. For example Polly noted;

“I’m having problems with these questions as I struggle to know what knowledge itself...everything is knowledge in a way, isn’t it? ...On my course I left wondering what all this had to do with social work ...it just didn’t seem relevant to what we were doing on placement.”

Such views were echoed by another, Martha who although she enjoyed, and gained from the wider experience of her course, ‘felt like I left unprepared’. She added;

“Never felt once I qualified that I was ready for practice. I joke now saying I still feel new and I’ve been here for 16 years...I never really understood how all this knitted together. It was a mystery.”

The clarity and understanding required of the knowledge issues were eventually met for Martha from ‘the experience I’ve had working of different cases’ and she admits that this past experience in work is the source from which she draws on ‘with students, new starters, with my day to day care management’.

Another participant Rowena, had completed a sociology degree prior to her social work programme some 16 years ago and she gravitated towards the former because of the way it made her think and the interest it demonstrated in people and society But she confesses;

“When I did my DIPSW, I didn’t get a lot from it ...because I think a lot of the times I was thinking, well this stuff is just common sense or I’ve kind of covered this in sociology....well I think a lot.... , well that (the course) was kind of a means to an end and you got your qualification to get into the job that you want to do and then you learn when you were here really. ..I think a few of us from the old school, think that way, ...I don’t know what it’s like now, but it was crammed and we didn’t have time to think ”

John, a social worker with three years post qualified experience, judged the experience of his course as enjoyable but lacking in knowledge and skill development which hindered his confidence and possible effectiveness of his practice. He compared his situation now with that of his early years in practice:

“Thinking of my development to date as a social worker, I mean now I’m only sort of three and a bit years into the career...I look at what I know now compared to three years ago and I’m quite shocked at the lack of knowledge and theory that I had as a newly qualified worker and I wonder how I got through the day sometimes, to be honest.”

Specifically, half of the group referred to the module ‘Social Work Theory and Methods’ or similarly named modules with the same content, as confusing. They recalled that little attempt was made to demonstrate its applicability to practice situations. The participants’ interpretation of their experiences of teaching and learning suggest that they became alienated from their learning journey and that the teaching and learning strategy was more governed by organisational and programme requirements than student centred approaches.

An alternative view was presented by Rachel, a social worker and Practice Educator. She argued that the university teaching often lacked depth on matters of knowledge use and application, and furthermore, caused confusion to practitioners by presenting the theories as alternatives.

“It’s almost as if practitioners, students or qualified staff, are free to pick and choose what they want. And yet they don’t understand them enough....they don’t understand the theories enough”

She felt that the universities were doing their job in teaching the issues relating to knowledge use via case studies, role play etc. However for Rachel, ‘the issue is about the person who should be looking at the knowledge use and application (for students) – the Practice Educator’ (PE) and for her, often the PE is ill prepared in pedagogic theory and unable to meet the demands of contemporary practice.

A similar problem arises for the Team Manager role who should offer supervision for staff and should be professionally competent to help practitioners reflect on their practice. All participants acknowledged that supervision rarely deals with these issues and is usually ‘a catch up’ focussing on developments in cases and whether they can be closed. No participant gave any positive comments about the use of supervision and its ability to help practitioners with the use and application of knowledge with cases. Most comments consisted of Team Managers being too

busy, and having a managerial role in adult work tends to be concerned with budgets and targets and precludes any epistemological issues arising from cases.

One participant Barry thought that he had gained an understanding of knowledge use and application during and since his training, but he described the process as 'osmosis' whereby he 'absorbed the theory from colleagues, books, environment and culture.' Participants were all conscious that professional education does not stop at graduation but is a lifelong process through CPD and other avenues.

Polly, a social worker for 3 years commented that since joining an adults team in 2014, she felt unprepared for the task as the teams had recently become generic consisting of service users from the previous specialisms of older people, learning and physical disability, drug and alcohol and mental health. The amount of new learning to her was overwhelming and apart from a few training events around the Care Act 2014 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005, most learning was by the traditional route of 'sitting next to Nellie' and observation as well as drawing from the pool of the team's collective knowledge. Polly considered too that she did not feel prepared for her role as much of the required knowledge and theory was not available on her course as it was from a health related background. A sign perhaps that contemporary practice is outrunning the content of some university programmes.

This lack of preparedness was also highlighted in Isabelle's data. She has been qualified for over 17 years and has witnessed various developments in her field of learning disabilities such as person-centred practice which was not on the agenda during her university training. However, in her experience, new developments can change the trajectory of service provision but unfortunately the local authority's response, influenced by austerity measures and managerialism, is often minimal. This is not the case with training around new legal knowledge which is prioritised, according to Isabelle, because of 'fear of judicial review' and 'the fear that if you get it wrong, you find yourself in a lot of trouble'. She comments that in her local authority:

"all of a sudden you have everybody who is willing to be seconded to be Best Interest Assessor being funded to do the course because there is a panic about legal literacy, and ...panic about meeting the requirements of the legislation.

However other practice developments around service matters, although important for service credibility and better outcomes for service users, receive minimal attention because they 'fester away and won't immediately become a problem'.

The issue of preparedness for practice is a central issue for these participants. All felt that their professional education programmes along with post qualification, in house or extra mural, training was insufficient to meet their practice requirements. This may have emanated from the unspoken assumption that professional education ought to prepare one for all practice requirements. However, all felt that they were fully committed to their roles and that their knowledge and skill were predominantly gained from case management and the collective experiences of their colleagues. This did not exclude their teaching and learning on their professional courses but most felt it was of lesser importance to their current expertise. Moreover they had difficulty in understanding the utility of their studies in relation to the minutiae of their daily work.

B) Types of knowledge available to social workers.

Formal knowledge

As noted in the literature review, there have always been problems in demarcating a body of knowledge exclusive to social work and consequently, what social work knowledge consists of continues to be a difficult subject. As Isabelle commented in her interview, "in terms of knowledge, I suppose it's about how you define knowledge".

The participants in this study all considered knowledge to be a vital ingredient of practice as Rachel noted 'without good quality knowledge we couldn't do our job properly' or for Barry 'social work is based upon knowing stuff and using it'. For these practitioners however, the question of what essential knowledge is required varied considerably.

All the practitioners made reference to the importance of knowledge of law in social work with adults whilst some participants put more stress on its central role in their practice. John maintains that in his role, there is an extensive use of

“sort of quasi legal knowledge really, what is knowledge ...I think the clue is in the name really when they call it statutory social work, it is so much predicated around fulfilling statutory requirements, and the Care Act and Mental Capacity Act.”

The introduction of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Care Act 2014, which consolidated over 60 previous pieces of legislation, has added significant responsibilities to social work with adults. This has focussed more attention on the legal duties with John noting that

“you are expected to know your stuff , stuff around eligibility, stuff around capacity etc, its relation to safeguarding, its relations to accommodation moves, so that’s massive... unless you are thinking about things, you may come unstuck as a practitioner.”

Paul too considered that his legal knowledge, gained from his previous law degree and focussed onto social work through his professional qualification, is central to his role

“There’s a lot more policies and processes that follow from the Care Act.... And I’ll use Care Law judgements to guide work when necessary.”

For others such as Betty, she was consciously aware of the legal knowledge that dominated her work and highlighted its centrality in her daily work. Working in a multi-disciplinary team dominated by health professionals, she acknowledged that her social work peers were more aware that everything in social work was underpinned by legislation;

“You’ve got to have your knowledge from legislation. You’ve got to know why we do what we do, in the way that we do. And ...it is...everything is underpinned...in the past it wasn’t so necessary, I’ve worked with adults for over 20 years now. At one time you’d have got away with knowing little about the law. But not now. The Care Act and the Mental Capacity Act have changed a lot in adult work. It’s more rigorous in some ways...Our documents are legal documents and it’s important they are filled in properly”

Martha too commented on the growing body of legal knowledge that is pertinent for social workers with adults. In some sense she experienced this development as a positive move which gave this field of work a greater focus in the same way that social work with children or mental health has had for some years. She considered

that previously social workers knew about the plethora of acts under which they worked prior to the Care Act, but it did not impinge on their consciousness to the extent that the latter does in contemporary practice.

“I think in some way, practice has been made sharper under the new legislation... There’s the Best Interest Assessor. And all your assessments when you’re considering a deprivation of liberty has to include recent case law and why DOLS exist, that type of thing. So you’ve got to include it in your assessments –Baroness Hale and the Cheshire West judgement and the ‘acid test’.

Although noted earlier that half the cohort were sceptical of the knowledge taught at university, not in terms of validity but more of its utility, there was some recognition from participants of the knowledge gained from their professional university education.

Barry referred to this knowledge as ‘life changing’ because of the impact it has had on his outlook and development as a person

“That knowledge is life changing. It would be hard to go out and do this job without the training you receive at university and the understanding of theory and why some people behave the way they do ...It’s changed the way I approach people and relate to them at work. Communication Theory I think it was. If someone was having a go at me in the past, I’d have a go back. Now I just think ‘what’s going on here?’ ‘Why are they so angry?’ That sort of thing.”

The recognition of the power of knowledge to change perception and behaviour and develop a professional persona is mirrored in the comments of Betty:

“You know we say ‘knowledge is power’. Well it was to me. It was like a light bulb moment. It was learning about relationship-based practice and working with resistant clients as we called them in those days. It made sense and I thought I can do that and I haven’t stopped since. I was only saying to a patient here, (it’s the health influence, they call them patients), he’s on Guardianship. I said I can’t make you come but you know there are consequences for you and you have to weigh up if it’s worth it.”

In a similar mode, Rowena described a session at university which went against her 'common sense' beliefs but changed her understanding of suicide risk which has remained with her:

“We were having a psychiatrist do a lecture on suicide risk as part of the mental health. He went on about how to assess the risk of suicide in people who feel like killing themselves with those type of thoughts, like depression or schizophrenia.... He brought in slides and stuff and we acted out scenarios with I think it was an ex-patient of his.....I thought if you mentioned suicide to a patient, it would put ideas in their head but it's the opposite.... We had to ask about their thoughts and how they would kill themselves, had they got a plan and what was the likelihood of killing themselves.”

Another area of product or formal knowledge that was considered to be fruitful, yet complex, was modules on life course development around children and behaviour, specifically around inappropriate child sexual behaviour and possible links to abuse. Rachel, working in an 'access to records' role, related the story of an adult female who wanted to see her records from when she was taken into local authority care over 30 years previously. Rachel studied the records beforehand to see if there was any third party implications and noticed comments about the then young teenage girl. Evidently there were numerous episodes of school refusal, absconding, associating with older boys, rumours of drug misuse and self-cutting behaviours. There was also a comment in the file from the social worker at the time referring to the teenager as 'dressing like a slut'. On reading the material, Rachel wondered about the issue of sexual abuse which was not picked up in the early 1980s by the professional involved. This was confirmed by the woman in the mandatory counselling session prior to the access meeting.

The episode confirmed to Rachel that although knowledge and theory around adolescent behaviour is valuable, “the understanding and awareness of child sexual abuse was not as clear as it is today and as today's will not be as tomorrow”. It demonstrated to her that knowledge is provisional and partial and whilst crucial to practice, a degree of scepticism is required about it.

Procedural knowledge

Procedural knowledge was referred to by all participants as essential in carrying out the daily work of social workers. Knowledge of the systems in use, the inputting of data on various portals and the telephone systems. These issues are said to have grown in importance in recent years, particularly IT literacy, as there is no administrative assistance given to practitioners. The participants with longer experience in practice lamented the demise of such help as it left more time for the core elements of the job. Betty noted that when she started in social work

“We all had a secretary who did all our typing, filing and recording of case notes but now we do everything ourselves, typing reports, letters, everything... no wonder we’ve got no time to reflect.”

Sally also commented that such work took time away from service users and stated that “they said computers would free us up to spend more time on the real job but it’s made it worse with more admin than ever”. Rachel concurred “all the procedural stuff falls to us now. Originally we had clerical officers to do a lot of that stuff, collating information ... now we do it all”.

Although older participants noted the developments from an earlier time, most participants felt that typing their own reports and letters was very time consuming and took them away from more essential tasks.

Polly noted that it takes her two hours to do an assessment but it can take four hours to type up that assessment in addition to the many other processes such as budget letters, capacity assessments, continuing health care assessments etc. She commented that:

“It’s taking twelve hours to do all the paper work and there’s something wrong there. It should be the other way round. I’m not saying tick boxing is the answer but a lot of this information is very repetitive and ...in reality it weakens your person centredness.”

Life Experience as Knowledge

The participants also highlighted an alternative perspective to the more academic, 'scientific' and legitimated areas of knowledge.

Seven participants identified the connection between life experience and learning and felt that it was a major element in the knowledge base that they utilised in practice.

Polly talked about the influence of her family and parental responses in shaping her personality and engagement with others along with the experience of working in a bar for nine years. The contrast between the interactions of Polly as 'sober, polite and well mannered' bar tender with the 'drunken aggressive customer' was a significant learning experience. 'It's how to manage that sort of situation, learning those type of skills and learning how to de-escalate those kinds of situations.'

On reflection, Polly acknowledged that the bar work enabled her to de-escalate potential or actual conflict through the daily experience of 'weighing people up' and observation of customer behaviour and body language. She felt it was her own 'intuition' gained from looking at the clues emanating from customer interactions and the effects of alcohol.

According to Polly, the origins of this learning came probably from the values with which she was brought up, 'of what's acceptable in your own home'.

"You learn from your parents, and you develop to know what's sort of rude, what's polite or aggressive. If you were brought up in an environment that is aggressive, you'd treat that as a normal sort of environment ...I wasn't brought up in that sort of environment, so I can recognise when people are being aggressive or being rude ...It's experience, if someone shouts at you and you shout back, it escalates the situation and you learn that with rows with your friends when you are little."

Martha also considered that her life experience has enriched her professional knowledge base, particularly as she grown older. She admitted that when she first started in social work she was quite young and felt she had little to offer in terms of empathy with service users. However with greater experience from marriage, parenting, caring and bereavement, it makes her 'a little bit more human'.

“I will relate things like, ‘well I had a family member who had Alzheimer’s. This was my experience. Tell me yours....And talking about my experience... put them at ease almost instantly, even with younger adults in transition work. I’m able to talk about my children.”

Martha accepted that such disclosures can be unhelpful and may affect the necessary boundaries between worker and service user. But if managed right and with professional motives, then it can put people “at ease, make them realise that you are not some kind of standoffish professional.”

Clearly it is not only positive experiences that people can learn and acquire new understanding. Sally described a very difficult childhood and background in addition to the experience of being a young carer. This coupled with her personal involvement for 16 years in facilitating a 12 step programme linked to addictions, taught her important lessons for the caring professions.

“Initially I wanted to be a rescuer.... I was in the rescuing mode early on...but I quickly realised that you can’t save the world, that you can’t change people’s lives that they have to do it for themselves. ..so that in a way has kind of added to the pot.”

The participants felt that almost any knowledge could be useful as preparation for a social work career but especially voluntary or paid work experience with vulnerable people which was a mandatory entry requirement for many social work education programmes in the past. This form of employment, like most work locations, enabled them to gain experience of working with vulnerable people or those with needs that required external support. Rowena felt that her experience of social care work made ‘a massive difference’ to her preparedness for social work as she was mixing with different people and got ‘first-hand experience of helping people who sometimes didn’t actually want to be helped, even though they needed it.’ This learning was reinforced by observing other, more experienced staff coping with difficult situations leaving her with the attitude of ‘nothing fazes me anymore.’ She lamented that nowadays entrants to the social work profession are often younger with little related work experience which may impact upon their ability to benefit from the professional programme.

Sally agreed with this view and wondered if younger entrants of 18 or 19 years old had sufficient maturity to understand the complexities of the job. Whilst recognising that maturity is not necessarily tied to chronological age, Sally queried whether 'in some ways they (younger entrants) have sufficient depths of empathy.'

The issue of whether life experience knowledge is utilised consciously or not was raised by Isabelle. She admitted that she was initially wary of including such a type of knowledge because:

"in some ways I try and separate some life experience from how I practise for fear of being too close to the issue or...perhaps because of some of your own life experiences may have been negative and you don't want them to have a negative impact on your own practice. However, thinking about it, can you actually successfully do that or is it more on a subconscious level?"

Furthermore Isabelle highlighted two areas in particular where knowledge gleaned through life experience may have had a direct impact on her practice. On reflection, she considered that the experience of loss of her father possibly enhanced her engagement with service users who were going through similar problems 'from the point of view of empathy.' Secondly Isabelle stated that having practiced as a social worker prior to, and after being, a parent, her analysis of her interventions now would draw attention to differences:

"Certainly if you think about the sort of knowledge required to work successfully with parents or people with learning difficulties when looking at issues of transition, moving people on, my understanding of those relationships, and why it can sometimes be a very difficult time, would be very different ... I certainly would understand the parents' pain and anguish more and the sense of loss they often feel."

Although she acknowledged that her experiences of grief and parenting would affect her response to these issues in practice, she felt that one could not have an uncritical attitude towards life experience as these matters are very individual processes. She considered that this form of knowledge needed to be reflected upon and dissected.

The validity and utility of life experience was also commented on by Rachel in relation to the transmission of values which may have a direct bearing on the kind

of knowledge that one may use. Whilst a probation officer, she undertook an exercise around report writing and looking at values within that process. She described 'an epiphany moment' in that it made her question what she had been handed on by her family.

"I was shocked because I had been a probation officer for quite a long time. I realised how my view of a woman with children and a woman without children were completely different and that I valued the woman with children more than the one without. I was really ... how could anyone teach me that?But it was my own awareness about what I was doing and how I'd seen that and where that came from, coming from a matriarchal family that really lay great store by having children...So I suppose at some point I thought I knew all this but I didn't!"

Thus the process of guided reflection on a training course made Rachel realise that her attitude to women, with and without children, and the often subtle yet significant attitude towards them, was shaped and developed through her experience of family life. She added that such experience and beliefs were discriminatory and oppressive but she was unaware of their possession until a formal teaching and learning experience revealed them to her.

C) All types of knowledge are equal but some are more equal than others.

All participants highlighted that there are different types of knowledge used in social work and that all have some merit and utility. Polly commented that all these types of knowledge 'bring something different to the table but that it depends on what situation you are in to determine which knowledge you feed off'.

However, it was generally accepted that although all sorts of knowledge is used in practice, the impression given was that academic or research knowledge was the most highly valued. Polly again:

"You can use knowledge from anywhere you want in practice but they don't all carry equal weight ... well that's the impression I get anyway. The stuff we learned at university or read in journals, well that's the most important, isn't it? because it comes from you lot (laughs), the intellectual bunch."

The idea that academic knowledge is the most important was widely acknowledged by the participants. However, it appeared as a grudging or half-hearted acceptance, based on what they think they ought to believe rather than which was true. Paul wondered if academic knowledge deserved the place it was given in the hierarchy of knowledge.

“Of all the stuff we learned on the course and afterwards, I’d say that theory was thrust down our throats as if it was the Holy Grail. It was almost a reverential attitude to it that bugged me.... Also all these researchers carrying out research and saying ‘Eureka..... this is it. Do it this way or that.’ But when you get out there you realise it’s just one view among many and not always the best view at that.”

The reasons for the exalted view of research and academic knowledge emanated from the fact that it is supposedly scientific, objective and hard to grasp or it is restricted to the cognoscenti. Betty noted that

“We all like to think we know more than them so what we know makes us special.”

Rachel commented in a similar vein that ‘professions need a knowledge base that others aren’t party to so that they can say, ‘we know all this that you don’t know.... Therefore we are professionals’.

Barry argued that:

“The post moderns tell us all knowledge is the same, it’s all equal. But I don’t know... it’s still the case that anything to do with science or research is better because it’s based on experiments that clever men do andthey have the reputation, they are acclaimed for it. They write books. Therefore they must know what they are talking about. Their opinions are highly valued.”

The role of gender in scientific enquiry was also raised by Rowena whose comments highlighted the gendered nature of knowledge itself with research knowledge held to be at the apex of the hierarchy. She considered that:

‘It’s mainly men who do research in universities, I’m not saying women don’t do any or aren’t capable but women do the job (of social work) while the men tell us what we should be doing.... but as they don’t do it themselves how do they know what we should be doing?’

Although the equation of research as a mainly male activity is incorrect in the social work academy, it appears that the elevated status of academic knowledge is pervasive throughout social work. Rachel who spends much time in a supervisory role with students observed that:

“When you talk about knowledge to a social work student, they’ll think about some kind of abstract knowledge or communications about a skill or something. They never think about, or they think least of all about knowledge of the person that they are working with....the most important bit of knowledge to me is that knowledge you’ve got of that individual and how you are going to work with them.”

This experience of getting to know the person, the service user, is, for Rachel, the crucial element of knowledge that the social worker requires but she concedes that it is often an afterthought in the litany of knowledges that the practitioner requires. Rachel blamed the reductive attitude to assessment in adult work for the overshadowing of this particular knowledge in social work.

“I don’t think people pay as much attention to assessment in the way we used to do. You know assessment is generally now an assessment for a service. It’s not holistic enough so that you never, in a sense, get to know about that person”

Barry stressed too that the foundational knowledge for his practice with an adult learning disability service was knowledge of the service user gained by “personal contact and asking questions with all those involved in his care so you can build up a holistic picture.” The centrality of the relationship was highlighted as the only way in which the knowledge of the person could be fully acquired.

“Not just one visit, you had to go back several times, forming a relationship with this particular person ...it took a few times for him to come down to the living room and speak to me, but you had to stick with it.”

Barry moreover emphasised that access to this knowledge is hard, complex work and achieved via good communication, empathy, patience and persistence. He added ‘it’s much harder than getting knowledge from the internet!’. Betty too remarked that her job started and ended with the service user and getting a good understanding of them and their situation was her paramount duty.

“We need to know how people tick. For many this is their first contact with agencies, they may have led a fully independent life and suddenly have a stroke at 57. We need to understand their fear and anxiety and how it can affect their functioning. So you’ve got to know how people tick, what makes them tick, their previous experiences, their life stories ...and how we look at them in context.”

This knowledge of the person is complemented by the knowledge that the service user and carers bring to the table. This knowledge has often been marginalised too and seen as less valuable than the knowledge derived from research or academic practices.

Paul witnessed the efficacy of carer knowledge in his practice with adults with learning difficulties and commented on families whose ‘understanding outstrips anything that I know in knowledge...I can read up on stuff but I can never replace their knowledge (of him) and how (he) reacts’. Barry also commented on value of such carer knowledge in the learning disability team where he worked:

“Quite often a lot of the service users aren’t able to communicate so it’s generally the carers I deal with. They are often the real experts on the situation and know enormous amounts about the issues facing their relatives.’

Such carer knowledge is not always held by relatives as both Polly and Isabelle referred to situations where carers of older people were attempting to subvert the legitimate desires of their older relatives to remain at home due to their own fears about risk and wellbeing.

John stated that the issue of service user knowledge is complex and depends on the client group as sometimes people with learning difficulties may have little insight into their problems but that ‘it varies on an issue by issue and case by case basis’. He further commented that often such knowledge is recognised but it has been ‘domesticated’ by its inclusion on the standard self-supported assessment documentation which gives a box for service user views about their situation. Such practices can ensure that the views of services users have been ‘captured but in reality, it is just a tick box exercise and can be rather meaningless.’

Knowledge and understanding is obviously gained from the daily experience of working with service users and carers. Polly especially mentioned the contribution that families may provide in assessments about their relative. Often she commented that time constraints and heavy workloads prevent holistic assessments and carers involvement help to facilitate such work by their filling in her gaps.

The absence of significant mention of service user knowledge in my research data, perhaps speaks volubly of the importance attached to their voice in the busy and complex environment that constitutes contemporary social work practice.

D) Support and Collective Knowledge

Within the transcripts, there was a feeling that without the support of their colleagues, participants would be unable to practice effectively as a social worker. The importance of good working relationships was noted along with a convivial milieu where people felt valued and could share their concerns or fears without any censorious judgements.

Polly commented that she felt 'there was nothing worse than a bickering atmosphere at work where people moaned all day' but she was now fortunate to be in an office with good rapport between practitioners. Unfortunately, not all participants experienced such fellowship and some felt that the team leader role was crucial in setting the tone of the office. Martha stated that it was difficult to feel at ease in her office as the team manager tended to micromanage all aspects of the office which left staff feeling demoralised and unhappy. She related a recent event when she was telling a colleague a story about a minor accident at home when she was brusquely interrupted by the team manager who informed them 'if they had time to talk they had time to take more cases'.

All participants commented on the use of collective knowledge as an important way of developing their practice and understanding of the job. Polly commented that knowledge was critical in sustaining her practice:

"You know coming into the job as a newly qualified worker, you can't keep going to your manager for support.....You have to rely on other colleagues and stuff and I've been very lucky to have been in a good team where I have been very supported....If we go to Continuing Health Care assessments,

they will discuss different health issues which I haven't a clue about. So I will ask them what does that mean. How does it impact on the person? What support do they need in relation to that?"

Rowena concurred with the value of the learning experience from other colleagues, not only but especially when less experienced:

"When we all first started to work, I think a lot of knowledge, that knowledge base, came from shadowing others and working in close proximity to people. Even just picking up those conversations that people have had or maybe how they phrase things and how they get information from people rather than going out with your assessment sheet and asking questions. They'd say 'bear those questions in mind but have a conversation with somebody'."

The nature of this learning is in stark contrast to the learning in formal educational settings and tends to be by social interaction in a piecemeal fashion. Betty noted that:

"It tends to be anecdotal ...So someone will have a case and they will say 'O we have so and so'....what happens is you end up having a sort of across the desk discussion about ...'well, I've met that once before and this is what we did and this is why we did this. And this is what worked and this is what didn't, and that's how you do it'. You do it in a very informal way. It's not 'let's sit down and have a formal case discussion'."

Although both parties learn from this process and the interaction is in both directions, the dissemination of this this type of knowledge is often from the experienced worker to the less experienced. Paul pointed out that he would actively seek out an extremely experienced colleague for a case discussion as 'he is a vital tool to use' rather than someone whose opinion he did not value. However, these discussions, he acknowledged as "process driven in its outcome, more to do with 'I would do it this way' rather than a holistic discussion."

Rachel recalled that this communal sharing of knowledge and experience was not always confined to informal routes. She noted the presence of 'case discussions and gatekeeping meetings in the youth offending service' where knowledge was shared and practice examined in specific cases. However she queried whether with

massive changes in organisations and the growth of bureaucracy and managerialism such processes are valued any more.

The impact of changing work practices and austerity measures appears to have a major effect on the effectiveness of the collective pool of community knowledge. Rowena queried whether the nature and transmission of this knowledge can survive in the light of these changes. She commented that:

“The local authority have got rid of a load of offices and it’s all money and so now they (social workers) can basically work where they want or they can work at home and that’s kind of encouraged.The focus in many teams now is to look at hot desking or people working from home and I don’t think there’s that peer support that people used to have when we all first started to work.”

Such strategies, dictated by the need to save money for vital services, may be necessary but the corollary may well impact on the professional development of social workers with the absence of the close network of colleagues around which good practice coheres. Rowena maintained that the efforts to remedy this lack has been made by the introduction of ‘buddy systems’ but she felt it was debateable whether these can take the place of the often informal learning mechanisms that grow around work practices.

E) Barriers

The transcripts highlight that thinking about and using knowledge in practice was difficult due to the many demands of the job. These were felt to act as barriers to effective practice because social workers are so pressured by the nature and volume of their work. As a consequence, they have little time to think about anything that is deemed ‘cerebral issues’.

John argued that:

“the nature of the job is demanding with large caseloads and about doing things....you are constantly thinking what are the things that I’ve got to do...we are responsible for quite a lot of important things around safeguarding , around making sure essential care needs are met.. And if things go, wrong fingers will be pointed.”

For him, the consequence is 'a disconnect between what a social worker might like to do and what the practice reality is.'

The time to think and reflect about the work undertaken, and its relationship to types of knowledge used, is clearly affected by the current funding crisis in social care with adults. Martha described the time to think about these issues as 'almost like a luxury... but often because its head down, you've not afforded the time.'

A further barrier noted was the current configuration of adult services and managerial philosophy. This emphasises outcomes and seems to demean the value of any intellectual considerations. The target culture, coupled with greater rationing of scarce resources creates different sets of priorities which treats considerations of knowledge as superfluous.

Polly commented that she thinks:

"senior managers don't understand what we are doing on the front line at all.... they don't understand what we are going through...we offload to team managers who are getting the cases in and have to allocate the cases...but their managers are kicking off at them saying you've got these targets to meet...the senior managers have a different task, a different priority...they don't understand what the service users and carers are going through because it's not a priority to them."

She averred that one of the problems with the standing of knowledge in practice is that it is undervalued partly because the senior managers in adult services draw from and value different knowledge bases:

"I think it's a lot about funding policies, economics and central government directives and I think that's what they are looking at, society as a whole but we are dealing with individuals."

Isabelle agreed that the different perspectives of senior managers to social workers is often a barrier to the development and currency of professional issues amongst practitioners. She commented that these different perspectives are compounded by the recruitment of senior managers in adult services who are not professionally qualified social workers. Not only are they a different profession but it is debatable

whether they have a sufficient understanding of the potential of social work with adults.

4.4 Superordinate theme two: Use/functionality of knowledge

A) Lack of conscious awareness

Participants considered that they had a lack of conscious awareness of the use and type of knowledge employed in practice. Indeed most practitioners initially found difficulty in articulating the knowledge used in relation to the chosen example of practice. However, on further reflection all were able to refer to the knowledge used in their case examples but they continued to claim that they did not actively and explicitly think about these matters on a daily basis. Martha stated that in her view:

‘To be honest once you’ve left the kind of academic world and you’re now in practice, you become less aware of it , and you’re not afforded the time to kind of think about it.’

Barry agreed with this view stating that ‘theory is a big part but I don’t think people consciously think, well we’ll use this type of knowledge, it becomes automatic after a while’. Rowena too accepted that she thinks ‘we do use knowledge and theories but honestly you don’t have the time to sit down and go over ‘well that was this kind of theory etc.’. The issue of ‘honesty’ was repeated by Polly who noted that “if I’m being totally straight with you, I don’t sit consciously ...and think about it.’ This reference to honesty, or openness regarding this matter, suggests that it is almost an unspoken embarrassment about the lack of conscious awareness of the knowledge question.

However, participants were conscious about the contextual nature of their knowledge in relation to the case example they outlined and the necessity to view every service user’s situation as unique. Moreover they were able to highlight aspects of theory in cases with reference to crisis intervention, task centred work and systems theory. Nevertheless they all referred to the time constraints resulting from high and complex caseloads which prevent proper reflective practices and meaningful supervision. Rowena concluded with the assertion that:

“Social workers are very good at playing down what it is they do and the knowledge they have ...I don't know whether it's because of something in your nature and that's why you are drawn to this work ...because we don't like to seem different from the people we serve. We're not like other professions or jobs, call it what you will. We've got to be alongside people if we are going to be of use to them.... we don't laud it over them and if we did, we'd get nowhere.”

B) The Status of social work with adults

Most of the participants recognised that the status of adult work is often compared unfavourably with work with children and families. They were aware too of the political context of their work which has led to changes in work practices which some consider leaning towards 'the death of social work with adults'.

Isabelle stated that she knew that:

‘Working with adults is of low status...I knew when I went into it. It was painfully obvious.... It's obvious in universities because people want to do the sexy stuff like childcare or detaining people under the Mental Health Act. Adults is seen as something you would probably do when you have done a bit of that heavy end. But the reality is that it is a very complex area of work and increasingly so with capacity assessments and best interest matters and DoLs.’

John who works in a busy adult team commented on the nature of his job in the light of the neoliberal policies of the last 25 years:

“In reality, you know you are here to fulfil a statutory function that is it. It is based around care management... and what we are still doing is assessing for services because they are the only tools at our disposal,...we can at least put a service in they will hopefully keep this person more safe and will assure their needs will be met.”

Betty considered that they were forced as workers to concentrate on the basic yet essential needs to the detriment of 'higher' needs because of the stress on the resource based nature of the job.

“To a large extent, if we started focussing too much on the top of the Maslow's hierarchy around self-actualisation, we would inevitably be missing people and their basic needs would not be met and they would be malnourished...or be getting pressure sores....if that person needs more work not around say their personal care or mobility.. (but) help them

overcome issues around self-esteem, repair relationship with family members ...you haven't got the resources to do that piece of work, arguably you've lost that knowledge and skills because you don't use them."

However Isabelle commented that the majority of people presenting to social work are not in search of self-actualisation but are most often simply looking for a service:

"They are not looking for you to work out how their childhood trauma is currently impacting on their behaviour because the intervention isn't about their behaviour. It's not about how they've not coped with things, it's not about why they can't move on in their life, it's about they've got an illness or a disability that is stopping them from functioning practically in the world which is either stopping them generate an income or it's stopping them going out and about, it's stopping them being able to wash and dress, it's stopping them from being able to feed themselves....I think it's quite accepted that care management and social work with adults doesn't replicate traditional social work or old fashioned social working."

This focus on individual pathology results from a kind of biomedical approach which seems to feature much in contemporary practice with adults. This model focuses on health in terms of biological factors. It is related also to the medical model of disability which also focuses on disability purely in terms of the impairment that it gives the individual (Thompson 2006). Hence little attention is given to role of structural oppression and discrimination in contributing to ill health and marginalisation.

From the transcripts, the experience of the participants suggests that the 'biomedical turn' emanates from the restricted view of social work influenced by care management and the savage cuts to welfare budgets which has led local authorities to concentrate on only the critical needs of clients.

John defended this approach thus:

"There is a whole miasma of other things that are impacting on these people and we do what we can to try engage with this broader context...but you know that stuff is not our primary responsibility. If we get distracted about going off on wild goose chases about things that are not our core responsibility, it literally is distracting from where the pressure is on our shoulders....."

The tensions in contemporary practice with the emphasis on meeting needs, but in the context of severe cuts in funding, have left practitioners with little opportunity to do anything but meet vital needs. Issues around psychological development needs in older people, such as by Erikson (1997 and 1959), seem to be put on the 'back burner'. Thus there are diminished prospects to engage in meaningful work for both service user and practitioner alike. As John noted "in our situation, we are not there to try to fix people or to try and work through those dilemmas."

The changes wrought on social work by care management and subsequent developments to expand consumer choice, are considered to be efforts to reduce costs and close services which provide social support. As Rowena argued;

"It's all about saving money for the local authority. I mean in the past we've had personalisation and direct payments on board because that's the way to meet everyone's needs but actually, no it is not ... we get a bit fed up with it because it's whatever is the hot topic this week and it is forced on you . It's like the 'word of the month' game. This month it's direct payments and everyone has to have direct payments and then it's reablement and everybody has to have reablement. But at the same time, there is actually less choice because there's no day centres left, no meals on wheels, and no quality home care service. It's like a sick joke!"

Barry commented that in his authority, the squeeze on public expenditure has led to the growth of a particular approach namely Asset Based Theory (Mathie and Cunningham 2002). It is encouraged in teams working with adults and is gaining popularity in some local authorities due its compatibility for an era of limited resources. Indeed the Care Act 2014 highlights that assessments should be driven by an asset-based or by a strength-based approach. The former argues that social workers need to take into account the wider relationships, networks and resources that people have in meeting their needs. While the latter is a more individualised approach allowing the service user to work with the practitioner to determine an outcome that draws on their strengths and assets.

For Barry however, it is shorthand for, "we can't afford to fund proper services anymore, so we should get people to do it for themselves." Such a critical outlook is shared by others as Polly argues it is a theory made by managers to deal with the

shortfall in funding. “Ok we’ve got to do something but don’t dress it up in fancy talk, tell the truth”. John also suggests that as a theory it is quite valid but that:

“To be realistic, you can’t do this with services users now. It’s more of a community approach and it’ll take years before this can be fully effective. It’s not a panacea for the present chaos.”

Nevertheless Paul felt that this development shows how context influences the creation of theory. “It seems dishonest really, when you think about it, it’s theory developed to fill gaps. That doesn’t feel right to me. I doubt if it is a theory really, more a sticking plaster approach.”

C) Knowledge to understand

After the conversations about what is knowledge *for* in social work practice, its purpose and function, three themes emerged from my engagement with the hermeneutical circle which are knowledge to understand or cast light on the person and their situation, to subvert the system to the clients advantage and to demonstrate proficiency.

Betty considered that she started to use knowledge from the initial moments of picking up a referral:

“Knowledge is used from the time you receive a referral because you’re asking yourself what the issues are, is the person capable to make decisions, what are the risk factors and the legal position. It all helps to inform the nature of my decision making.”

Overall the transcripts demonstrate that in practice, knowledge plays a basic and fundamental role in giving the practitioners a sense of role and a sense of a discrete identity. John commented that for him, his knowledge base effected the minutiae of his presentation and communication.

“I mean it effects how I ultimately go to a meeting ...with family, with other professionals and providers. It’s being reflected at what I’m saying at those meetings; it’s being reflected in my demeanour; it’s being reflected in the assessment documents that I type up within the capacity assessments and best interest documents that I produce. But it’s not particularly formalised though because in reality, the knowledge is from loads of places and I’m not going to put an academic reference in my assessments. In fact my signature

at the end is like the reference; it's like saying 'this is from me. This is my work.'

Rachel had similar ideas about the role of knowledge in her practice commenting that the knowledge is for the practitioner to adopt the role of the professional and interpret it in the light of the service user's situation. For her, good social work is not about 'fitting' service users and their lives into their knowledge or theory but of fitting/making theory useful to the service user.

"I think it's for me, it's not really for the service user, it's for me to use. It's about being open minded really. I've received knowledge from various places.... almost in its original state..... I always think it is like being a tailor. You get a piece of cloth. It's the raw material and you need to cut and shape and sew it to make it useful and fit the person! That's my job.... You can get ready made stuff but it never fits as good!"

When recounting her experience of using knowledge in practice, Martha described the process of using knowledge as akin to writing a novel or biography. 'It's like gathering the various elements of a person's life and placing them against the backdrop of a bigger picture which can make sense of what's going on in their lives.... My manager always tells me that I tell a beautiful story.'

This idea of linking the personal to the political bigger picture has a specific purpose. It is not knowledge to entertain; it is knowledge to bring about change or at least to prevent a deterioration if possible. Martha again comments that knowledge is:

" to support or improve their lives isn't it? So I'm using what they tell me along with my experience to make better their circumstances, whatever that is... I use the knowledge to form and then complete my assessment.... and then I'd draw on the knowledge to link it to my eligibility criteria and then consider needs and resources that are available to me. It's like a process that gives shape to something. It is like writing a story."

Clearly knowledge is utilised to understand but some participants identified another purpose; to align the service user to government policies regarding independence. Sally saw the use of knowledge as:

“Hopefully to influence practice so that (we) can effect positive change. And I think more and more now, it’s to support service users to become less dependent so they can’t be reliant on the social worker anymore, and social workers are buying into it as they’ve no choice. There’s hardly any long term work with older people anymore. It’s all assessment, services, and then pack them off to a review team to see them every six months or a year.”

John also suggested that knowledge use is dictated by governmental policy and although that knowledge is obviously linked to understanding:

“where people are, how they see themselves and their goals, in reality , it doesn’t really change what we are doing as statutory social workers... if I was to stick my neck out ... it doesn’t seem to make a lot of difference to the outcomes what we are pursuing in statutory work.”

Other participants agreed that much work with adults is procedural but that knowledge used to understand the person is vital. Barry noted that in a particular case of a female with learning difficulties, knowledge of her condition and history was crucial in his work with her as:

“it gave me the resilience to continue with her in the face of significant opposition and abuse.... It was constant daily telephone calls with her shouting down the phone she’s going to get me sacked.... If that was outside professional life, I’d have walked away long ago.”

Other developments cause concern to the participants because of their reductive nature which ignores the role of professional decision making and expertise based on knowledge and training.

Rowena criticised the diminution of professional knowledge and skills used in new assessment methods which appear to limit the role of the practitioner and rely on standardised processes which produce a personalised budget from the responses.

“These assessments now that have come in and it’s like, well you answered these questions and ticked these boxes so this is the budget and you can only have services that fit within that budget. Where is the professionalism in that?”

It was acknowledged that although the different types of knowledge, sourced from varying places, imbued the participants with greater understanding, this did not necessarily lead to success.

Polly outlined a case about a vulnerable older female with early signs of dementia surrounded by warring relatives who had different ideas about her care and wellbeing. Polly explained that she utilised various knowledge including the legal framework because of significant capacity issues. Systems theory was also used to cast light on the complex family situation along with a strengths perspective with the older female, all in the context of a person centred approach. However no significant headway was made. Evidently there was some minor improvements in that some recognition was gained by the battling family on the centrality of the mother's position in the situation. When asked how the knowledge worked Polly replied wistfully "I don't know exactly, but it doesn't have to work perfectly does it?"

D) Knowledge to subvert

The transcripts also demonstrated the use of knowledge to subvert and challenge systems which the social worker felt were unfairly creating barriers to services. Several participants revealed a willingness for doing what they believe is in the best interests of service users, by taking a position contrary to what would be expected from one employed to uphold organisational policies. These processes are clandestine in operation and were apparently not discussed with other practitioners or managers for fear of repercussions.

Paul referred to the practice in language of covert operations to ensure vulnerable people received the support they deserved but would be refused due to stringent eligibility criteria.

"Well I don't think it's about lying. It's more about using the system against the system if you know what I mean.... It's like your country has been taken over by a foreign power and you go out sabotaging their efforts to kind of stop them (I'm joking -laughs).As I say I don't lie but we all know what we have to say to get services...Well using a musical metaphor, it's a kind of like a 'variation on a theme'. You know what I mean if you play a piano and you press one key you get one sound but you can either press the key gently or loudly. It's the same note but if you press harder, you get more attention."

Paul admitted that he worried about these actions but felt that they were justified in some cases:

“The managers don’t see the consequences of their funding decisions. I don’t mean they don’t care but they don’t actually see the man sitting crying about his wife’s death and worried about how he’ll cope without her. I do and if I can get him something to make it bearable I think I should do. It’s about values.”

Betty acknowledged such practices occur but she stated that she would not lie about a service user’s circumstances as:

“I’m very much aware that what I fill in is a legal document ...and.... if for any reason I am in the witness box, I need to be able to put my hand on my heart and say that that is true.”

She considered it was more about the skills of the practitioner that made the difference in achieving successful outcomes:

“I think there are ways of supporting and gathering information ...and it is an important skill for a social worker to have to be able to know where all this information is and how to gather it, to be able to present the argumentit’s about knowing how organisations work, knowing the system and how they’re all interlinked.”

The difficulty surrounding this issue relates in some way to the complexity of knowledge and the interpretation that a practitioner may put on it. Polly noted that the process of how interpretations of information are made is “not necessarily straightforward because you have values or ideas about these people whom you are working that influences you as much as the factual knowledge you get from them and their carers”

This notion of subverting the system was echoed by Martha who also acknowledged that the practice occurs:

“I know what I need to say to get someone the support that they may need but the manager’s perspective may not necessarily think they need it. So I can write what I need to write.”

Martha considered it more a professional opinion than being economical with the truth because she would not give everyone what they wanted because:

“...it would be my professional opinion that they do not necessarily need it...whereas someone else who is desperate for someone to come and cook the tea, (but we don't do a meals anymore because of the cuts and all of that), I'll say “well do you need someone to come and prompt your medications as well and empty the commode?” ‘No, no’, she'll say. “Well you do.” That type of thing I would do because otherwise they wouldn't have a hot meal. And on my assessment I'd be guiding it that they've got other support needs to enable them to get that.”

Martha was keen to point out that she was ‘not a pushover, but I know when there's a need but it may not necessarily...it might need a bit more elaboration.’ She considered that she was using systems knowledge to meet people's need which ‘you only get from experience.’ She lamented the fact that often assessments of newly qualified practitioners are ‘factual and accurate but they may not necessarily meet the criteria...so I do say “think about this, what about that?”’

E) Knowledge to demonstrate proficiency.

Many participants recognised that their knowledge base is also importantly used to demonstrate their proficiency in both formal and informal ways to the organisations in which they work and to service users and carers.

John said he felt conscious of the need for his knowledge base to be explicit in his CPD log and supervision notes for when he is called upon to show his manager and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) in the biennial registration process. He felt that the managerialist culture in which he worked alerted him to the need for evidence to demonstrate ‘his worth in the job’. He considered the task has been made easier for him by the introduction of the Professional Capability Framework and the Knowledge and Skills Statement for Adult workers (KSS):

“It's daunting but clearer to know what's expected of me as an experienced social worker. I can say to my manager if something is beyond me in terms of my knowledge and skills... but it's good for me as a yard stick.... I can know where I'm up to.... We were talking about the KSS last week in fact, in reality I can say to him look this is evidence of my practice knowledge.”

The participants' desire to be seen as competent is not only brought out for managers or at appraisal time but is a feature of professional life. Isabelle noted that in her experience as a social worker, it is essential to perform the job with a personable yet 'professional persona'. She commented:

"No one wants to be seen as unprofessional, do they, to colleagues, other disciplines especially, or to service users or their families.... There's nothing worse in professional life than the thought that others think you are useless.... You really need to know your stuff and show them you know your stuff... Sometimes you've got to let them see you know what you know."

Betty agreed with this view, as working in a multi-disciplinary team, she is conscious of the opinions of the health staff about social workers. She remarked that:

'In the past, I think we had a bad reputation with nurses and OTs. They didn't understand why we acted in certain ways like blocking an admission to residential care. They just didn't get that we are here to promote independence wherever possible, when the person is capable and wants it.... They didn't know what we were about.... But now we work next to one another, I think they appreciate what we know and how we go about things. It can be very different from them but they accept it more now... It's like they respect our knowledge and skills....not fully but it's better than it was.'

Rowena concurred with the need for social workers to demonstrate their value to other professions, especially doctors and nurses:

"You've really got to advertise what you know. I don't mean stand there telling them about this or that theory but by showing you know what you are talking about ... I was talking with a GP the other day and I was explaining about how this man did not want residential care despite his daughters demands . I was talking about capacity and self-determination and dignity and choice and them being risk averse. You know he got it and I think he learned to understand the man's position more."

4.5 Superordinate theme 3: Putting it into practice

A) Fear and Apprehension

Most participants admitted to a feeling of unease when faced with discussing matters relating to applying knowledge in practice. They felt perplexed and embarrassed in case I would judge their abilities in this area.

Rachel reported that as a new practitioner, she 'hated talking about integrating theory and practice because I was afraid I'd look ignorant' and this fear continues because 'it's still hard to say how it's done.'

Polly also acknowledged concern about partaking in the research especially when she read the title about applying knowledge in practice:

"To be honest, when I saw that first bit about applying knowledge, I thought 'no I can't do that'. The integration is the hard part....That bit of putting it into practice is hard to talk about because it isn't straightforward, and the academics make it worse, don't they?"

The apprehension about the theory to practice conundrum, seems to emanate from not only the fear of exposing one's presumed ignorance but the confusion over what constitutes acceptable knowledge. Rowena commented that she was unsure of what the term 'theory/practice integration' meant:

"Really how can there be practice without knowledge and the theory stuff....even if I am not thinking about it, it's there and it's being used. So how can they talk of it as separate stuff? I'm not sure. Do you ever think they make problems up to keep us on our toes?"

This confusion over language and terms used was replicated by Paul who stated that his anxiety was due to a lack of understanding of the terms and their meanings:

"Really I can't follow it properly and I wonder if we are talking about the same things... we have academics here and social workers there and you'd think they were talking different languages. Perhaps that's the problem. Two tribes go to war? (Laughs).

This separation between theory and practice mirrored in the practitioner/academic divide was also raised by John who considered that much academic discourse is interesting but insufficiently practice based for statutory social work:

“I used to read the British Journal of Social Work a lot and...there are some useful articles ...but it was very academic in its focus and would have articles about social work in the Netherlands or Peru which might be quite fascinating but not hugely applicable to British practice ... there is a divide you know, I'll be absolutely clear, there's a divide between academic social work and social work practice...the two obviously meet, there's no two ways about it, but they are very disjointed and this causes the confusion.”

B) The ideal versus the real world

The initial fear and anxiety felt by participants when discussing applying knowledge in practice is related to the perceived disconnect between these two worlds of social work. This was indicated time and again by the inclusion of words in the transcribed data such as 'in reality', 'to be honest', or 'to be truthful about it'. This suggests that participants experience a variance between what they perceive to be the ideal versus the real world of social work.

Paul noted that:

“Well they are really not the same, are they? ...It's like one thinks it feeds into the other but it doesn't do it very well.... It's like the ideal world and the real world... Why don't they ask us what we think, what we do? I tell you they'd get a shock!”

Similarly Rowena wondered whether the ideal versus real world resulted from a view that:

“we just roll up our sleeves and get on with it and you do it ...whatever is needed but they just write about it. We are the real and they are the ideal. I don't think that's wrong. Just different jobs but we don't have much to do with one another after the course, do we?”

This dichotomy is mentioned by Sally also who argued that the way the education of social work is organised contributes to the dilemma:

“I think the way the social work course is arranged with a very real division between theory at university and practice on placements causes these problems....one's theoretical and academic and the other practice...yet half the

course, more or less, is placement but you don't get the impression that they are equally valued...it's almost as if you have to get through essays to get the grades to pass, not because they are vital to your practice.... My experience tells me this causes this mismatch between the way it is and the way it should be. Not helpful."

Rachel added that the province of the academic is populated with issues and ideas that bear little relevance to contemporary social work practice with adults:

"If you look at the top journals, there isn't much what you'd call research, it's more about views and opinions... Now I'm not saying that it isn't interesting and worthwhile. It is very thought provoking but I mean its direct application to social work as I know it, isn't always obvious to me, really."

The reason for this gulf is not exclusively confined to academic practices but can be attributed to organisational regimes which inhibit access to new learning. Once the social worker has completed the degree programme and started to practice, the world of academia quickly disappears from view. This process is undoubtedly quickened by the pace of caseload allocation. Polly noted:

"Being honest, I think it's probably time resources ...processes stop you linking it all up....being totally honest, you soon learn to take a bit from everywhere, ...university slides into the background and the job pressures take over...it all seems a long time ago now You've got to pick up from your other stuff to be able to do your job effectively."

Isabelle considered that familiarity with research knowledge is the ideal in the sense that the practitioner would engage with it in order to ensure that:

"your practice is up to date, so that you are not relying on what you learned at university, 10, 15, 20 years ago but that you are keeping up to date with new knowledge that's emerging from research."

However, she acknowledged its 'ideal' status is because the opportunity to engage with these developments is limited in view of the complexity of practice in a time of austerity. Moreover, the problem with some research was that:

“It needs to be meaningful research that’s anchored in practice...accessible and meaningful to practitioners because the reality is that when I read research that has been undertaken and written about in the British Journal of Social Work, I am left thinking great but what’s it got to do with me?”

This reasons for the irrelevancy of some research are manifold including the academy’s understanding of contemporary practice.

Isabelle again noted that:

“As a practitioner, you feel that the people undertaking the research are often distant, they... may be well versed academics who’ve written lots of books, written lots of papers but they may not have practiced for 20 years.”

This lack of practice currency and integrity within the academy is important for Isabelle because of its impact on the nature of their research “things change in practice really quickly and they are just not current enough and that in essence is the issue.....they are two different professions and they can be mutually exclusive.”

Nonetheless, Isabelle considered that it still possible for practitioners to maintain currency and validity in practice by participation in student and newly qualified staff supervision because ‘I think it prompts you to keep up to date.’

Conversely, Barry felt that there was a certain negativity from practitioners to research but much was underserved as it was often ‘an excellent starting point for practice, without which you can’t do your job well’. For Barry, the problem was not ‘real versus ideal’, meaning the academy versus practice, but like others, he felt it was about:

“Having the time to sit down and keep yourself regularly updated on the latest research and certainly having the time to form your own opinions is probably a luxury which most social workers don’t have because you are that busy dealing with people’s lives....when I first started I had every intention of including research in all my assessments. But time constraints just don’t make it possible.”

C) The missing link- the social worker

Some participants initially expressed a little concern at discussing the issue of knowledge and its application to practice as they felt their ignorance would be

exposed. Polly exclaimed 'I'm no use at this business, it was the same on my course', whilst Martha confided that she wasn't sure she ever understood 'this bit about integrating what we learned. I always felt a bit of a cheat.' Rowena similarly commented that she found this 'really difficult...not conscious of applying it but you just do it'. However this soon dissipated in the discussions that followed.

The issue of theory and practice integration is often visualised as a 'gap' between them that needs to be filled or a dilemma that requires a solution. Barry considered that there is a gap between theories and practice because:

'in my experience , theory is static and practice is about life and you know, life happens and the best made plans go wrong , ...you may predict how someone behaves but it's not always like that... Theory is very important and it should influence your practice but your knowledge of the person has to fill that gap, your knowledge of the case....theory is generic isn't it but knowledge is personal.'

Rachel dismissed the idea that there was an automatic gap or hurdle to cross in the application of theory to practice and considered it was more to do with one's approach to the issue:

"In my experience, there is a gap if you take a theory and think you could just impose it as it is on the person. Then you have a problem because these are people and these are theories! ... It's a bit like medicine, isn't it...people's biochemistries are different and different tablets work with one person but not another. You might have one blood pressure tablets. I might have three... And I'm thinking it's the same kind of thing with theory and practice. If you think 'I'm going to take this theory and I'm going to used it with that person', it may not work. You might then need to adapt what you're doing. And some don't understand that. They think you take the theory whole and just stick it on that person. You need to understand the person that you're working with and think about the theories."

Other participants also wondered whether the problem lay with a misunderstanding of the purpose of theory to practitioners. John felt that in his experience of practice some workers try to fit their work around a theory rather than starting with practice and using theory. He added that theory is:

'almost like kinds of fruits you find as you are walking along the jungle, it's the fruits that help sustain you and points you in the right direction.'

Isabelle thought that the gap is more mythical than real and associated with academic pontificating and newly qualified workers who have recently been exposed to academic social work:

"I don't experience it as a gap that is something I associate more with newly qualified social workers who've perhaps been on a course that has been more dominated by theory and which hasn't provided the reality of social work."

Although Isabelle considered that the application problems are not in the 'real world', she acknowledged that they may be experienced as troublesome by long serving practitioners:

"Perhaps where there is a perceived gap is once you're in practice for a long time, thinking that you're not using theory when you are, because there is no theoryless practice,... thinking that you are just *doing* but how can you not be influenced on a daily basis by what you've learned and what you have put in practice before and the results of that?"

Moreover Isabelle admitted that her experience is coloured by her significant involvement in student supervision which has led her to be:

"consistently anchored in practice and in theory because when you've got students with you, you're always helping them make links so perhaps it's different if you're not encouraged to reflect on the theory and the knowledge."

Various other hypotheses were put forward to explain the problems facing practitioners with applying knowledge to practice. John criticised:

"The fact that so many of the traditional social work theories are from the 1970s or even beforehand when the shape of social work was different to its contemporary guise."

Thus he averred this 'outdated knowledge' offers limited useful commentary on the contemporary 'cash strapped councils.' Paul also considered that in his experience, the application process is hampered at times by the 'rigidity' of some theories which

had led to his preference for relationship based social work which he considered fluid and flexible in its approach. He added too that:

“The theory can come across as a bit fairy-tale like and it doesn’t translate well into practice. There are times when it does so but if you look at person centred approach, does that fall in line with the Care Act? I question that because while we can display the congruence and stuff, does it fit with the processes when you are having to make sure it’s cost effective?”

The gap between theory and practice mentioned frequently in the conversations, exists primarily as a metaphor to express issues around the difficulties that some experience in applying knowledge in practice. Martha was uncertain if she personally saw it as a problem:

“I think it’s about being conscious of it. And I think once you’ve left the academic world and you’re now in practice, you become less aware of it, and you’re not afforded the time to kind of think about it...Perhaps the gap only is there when not thinking about it...because when you do think about it , the gap closes. Does it disappear? So when you are consciously applying your knowledge in theory and practice, there is no gap, is there? ... But when someone said, ‘right, what theory are you using? What knowledge are you using? You think, ‘I don’t know’. I just did it. So is that a gap? I don’t know, is this conscious competence or incompetence?”

The talk about gaps between theory and practice centres on the dichotomy or apparent opposition between these two elements of social work, often configured as the academic and the practicum. However several participants commented on the limitations of this binary model and suggested that the vital connecting element was often overlooked – the social worker.

Barry argued that the relationship with the service user facilitated the integration of theory with practice:

“I would say that I’m a sort of vessel or thing through which the theory passes to use in practice. The social worker is the funnel really which the knowledge passes to practice ... It meets in you and it’s the relationship with your client that does it... it’s you who has to make sense of it really in the context of the client. You have to sort of personalise it.”

The focus on the relationship as a facilitator or in some cases, a barrier to applying knowledge in practice, was echoed by Polly who also thought that the social worker was the link between theory and practice:

“It’s me that gels them together, the theory and the practice...because I’m the one picking the theory and putting it into practice.... It’s me and my skills and knowledge which pulls these together.... That’s the trouble too when you haven’t got the time....you are working in crisis management, I’m stressed out with cases.... you can’t function as you should do as a professional, there’s a blockage in the system. ”

Sally also commented that she felt that the role of social worker was crucial in integrating theory and practice but often was ignored:

“Let’s be frank, we talk a lot about whether the theory is good or bad or is it useless, whether the job is a profession and has a body of knowledge to make it a real profession or is it just a job. All these things effect our ability to kind of make sense of and apply theories to practice but the social worker is the link. She has to think ‘am I prepared and able to integrate the theory?’...That’s forgotten I think...it’s not theory and practice, is it? It’s theory and practice and social worker all in the mix.”

The extent of knowledge required to work effectively with adults is an issue which participants highlighted as a possible barrier to its proper application in practice.

Polly noted:

“We are expected to know too much in my opinion. We’ve the important statutory stuff like the Care Act, the Mental Health Act and the Mental Capacity Act and then we are covering everything with people from 18 onwards. We have to deal with alcohol and drugs, learning disabilities, older people, physical disabilities and all that comes with it, safeguarding, needs assessments, resources, multi-agency work, continuing health care assessments etc. Too much to take it all in.”

Rachel also recalled that in the past, practitioners would be expected to have a relatively small repertoire of essential knowledge related to their area of practice. ‘So for example in a drug agency, you would expect them to know about motivational interviewing and cycle of change’. However she queried whether it was possible to develop the volume of knowledge and skill required to function properly in the current genericism of many adult teams:

“I’m sure it’s not impossible, but is it desirable and does it benefit the service user? People may say ‘well GPs do it’ but they have the option of referring people to specialists. We don’t have that luxury.”

Such configurations within the adult field coupled with high caseloads and fewer resources may be a barrier to effective integration of theory and practice as staff have less time to consciously consider such cerebral matters. Typical within the conversations was the response of Martha who considered it improper, but ‘not dangerous’ to use one’s knowledge and theory unconsciously. She stated that in her experience:

“Well it’s almost like a luxury to be afforded the time to be consciously aware of itin fact, it’s great when you are given the time think about a case because you know you’re using theory and you might think ‘I’m glad I did it that way’ or ‘I should have done it that way.’ But often because it’s ‘heads down’, you’re not afforded the time. Is it proper? No, but then, we should have capped caseloads, we should be allowed half an hours reading time a week, we should have supervision, and we should be allowed peer reflection. But we’re not allowed (such practices) so you’re not always able to be conscious about what you’re doing.”

D) Practice Wisdom

Most of the participants recognised the concept of practice wisdom as that knowledge coming from practice experience mingled with other types of knowledge including theory, research which emanates from professional courses, and even life experience. However a more detailed understanding of its composition varied across the group with Polly admitting that:

‘In my experience, it’s something you do and draw on but don’t think about... it’s not articulated clearly but I think it consists of experience dealing with so many different things.’

Rowena admitted that she had not heard of the term ‘practice wisdom’ but was well aware of under its different guises as ‘practice know how’ or ‘practice knowledge’ and acknowledged its central importance in her practice:

“Absolutely we use it all the time, that is what we *rely* on and that from others as well because we have a lot of people with different experiences in our team so we are constantly having those conversations, drawing on those experiences, ‘what do you think?’, ‘what are your ideas?’ And that ability to

share that wisdom is so important which is why it always worries me about people working at home or different offices.”

Isabelle was also unsure about the nature of practice wisdom but she identified the processes through which the ‘wisdom’ is gained:

“It’s hard to pin down, isn’t it? If someone asked me to define it, it would be the culmination of testing out theories and testing out knowledge on real people and real situations...and although not through research mechanisms, anecdotally you know you gather experience from it, don’t you?... well to me that’s what I think ... it’s like my research that’s completely informal so not research as in going to ethics committees...it’s more research as in research in action... going out there doing something and then the result is your review, isn’t it, if you want to use care management terms.... I don’t know if it is credible research but to you it is, because that gives you an experience that you can use with the next family you move on to.”

Rachel also experienced practice wisdom as a type of ‘what works’ compendium based on a combination of what the practitioner has learned from previous and current academic knowledge and case management. The process requires a consideration of:

“ what works for you or your team, and not blindly picking something up and using it without properly thinking about it. It’s also thinking about other people that you’ve worked with and their ideas but also thinking about your own knowledge of the people you’ve worked with over time. Because there will be many that you will think about, ‘that worked for them. I wonder if I could try something similar’.”

Moreover, Rachel recognised that the development of practice wisdom was not purely based on the accumulation of practice experience but:

“ on what the practitioner has actually done with those experiences in terms of their refinement by way of critical reflection’.

However she wondered what recently qualified practitioners can draw on other than their academic knowledge which she thought was insufficient. She added:

“that’s why I m a great believer in the NQSW status, although I think it should have been better as a 2 year assessed period. I know they’ve had two

placements but newly qualified colleagues need longer to be exposed to the realities of practice .They need that community of practice and closer supervision to draw on as a substitute initially for proper practice wisdom.”

John commented that practice wisdom is ‘a sort of experiential knowledge and accumulated wisdom’ which is cultivated incrementally via casework which is the main driver in this process:

“We learn it (practice wisdom) by having a variety of cases over time and being exposed to a range of human problems and experiences, you know poverty, housing issues, safeguarding, benefits, dementia, carer breakdown, grief and loss, which a big one with older people, knowing the roles of others, who is responsible for what etc....I know we start to learn about these things on your course with lectures and reading and placements but you only start to make sense of it over time actually on the shop floor as it were....it sort of becomes part of you, it becomes the main part of your bag of tools.”

Furthermore, John considered that as a practitioner, ‘in terms of knowledge in social work, it has got to be the top of the tree around knowledge’ because of its utility. He also reflected that unlike ‘say procedural wisdom which is based on the area you work in’, practice wisdom is portable in that ‘you could take it to a local authority down south and still have that type of practice wisdom.’

Another participant, Betty shared this idea that practice wisdom becomes an intrinsic part of one’s professional identity:

“I think my knowledge and experience are individual to me, they are what I have acquired over the years by various means. But I have a duty to impart them, share them, as we all do. You all need the ability to think on your feet because of the nature of people, of life. It doesn’t stand still.... How could I not use practice wisdom? How could I separate myself from it? I am who I am. I am practice wisdom.”

Such positive appraisals of practice wisdom are balanced by other conversations which note its possible shortcomings. Isabelle maintained that because it is based partly on individual interpretation, there could be a lack of objectivity which requires some degree of checks and balances to ensure its efficacy and appropriateness:

“I think it is an individual thing if it’s based on your experiences of deploying your arsenal of skills, your ability to intervene, to use knowledge,... then reflecting on it, then I think it is individual ... I think all social workers will have

some practice wisdom that won't be necessarily the same as mine and if it's your individual interpretation of how something has gone, then there's a good chance, isn't there, that the person working next to you might have a different view and that's where the checking in with other people would come in.... if you're doing your job properly, you should always have yourself in check... and a good team would be saying 'what do you think of this?'"

Similarly, Rachel felt that practice wisdom was probably both an individual and collective endeavour but wondered whether it was knowledge that could be exclusively relied on because 'if you have that kind of narrow view that it's just based around your experiences, there is a lack of any kind of checks.'

Rachel further lamented the fact that 'you don't seem to get a lot of academic literature devoted to practice wisdom or on-the-job knowledge'. This idea was taken up by other participants, notably Barry who recalled that practice wisdom 'hardly figured' in university teaching and there was 'nothing at all in the ASYE year' and that he 'had not seem much written about it at all.' This was a surprise to him as since working:

"I've got to say that it is so important on a day to day basis. It's the starting point from what you've learned from university study but then is also tempered by your knowledge of the job, the knowledge of the service users you work with and what is available out there to support them really."

For Barry, the problem with practice wisdom lay in its informality. He commented:

"The trouble is that it isn't written down. It's like an oral tradition but that's the problem when it isn't written, it's hard to scrutinise so we can't say with any certainty if it's good or bad...How can you know if your interpretation of it is right?"

4.6 Summary

This chapter has displayed the diverse and complex responses of the participants in this study to the use and application of knowledge in practice. Moreover the idiographic focus of the study has enabled their individual stories to become clear

within the findings while contributing to the overall superordinate and subordinate themes.

The knowledge the social workers talked about was various but experience-based knowledge was more favoured as more useful in practice. Academic knowledge and research was not rejected but relegated as of lesser importance. The issues around applying knowledge was also varied with more attention paid to the role of the practitioner in acting as link between theory and practice. There was a remarkable uniformity in some areas of discussion, particularly around their perceived preparedness for practice and the impact of the era of austerity on their practice.

In all, three main themes emerged:

‘A complex process’ which referred to the issues which participants faced in thinking about the variety of knowledge, how they acquired and developed such knowledge and the difficulties they faced due the demands of the job.

‘Use of Knowledge’ which involved the inexperience and anxiety in articulating the theoretical base of practice alongside issues of working in an area which is perceived as low status. This theme also encompassed participant reflections on what knowledge is used *for* in practice, highlighting three sub themes of knowledge to understand, to subvert and to demonstrate proficiency.

‘Putting it into practice’ deals with the concerns and questions of participants around the feelings of unease talking about these matters, especially as they felt a disconnect between the ideal world espoused by academics and the messy real world of practice. This was followed by consideration of the practitioner in bridging the gap between theory and practice and the role of practice wisdom in this process.

In the discussion chapter which follows I will consider the three major themes from the findings chapters in relation to the existing literature.

Chapter 5

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the discussion considers the findings of this study in relation to the existing literature. The three main themes and allied subordinate themes will be examined to ensure a comprehensive discussion of the findings. It is important to acknowledge that while focussing as closely as possible on the life world of the participants, my subjective interpretations as researcher will influence on what is presented in the thesis. The aim of IPA is to get close to the participants' experience of their personal world but it is recognised that it is not possible to access it directly or completely (Smith et al. 2009). Therefore I as researcher and lecturer have determined what data to include and how to frame it and these decisions will shape this discussion. As there is little research previously carried out on the use and application of knowledge of social workers in the adult field, this study presents the first findings on how the participants experience these issues.

Finally the chapter includes an evaluation of the IPA process whereby the strengths and limitations of the research method will be discussed.

5.2 Superordinate Theme One: A complex process

A) Lack of preparation

Social work with adults is a complex and changing field, and social services to adults are provided by an increasingly varied workforce, including unqualified social care assessors, support workers as well as qualified occupational therapists. Social work, however, has a major role in this field because of the long involvement of adult social care in this area of practice. Jack and Donnellan (2010 p. 306) maintain that social work qualifications are “an anchor for the development of full professional status”, reflecting that social work expertise is a subject that cannot be taught fully while in training (Tham and Lynch, 2014). This has long been known but attention has mainly been paid to newly qualified or inexperienced staff. However, in the context of the new genericism of social work teams with adults, coupled with the growing complexity of practice, questions arise about the preparation not only of students and newly qualified social workers, but also of long serving staff. The

challenge is not new. However, it is more acute now and the profession confronts the challenge of how to balance the need for breadth of knowledge and skill with appropriate depth of input to guarantee that staff are prepared for specialised areas in adult welfare (Healy and Meagher 2007).

Chapter Four explored the experiences of social workers around their preparedness for the different kinds of adult social work practice they now face. This is of continual importance as the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) (BASW 2018) and the Knowledge and Skills Statement for Adults (DoH 2015) maintain that all social workers in England should have relevant and contemporary knowledge in their area of practice. Moreover they must be able to make the connections between theory, research and legislation, and apply it into everyday practice.

The issue of preparedness or readiness for practice was perceived to be a central issue for these participants. It must be said however the conversations herein relied on self-reported views of one's preparedness and not on any observation by the researcher. It is interesting that Galvani and Forrester (2008 p.27) too note that there is 'no objective standard for which "preparedness" can be measured.' The issue of preparedness is a complex matter and the PCF and KSS should be the measures by which social workers are deemed prepared for practice in various stages of their career. However, one challenge for the regulatory body of social work, the HCPC, and practitioners too is how to ensure preparedness is maintained and developed instead of the encumbrance of a static view.

There is also a perception amongst participants in this thesis that there is a contradiction in the preparation that they received during their professional programmes about social work and the reality of statutory practice. This is akin to the front stage and back stage behaviour (Miller 2004b) which recognises that sometimes social work keeps some behaviour backstage to avoid discomfort. Alternatively it is the difference between what we claim to do and what we do (Banks 2005).

All felt that their professional education programmes, and any with post qualification training, were insufficient to meet their practice requirements. All felt that they were

fully committed to their roles but that their knowledge and skill was predominantly gained from case management and the collective experiences of their colleagues. This did not exclude their previous teaching and learning on their professional courses but most felt it was of lesser importance to their current expertise. Moreover they had difficulty in understanding the utility of their studies in relation to the minutiae of their daily work. Perhaps this suggests a misunderstanding between what Downie and McNaughton (2000) distinguish between education and training. They maintain that 'education' infers a widening and deepening of vision which is emancipatory, whilst 'training' concentrates on some specific technical competency. This division mirrors the debate about whether social work is an art or science. Although there is a clear overlap between training and education, they are distinct elements of learning. As Gibbs et al. (2004) argue education, within a professional human services course, refers to:

“a learning process that deals with unknown outcomes, and circumstances which require a complex synthesis of knowledge, skills and experience to solve problems. Education refers its questions and actions to principles and values rather than merely standards and criteria” (Gibbs et al. 2004 p.5).

Alternatively, the concept of training involves an identifiable performance or skill that has to be grasped for which practice is essential (Gibbs et al. 2004).

This dichotomy is reflected in the ongoing debate about the essence of social work which some argue has changed from a practical-moral activity to a rational technical one (Parton 2000; Taylor and White 2006). Munro (2009), writing about child care, highlights the prevalence of rule-based responses overriding knowledge-based responses. Moreover the 'Caring for People' reforms of the 1990s with the introduction of the purchaser/provider split compounded this problem in adult work and undoubtedly contributed to the crisis involving a challenge to professional knowledge and control (Fawcett et al. 2000). The use of care management processes routinised the work of the social worker and took away the power for policy making from professional hands with particular expertise. Instead bureaucracy and managerialism maintain control through competitive and short term contractual funding arrangements (Rogowski 2010; Ferguson 2017).

The genericism of most qualifying social work programmes has led to questioning whether such programmes adequately prepare social workers sufficiently for the rigours of any chosen specialism (Hodgkin, 2002; Marsh and Triseliotis, 1996; Pithouse & Scourfield, 2002). Since the inception of the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work in 1970 (CQSW), British social work education has been distinguished by a generic tendency in which the social work profession accepted a wide range of methods and areas as legitimate terrains of social work intervention (Healy and Meagher 2007). Its mainstream qualifying courses, now three year undergraduate and two years postgraduate, require two separate placements in different areas in child care or adults. A range of academic modules are also studied but overall these tend to promote generic professional skills, such as critical thinking (Gibbons & Gray, 2004), rather than specialist ones. However, the participants' sense of being unprepared for practice related more to the content of their courses, (whether pre or post qualifying). They considered that the major changes in practice with adults over the past thirty years were not effectively taught and current practice was therefore always ahead of the academic world.

Concerns about the quality and consistency of the social work degree were largely based on the high profile abuse tragedies, such as Lord Laming's 2009 report on the death of Peter Connelly and the failing performances of some local authorities, such as Haringey, Birmingham and Cornwall (Ofsted 2009). This coupled with reports from employers that newly qualified social workers are not prepared for practice (CWDC 2009) has thrown the genericism versus specialism debate into sharp relief. In turn, the future orientation of social work education has come under increasing scrutiny by the two reports, referred to earlier in Chapter One, to address concerns about the preparation of particularly new social workers for practice. These are the Narey Report (2014) and The Croisdale Appleby report (2014).

In his report on social work education published in February 2014, Sir Martin Narey proposed wide scale reform of social work education based on, amongst other things, a perceived lack of preparedness for front line practice. Croisdale-Appleby (2014, p.15) on the other hand, acknowledged that 'as a profession, social work requires its practitioners to understand intricate and often seemingly impenetrable behaviours and situations'. He argued that social workers must depend on social work theory, sociological understandings of disadvantage and, perhaps most

importantly, 'their own mental processes and judgement' (Croisdale-Appleby, 2014, p.15). Both argued, however, for a greater degree for specialism in social work education with Narey proposing specialist child care courses and Croisdale Appleby, greater specialist approaches in the generic degree.

This issue of how to balance generic practice standards with the demands of specialist practice is an ongoing debate within social work and is a strong indication of the importance of this matter to the social work profession generally (Healy and Meagher 2007; Cambridge & Parkes, 2006; Long et al., 2006; Stevenson, 2005).

Whatever way the pendulum swings however, it is worth recalling the words of Stevenson (2005):

“the fundamental principle of a common, 'generic' base to social work does not in any way imply that further specialism is unnecessary, any more than in the practice of medicine” (Stevenson 2005 p.571).

However educated, it is accepted that the initial years of a specialised public sector career are recognised as being crucial in the process of becoming a professional in whatever chosen field by the newly qualified practitioner (Nixon and Murr, 2006).

Moreover Croisdale-Appleby (2014 p.xiii) referring to social workers, conceded:

'the first year of practice is absolutely vital for social workers as they consolidate the learning from their degree and develop new knowledge and skills in their first employment setting'

Indeed, Daley (2001) highlights what many participants recognised in this study that office culture, skills and knowledge are thought to be gradually embedded through continuing processes of repetition, reflection and shadowing, long after the time of professional qualification (Grant, Sheridan and Webb 2017).

For most of the participants in this study, the completion of the social work qualification denoted only the starting point in their professional development. Although, the transition from student to practitioner signifies a critical moment in professional development, surprisingly this transitional stage has a lack of thorough research about what happens to social workers when gaining professional employment post qualification (Moriarty et al., 2011; Grant, Sheridan and Webb 2017).

Research undertaken on the role of Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs) in preparing social workers for practice appears initially positive with increasing satisfaction among recipients in the following studies. Lyons and Manion (2004) report a figure of at least two-thirds of newly qualified social workers in England who felt their course prepared them for professional life. Bates et al. (2010) also found that approximately three-quarters of participants in their study 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that their social work course had prepared them with good levels of knowledge, understanding and skills to help cope with their new employment. Sharpe et al. (2011) too identified significant numbers, of over three quarters, who considered that their courses had been instrumental in their preparation for practice. A more recent study by Grant, Sheridan and Webb (2017) reported that 30 per cent of participants considered that their HEIs had provided 'good preparation' for the demands of practice whilst nearly 50 per cent felt that HEIs provided 'adequate preparation'. Nearly 20 per cent felt that HEIs were 'not good' at preparing practitioners. It is surely debatable, however, whether 'adequate preparation' is indeed satisfactory for 'good enough practice'. These latter findings were mirrored in my study as most participants felt under prepared by their period of professional education echoing the experiences of Rowena who commented that she:

“didn't get a lot (from the DIPSW)... I don't think I got a lot out of it because...a lot of the times I was thinking, well this stuff is just common sense or I've kind of covered this in sociology previously. .. was a means to an end and you got your qualification to get into the job that you want to do and then you learn when you were here really”.

Whilst some of the above studies are positive in general statements about preparedness for practice, other studies such as by Galvani and Forrester's (2008) review of 248 newly qualified social workers in England found that only around half of respondents felt prepared to work with service users with drug or alcohol problems, in comparison with 83 per cent who felt ready to work with children and families. Indeed, Galvani and Forrester (2008) discovered a significant connection between those who felt unprepared for working with substance misuse and the absence of considerable input on this topic within the curriculum. This is a significant issue when one considers the impact of drug and alcohol in the lives of many who

seek social work assistance. This was similar to comments by participants in my study who felt that the generic nature of adult work left them feeling unprepared, not only with substance experience but with the vast array of other specialist knowledge needed to carry out the job. However it is debateable if the comparison is useful as presumably the 83% who felt ready to work in the children and families sector may have been the ones who wanted to work in what is already a popular field of practice

A small scale study by Jack and Donnellan (2010) in England found that all of the newly qualified social workers started their first jobs with optimism and confidence. However, a combination of the daily realities of the work and the organisational conditions under which it was practiced led to initial feelings of preparedness giving way to a 'reality shock'. This focused around issues of accountability, care and control, the care management role and inconsistent supervision (Jack and Donnellan, 2010, p.309-310).

The problem with these self-reporting type studies is that although attempts to reduce bias are made, the process has its limitations. Nevertheless, they show some expressed concern about the preparation of social workers for practice and although they are limited mainly to the first two years of the post qualifying period, there is no reason to believe that such concern is restricted to this period.

What has additionally been found from my study is that the issue of "preparedness" cannot be confined to the first years in practice but should be seen as an ongoing need to ensure the worker is engaged and equipped for the realities of contemporary practice. Hitherto, this does not appear to have been examined in the field of adult social work. The participants' experience of preparedness is not only connected to the efficacy of their qualifying courses but to their ability to function in a complex and changing world. The role of supervision in this perspective is critical to the advancement of excellence and practitioner retention in creative practice (Beddoe, 2015).

Learning from supervised practice is a fundamental element of the education and training of social workers (Carpenter et al. 2015) and according to Laming (2009),

supervision is the 'cornerstone' of good social work practice. This view is a significant alternative to the managerialist style which is fixated with supervision geared toward efficiency, accountability and performance management (Noble and Irwin 2009). The references to insufficient formal supervision in the interviews with participants in this thesis highlighted it as a significant element in the lack of preparedness for practice. Supervision within social work has long been acknowledged as a critical feature of the professional operation of the qualified role (Kadushin and Harkness, 2014). It usually takes place within a private space with both worker and line manager and should consist of reflective and reflexive consideration of both the professional self and professional working life (Kadushin and Harkness, 2014). Its interest here is its status as a crucial activity for meeting many professional demands including the continuing development of the professional role, the safeguarding of competent and ethical practice and the oversight of casework (Beddoe et al. 2016). In view of this role, it is unsurprising that the Association of Directors of Social Services acknowledged it as one of the five main elements for effective practice (ADSS/NCH 1996). Regular and effective supervision enables workers to be skilful, knowledgeable, and clear about their roles. Moreover 'it assists in their practice by sound advice and emotional support from a supervisor with whom they have a good professional relationship' (Carpenter et al 2015 p.3).

Unfortunately most participants voiced negative comments about formal supervisions, highlighting not only its infrequency but its inappropriateness to meet needs of professional development. Polly's comments were typical where she recognises that the limitations are based upon the neoliberal climate and its impact on practice and not shortcomings of the supervisor. Indeed the latter are often caught in the middle between the needs of practitioners and senior managers who are preoccupied with targets and outcomes. Laming (2009) reiterated similar disquiet about contemporary supervision:

"There is concern that the tradition of deliberate, reflective social work practice is being put in danger because of an overemphasis on process and targets, resulting in a loss of confidence amongst social workers. It is vitally important that social work is carried out in a supportive learning environment that actively encourages the continuous development of professional

judgment and skills. Regular, high-quality, organised supervision is critical, as are routine opportunities for peer-learning and discussion” (Laming 2009, p.32).

Giddens (1991) examines the concept of self-development as something that is constantly evolving, and as being mediated through social contact and expert knowledge. This perspective recognises that knowledge is provisional and not fixed. Reflexivity is essential to understand and appropriate new knowledge and the impact of changing social and institutional contexts, or what Giddens calls ‘self-interrogation’ (Giddens, 1991, p.76), and is an essential component of reflective supervision. This concept was captured by Sally who described a common experience of constant new learning from varied sources which recognised the evolving nature of the role.

“You can never stand still in this job. Every day is different and believe me , every day I learn something new, something I didn’t know yesterday....Your colleagues are your strength here as we all pull together we have to draw on one another .’

For social workers employed in the adult field of practice, however, the introduction of neoliberal ideology and the New Public Management (Noble and Irwin, 2009; Maidment and Beddoe, 2012) since the 1980s have brought in alternative quality assurance practices. These emphasise accountability and performance management, both in supervision and in practice (Howe 1996). As a consequence, for the participants in my research, social work practice and formal supervision is experienced more as a caseload management instrument. In this process, little time is accorded for reflection (Jones and Gallop 2003), form-based information is favoured over relationships (Parton 2008), and knowledge becomes increasingly synonymous with information (Taylor and White 2006). This becomes a tool for surveillance and the soft exercise of power and authority which values efficiencies and targets over an understanding of policy or, more importantly, practice (Rogowski, 2011). Thus supervision becomes an accountability exercise with limited attention being given to the experience of learning. In addition, there has been a lack of recognition to ‘the emotional content of interactions with users and other professionals..., so that feelings of anxiety and uncertainty, become harder to voice to a supervisor’ (Collins 2008 p 1181). This is in direct contrast to a

professionally reflective sphere for critical analysis and personalised skill-set development. In the former setting, it is difficult for social workers to maintain a momentum towards the continual learning and preparedness that is essential for good enough practice. Participants talked of the dilemma in carrying out their duties without the benefit of the quality supervision from their managers and sought it elsewhere, as best they could, from experienced colleagues. This was not considered a satisfactory substitute but a recognition of the organisational failure to provide strategies for effective preparation for practice. As a consequence, less experienced staff grappled with complex cases for which they felt they did not possess sufficient skills. This can result in the drift within cases and the anxiety expressed by some participants in the interviews.

B) Types of Knowledge

In view of the large range of roles and duties carried out by social workers, in a diverse range of practice settings, it is not surprising that knowledge is used from various sources and with varied intentions. Indeed, one aim of my study was to ascertain what knowledge do practitioners use, produce and disseminate in practice. In doing so, I aimed to foreground the often marginalised voice of the social worker in the ongoing debate. The findings explore the ways by which the participants undertake the 'knowledge work' of making sense of service user lives and explain their 'everyday epistemologies' or methods of figuring out those truths (Kirk and Reid 2002).

From the responses of the participants, it is clear that all recognised that knowledge was the critical core of practice. The most commented upon types of knowledge of use in practice were formal or theoretical knowledges gained from formal learning centres. Although this may seem inconsistent with participants' feelings about being 'unprepared', the inclusion acknowledges the participants ambivalence about the degree of preparedness than a state of nil preparation. Furthermore formal knowledge along with procedural knowledge was also gained from the employer once qualified via training and development events. Finally participants referred to what they deemed life as knowledge coming from their many and various experiences. This framework is not unlike the various ones put forward over the last

twenty years by Drury Hudson (1997), Osmund (2005) and Trevithick (2008) with each having various schema, which include key features about 'the kinds of knowledge that can actually inform social work practice' (Osmund 2005, p. 882). However, not surprisingly, it focussed on the very specific needs of practice as required by those immersed in the daily engagement with complex and demanding situations.

Table 2. Typologies and taxonomies of knowledge for social work

Author	Type of knowledge
Pawson et al. 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy • organisational • research • practitioner • user
Drury Hudson (1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • theoretical • empirical • procedural • practice wisdom • personal
Trevithick (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • theoretical (theory) • factual (research) • practice
Osmund (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organisational (of own and other agencies duties and powers), • moral (to guide in situations where personal and professional values are prevalent) • practice

Indeed, what constitutes the most valuable knowledge in social work practice is very much in the eye of the beholder. As we have seen, social work may be viewed as either a practical/moral or a technical/rational activity (Parton & O'Byrne, 2000; Taylor and White 2006) and these two different notions of social work will require very different forms of knowledge. Sheppard et al. (2000) propose that there are two quite divergent social work cultures: one which emphasises learning reflectively from practice and the other which prefers more academic knowledge. Hothersall (2016) too has a similar view arguing that these contested models appear to have centred around two streams of thought, one research based knowledge and the other from knowledge gained from other sources (Hothersall 2016).

The concept of 'formal' knowledge in the data consists of various subjects such as the growing importance of legal knowledge in adult work alongside an understanding of social work theories and of human development over the life cycle. It is widely recognised that the importance of a theoretical knowledge base is a main element of all professions (Abbott, 1988). Moreover theoretical knowledge is an essential element in professional development (Evans & Donnelly, 2006) and is considered indispensable for developing a professional identity (O'Connor, 2007 Payne 2015).

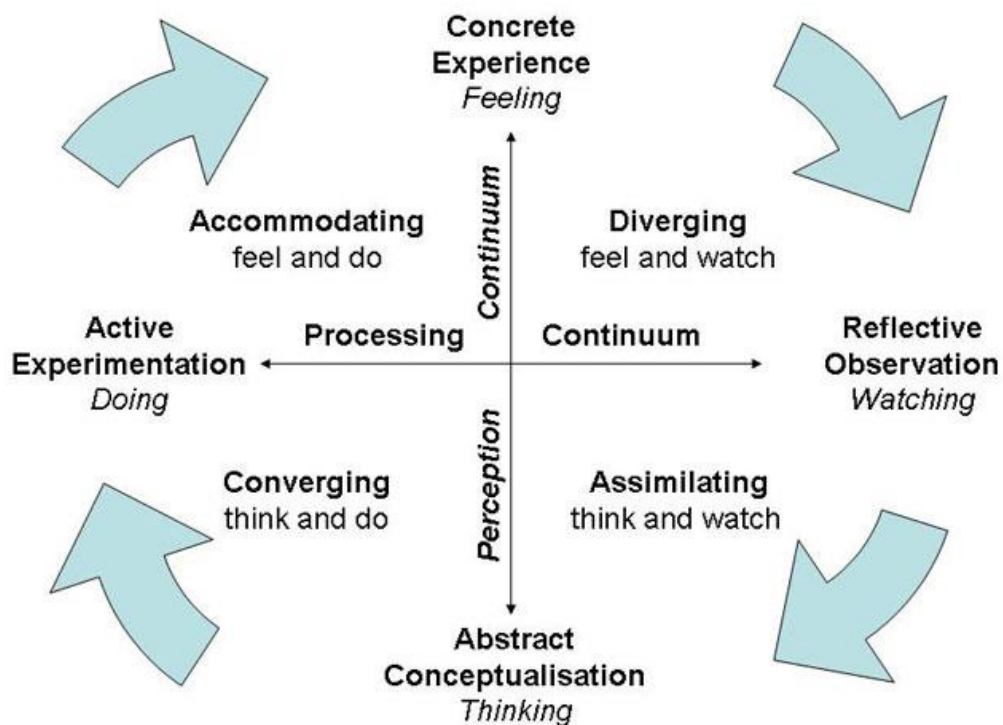
The value of what is termed 'scientific' theoretical knowledge is that said to provide a reliable base for transcending particular cases and possesses an explanatory dimension for generalisation (Young 2008; Hatlevik and Smeby 2015). This further enables practitioners to rise above negative personal interpretations of behaviour and interpret it, for example, as a sign or consequence of being a member of an oppressed group. Thus it provides a more nuanced comprehension of human behaviour and contributed to the participants' professional repertoire by enabling more reliable assessments (Hatlevik and Smeby 2015).

The data explored in the study exposed the use of a pluralist epistemology which included not only formal or product knowledge but also tacit, intuitive and personal types of knowledge arising from life experiences. From the discussions with participants, it is clear that the concept of life experience to them appeared quite

wide and encompassed myriad examples. This included family values and experiences, parental, sibling and peer influences, work experiences prior to professional education, illness of self or others, bereavement , parenting, experience of marginalisation or membership of oppressed group or minorities, and educational opportunities.

This concept of experiential learning is not new. Kolb (2014 p37) writes that “Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience’ and his four stage model demonstrated how this experience is converted into new knowledge (figure 2).

Figure 2. Kolb learning style



In this area of ‘experiential learning’, authors have inclined to use the words in two different senses (Brookfield, 1983 p.16). Firstly, the word is used to refer to the type of learning undertaken by practitioners who are given the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills in a particular setting such as an educational or training

course. The other main type of experiential learning is 'education that occurs as a direct participation in the events of life' (Houle 1980, p.221). This is knowledge that is highlighted by participants such as Isabelle and Martha and achieved through reflection upon everyday experiences of relationships and ordinary events. Despite its significance in the practice of my participants, the importance of life experience has not previously received enough attention in academic research (Eraut, 2004; Price 2009; Smeby & Heggen, 2014; Jordal and Heggen 2015) or in professional life.

Broadhurst and Mason (2014) also note that there is a general resurgence of interest in embodied ways of knowing in social work literature. Jordal and Heggan (2015) consider that the use of life experience involves the harnessing of peoples' ability to develop connections and meaning in their own lives through stories (Bruner 2004). Jordal and Heggan (2015) refer to the term "meaning making" to demonstrate how people use narratives from the whole range of events, experiences and perceptions (Frank, 2010; Gubrium & Holstein, 2009). These experiences form a "reservoir" from which storytellers draw and create narratives by making associations and connections between these elements of experience. This process is referred to as 'linkage' and Gubrium and Holstein (2009) argue:

"In practice, no item of experience is meaningful in its own right. It is made meaningful through the particular ways it is linked to other items. Linkage creates a context for understanding" (Gubrium and Holstein 2009 p.55)

The meaning making was witnessed in the transcripts on several occasions notably by Polly who made the links between her life experience as a bar manager dealing with inebriated customers to the ability to read body language and intuition in her current post. Similarly, Martha's experience of family bereavement was drawn as from a reservoir to aid her empathy and alliance with service users experiencing loss and grief.

This 'linkage' is one of the most important meaning-making features in narrative processes. However, such meaning making and linkage are not unique processes related only to the individual's biographical data; 'they also include elements of the

historical, social, discursive and cultural contexts in which the narrator is positioned' (Jordal and Heggan 2015 p.107).

This positive evaluation of the value and process of life experiential knowledge is significant. However, it is important to note that any prominence given to the use of life experience inevitably highlights the specificity of the individual's understandings. This brings into focus the risks of too much emphasis on personalised or individualised knowledge (Sheppard, 1995a; Christie and Weeks 1988). Moreover, the employment of life experience is likely also to lack robust evaluation thus allowing the entry of oppressive or discriminatory processes into practice (Sheppard, 1995a).

Indeed Sheppard reminds us that it is the condition of critical awareness which 'distinguishes mere experience from its intelligent use' (1995a, p.285) and this, he argues, is acquired via education rather than just training, as a range of high level cognitive skills are required for its proper execution. Nevertheless, there is a place for experience based personal and situational knowledge forms but with procedures built in for systemization and quality assurance as are found in more evidence informed knowledges.

C) All types of knowledge are equal but some are more equal than others

The participants in the study recognised explicitly that while social work required a variety of different types of knowledge to do the job well, there were some types of knowledge favoured over others which took a lesser place in the epistemological hierarchy.

The debates about knowledge in social work have often tended to privilege this formal knowledge or product knowledge, which is written down and can be used in practice, generating what Foucault (1974) refers to as 'regimes of truth'. Although there are many other debates about knowledge witnessed in this thesis, this particular privileging is attested in the transcripts on numerous occasions. These include examples such as Barry's 'anything to do with science or research is better

because it's based on experiments that clever men do' and Polly's view that material 'at university or read in journals, well that's the most important,... because it comes [from].. the intellectual bunch.' This suggests that an understanding of research related to 'how to do practice' instead of a more holistic one including issues about practice, the conditions in which it is practiced and the political context. Indeed, this 'applied social science', influenced by positivist epistemologies, suggests that theory takes the form of either hypothesis-testing or a methods-application model. In the light of this perspective, practice judgements should always be made in correspondence with the rules derived from formal knowledge (Sheppard et al. 2000). However, Gomory (2001p.67) argues that "knowledge claims rest heavily on how they are selected and... by whom" thus claiming that the use of theory and formal 'scientific' knowledge in practice cannot be value-neutral. Rather it is contingent on who has the power or authority to choose which specific theoretical or research knowledge that is to be used.

The challenge then involves epistemological issues as it probes the types of knowledge which are considered as more legitimate than others, the way legitimate knowledge is developed and whose knowledge is considered as legitimate. Fook (2000) poses the question:

"Is generalised rationalist theoretical knowledge obtained by researchers through scientific rationalist means that which should be the benchmark of professional knowledge? (Fook 2000 p.106)

Although the status of postmodern and post structural thinking is vigorously debated within social work (Caputo et al. 2015), its investigations between knowledge and power, has led some social work theorists to relinquish 'linear, prescriptive and positivist practice modalities' (Razack 2000 p.117). They argue that the privileging of the methods of science and unitary knowledges have led to "the subjugation of previously established erudite knowledge and of local, popular, indigenous knowledge located at the margins of society" (Hartman, 1992, p.483). Instead they argue for the substitution of formal knowledge with "the idea of multiple subjective truths" (Jani et al 2011, p. 284) and "'on the ground' knowledge embodied in the daily experience of both practitioners and service users" (Fook 2000 p 107).

As we can see in the participant conversations in Chapter Four, the knowledge base that they as practitioners draw upon is very varied and comprises some types of knowledge whose status is nebulous or contested, such as life experience. The largely intuitive and experiential source of much social work thinking means that much of the knowledge that practitioners use is based on experience and 'practice knowledge' while types of knowledge with higher status, such as research/academic sourced knowledge, are rarely utilised in practice (Singh and Cowden 2009; Fook 2012).

Philp (1979) argues that 'privileged' forms of knowledge which laud it over other ways of knowing, tend to suffer from epistemological idealism and do not take into account the reality of social work practice which is involved with complex human experience in a constantly changing social context. This was echoed by participants, such as Paul who, we have seen, argued that 'theory was thrust down our throats (at university) as if it was the Holy Grail. It was almost a reverential attitude to it that bugged me'. Indeed academics are often criticized for occupying ivory towers where idealists participate 'in intellectual pursuits which are disconnected from the realities of everyday life' (Ashwin et al. 2015 p.141). Although writing before the greater acknowledgement of different forms of knowledge, Rein and White (1981) recognised that as social work is concerned with human action, the use of theory or scientific knowledge is by its nature likely to have limited application:

"The knowledge that social work seeks cannot be made in universities by individuals who presumptively seek timeless, context-less truths about human nature, societies, institutions and policy. The knowledge must be developed in the living situations that are confronted by the contemporary episodes in the field" (Rein and White 1981 p.37/8).

This resonates with the ideas of Grace and Wilkinson (1978) who argue that 'the nature of social work knowledge is not to be found in the literature, but 'in situ' (p.322) which suggests that knowledge that comes from practice is of a more robust and lasting kind. Interestingly one could argue that social work is a process, as something that the social worker does, and only by doing does the knowledge

content come into the picture. This is inferred by the participants in their hesitancy and lack of conscious awareness of knowledge issues.

The idea of selecting a canon of appropriate knowledge to use in practice recognises that some knowledge is rightly better than others. However, the issue of 'who decides' is of paramount importance as people creating a canon obviously bring some bias to the process. As Barry noted in Chapter Four, "we are often told that all knowledge is the same but ... that anything to do with science or research is better because it's based on experiments that clever men do ...they have the reputation, they are acclaimed for it. They write books. Their opinions are highly valued."

Barry's understanding of research as a homogeneous entity demonstrates the pervasive idea of research as male activity related to the positivist paradigm based on empiricism. Thus valid knowledge is found only in derived knowledge or exclusive source/authoritative knowledge. Consequently, this has possible implications for his, and others', preference of knowledge for practice. If scientific knowledge is considered to be of a higher calibre than non-scientific knowledge, then it is understandable that such knowledge is the preferred choice, even if it is not used in practice. Moreover, such beliefs undermine the value of other types of knowledge and lessen their credibility for practice.

Clearly selection is necessary not only because of the parameters of the professional requirements but for the fact that we reside in an information rich environment. The guiding principle is surely not to circumvent selection but to select as appropriately as possible the material that is relevant to the job and has utility. This has been proposed by Trevithick (2008) amongst others but without sufficient recognition of the need to involve practitioners at the heart of the discussions.

D) Support and Collective Knowledge

"I don't think a social worker has knowledge, well not much it.... It's not about what I know or don't know. It doesn't work like that. It's what Rita knows or Sam, or Geoff. If I don't know something, I know they will know, they will know something.... When you work in an office, it's frightening at first but then, after a while, you realise, it's not what you know but who you know.

Because it's like a great pool of knowing that we draw onand after a while, you start putting in as well as taking out.” (Sally, participant)

The comment of Sally, above, highlighted the central importance of support within a team which has been described by Payne (1980, p.284) as ‘the degree to which the environment makes available resourcesrelevant to the demands made upon the system’ and by Thompson et al. (1994 p.36) as ‘a resource that helps people cope with job stress through supportive relationships with others’. Furthermore, research by Collins (2008), Bradley and Sutherland (1995), Thompson et al. (1996) and Smith and Nursten (1998) have all underscored the significance of support and help from colleagues. Bennett et al. (1993) too highlighted the possible adoption of ‘buddy systems’ and the part played by peer mentoring in offering extra support to colleagues. Other research has indicated that the attainment and transfer of knowledge in social work practice is directly linked to verbal communication between workers and their physical proximity (Bowen & Martens 2005; Powell 2005; Osmond & O’Connor 2006; Palinkas et al. 2009). In this sense, colleagues perform a critical role in the flow of knowledge, far exceeding the impact of written documents and IT resources. The present study endorsed the significance of this interactive aspect of knowledge acquisition and transfer. The support mentioned in the transcripts primarily related to the learning in a team and with it, the experience of gaining and developing knowledge. This undoubtedly helped them to maintain currency and reliability with service users. Interestingly, it was mainly through the informal means discussed here that participants sought support.

The role of collective knowledge amongst a staff team was strongly identified by the participants as a main source of knowledge available to workers. Its prime strengths were noted as its ready availability, unlike managerial support, and resourcefulness. This source of support and development was differentiated from the formal supervision offered by line managers and seen as a supplementary form of learning by participants. This is more ‘knowledge from the inside’ (for example, from colleagues) as opposed to ‘knowledge from the outside’ which consists more of external courses, education, journals, books and other resources (Iversen and Heggen 2016). Furthermore the element of accountability and judgement tied into

supervision sessions coupled with inaccessible managers, made the cultivation of alternative means of support more viable and attractive.

Joynes (2014, p.11) refers to a 'sociocultural perspective' to understand learning whereby professional learning is understood as 'knowing is....situated in activity and therefore is particular to settings and communities' (Fenwick and Nerland 2014, p.3). Similarly, in this perspective, 'practice' is considered to involve 'practitioners knowing and learning in everyday activity' (Fenwick and Nerland 2014, p.3). Hence 'learning' cannot be separated from 'practice' because one necessarily involves the other. This 'situatedness' is an important element of the participants' experience of support from their teams and it is based on the premise that the social situation and the physical setting must be respected as the context for 'knowing, working, learning and innovating' (Gherardi 2014, p.12; Joynes 2014).

Learning does not only take place in formal settings such as in universities but it can and does happen in the office or workshop (Eraut, 2008). In these spaces, the interactions of individuals working together can facilitate informal learning. The purpose of social service agencies, however, is to assist people in need in a variety of ways. They do not exist primarily to aid new learning which occurs mainly as a derivative of working alongside others (Eraut, 2008). Lave and Wenger (1991 p.34) refer to this process as "situated learning" which is "learning in everyday practice through social interaction" (learning which is contextual and embedded in social and physical environments).

'Situated learning' then is a theory of situated activity in which 'learning' is seen as a transitory concept or bridge between cognitive processes and social practice. Lave and Wenger (1991) write:

"In our view, learning is not merely situated in practice - as if it were some independently reifiable process that just happened to be located somewhere; learning is an integral part of generative social practice in a lived-in world. The problem ... is to translate this into a specific analytical approach to learning' (Lave and Wenger, 1991 p.34).

My findings demonstrated this reality for the participants of situated learning in their continuing development of knowledge, skills and identity. Clearly the importance is

recognised in the configuration of student placements but it appears less acknowledged in ongoing professional practice. As Polly admitted “you can’t keep going to your manager for support. You have to rely on other colleagues.” The informality is a marked feature of much of this learning and comes not always from verbal communication but from modelling and observation. Rowena’s comments illustrate this aspect of situated learning, ‘a lot of that knowledge base....(comes) from shadowing and working in close proximity to people....picking up those conversations or maybe how they phrase things.’

By sharing and discussing practice issues, teams can trigger knowledge creation by bringing different expertise together (Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis, 2005). A main reason for lack of learning opportunities or knowledge sharing in the transcripts is the limitations of time and space where the participants, such as Martha bemoan the absence of time to reflect (Hildreth 2000). Staff within agencies are often harried by work schedules and caseloads which can lead to barriers to supporting colleagues or sharing knowledge. Hence they seek support and learning from others who may be, but not necessarily, more experienced and knowledgeable. Paul admitted to seeking the expertise of a trusted experienced colleague acknowledging that ‘he is a vital tool to use’. This reliance on individual sources of learning did not however exclude more formal routes such as Rachel’s presence at ‘case discussions and gatekeeping meetings’ where knowledge was acquired and practice collectively examined.

Although the research and literature on ‘communities of practice’ have been developing quickly, an examination of the literature shows that their potential for understanding social work knowledge has not developed. Not surprisingly, the term ‘community of practice’ was not formally mentioned by participants but the concept is akin to the ideas and practices expressed in the data. Wenger et al. (2011) described the notion of community of practice as:

“a learning partnership of people who want to learn from and with each other about a particular area of interest and use each other’s experience as a learning resource” (Wenger et al 2011 p.12/3)

To the participants, the need to learn and develop did not end with their formal education but was recognised as a continual element of practice. However, there was dissatisfaction with the paucity of learning via continuing professional development routes and an awareness that this 'knowledge-as -situated is very different from the school oriented knowledge-in-the-head' (Hoadley 2005 p.32).

The informal nature of learning in the agencies in which the participants work have the main elements of 'communities of practice'. Moreover the process of 'legitimate peripheral participation' which is a core element of these communities of practice, provides a way of comprehending the dynamic process of 'becoming' rather than a static end product. This describes how initially people have to join communities and learn at the periphery until as they increase in competency, they become more involved in the main processes of the agency. They move from legitimate peripheral participation to into 'full participation (Lave and Wenger 1991, p.37). Thus learning is not seen as the gaining of knowledge by practitioners but as a process of social participation and clearly the nature of the situation influences the process significantly.

The issue of identity is germane to the discussion, with learning to behave, speak, and develop ideas in ways that make sense in the community. Moreover learning seen as 'increasing participation in communities of practice concerns the whole person acting in the world' (Lave and Wenger 1991, p.49). The emphasis is on the means in which learning is 'an evolving, continuously renewed set of relations' (Lave and Wenger 1991, p.50) which is a relational view of the person and learning. This is evident in the practitioners in this thesis who develop their individual and collective sense of identity through the participation in the lived experience of sharing in the collective knowledge building of their teams. Thus their experiences appear to define knowledge development as a type of co-evolution of cognitive and social systems. In view of the paucity of research on collective knowledge building in social work, it is difficult to know if this is common to practitioners in all fields of practice or only applicable to those in the adult area. However, as social work teams have similarities in organisational arrangements, it is likely that knowledge in all practice areas develop via comparable routes.

It is fair to point out that Wenger et al. (2002) raise concerns with the communities of practice idea which they refer to as the 'downside' of communities of practice where:

'the very qualities that make a community an ideal structure for learning – a shared perspectives on a domain, trust, a communal identity, longstanding relationships, an established practice – are the same qualities that can hold it hostage to its history and its achievements' (Wenger et al. 2002, p.141).

This is particularly pertinent to professions in a state of flux, where established and fixed understandings of practice may prevent and delay the process of change. Gray et al. (2008) also express caution about the interface between the community of practice and the line management and wider organisational responsibility in the supervision and development of social care practice. This is considered essential:

"to ensure that its demands and imperatives do not undermine the community of practice and to ensure that the organisation does not come to see the community of practice as a threat" (Gray, Parker and Immins 2008, p.35).

Moreover there may be circumstances where the community of practice is feeble or suffers from power relationships that seriously inhibit entry and proper participation or they may become stagnant in terms of their knowledge base and resistant to change. Indeed Roberts (2006 p.630) notes that knowledge that confirms the identity and current practices of its members is likely to be espoused 'more readily by the community than knowledge that challenges current identity and practices'. Furthermore, the ways of doing things can become institutionalised within routines (Nelson and Winter, 1982) and the development of knowledge within a community of practice may merely bolster an existing preference or predisposition (Roberts 2006).

E) Barriers

The unremitting daily impact of high caseloads, complex safeguarding issues, little formal supervision, unhelpful managers and importantly, lack of resources, can be a depressing element of social work with adults (Spolander et al. 2014; Ferguson and Lavelette 2006; Rogowski 2010). The participants in my study all identified one

or more of these features as significant barriers which prevented them from giving time and effort to a thorough consideration of their practice. Clearly social work staff working with adults increasingly find that the rhetoric of community care does not coincide with the reality of their everyday work (Gorman and Postle, 2003) with Polly claiming that 'senior managers don't understand what we are doing on the front line'. Moreover for the past ten years, staff have struggled with cuts and reorganisations which have sapped their morale (Lymbery 2004). Performance management demands and the increased administrative tasks alongside ineffective IT systems have also affected their morale and confidence (Wastell et al., 2010; Wastell and White, 2010).

Cross (1981) identifies three main barriers to adult participation in effective reflection and learning which are situational, institutional, and dispositional barriers. She terms 'situational' as those that arise from one's political situation or environment at a particular time; 'institutional' as those practices and procedures that exclude or discourage adults from participating and reflecting on learning activities; and 'dispositional' as those related to the attitudes and self-perceptions about one-self as learner/reflector. Maintaining currency in social work practice and acquiring and using new knowledge and skills is imperative in the constantly changing environment. Cross' (1981) tripartite model usefully differentiates the nature of the barriers that impede currency in practice and correlates with the findings in this study. However, in practice the three tend to coalesce and form a more rigid obstacle. Hence from the participants' accounts, the political element of neoliberalism affects the practice of social work by its encouraging a quasi-business approach. The latter in turn effects the professional context with the rise of managerialism alongside an audit and fiscal culture which reinterprets the role of the practitioner. In addition there is a significant reduction in funding for continuing professional development (Thomas and Qiu, 2013). The socio-political environment with demands for target-setting, performance management, and increased regulation seem to have relegated education to something that can be measured within the domain of the individual. This instrumental approach to learning is clearly inadequate given the complexity of adult personal and working lives.

As a result, to some degree, the participants adopted of a role of a functionary with neither the time nor encouragement to invest in reflection or learning. This is reflected in the discussions with the participants such as Rowena who described the extension of home working practices. These may well save money for agencies but undoubtedly they undermine the development of learning environments. Such developments towards 'agile working' (Jeyasingham, 2014) raise concerns about the accessibility of support and learning mechanisms which may affect the quality of decision making processes (Saltiel 2015).

Research evidence from within the social work field highlights that the workforce in adult social care is demoralized and de-motivated because of policy changes (McDonald et al. 2008; Smith et al. 2017). Indeed empirical research undertaken in 2003 identified problems at three levels, structural, managerial and practitioner, (McDonald et al. 2008) and this seems remarkably similar to the earlier work by Jones, (2001); Lymbery, (1998) and Postle, (1999). The participants in my thesis partly mirrored the findings of these studies with a sharp disconnect noted by Isabelle between the ideal and the reality of social work practice. John too experienced the marginalisation of the 'expert' worker under neoliberalism and the emphasis on the service user as customer which influences the direction of social work practice. However, although working under such constraints, the participants did not appear to be demotivated as they considered their job to be worthwhile and the context required more commitment to helping those for whom they entered the profession.

McDonald et al.'s (2008 p.1374) overall findings on retaining and using professional knowledge identified that at a structural level, an inflexible hierarchical system did not encourage use of practitioner knowledge, and that social services staff experienced conflict, rather than partnership with other agencies or professionals. On the management level, practitioners, similar to participants in my study, felt that supervision was directed to workload management issues and outcomes rather than meaning and process (Lymbery, 2004). This was considered superfluous to staff struggling with complex cases. McDonald et al. (2008) suggested that this

contributed to their difficulty in articulating the rationale for their work or identifying an appropriate framework of knowledge.

Furthermore at the practitioner level, McDonald et al.'s (2008) study noted that staff laboured with gaps in their knowledge about legislation, and risked using defensive practice and were dependent on procedures, rather than creative working. Team managers too were considered unable to act as professional advice givers, especially where their professional background differed from the supervisee. In some cases, it was felt that they had no greater knowledge than the practitioner but, more generally, managers had become monitors of workloads, rather than sources of professional supervision (Lawler and Harlow, 2005).

These issues raised by the participants and confirmed by the wider studies, confirm that current social work practice, informed by political ideology, is in a state of real flux with, among other things, a role which is confused about knowledge and beset with problems of identity, future direction and legitimacy (Lavalette, 2011; Higgins, 2016).

5.3 Superordinate Theme Two: Use/functionality of knowledge.

A) Lack of conscious awareness

Most of the participants admitted that they lacked much conscious awareness of using knowledge in practice before or during engagement with a service user. The reasons for this invariably centred on time constraints of having heavy caseloads and safeguarding work which required quick responses. Much behaviour is often mediated by processes outside conscious awareness, and further research would be beneficial to examine the triggers to making decisions in particular cases with adult service users.

As reported earlier in the findings, initially most participants had difficulty in recognising the knowledge used in practice but when asked to reflect further, all were able to discuss what types of knowledge were useful and how it would help them to intervene. However, this lack of conscious awareness of the 'tools of the

trade', in practice situations, possibly suggests helping in a certain way just because it feels right to do so. As Cournoyer (2000) describes:

“Because social work practice involves the conscious and deliberate use of oneself, you become the medium through which knowledge, attitudes, and skill are conveyed. ... You might have the most noble and idealistic of motives.... Nonetheless, if you lack self-awareness, you may unwittingly enact emotional or behavioural patterns that harm the very people you hope to help” (Cournoyer 2000 p.35).

The values, attitudes, perceptions, biases, and beliefs of practitioners influence the way that they intervene with service users and my data highlighted that these values and beliefs are disclosed in professional relationships directly and indirectly. Indeed as Heydt and Sherman (2005) argue

“the more consciously aware workers are of how their own beliefs, perceptions, and behaviours impact their professional relationship, the more consciously they can choose how to influence the helping relationships in which they are involved” (Heydt and Sherman 2005 p.27).

This is indeed the crux of the matter in that if knowledge and theory are used unconsciously and without proper formulation, then as Osmond (2005) notes ambiguity enters in the service delivery and practice behaviour is potentially unclear. McDonald et al. (2008) refer to various studies which examined the use of knowledge and reflection on knowledge. They noted that these suggested at most only limited formal knowledge use by practitioners and at worst that such knowledge was considered as being of minimal importance:

“.... in the absence of conscious use of knowledge, others have resorted to a subconscious assimilation thesis whereby the absorption and use of knowledge is so ingrained and automatic that practitioners are unaware of its uses” (Sheppard et al. p.177 in McDonald et al, 2008, p.1380).

Hicks (2016 p.403) in a review of the empirical literature notes that in some studies, it is claimed that theory is used without ‘reflexivity or acknowledgement, in an entirely personal way, and, therefore, that explicit acknowledgement of theory is not a preferred cultural practice.’ In Carew’s (1979) research based on twenty English social workers’ activities and questionnaires, most suggested that knowledge becomes integrated, and that its use is unconscious with responses such as ‘we

use probably more than we are aware', and 'we use it without thinking' and it is 'absorbed theory' (Carew 1979 p.353). Although this work was undertaken nearly forty years ago, more comparable research suggests that this is still the case in most situations. Similarly Barbour's (1984, p. 566) longitudinal study, based on participant observation and semi-structured interviews with twenty social work students in the UK highlighted that some students described theory as something which "seeped in" and was used 'unconsciously.' An American study based upon child welfare workers by Arnd-Caddigan and Pozzuto (2008, p.61) also suggests that even where a social worker does 'not believe she was using formal theory, she may have in fact done so'.

Most of the participants in my study were not hostile to formal knowledge nor denigrated its use in practice as referred to in earlier studies (Mc Donald et al. 2007: Osmund 2005; Sheppard et al. 2000; Green, 2006). The lived experience of the context of high-volume, complex work did not give the time to consider the role and application of knowledge in practice. In addition, the impact of structural problems and ineffective management supervision was combined with anxiety in meeting the increasing knowledge demands of contemporary social work (Lawler and Harlow, 2005). If practitioners do lack detailed professional knowledge, it is hardly surprising given the constraints of the current maelstrom of daily practice.

B) Status of Social Work with Adults

Many problems facing social work with adults today are mainly the result of policy changes initiated by subsequent governments from the 1980's to the present day. These changes resulted from the introduction of a neoliberal ideology whose central tenet is:

"... that it entails the coming of 'small government': the shrinking of the allegedly flaccid and overgrown Keynesian welfare state and its makeover into a lean and nimble workfare state ... stressing self-reliance, commitment to paid work, and managerialism ..." Wacquant (2009, p.307)

McDonald et al. (2008) acknowledge the effect that neoliberal managerialism has caused to the profession with an attendant devaluation of social workers' knowledge

and skills with a move described by Howe (1996 p77) as from 'depth' to 'surface' social work. This, he argues, is leaving the discipline 'analytically more shallow and increasingly performance - oriented'.

Ritzer (2000) refers to the process of 'McDonaldisation' whereby established skills and knowledge are superseded by requirements for efficiency, calculability, regularity and control through mechanical technology. Dustin (2007) argues that this has a synergy with social workers' circumstances (Wallace and Pease 2011).

These reductive developments have implications for the nature and use of professional knowledge as the latter itself does not develop in a vacuum but its meaning and relevance are established and developed by their location in a specific context. Ferguson (2004) highlights a simplified neoliberal social work of 'what works' becoming a major practice philosophy. Several participants, in my study identified the ascendancy of 'co production' which is both complementary to and dependent on 'asset based approaches' as favoured means of social work intervention. Co-production has been described as "the public sector and citizens making better use of each other's assets, resources and contributions to achieve better outcomes or improved efficiency" (Bovaird and Löffler 2011). It acknowledges that people have 'assets' such as knowledge, skills, characteristics, experience, family, friends, colleagues and communities. These assets can be utilised to support health and social wellbeing.

Whilst this may have some value, the participants feared that such an approach is gaining in popularity in adult teams by managers as a way of deflecting service users away from services into the arms of 'community resources' consisting mainly of relatives and friends. Such a cynical note was sounded by Barry who considered it was really a 'lack of intervention' by authorities who are operating within a much reduced budget.

There is no doubt that in adult social work, managerialism, performativity and procedural compliance dominate (McDonald 2008; Lymbery and Postle 2010) and that little time exists for thinking and reflection (Jones and Gallop 2003). The

participants interviewed in my study had a strong feeling of concern at the impact of austerity measures on the service they provide, and agreed that the market is not appropriate as the primary mechanism for regulating health and social care. However, none felt that their work was of low value or skill. They all considered that the work they undertake was of enormous value and they attempted to meet the service users' needs as best they could in a climate of tighter eligibility criteria. Although the literature talks of the demise of social work with adults, and the routinisation of much of the work, participants felt that the developments of adult generic teams, recent legislation such as the Care Act 2014, Mental Capacity Act 2005 and emphasis on safeguarding has given greater professionalism to their status. Some questioned why meeting the physical needs of service users with services was deemed of lesser importance than Maslow's (McLeod 2017) self-actualising heights. Some also wondered why 'emancipatory work' (Ferguson 2008) was considered of more value than delivering a care plan to assist with independent living. Clearly there was great concern at the changes wrought by neoliberal policies but there was a desire to set the record straight regarding the overly negative view of the academy on the role of safeguarding vulnerable people via care management.

The introduction of the Care Act 2014 heralded the centrality of 'individual wellbeing' and professional practice of the individual social worker at the centre of adult social care. It purportedly indicated a different path from care management as the main approach to working with adults with its emphasis on service user choice and control. However, despite frequent references to it in discussions, no participant highlighted any significant difference to the process of care management.

C) Knowledge to understand

My study examined the experience of the ten social workers' use of knowledge in practice. The types of knowledge used were what they themselves identified in the transcripts as of particular significance to them in practice. From that experience,

three main uses of knowledge in their daily practice were uncovered which can be ordered as knowledge to understand, to subvert and to demonstrate proficiency

The key to understanding the role of knowledge in practice is to examine how knowledge is used in practice. What is it for? The issue of knowledge use in social work practice is fairly nebulous as, to date, little research has been undertaken that reveals the use to which knowledge is put (Osmond 2006). Empirical research on the 'use' of knowledge in social work has comprised a number of different conceptualizations (Rosen, 1994; Osmond 2006) but the area explored in this element of the subordinate themes was to find out what do social workers employed in the adult field use knowledge for? What was the experience of these participants in using knowledge?

There has been some research on the aims or functions to which knowledge can be used. Rosen (1994) and Rosen et al. (1995) investigated whether knowledge was used for passive or active prediction by social workers in respect of particular duties. They divined that knowledge which presents explanations or descriptions of phenomena is liable to inform passive predictions, whereas with active predictions, knowledge that is proficient at influencing, transforming or changing client situations or phenomena is used (Rosen, 1995; Osmond, 2006). There is also what is defined as 'conceptual' and 'instrumental' use of knowledge (Caplan, 1979; Dunn, 1983; De Martini and Whitbeck, 1986; Osmond 2006) with the latter referring to the concrete application of knowledge and describing changes in behaviour or practice whilst the former refers to changes in the ways that users think about problems.

The conceptual use of knowledge has also been represented in the transcripts as having 'opened my eyes' by Sally and as 'life changing' by Barry which indicates that knowledge served to encourage understanding and discernment for them This mirrors the descriptions in the literature as it having an 'enlightenment' function, or 'lightbulb moment' (Eriksson, 1990; Hardiker and Baker, 2015; Osmond 2006).

Knowledge to understand was primarily concerned with understanding, both conceptually and instrumentally, the service user and the practitioner him/herself.

This was the most significant area of knowledge which they felt was crucial to the nature of their work and it was used specifically to facilitate a process of rapport-building and effective communication. This mirrors Ferguson's (2005) assertion that placing the relationship at the heart of social work practice enables the worker to move beyond surface understandings and is intrinsically valuable as an intervention in its own right. This understanding was obtained from the knowledge that the worker gained directly from the service user and their family/social networks. The means of obtaining knowledge was the formation of the relationship or alliance which was described as the key to accessing knowledge of and about the service user. There was significant recognition among the participants that the starting point of good social work was the direct experience of the service user. As Rachel commented, her role was not to fit service users into pre-existing theoretical frameworks. This has an echo of Blom's (2009) research on 'unknowing' as a form of knowledge whereby the practitioner knowledge is intentionally bracketed to 'exclude any possibilities a priori' (Blom 2009 p.169).

This form of practice is relationship based which allows and encourages the social worker to look 'beneath the surface' (Howe 1996 p.77)). This assists in understanding not only the irrational and unconscious aspects of practice (Hingley-Jones and Ruch 2016) but also a consideration of the inimical socio-political environment which impacts on vulnerable people (Featherstone et al., 2014; Morris et al., 2015).

The purpose of this knowledge use is to understand the issues which have led to the referral for assistance but in the context of the bigger political picture. By using Wright Mills' notion of the sociological imagination, it links 'public issues' and 'private troubles' (Mills, 1959) meaning that people's lived experiences are inextricably linked to political structures. As Wright Mills notes (1959):

"personal troubles cannot be solved merely as troubles, but must be understood in terms of public issues – and in terms of the problems of history making. Know that the human meaning of public issues must be revealed by relating them to personal troubles – and to the problems of the individual life" (Wright Mills 1959, p.226)

The participants in the study had a clear understanding of the neoliberal political context of social work and the impact it was having on service users. However, there was little connection between the macro and micro worlds of the service users or the importance of social justice as a key concept with those who may face oppression related to structural inequality. In their research of social workers in Australia, Hawkins, Fook and Ryan (2001) also observed that social workers referred infrequently to social justice issues, even when presented case studies which generated an opportunity for that debate. The participants referred to the consequences of the welfare reforms in their discussions as involving the reshaping of social work practices. However, there was minimal consideration of political transformation that may be felt more consistent with social work's emphasis on social justice. Thus there was a tendency to individualise social issues and rely more on a biomedical type approach to solve problems even though passing mention was made to strengths perspectives and asset approaches. Why this was so is far from clear. However, possibly the grip of neoliberal ideology is so strong that any serious consideration of engaging with macro issues is felt to be pointless. This was summed up in one participant's comment that 'If we get distracted about going off on wild goose chases about things that are not our core responsibility, it literally is distracting from where the pressure is on our shoulders.'

This increasing dominance of care management in adult work has tended to 'therapeutise' social work practice with the participants tending to see their role as meeting personal needs. Some would therefore argue that this 'has put the profession out of step with its own mission and on the margins of social change efforts' (Jacobson, 2001, p.53). Thus it could be said that, 'market' rhetoric has superseded professional discretion with technocratic skills, with a specific type of business thinking (Ferguson & Lavalette, 2006; Jones, 2005). As a result, what generally has been considered essential knowledge has been reconstructed (Harris, 2003).

Indeed Ferguson's (2008) analysis argues that the adverse impact of neoliberalism and the development of new managerialism have produced such neoliberal types of social work which have destabilised not only 'radical or structural' approaches but

also 'traditional' relationship-based social work (Bryan, Hingley-Jones and Ruch 2016). Thus some argue that the social work profession has turned to being a 'failing' and 'quiet' profession (Kam, 2014).

D) Knowledge to subvert

At times participants indicated that knowledge was used to solve problems and/or provide advice or signposting. However, personal knowledge of the service user was also utilised to align the person with the government policy objectives and assess whether the person meets the eligibility criteria. These criteria have become tighter due to government austerity measures and the participants admitted that their knowledge was used sometimes to subvert and covertly challenge the dominant discourses. Indeed these were thought to lack the sense of justice and ethics to which they felt personally and professionally aligned. Few participants had any experience of social work prior to the introduction of care management yet they had a sense that neoliberal social work challenged the value and practice base of social work. In addition, the ascendancy of the care management process turned the worker–service user relationship into an economic one, with the service user constructed as a customer (Ferguson and Lavalette 2006). Issues such as these can lead to dissonance with the motivations which brought people into social work in the first place and negate basic social work values, such as respect for people. This discomfort experienced by some participants around the plight of service users led them to sometimes subvert the eligibility criteria by clandestine means. This is not surprising given that social work is, in many respects, emotional work, and an ability to work interpersonally is an essential element for social work to take place effectively (Ruch et al., 2010).

These attempts at using knowledge as subversion or resistance by social workers to what are perceived as injustices towards service users appear to be a distinct finding of my research. Resistance is a relatively under researched topic. Leonard, (1997, p.59) suggests that resistance can be understood as an attempt to undermine a dominant discourse, such as the state's commitment to community care with 'its constitution of the subject as an independent, autonomous entity'. By

doing so, space is made for alternative discourses such as on the interdependence of active human subjects which rejects the hegemony of individualism.

Baines's research (2006) highlights some evidence of resistance to aspects of organizational and work practice, but he notes that there was no real attempts to make connections with wider structural reasons for dissent (Pease and Wallace 2011). Jordan (1990) notes however that where resistance does take place, social work can nonetheless witness to injustice and reject any attempt to collude with the exclusion or oppression of service users.

From the transcripts, it is clear that the acts of resistance are explained by, and in, the context of neoliberal ideology which is considered to promote a consumerist model of social service delivery and consequent transformation of the accepted beliefs of social work (Carey, 2008). Participants rejected any notion of lying to funding panels but of using their knowledge of organisational systems to get services for people who otherwise may not meet the stringent eligibility requirements. These acts were undertaken by emphasising elements of the service user's situation that the workers knew would attract services but were in a borderline location. These acts were said to be widespread through teams but were not carried out continually lest they brought opprobrium on the workers. They were evidently not talked about openly but in coded terms by practitioners. This was possibly carried out to demonstrate solidarity and the presence of alliances to form breaches in the wall of the neoliberal market place. In some sense, it may appear that these acts result in a form of 'disguised compliance' by the worker to the agency (Gibson 2015). The traditional view of disguised compliance is that it arises when parents appear to cooperate with social workers. However, in reality parents act thus to mask their real intentions which is to facilitate closure of the case (Brandon et al. 2008). There are some similarities with the behaviour of practitioners who engage in these acts of subterfuge as they appear to be following the rules but their real intentions are to subvert them.

The reasons why the participants acted in such a manner were not homogeneous with explanations veering towards more emancipatory or radical social work with some or with others, personal ethical stances against what they thought were unjust situations. However the motivations for such acts appeared to be a response to the vagaries of care management which:

'is a simulacrum of care or an imitation of care in the same way that McDonald's food is a simulacrum of food . . . (it) is not "natural" and is highly processed and bureaucratized and serviced by people who do not "care" in the sense that they must maintain professional boundaries between themselves and those they care for' (Dustin, 2007, p.153).

E) Knowledge to demonstrate proficiency

The other main way that participants claimed they used knowledge was to demonstrate their proficiency to themselves and especially others, including other professionals, service users and carers. As indicated in Chapter One, social workers are now expected to have at least an undergraduate degree in Social Work, and to be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council. Therefore, as a qualified practitioner, they must meet those Standards of Proficiency which relate to the areas in which they work as mapped to the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) (BASW 2018) and the Knowledge and Skills Statements for Adults (KSSA) (DOH 2015).

The PCF and KSSA provide the basis for social work education and practice in England at qualifying and post-qualifying levels and are used in performance appraisal and career progression. Indeed the KSSA specifies in more detail what a social worker should know, and be able to do, in specific practice settings, in particular roles and at different levels of seniority. The awareness of the biennial registration process appears to have alerted some participants to the need for evidence to show, what one participant termed, 'his worth in the job'.

My participants highlighted that the use of knowledge was explicitly tied to the demonstration of professional worth not only to the management but to self, colleagues and external agencies. This is not surprising when one considers that

the capacity and ability to act as a social worker is bestowed on them by i) their knowledge bases ii) law and legal powers iii) the respect and deference given to those in and with authority and iv) recognition of 'professional' status (Webb, 2000).

Moreover the concept of professional identity itself also appears in the Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Work (PCF) where one of the nine domains requires social workers to ' . . . identify and behave as a professional social worker, committed to professional development' (BASW 2016). This comment within the PCF suggests the need to be socialised into the profession even though the very nature and professional identity of social work remains a contested area. (Webb, 2015). How a social worker thinks about his/her professional identity, how they think about themselves as a social worker is important for a number of reasons.

Identity itself has been conceptualised in various ways by psychology, anthropology, and philosophy but the view most useful in this discussion is a sociocultural perspective, situating identity negotiation and construction within a social context and through social interactions (Giddens, 1991; Jenkins, 1996). This perspective is relevant for social workers because as being part of a community with shared practices and purpose, it contributes to their identity negotiation and construction (Wenger, 1998).

McDonald (2004) maintains that having a mutual, common, stable identity can improve practice for social workers and other health and social care professionals. As without it, there is often the presence of unmanaged, unstable identities with consequent feelings of powerlessness. Indeed the ability to acquire a 'professional identity' is therefore important because of what such an identity means to both individuals and professional practice (Joynes 2014).

The concept of professional identity, however, does not appear as stable as McDonald (2004) suggests. Rather it may be viewed as a contestable concept due to its variable and dynamic nature. Webb (2015 p.4) writes:

“Professional identity is not a stable entity; it is an on-going process of accommodation and customisation shaped by contextual workplace factors.

In this respect identity formation is viewed as more interactive and more problematic than the relatively straightforward adoption of the role or category of 'professional social worker' (Webb 2015 p.4)

This would concur with the view of Valutis, Rubin and Bell (2012) who support the view that identity develops throughout a social worker's career and is not therefore a static entity. Indeed identity is a process of "becoming" and is never "final or settled" (Jenkins, 1996, p.18).

It has been suggested that social work education has a key role in forming professional identity via a process of socialisation in which students embrace professional norms and values (Wiles 2013). However, as identity is a continual ongoing process, the formation of identity does not end but is in a constant state of change and adaptation (Fook 2002, Payne 2015). The literature appears to pay little attention to this issue, concentrating instead on the initial formation of professional identity in student social workers. Consequently there is a failure to recognise that the role of professional identity needs not only to be acquired but maintained and developed throughout one's professional life.

For social workers, being part of a community with shared practices and objectives contributes and maintains their identity negotiation and construction (Wenger, 1998). Professional identity may be thought of as "the way a person understands and views themselves and is often viewed by others" (Horn et al., 2008, p.62) or "a way of being in the world" (Wenger, 2000, p.151). Similarly Gee (2000 p.99) argues that identity can be considered as "being recognized as a certain kind of person in a given context". Thus identity appears as a negotiated and constructed entity within a social context. Notwithstanding its individually constructed character, the views of others within an individual's social world are a significant element of the negotiation of the individual's identity.

The process of preparation for the professional role is labelled professional socialisation by which:

"the content of the professional role (skills, knowledge, behaviour) is learned and the values, attitudes, and goals integral to the profession and sense of

occupational identity which are characteristic of a member of that profession are internalized” (Goldenberg and Iwasiw 1993 p.4).

Socialisation impacts on each practitioner, leading them to take on the cerebral, cognitive, affective and behavioural stances of a social worker. The importance of this process is recognised as a significant characteristic in the development of identity (Loseke & Cahill, 1986; Freund et.al: 2014; Webb, 2015). Wenger (1998) examined the construction of professional identity within a social/cultural perspective via the lens of communities of practice. As we have seen, community of practice (CoP) is a model of situational learning, founded on collaboration among peers, where individuals work to a common purpose. Wenger further (1998) maintains that:

“there is a profound connection between identity and practice. Developing a practice requires the formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and thus acknowledge each other as participants” (Wenger 1998 p.149).

An important factor of situating identity, in particular of a professional social worker identity, within a community of practice is the part played by the ‘trajectory of participation’ as it shapes the connection with the community. Wenger (1998) argues that there are five possible trajectories of participation or membership of the community of practice: peripheral, inbound, insider, boundary, and outbound. The titles are obviously based on the variations in the degree of participation, as felt by individuals or identified and classified as such by other members. It is by participating in the community of practice that members constantly express and reinforce their professional identity based on knowledge and shared practice. The participants in my study who had varying levels of experience post qualification, reflected these trajectories of participation. Most appeared to be ‘insiders’, although one was on the ‘boundary’ through pending retirement and two ‘inbound’ acknowledged their limited membership of the group by virtue of their post qualification status and experience in generic adult work.

Clearly there are other types of learning communities and Brown and Duguid (2001) have highlighted that individuals may take part in diverse ‘networks of practice’ across various organisational boundaries. Nevertheless they consider that it is

through and in these communities and networks that individuals develop their identities and practices through processes such as role modelling, experimentation and identity-construction.

Kupferberg (2004) on the other hand, dismisses the idea that professional identity only starts when the person enters their chosen profession. He argues that professional identity starts to develop long before that time which can be seen in those preparing for careers well in advance of their acceptance on courses. The frequent reference to life experience as knowledge for practice, by some participants in the study, and their many years of preparatory work prior to training, may support Kupferberg's view.

The transcripts refer explicitly to knowledge use as an important way of participants demonstrating their proficiency and identity in the social work role. Perhaps in this age of bureaucracy, performance management and control via registration, social workers have a heightened awareness of appraisal processes and job security. Moreover with increased multi agency working, they also want to be seen as equal partners to disciplines who may have a more sure footing on the professional stage. The knowledge use may then be a protective measure as well as a sign of belonging and a mark of professional identity

5.4 Superordinate Theme Three: Putting it into practice

A) Fear and apprehension

The supposed gap between theory and practice and the consequent issues facing practitioners of integrating the two areas looms large in the literature and in the transcripts. Participants expressed concern and embarrassment about the discussions in case it exposed their ignorance and damaged their credibility as practitioners. This is akin to 'imposter syndrome' which is a persistent internalized fear of being revealed as a "fraud" (Clance and Imes 1978). The issue seems to be grounded in the experience of their qualifying programmes which are constructed

on separation of theory and practice through the theoretical teaching in university and the practice periods on placements.

Discussing what is meant by theory and practice raises a host of conceptual problems. Theory often relates to the clarification of conceptual and abstract entities and is devised for explanation or intervention. This is particularly so within the frame of scientific propositions that can be contested by empirical observations. Practice on the other hand, is also an ambiguous idea that may be interpreted descriptively (what is done in the world of phenomena or taken to be mean the general state of affairs) or normatively (what is desirable or ideal). There is also the difference between the practice of an experienced social worker and practice in the sense of striving towards the skilfulness of a competent and expert practitioner (Jorgensen, 2005).

From participant accounts, there is clearly a significant cultural difference between higher educational institutions and placement with the university seeming a totally different world from the world of life experience. Moreover the use of the concepts, “theory and practice”, to explain and understand teaching, learning, knowing and doing, represents a problem in itself. This is because both words are often used naively to refer to either placements or teaching at the HEI, and partly because “theory and practice” limit the legitimate types of knowledge surveyed in a social work programme, which are multiple and diverse (Haastrup and Knudsen, 2015).

It was clear that participants experienced initial fear and apprehension in the context of knowledge talk partly because they were concerned about negative judgements on their understanding of these quite complex issues. This may result from an educational process lacking in more democratic participation and involvement of the practitioners’ own epistemological processes. Interestingly, no such comments about fear and apprehension were made about discussions with colleagues in the office setting.

B) The ideal versus the real world

Most participants depicted the social work world in a binary formulation, the real versus the ideal world. This formulation relates 'real' to the world of practice, the busy, chaotic, complex environment. This is the world populated by service users, carers, provider services in the private and public domains, other disciplines and the social workers themselves. The ideal world, on the other hand, is the imaginary world of order, direction, and harmony inhabited by academic researchers which focuses on regularity, uniformity and symmetry. Of course this is an exaggerated picture but it illustrates the polarisation between the academy and the practicum in the minds of participants who are caught in the maelstrom of contemporary practice.

Concern about research/academic knowledge from practitioners are longstanding usually relating to its utility and the nature of academic output. This is often thought to arise from ideologies that claim to have understood people and their situations completely. In these ideologies, the randomness and opportunity that result from the human capacity for infinite variation are replaced by predictability and formulaic prescription.

It has been suggested by Marsh and Fisher (2008) that our attitude to knowledge use has been constructed on the fallacy that practice is passively informed by knowledge that is produced in the academic world. They propose instead a research that begins with social workers' accounts of their practice. In their view, practitioners may use 'different concepts and speak a different language' which researchers in academic settings may not understand (Marsh and Fisher 2008, p.977).

From the discussions reflected in the transcripts, there is a sense of irritability towards knowledge coming from research and the academy. It is something done 'over there' by people who have no current experience in contemporary social work practice. In this complex world, where people deal with their personal lifeworld, there is the feeling that problems cannot be readily solved in any 'clear, measurable, calculative way' (Parton and O'Byrne, 2000, p.30). Also research knowledge was considered unhelpful in that it was felt to be part of this rejected construct of the 'ideal' world. Cohen (1975) noted a similar response when discussing the relationship between sociological theory and social work. He found that the most familiar reaction was that:

“however interesting, amusing, correct and even morally uplifting our message might be, it is ultimately a self-indulgent intellectual exercise, a luxury which cannot be afforded by anyone tied down by the day-to-day demands of a social-work job” (Cohen 1975 p.76).

Harris (1999) also describes an emasculated version of the social worker under the neo liberal agenda, and its substitution by a ‘consumercitizen’ identity whereby the professional is circumvented in the consumer relationship, or compelled to take customer service type roles. Indeed these changes have affected the mind-set of social workers to the extent that Carey (2008b) argues that at both conscious and unconscious levels, they are often unable to appreciate types of social work that are beyond the neoliberal ideology. Some social workers are unable to think outside of the box set of neoliberal consciousness to critically reflect on the impact of managerialist discourses in their practice. This was partly reflected in the discussions with some participants whose professional experiences were wholly confined to this period and they had some difficulty in seeing beyond the immediate horizon.

This hierarchical understanding of knowledge, which places emphasis on positivist paradigms and research-based evidence, was clearly considered by the participants to be of high status associated as it is with the university world. This did not appear to be related with the ‘anti-intellectualism’ identified in strands of British social work by Jones (1996). Rather it was related to its limited utility within the complexity of practice and the availability of time to consider it properly. The recognition however of its status as high in comparison with life experience or practice knowledge created a discordant note at the heart of practice. Hence this adds to the sense of practitioners being at variance with major elements within the academic world whose rhetoric of research knowledge does not coincide with the reality of their everyday practice.

This could also be described as ‘cognitive dissonance’ which Festinger (1957) argued ‘is a state of tension that occurs whenever a person holds two cognitions simultaneously (ideas, attitudes, beliefs, opinions) that are psychologically inconsistent,’ thereby producing various stages of mental discomfort” (p.13).

Festinger (1957) conjectured that we represent the social world as a set of mental cognitions in which any type of knowledge we have about the world or ourselves, including our behaviours, attitudes can be considered a cognition (Cooper, 2012). He proposed that humans have an inner drive for internal psychological harmony and consistency in order to mentally function in the real world as we are sensitive to inconsistencies between actions and beliefs. Thus the internal inconsistency which leads to psychological discomfort is the motivating force to resolve the cognitive dissonance. This is done by making changes to justify the stressful behaviour, either by adding new parts to the cognition causing the psychological dissonance, or by actively avoiding social situations and/or contradictory information likely to increase the magnitude of the cognitive dissonance.

Tavris and Aronson (2007) apply Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance to various challenges to integrity in the professional arena. They note the morally ambiguous contexts that may arise in the public service field particularly for those employed in the caring professions:

“If you hold a set of beliefs that guide your practice and you learn that some of them are mistaken, you must either admit you were wrong and change your approach, or reject the new evidence. If the mistakes are not too threatening to your view of your competence and if you have not taken a public stand defending them, you will probably willingly change your approach, grateful to have a better one. But if some of those mistaken beliefs have made your client's problems worse, torn up your clients' family, or sent innocent people to prison then you... will have serious dissonance to resolve” (Tavris and Aronson 2007 pp. 101–102).

The process of reconciling dissonance can actually lead a practitioner to change their core beliefs with the passage of time because dissonance reduction basically involves a type of behaviour justification. As Ghore (2008) wryly comments ‘the deceptive “trick” is to enlist some self-justifying rationale to circumvent this troubling condition’!

Research suggests that people resolve the dissonance in one of three ways:

- i) They change the behaviour to align it with the dissonant

ii) They attempt to justify their behaviour through changing one of the dissonant cognitions;

iii) They attempt to justify their behaviour through adding new cognitions (Aronson et al., 2007; Burke et al. 2017).

This approach sheds light on the issues faced by social workers in my thesis in the face of the reductive approach to social work practice. Their formal qualifying education has equipped them with the knowledge and skills to undertake a job which in reality does not exist as taught. Hence the participants have a cognitive dissonance which is resolved by creating a dichotomy between real and ideal worlds which require different knowledges and approaches to the formal ones taught in universities. Thus they are almost forced to comply with the limited model of social work on offer even though it is inconsistent with his or her beliefs. In doing so, they can comfortably ignore much of the academic research knowledge which can be labelled as part of the ideal world and use only material considered suitable for this real world in which they practise social work. It is therefore possibly self-esteem maintenance. This then contributes to the theoretical fault lines which run through the centre of social work.

C) The Missing Link –the social worker

The participants all demonstrated a passion and commitment to their professional role. They were also able to articulate their thoughts about the issues facing social work and the knowledge and skills they thought were essential guides to practice. They were however rather more diffident and embarrassed in their discussions about the role of formal theory and research findings in practice.

From the experience of doing social work for various lengths of time from three to thirty years, there was an obvious variety of views from the participants about the application of theory to practice. The need for time and space to think about this application figured significantly in the transcripts with many identifying high cases and relentless pressure as a barrier. This is far from surprising as it is clear that social workers in the adult field are now only dealing with service users facing

considerable problems which require more attention. This is a major difference from social work practiced in the past which had much lower thresholds for intervention.

From the discussions with the participants, there was no belief in a real gap between knowledge and practice as all considered they used knowledge and theory daily in practice even if unconsciously and of experiential kinds. This concurs with Hackett's (2012) view who considers that practitioners do use theories but in an implicit fashion, as adaptable tools rather than rigid prescriptions.

There were comments made about the validity of some types of formal knowledge and its ability to be applied easily into practice. Usually however these processes were found to be the result of misunderstanding about application issues and too much emphasis from academic circles about research knowledge.

Although writing about child protection, Munro advocated a simple yet crucial principle of social work that practice should be "informed by knowledge of the latest theory and research" (Munro, 2011, p21.) Moreover we have already seen that practitioners in England are required to adhere to the HCPC standards of proficiency (Health and Care Professionals Council, 2012). Standard 13 asserts that registered social workers must 'understand the key concepts of the knowledge base relevant to their profession'. The KSS for Adults Social Workers also stresses "the need to apply a wide range of knowledge and skills ...to achieve best outcomes" (KSSA DoH 2015).

Applying research based knowledge to practice is a common topic in the academic literature (Heinsch, Gray, Sharland 2016; Armstrong et al. 2013; Hothersall, 2017). However, minimal interest is given to those application issues relating to more experiential or practice formed knowledge (Fook 2002; Hothersall 2017).

There has been much prominence given to evidence-based practice (EBP) in social work in the last few decades (Marsh and Fisher 2005; Payne 2015) much of which highlights its latent contribution to improvements in practice. However it is acknowledged that interest in this perspective is not generally reproduced in the

daily practice of social workers and that practitioners' use of theory and research is negligible (Sheppard, 1995a). Indeed Osmund (2006) highlights:

“So, while social work empirical research on knowledge use has offered some valuable insights into the functions of knowledge, there appears to be gaps as to whether these are mirrored in practice and whether knowledge serves other, as yet, unknown functions in practice” (Osmund 2006, p.224).

There are various explanations for the lack of interest and use of EBP including an inability to articulate theory and research knowledge (Drury-Hudson, 1999; Osmund and O'Connor, 2006) to limited time and resources (Gray et al., 2013; McDonald et al 2008). These constraints and limitations are accepted to some extent by the participants in the study but there was no real sense of rejection of research or its importance.

However, for knowledge to be valuable for practitioners, it needs to be relevant, contemporary and able to be used, or as Pawson et al. refers to as 'fit for purpose' (Pawson et al., 2003, p. 39). Tyson (1994) maintains that some research based on positivistic ideas has little practical application for social workers as the findings are too irrelevant or outdated for their practical experience. However, there is little evidence that qualitative research findings are employed, possibly because that too belongs to the research world. Practitioners are thus faced with a degree of ambivalence toward research knowledge as belonging to the 'ideal world'. They prefer to rely on more accessible and employable knowledge sources and more personal and interactive collaboration with team colleagues.

Petersen and Olsson (2015) also question evidence-based practice as a working strategy for relevant applied knowledge in social work. They argue that evidence-based practice suffers from a problem whereby a narrow view of evidence is prioritised at the cost of relevance to social work. Consequently they propose a 'praxis-based knowledge' which does not rely solely on strict scientific evidence, but welcomes different forms and sources of knowledge. Although such an approach would lie easily with the findings of this study, studies from other disciplines such as librarianship suggest that EBP can encompass such praxis based knowledge along with research evidence and local evidence. Their emphasis is more on the

applicability, 'because decision making is ultimately a local endeavour' (Koufogiannakis and Brettle 2016 p.14).

Clearly evidence-informed practice is a valid construct for social work but this needs to be understood against the backdrop of the fallible nature of knowledge. This includes a recognition of limits to the capacity of formal knowledge to provide answers to everything and the contestable nature of much social work decision making (Taylor and White, 2001; Hardwick and Worsley 2011).

Coupled with the considerable impact of neoliberalism on social work, the rise of postmodern perspectives has had a significant impact on social work in various ways, including the ideas about knowledge which has also shook the profession's philosophical foundations (Powell, 2001).

By replacing singular objective knowledge with the "the idea of multiple subjective truths" (Jani, Pierce, Ortiz, & Sowbel, 2011 p.284), postmodernism asserts meaning and 'truth' as created, and therefore only understood, through the language and the context of the local (Howe, 1994). Hence within the postmodern perspective that "all knowledge is relative and local" (Dyson and Brown 2006), the value of EBP was questioned due to its status as a privileged metanarrative which promoted the view that knowledge (or evidence) is objective, impersonal and context free. Metanarratives such as these, are generally considered to be the means by which societies and the elites (e.g. academic institutions and research centres) organise understanding of knowledge and culture and as such are described as 'dominant cultural orthodoxies' (Fook and Pease 1999). However, under the influence of postmodernism, the epistemological agnosticism about the absolute truth of metanarratives makes them less convincing as bearers of meaning. For the participants in the study, there appears a more comfortable stance with 'domestic' narratives such as life experiences and practice knowledge and life lived amidst the 'ordinary'. This does not suggest rejection of academic or research type of knowledge but perhaps an acceptance of 'epistemological pluralism since:

"There are competing explanations rather than one single or dominant explanation available to understand human behaviour and the environment" (Forte 2014 p. 22).

However, although it may be valid for social work to embrace any epistemological orientation, the choice is surely not without implications. As Caputo et al (2015) notes:

“By equating postmodernism with empiricism, as an alternative way of knowing, social work has compromised its credibility and jeopardises its future” (Caputo et al. (2015 p.645).

Social workers are possibly faced with an ambivalent attitude towards EBP because there are discursive ways in understanding the composition of social work knowledge as either a view of social work as a science, or as an art (Bent-Goodley, 2015). Such debates endure (Grady and Keenan, 2014) with many arguing that, to varying degrees, social work is both art and science albeit in tension with one another in practice (Healy 2008). To Healy (2008 p.195) however the epistemological question for contemporary social work ‘cannot be whether we should have science or art, but rather, what should be the relationship between these ways of knowing.’

The continuing discussions around the application of knowledge in practice is unsurprising in view of the process of differentiation in knowledge each with its spheres of understanding and sources for the production of meaning. This can generate an increased and improved range from which the practitioner can choose but undoubtedly the current situation is one of fragmentation with little sense of consistency and coherence in use and application of knowledge.

This problem in transmission, application or integration is usually seen in binary relation between theory and practice but the participants in my study suggested that the binary model is unsustainable and instead we should consider a triangular representation of theory, practice and social worker. This would require a ‘practitioner turn’ to recognise the centrality of the social worker in collaboration with her/his ‘community of practice’ (Edwards 2010; Hothersall 2017).

Indeed this is reminiscent of Parton who suggests that social work’s “central and unique characteristic is the way theory and practice are closely interrelated” (p. 449

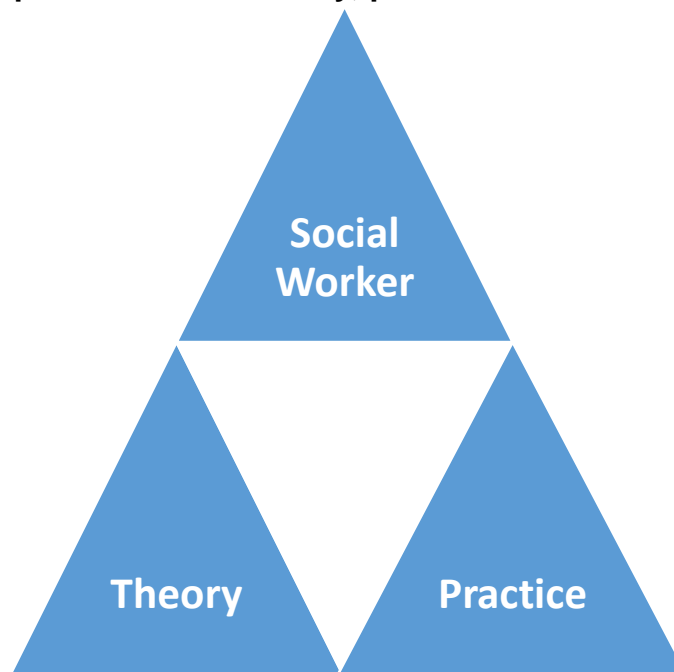
- 450) and they are closely related in the subject of the practitioners. The terms used by the participants such a 'funnel', 'vessel', 'link' indicated the role, for good or ill, that the social worker played in bringing knowledge and practice together through their skill and ingenuity. This brings to mind the use of self in social work from a more psychoanalytic branch of social work which was the term used to describe the practitioner as the subject of the discipline who acts as the agent of change in an effective helping relationship (Biestek 1957). Indeed Sheafor & Horejsi, (2003) state that:

“Use of self is the term used in social work to describe the skill of purposefully and intentionally using his or her motivation and capacity to communicate and interact with others in ways that facilitate change” (Sheafor & Horejsi, 2003 p.69).

Moreover Cournoyer (2000 p 35) writes that:

“Because social work practice involves the conscious and deliberate use of oneself, *you* become the medium through which knowledge, attitudes, and skill are conveyed. . . .”

Figure 3. Triangular representation of theory, practice and the social worker



Practice is a complex business mainly because the success of any intervention is interwoven with the phenomenological attributes of both service users and practitioners (Prynn, 2008). Thus practitioners have to deal with major questions such as identifying what they contribute to a relationship, how this impacts on

decisions and what individual and structural power imbalances influence practice (Fook, 2002).

Social work is quite unique in its approach due to the emphasis placed upon the worker's use of self within the relationship with the service user but, in looking at the literature, the understanding of the term is vague and nebulous. England (1986) describes it as 'the persistent mystery of the intuitive use of self' which is:

“an issue too central, too essential to be given only a marginal theoretical status... it is a problem which must be solved (England 1986 p.40).

Wilber (2000) has offered a definition which may be useful in giving some sense of clarity to the term when he writes of the self as:

“that which attempts to integrate or balance all the components of the psyche at any given level of consciousness development , including body mind or soul” (Wilber 2000, p.4)

Nevertheless, despite the ongoing debate about its meaning, research has revealed that the use of self clearly affects the quality of the social work relationship and practice outcomes more than the use of any particular technique (Howe 1993; 2008). This emphasis on the use of self as central to the professional relationship between service user and practitioner was imagined by participants in my study as the embodied link between knowledge on the one hand and practice on the other. This did not merely refer to experiential knowledges developed in practice but 'top down' knowledge which needed to be filtered and personalised to inform or intervene in the life of service user. Although the language seems rather dated, Biestek (1957, p.4) describes it thus: 'a knowledge of the science of human relations is necessary because the caseworker deals intimately with people'. He argued that 'knowledge alone without skill in relationship is inadequate' and crucially he believed that 'the purpose of the relationship is a part of the overall purpose of the entire casework process' (Biestek, 1957, p.4, p.2).

D) Practice Wisdom

There has been a comprehensive debate about practice wisdom in the last 30 years involving various authors who have added different emphases to our evolving understanding of the subject (DeRoos, 1990; Dybicz, 2004; Goldstein, 1990; Klein and Bloom, 1995; O'Sullivan, 2005; Roca, 2007; Scott, 1990; Sheppard, 1995a; Thompson and West, 2013). De Roos (1990) described practice wisdom as being an amalgam of both knowing-in-action and reflecting-in-action which involves the tacit knowledge that has been internalised, and reflecting-in-action, which refers to the conscious thought about assessing one's performance with predicted outcomes (DeRoos, 1990; Schon, 1983, 1987). De Roos (1990) and Scott (1990) regarded practice wisdom as a form of tacit knowledge (Poliyani 2009).which is intuitive, personal, and embodied. Ooi et al., (2016) too consider that knowledge based purely on scientific research limits the different ways of knowing and inhibits the discovery and validation of other forms of knowledge such as practice wisdom.

The role of practice wisdom had a significant profile in the discussions with participants and their comments can be reflected in the definitions of practice wisdom of De Roos (1990), Goldstein (1990) and Sheppard (1995a) where both professional and life experiences have a role to play in knowledge creation. Mitchell (2011) highlights practice wisdom as:

“practice-based knowledge that has emerged and evolved primarily on the basis of practical experience rather than from empirical research” (Mitchell 2011, p. 208)

Moreover this learning from experience of direct work is considered by Klein and Bloom (1995, p.801) as ‘a personal and value-driven system of knowledge that emerges out of the transaction between the phenomenological experiences of the client situation.’ Hence its value lies in the possible ease of its applicability to other similar situations.

From the discussions with participants, the experience of learning from others in the team was of paramount importance in their acquisition and development of new knowledge. From within their practice, the practitioners connected to the informal learning communities which provided peer learning and support to each other as a way to develop tacit knowledge and practice wisdom for working professionals (Carson et al., 2011). Indeed Carson et al. (2011) argue that practice wisdom can be acquired through 'iterative and generative learning strategies such as team building, mentoring and professional development policies within organizations' as well as informal sessions with other experienced team members (Carson et al. (2011) pp. 268–269). Cooper and Lousada (2005) argue that this process is learning from 'lived experience'. Whilst DeRoos (1990) portrays practice wisdom as an 'evolutionary epistemology' where social workers amass information, ideas, ideologies and judgements that have been productive in working with service users. Indeed practice wisdom is generalised when the knowledge relating to a specific context is transferred by the social worker in such a way that the original principle, derived from a certain intervention approach, is substantiated by reference to a new context (Fook 2002; Fook and Gray 2004). This knowledge is produced from a specific personal and social context, unlike theoretical knowledge, which as Kwong (1996) notes is only possible if it is founded on the generalisation from, and decontextualized of, its contexts.

There were other concerns expressed in the transcripts about the lack of rigorous examination of practice wisdom in view of its tacit, personal, experiential and oral nature, often expressed in anecdotal form. Can practice wisdom be considered evidence on which to base practice? Clearly not if, like in the positivist tradition, it is assumed that research develops theory, which is then deductively applied in practice in the form of skills and techniques. In this perspective, practice wisdom is viewed as a lesser type of knowledge, subordinate to the validated claims of empirical research (Dybicz 2004).

Bouffard and Reid, (2012, p.5) described the nature of evidence as ... "information bearing on the truth or falsity of a proposition". However, as we have seen, postmodern epistemological accounts reject the idea of one truth and introduced what may be described as the 'relativist turn' in epistemology. Consequently

scientific research is displaced as the sole knowledge that informs EBP (Ooi, 2016) as from a relativist perspective:

“the validity of all knowledge claims is contingent upon the spatiotemporal specificity of the sociohistorical context in which they are raised. On this view, *epistemic validity* is — always and unavoidably — *context-dependent*.” (Susen 2015 p.40)

In other words, we view our knowledge and values as if they were universal truths instead of constructions within a particular social and historical space or, as Heidegger avers a "cultural clearing" (Cushman, 1995).

The 'relativist turn' in epistemology may well have invigorated the epistemology of social work by supplying a useful corrective to more rigid forms of positivist approaches which Rein and White (1981) pithily expressed as "science makes knowledge, practice uses it" (p.36). Moreover, it has helped to highlight the possible existence of multiple realities, multiple narratives and multiple 'truths' and accordingly increased humility and flexibility towards the complexity of knowledge positions (Bader 1998). Undoubtedly this has heightened the profile of more experiential based knowledge such as practice wisdom and contributed to the critique of EBP within social work which challenged the view that scientific knowledge is the only valid basis for EBP (Ashcroft, 2004; van Baalen & Boon, 2015).

Practice wisdom is not a very transparent and open concept in the transcripts but it seems to refer to the ability to call upon material gained from previous experiences from a variety of sources. Some of these were personal to the practitioner's life or work, some from other colleagues and others from more formal knowledge from their training courses. However, it was not only knowledge that counted as important but the practitioner's value base that worked as an adhesive to hold the stuff together.

Practice wisdom is not only the tacit, practical, and accumulated amalgam of various types of knowledge which are obtained and stockpiled for repeatedly applying to cases. Goldstein's (1990) ideas about practice wisdom are important considering it

to be more a 'process' rather than possessed characteristics, and he views it as the application of 'insights, skill, and values' in competent practice (Goldstein, 1990, p.41). Dybicz (2004, p.199) too states that it is 'more of a process than a product' requiring an appreciation of the need for new knowledge. In a similar vein, Collins and Daley (2011) describe it as a way of integrating and making sense of the multiple, varied and ambiguous sources of information that practitioners must engage with and then apply to specific cases. Litchfield (1999) explains practice wisdom as 'a process of practice and reflexive development of theory within it; a form of praxis' (p. 62). Thus practice wisdom embraces the art and science of social work practice and bridges the traditional gap between theory (knowing that), and practice (knowing how) (D'Cruz et al 2007).

As Thompson and West (2013) suggest prudent practitioners acknowledge not only their own knowledge and procedures in practice, but they also accept their own limitations and the service user's expertise:

“ wisdom lies in intuitively recognizing when deficiencies present a need for further theoretical and procedural knowledge and when there is a need for deference to client or other knowledge” (Thompson and West 2013 p.125).

Such 'wisdom' is called upon to handle difficulty, complexity, and uncertainty by making sound judgements (Chun-Sing Cheung 2016). Thus it accompanies 'aporetic' conditions which require deliberations with oneself regarding uncertainty or doubt about how to proceed. It is this process that happens as practitioners integrate new information through a process of reflection that leads to making changes to problem-solving action (DeRoos, 1990). Scott (1990) considers that it is based on intuition, since practitioners often find it hard to expound the principles underlying their practice. She conceptualises it as involving methods that include such things as interpretation, reflexivity and social construction that help in the development of hypotheses. The key factors contributing to its development are identified as case comparisons and formal and informal supervision (Scott, 1990). This is highlighted in the transcripts as a main way of professional development and learning which as John says 'becomes part of you, it becomes the main part of your bag of tools'. Its value lies in the fact that the solutions offered by social work have to be tailored to each individual's problems and as Isabelle mentioned 'it is an

individual thing based on your experience of deploying your arsenal of skills.’ In this way, practice wisdom is more akin to a living organism which grows and develops in response to its environment. It cannot be rigid and static with prefabricated and prescriptive solutions to problems (Rode 2017). Indeed it is this tailored nature which is flexible and malleable that helps in bridging the practice/ theory gap.

The problem remains with practice wisdom that it is personalised knowledge which is local, oral and has difficulty in wider application due its private ‘quasi domestic’ nature. Moreover although it was recognised by the participants in my study as significant knowledge for practice, it has not been ‘the subject of empirical study, but only academic discussion’ (Cheung 2015, p.259). It appears that although postmodern epistemology has enhanced the value and status of practice wisdom as a type of ‘indigenous’ knowledge, it has failed to demonstrate how the practitioner can use the data to thoroughly validate their knowledge and develop more accurate forms of this knowledge (Bader 1998). By arguing that positivist types of accuracy are not possible or desirable, the option of describing or operationalizing their own systems of validation which must inform practice, are ignored. But in the ‘helping professions’, the practitioner is required to ensure that their interventions are ethical and are on the "right" track, are concordant with the service user, that they are “working” and that the service user is "getting somewhere". These judgements require at least some type of informal system of validation which can demonstrate some indication of usefulness (Bader 1998). Some form of validation is required and several participants referred to concerns about the reliability of practice wisdom derived from personal experiences and the possible idiosyncratic knowledge which may develop from practice experiences (O’Sullivan 2005). Such views are a reminder of the work of Zeira and Rosen (2000) who propose that the utility of such an implicit, haphazard, and disorganized wisdom may exceed its reputation (Chun-Sing Cheung 2017).

However, for practice wisdom to be better appreciated as a form of evidence, it has to be relevant, ‘fit for use’ (Pawson et al., 2003, p.39) and presented in a form that is capable of being used. In order to pursue this process, more research is required into the workings of its internal mechanisms if it is to move forward as authentic and

legitimate evidence. Schalock et al., (2011) suggest that the significance of evidence should be determined through a three part process consisting of:

- i) analysis of the constituent parts of the evidence, how it has been collated to evidence indicators for effectiveness;
- ii) evaluation which examines the integrity of the evidence and the level of confidence in such proof through careful appraisal of the results and
- iii) interpretation which evaluates evidence in the light of practice, addressing practitioner expertise on delivering interventions and their judgement on effectiveness.

Various tools are available to determine the quality of research that would be required in evaluating practice wisdom. The TAPUPAS framework devised by Pawson et al (2003) referred to Chapter Three of this thesis is one such tool but Long et al. (2006) argue that although the TAPUPAS framework is largely applicable, not all of the standards are appropriate for different types of study. Orme and Shemmings (2010 p.75) highlight a number of 'key questions' that can be used as part of a critical evaluation of social work research. These are:

- How relevant is the study to the review question?
- How much information does it contribute?
- How trustworthy are its findings?
- How generalisable are its findings?
- Was it conducted ethically?

(SCIE 2012)

At the current time, there are more questions than answers about the efficacy of practice wisdom. Its apparent value is predicated on the complexity and uncertainty of human life and the contingent nature of social work practice. This involves working alongside marginalised people at difficult transition moments in their lives. The attempt to assist people properly at these points in their lives is the driving force to ensure that interventions are timely, effective and appropriate. The use of such frameworks above are not an attempt to force practice wisdom into a type of scientific paradigm but an opportunity to enable practitioners to conceptualise and codify this wisdom in order to ensure its efficacy and suitability for use with service

users. Of course practice wisdom is a 'different way of knowing' but this does not exclude all attempts to understand it more in order to share its wisdom to a wider audience. As Chu and Tsiu, (2016) note:

“Experienced frontline practitioners are repositories of knowledge that is highly personal and often unarticulated ... the university should provide conceptual tools and resources that allow practitioners to use their ability to make professional judgements, grasp scenarios accurately, mobilize knowledge and learn from both their successes and failures. There has never been a better opportunity for the university and frontline practitioners to work together in order to discover and create knowledge through action, to pass on age-old wisdom and to make context specific knowledge generally accessible” (Chu and Tsiu, 2016, p.52).

5.5 Strengths and limitations of the research process

The use of IPA may be unusual in dealing with this subject as it is often used in understanding various health conditions or personal events from the service user/patient perspective. However IPA can be used with any topic and researcher who wishes to explore the lived experience of a particular small group of people. The methodology offers an approach that embraces the importance of individuals' perceived experiences and the value in exploring the idiosyncratic accounts of small samples of 'expert groups'. I did not wish to examine the subject from a purely intellectual or cognitive angle about the content of their knowledge as if it was a test of their abilities in knowledge of social work. Rather my interest was in their experience of these processes and how the participants made sense of this area which is the basis of their professional involvement with service users whether they are conscious of it or not.

This study has presented the findings of semi-structured interviews with ten social workers, seven female and three male, who support adults (18+) living in the community with various difficulties emanating from age, disability or illness. In view of its idiographic nature of IPA, the purpose of the study was not particularly to make generalisations about the experiences of all social workers in the adult field. Thus there is more of an emphasis on the possible transferability of findings from group to group rather than generalisation. Smith et al. (2009 p.4) also argue for 'theoretical

generalisability', where the reader may be able to 'assess the evidence in relation to their existing professional and experiential knowledge'.

The participants were a selective group of social workers currently involved in the whole range of adult work, who had responded to my request to discuss their experiences of using knowledge in practice. Moreover although in one sense they were a relatively homogeneous group which IPA research requires (Smith et al.,2009), as qualified practitioners, they had a different range of current and past experiences, and had been in practice, post qualification, from thirty to three years. Consequently these differences may well have impacted on their views and responses.

There is no claim that the participants are typical of all social workers in the adult field. The study was undertaken following IPA trajectory which is by its nature, small scale, idiographic and exploratory. It was undertaken in a very specific period marked by austerity in public service spending and considerable debate about the role, function and preparedness of social workers to do their job effectively. Importantly, it also focused on individual participants whose lived experiences of their professional lives was very different highlighting as Kvale (2007) observes that the qualitative interview is "a construction site of knowledge" (p. 21). It is unwise to say that the account and interpretations in this study are true or that different researchers would find similar findings. Moreover the idiopathic nature of the ideas, perspectives, experiences, and interpretations examined in the discussions mean that comprehensive and general claims are not possible. Indeed IPA has been accused of resulting in dualism or opposition between 'theme' and 'idiography' (Wagstaff et al.2014 p.11). The conflict between the idiographic emphasis and the discovery of themes can present problems as the quest for common themes can diminish the emphasis on the idiographic.

From the qualitative angle of the study, a follow up interview would also have been useful, returning to the participants with the transcripts and preliminary analyses. This would have valuable in discussing my interpretations of the data and assessing the reliability of my superordinate and subordinate themes. Unfortunately however,

it was not possible to pursue this strategy in view of the time constraints and availability of the participants. Indeed it was difficult to arrange the initial interviews without encroaching upon their time and patience for further consultations.

Despite potential limitations, the findings may aid sense making in relation to how this group of social workers experience the core area of their work as they grapple with the many complexities of daily practice. Moreover the light thrown on these often hidden experiences may inform other practitioners' understanding of their own internal processes as they seek to understand and intervene in the lives of others. Thus IPA may have much to contribute to our understanding of a phenomenon, and as Warnock reminds us the focus on the particular can help illuminate the universal (Warnock, 1987).

Throughout the analytical process, I was conscious that my prior assumptions and experience in social work education may have influenced my engagement with, and interpretation of the findings. In addition the cross-case analysis was quite dense with the complexity of participant discussions and my responsibility to identify resonance and dissonance, whilst taking a systematic approach. However by following Smith et al's (2009) systematic approach, the thoroughness of the research was maintained by constantly revisiting the participant transcripts throughout the process via close engagement with the hermeneutic circle. The development of the superordinate and subordinate themes resulted from the use of IPA, focusing on hermeneutic, ideographic and contextual interpretation. They emerged in different ways with some suggested by the participants' own language and emphasis without the need for significant interpretation. However other themes developed through the constant re-examination of texts, both written and on audio tape recordings and use of the interview diary to dig deeper into the meaning.

I was conscious that what I interpreted as significant in their experience was influenced by my own bias, as I was not a neutral observer. This meant some of the issues the participants discussed had more importance for me than others. This can be seen as a limitation in the study, in that I adopted a less objective and critical stance towards their discussions perhaps, than one who is less immersed in these

practices. Alternatively, this can also be seen as a strength, as being conversant with the language, meanings and understandings embedded in this practice, enhanced my ability to interpret their behaviours.

5.6 Summary

The main themes of this study have been discussed in line with the available evidence, highlighting the significant findings and considering their relevance in relation to the aims of this study. The aim of this research was to explore the lived experience of the participants in their use and application of knowledge in practice. The first and second objectives were to explore the types of knowledge which social workers use in practice and the origins and purpose of such knowledge. These include:

- Formal knowledge gained from professional training and developed from research and academic sources
- Procedural and policy knowledge acquired from governmental legislation and policy developments and from the agency setting which involving practical 'know how' of how the agency functions in line with policy and procedures.
- Life experience from the personal experiences, connected with relationships, employment or family practices. The participants viewed their life experiences as a type of knowledge which gave them particular understandings into the position of service users. The individual nature of their lived experience was appreciated as a potential resource for practice but they did not consider life experience as a replacement for professional education and training.
- Practice wisdom which has various distinct potential sources. These include life experience derived from the process of living in society and interaction with others; knowledge gained from professional education, specifically research and ideas; and knowledge gained from the performance of social work practice including casework, and from informal collective discussions with colleagues.

To some extent, the findings reported here echo some of the existing research findings on use of knowledge in practice which indicate that research knowledge is little used and that experiential types of knowledge are more common. However, this research adds an additional dimension to the body of social work research on eliciting the uses of knowledge in practice. Indeed the study shows that knowledge is used primarily to understand service user lives and problems, to subvert eligibility criteria where it is thought oppressive and to demonstrate the proficiency of the participants to managers, colleagues and other disciplines. Use of knowledge in this way appears to be influenced by the neoliberal ideology which pervades the realm of social care practices in the UK.

The third objective of the research was to examine the often referred to 'gap' or 'space' between theory and practice and whether it is real or imagined. The findings demonstrate that the participants did not consider there was a gap between knowledge and practice and that they experienced some confusion about what constitutes acceptable knowledge. This was more about the utility of knowledge rather than its validity of knowledge. Participants rationalised the disconnect of theory and practice with some referring to the 'real versus the ideal world' and exhibiting a kind of cognitive dissonance to justify their actions.

This study also demonstrates that rather than there being a gap between theory and practice, the practitioner is the link between theory and practice thus highlighting a triangular relationship instead of the often referred to binary configuration between the academy and practicum (see figure 3) . It also suggests a 'practitioner turn' which facilitates a clearer understanding of the role of practice wisdom which, despite its shortcomings, appears in the transcripts as an embodied knowledge which surpasses issues of transmission.

Practice wisdom develops through the experience of 'doing' social work in the context of our professional relationships and the social circumstances in which they are played out (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In the social sciences especially, knowledge remains far from absolute. As we have read, social workers operate in an environment full of unaccounted and unexplained variables and it is often observed

that social work decision-making is characterized by substantial degrees of uncertainty and complexity (Munro 2011). Webb (2001 p.63) argues that more empiricist approaches neglect 'the complexity of actual decision-making processes in social work. A more complex relationship exists between social work interventions and decisions made by social work agencies which are governed by imperatives which fall outside the workings of a rational actor'. Practice wisdom, however, as a type of process works with complexity and facilitates the application of, and narrows the gap between, theory and practice.

Chapter 6 – Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

The aim of the research was to explore how social work practitioners use knowledge and what issues they face in applying knowledge to practice. The research is based on interpretation of their experience. As asserted by Heidegger (1962) it is impossible to live and have experiences without interpretation. Participants presented their perspectives, through semi structured interviews, which supports the hermeneutic process of moving between knowledge and experience (McConnell-Henry et al. 2009).

With this aim in mind, the following objectives were addressed;

- To explore the types of knowledge which social workers use in practice.
- To consider the origins and purpose of such knowledge.
- To examine the often referred to 'gap' or 'space' between theory and practice and whether it is real or imagined?

The study adopted IPA to explore the phenomenon of knowledge use and application in social work. In doing so, three super-ordinate themes were identified which were discussed at length in the context of their accompanying subordinate themes in Chapters Four and Five.

- A Complex Process;
- The Use of Knowledge/Functionality;
- 'Putting it into Practice'.

6.2 Overview of key findings relating to the research

In contrast with the literature which focuses on students or newly qualified social workers or child care practitioners, this study examines the issue of knowledge use in practice with experienced social workers in the adult field.

Like most professional qualifications, the social work qualification is the important foundation on which to develop full professional status and identity. However, it must be acknowledged that social work expertise itself cannot be grasped fully in

training. The participants in my study showed no significant variation in their understanding or response to the issues raised despite the large variations in post qualification experience. This study suggests that epistemic issues are a perennial issue for social workers and should be revisited throughout Continuing Professional Development events.

The study highlighted the complexity of social work with adults which is often overlooked in the literature which prefers to highlight its routine, quasi administrative nature. However, the thesis noted the complexity of much practice with adults is pervasive particularly in the light of stringent eligibility criteria which means practitioners are only dealing with those in dire need of intervention to aid their independence and wellbeing. Thus many of the participants considered the importance of this was overlooked by the academic community. Participants maintain that their role is multifaceted and deals with the whole range of complex adult problems from safeguarding to intricate and demanding capacity issues. They clearly accepted that there are very real problems facing adult services and they do not have the luxury of helping those with low level needs as in previous years. However, they rejected the idea that helping people to overcome barriers to independent living is of low value nor 'real social work.'

From the findings, the present situation of social work can be said to be marked by 'epistemological crises' and these seem mainly to be found in the paradoxes and aporias of post-modernism. These include the status and diverse range of knowledge available to social work, functionality issues and application problems.

In the findings and discussion in Chapters Four and Five, the demise of Cartesian certainty has questioned the traditional authority of professional knowledge with specialist knowledge challenged as the exclusive domain of a particular professional group.

This postmodern mentality characterised by pluralism, relativism and the demise of dualism can be seen in the inclusion of different types of knowledge in social work as exemplified in the responses of the participants in Chapter Four. The issue of life experience as a kind of knowledge for practice demonstrates the eclecticism and

challenge to more legitimate forms of knowing. However, it raises problems, as although life experience appears to be widely used by participants in practice, it has limitations and without evidence of its efficacy. Its mode of acquisition is not through scientific research but based on lived experience which although lauded as essential in some areas, others consider it restrictive and suspect.

Notwithstanding the limitations of 'alternative knowledge', the findings demonstrate that the starting point of social work should perhaps not be a set of dogmatic propositions about social work or primarily in the content of social work knowledge. Rather it should be in social work as a process as something that the social worker does. It is through this process that the content comes into the picture suggesting that perhaps the foundations of knowledge come not before but during social work and after the investigations of texts and sources.

This leads to a significant idea in the findings. This embodied understanding is overlooked in the 'theory/practice' debates and thus the role of social worker is marginalised in the application to practice debates. We read regularly of theory/practice gap and other issues relating to theory and practice as if in a binary relationship. However, from the discussions with the participants, they do not accept the idea of a gap or hiatus between theory and practice. Rather it would be more appropriate to think of a triangular relationship with the social worker as the link in the process between theory and practice. Hence not a gap but a person.

In Chapter One, Edwards (2010) was noted as arguing for a renewed form of being a professional in the public sector. This form would uphold the service ideal and highlight knowledge in practices as a resource to be recognised and utilised in work on complex problems. This aligns with my findings about the importance of the 'practitioner turn' in the theory/practice debate which reflects the idea that knowledge is both constructed and reconstructed as required, and is contingent on situation and context. Thus the agency of the social worker is vital in the development of new knowledge. Professional knowledge is thus recognised as rooted in professional practice, not fixed or given, but as a facility produced and reproduced in recurrent social work practices.

This findings demonstrated too that the participants used knowledge from diverse sources and applied it in ways which they felt was required in a specific context. This suggests that implicitly they took a more pragmatic approach to knowledge. Hothersall (2017) posits this is justified if the intention of the adoption of (rationalist pragmatism) and use of a specific type of knowledge is to generate outcomes that improve performance or wellbeing. This is largely consonant with the Aristotelian idea of 'eudemonia'. Hothersall (2017) argues further that:

“Understanding how knowledge ‘happens’, what shape it can take, why and how it is always and necessarily provisional and context-based, and how it can grow and change, can help practitioners feel more comfortable in using the rich variety of knowledge forms they possess and come into contact with on a daily basis” Hothersall (2017 p.55/56).

6.3 Implications for policy and practice

It is debateable if recommendations for policy and practice can be made solely on the findings from a single study using IPA which focuses on the lifeworld of the various participants. However a number of suggestions around future policy and practice arising from the findings of this study might be made.

There is a clear current imbalance in research and academic writing between child care and work with adults. Hence the needs of practitioners in the adults sector is often inferred from research on child care workers. This ought to be addressed if we are to obtain a fuller picture of the range of issues facing such practitioners.

There is a lack of attention given to the learning needs of experienced practitioners with adults as a whole. Research mainly focuses on education, learning and socialisation of student social workers and newly qualified practitioners. However, the pace of change and increasing generic arrangement of working with adults is overlooked in the literature.

The confusion over the nature and types of knowledge available to practitioners needs to be addressed on pre and post qualifying courses as well as CPD events. It would be helpful if some introduction to the philosophy of knowledge (epistemology) be included with students understanding the inductive and deductive approaches underlying the formal and more experiential types of knowledge.

Practitioners do not appear to have the language and knowledge to address these epistemological questions and it would help that they had some understanding of the ways knowledge is developed and applied in practice.

The concept of practice wisdom should be introduced and critiqued on qualifying courses and more attention given to it in continuing professional development

Closer involvement between the university and Practice Educators should ensure that the latter also have a more mature understanding of the epistemology and how knowledge is conceptualised and used within practice. This would help lay the foundations for subsequent learning.

A clear understanding of pre modern, modernist and postmodernist influences on the development of social work would be beneficial to practitioners at all stages of their professional life.

6.4 Recommendations for future research

The rather small empirical research of how knowledge is conceptualised and used within social work practice suggests the need for further research into this area. However this also requires the consideration of methodological and epistemological questions as to what constitutes knowledge and theory and how do we capture it. The use of supervision in social work practice too, particularly under the conditions of neoliberalism, appears to be under researched. There are numerous concerns expressed in this study and elsewhere about its ineffectiveness but little evidence of how practitioners engage with it to deal with the complexities of case management.

6.5 Contribution to knowledge

This research project has made significant and original contributions to what was already known, including a fresh perspective on the use and application of knowledge in social work. Firstly, the findings presented in this thesis enhance our understanding of the range of knowledge used and how knowledge is used in practice. This includes not only more obvious use of knowledge to understand and

intervene but to demonstrate proficiency to social work colleagues and to those professionals on the wider multi-disciplinary stage. Knowledge is thus used to prove one's worth and demonstrate a professional persona and accountability to the agency. The use of knowledge to covertly subvert and challenge eligibility criteria to ensure vulnerable service users receive services is a novel finding and demonstrates a particular social work response to the difficulties of a neoliberal environment which is perceived as oppressive and unjust.

Similarly the study has found that the use of knowledge has both a personal and a collegiate element in the form of unofficial and informal 'communities of practice' (Wenger 2007). These support the use and development of knowledge directly bypassing the more formal supervision sessions which many felt were infrequent monitoring exercises.

The study also makes a meaningful and unique methodological contribution as IPA has not been used in addressing the lived experience of those working in the adult sector of social work. One of the advantages of this type of study was the opportunity to experience social workers in real time, undertaking their everyday practice. This study was therefore concerned with the normal and the 'domestic', rather than on participants' recall of significant incidents. It was used to address the experiences of knowledge use and application which is innovative as the idiographic analysis reveals the individuality, idiosyncrasy and heterogeneity present within a small sample of practitioners. This study has highlighted to some degree, the utility of the approach for examining the epistemological issues facing practitioners within an IPA framework. Furthermore it has also given prominence to the often unheard voices of practitioners and suggests the need for a language that is more descriptive of their lived experiences rather than an academic articulation of the issues which seems alien to their task.

Reference List

Abbott, A. (1988). *The system of professions: An essay on the division of expert labor*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Adams, R., Dominelli, L., and Payne, M. (2009). *Critical Practice in Social Work*. (2ndEd). London, Palgrave MacMillan.

ADSS/NCH (1996). *Children Still in Need: Refocusing Child Protection in the Context of Children in Need*. ADSS/NCH, London.

Aguirre, R.T.P. and Bolton, K.W. (2014). Qualitative interpretative meta-synthesis in social work research; Uncharted territory. *Journal of Social Work*, 14 (3), pp. 279-294.

Alexanderson, K., Beijer, E., Bengtsson, S., Hyvönen, U., Karlsson, P.A. & Nyman, M. (2009). Producing and consuming knowledge in social work practice: Research and development activities in a Swedish context. *Evidence & Policy: A Journal of Research, Debate and Practice*, 5 (2), pp.127-139.

Allsup, R. E. (2005). A Response to Estelle R. Jorgensen, "Four Philosophical Models of the Relationship between Theory and Practice" in *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, 13 (1), pp.104-108.

Anastas, J.W. (2014). The Science of Social Work and Its Relationship to Social Work Practice. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 24 (5), pp.571-580.

Aram, J. D. and Salipante, P. F. Jr. (2003). Bridging scholarship in management: Epistemological reflections. *British Journal of Management*, 14, pp.189-205.

Archer, M. (1998). Introduction: Realism in the Social Sciences. In Archer, M., Bhaskar, R., Collier, A., Lawson, T. and Norrie, A. (Eds.) *Critical Realism, Essential Readings*. Pp.189-205. London, Routledge.

Argyris, C., and Schon, D.A. (1974). *Theory in Practice*, San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

- Aristotle (2009). *The Nicomachean Ethics*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Armstrong, R., Waters, E., Dobbins, M., Anderson, L., Moore, L., Petticrew, M., Clark, R., Pettman, T.L., Burns, C., Moodie, M., Conning, R and Swinburn, B (2013). Knowledge Translation Strategies to Improve the Use of Evidence in Public Health Decision Making in Local Government: Intervention, Design and Implementation Plan. *Implementation Science*, 8 (1), 1.
- Arnd-Caddigan, M. & Pozzuto, R. (2008). Types of knowledge, forms of practice. *The Qualitative Report*, 13 (1), pp.61–77.
- Aronson, E., Wilson, T., Akert, R., & Fehr, B. (2007). *Social psychology* (3rd Ed.). Toronto, Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Ashcroft, R. (2004). Current epistemological problems in evidence based medicine. *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 30 (2), pp. 131-135.
- Askeland, G.A. and Payne, M (2001). What is valid knowledge for social workers? *Social Work in Europe*. 8, (3), pp13-23.
- Ashwin, P. Boud, D.Coate, K. Hallett, F. Keane, E. (2015). *Reflective Teaching in Higher Education*, London, Bloomsbury.
- Asquith S., Clarke, C and Waterhouse L (2005). *The Role of the Social Worker in the 21st Century: A Literature Review*. Edinburgh, University of Edinburgh Department of Social Work
- Aveby, G., Per Nilsen, and Dahlgren, M.A. (2014). Ways of Understanding Evidence –Based Practice in Social Work: A Qualitative Study. *British Journal of Social Work*, 44 (6), pp 1366-1383.
- Avby, G., Nilsen, P., and Ellstrom, P. (2017). Knowledge use and learning in everyday social work practice: A study in child investigation work. *Child and Family Social Work*, 22 (S4), pp.51-61.
- Bader, M.J. (1998). *Postmodern Epistemology: The Problem of Validation and the*

Retreat from Therapeutics in Psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*. 8 (1), pp.1-32.

Baginsky, M. (2014). *Social work: training for the profession or task?* Winston Churchill Travelling Research Fellowship 2013. London, Winston Churchill Trust.

Baines, D. (2006). Social work and neo-liberalism: 'If you could change one thing': Social service workers and restructuring. *Social Work*, 59 (1), pp.20–34.

Balkow, K. and Erath, P. (2014). *Social Work Research and Practice –Towards a Productive Relationship*. Paper delivered at ERIS Conference, University of Hereford, October 2014.

Bamford, T. (2015). *A Contemporary History of Social Work: Learning from the Past*. Bristol, Policy Press.

Barbour, R.S. (1984). Social work education: tackling the theory–practice dilemma. *British Journal of Social Work*, 14 (6), pp. 557-578.

Barnes, H., Green, L. and Hopton, J. (2007). Social work theory, research, policy and practice – challenges and opportunities in health and social care integration in the UK. *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 15 (3), pp.191-194.

Barr, H., Goosey, D. and Webb, M. (2008). Social work in collaboration with other professions. Davies, M. (Ed.) *The Blackwell Companion to Social Work*. (3rd Ed.). Oxford, Blackwell. Pp. 277-286.

Bates, N., Immins, T., Parker, J., Keen, S., Rutter, L., Brown, K. and Zsigo, S. (2010). Baptism of fire: The first year in the life of a newly qualified social worker. *Social Work Education*, 29 (2), pp.152–170.

Bauman, Z. (1993). *Postmodern Ethics*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Bauman Z. (2011). *Collateral Damage: Social Inequalities in a Global Age*. Cambridge, Polity.

Becker, H. S. (1970). Whose side are we on? In Douglas, J. D. (Ed.). *The Relevance of Sociology*. New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts. Pp. 99-111.

Beckett, C. (2006). *Essential Theory for Social Work*. London, Sage.

Beddoe, L. (2015). Social work supervision for changing contexts. In Beddoe, L. and Maidment, J. (Eds.). *Supervision in social work: Contemporary issues*. London, Routledge. Pp. 82-95.

Beddoe, L., Karvinen-Niinikoski, S., Ruch, G., and Tsui, M. -S. (2016). Towards an international consensus on a research agenda for social work supervision: Report on the first survey of a Delphi study. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 46(6), pp.1568-1586.

Benner, P. (1994). Hermeneutic Phenomenology: A Methodology for family health and health promotion study. In Benner, P (Ed.) *Interpretive Phenomenology: Embodiment, caring, and ethics in health and illness*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage. Pp 71-72.

Bennett, P., Evans, R. and Tattersall, A. (1993). Stress and coping in social workers: A preliminary investigation. *British Journal of Social Work*, 23 (1), pp.31–44.

Bent-Goodley, T. B. (2015). The art and science of social work revisited: Relevance for a changing world. *Social Work*, 60 (3), pp.189–190.

Benton, T. and Craib, I. (2011). *The Philosophy of Social Science* (2nd Ed.). Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Beresford, P. (2016). *All Our Welfare: Towards Participatory Social Policy*. Bristol, Policy Press.

Beresford, P. (2010). Re-examining relationships between experience, knowledge, ideas and research: A key role for recipients of state welfare and their movements. *Social Work and Society*, 8 (1), pp. 6-21.

Beresford, P. and Boxall, K. (2012). Service users, social work education and knowledge for social work practice. *Social Work Education*, 31 (2), pp. 155-167.

Beresford, P. and Croft, S. (2004). Service Users and Practitioners Reunited: The Key Component for Social Work Reform. *British Journal of Social Work*, 34 (1), pp. 53–68.

Berger, P. and Luckmann, T. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality: A treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York, Anchor Books.

Biesta, G., Field, J., Hodkinson, P., Macleod, F., Goodson, I. (2011). *Improving Learning through the Lifecourse*. London, Routledge.

Biestek, F. P. (1957). *The Casework Relationship*, London, George Allen and Unwin.

Biggerstaff, D. and Thompson, A. R. (2008). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA): A Qualitative Methodology of Choice in Healthcare Research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 5 (3), pp. 214-224.

Bilic, P. (2015). 'Searching for a centre that holds' in the network of society; social construction of knowledge on, and with, English Wikipedia. *New Media and Society* 17(8), pp.1258-1276.

Blackler, F. (1995). Knowledge, Knowledge Work and Organizations: An Overview and Interpretation. *Organization Studies* 16 (6), pp.1021-1046.

Blom, B. (2009). Knowing or Un-knowing? That is the question: In the Era of Evidence Based Social Work. *Journal of Social Work*, 9 (2), pp.158-177.

Bolton, G. (2006). Narrative Writing: Reflective Enquiry into Professional Practice. *Education Action Research*, 14 (2), pp. 203-218.

Bouffard, M. and Reid, G. (2012). The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Evidence-Based Practice. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 29 (1), pp.1-24.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1998). *Acts of Resistance: Against the New Myths of Our Time*, Cambridge, Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1998). Utopia of endless exploitation: The essence of neoliberalism. In: *Le Monde Diplomatique* (3rd Ed., trans. J. J. Shapiro). Paris, LMD.

Bovaird, T. and Löffler E. (2011). From Engagement to Co-production: How Users and Communities Contribute to Public Services. In Pestoff, V., Brandsen, T. and Verschuere, B. (Eds.) *New Public Governance, the Third Sector and Co-Production*. London, Routledge.

Bowen, S. and Martens, P. (2005). Demystifying knowledge translation: learning from the community. *Journal of Health Services Research and Policy*, 10 (4), pp. 203–211.

Boyd, C. O. (2001). Phenomenology the method. In Munhall, P L. (Ed.). *Nursing research: A Qualitative Perspective* (3rd Ed.).Pp. 93-122.

Bradley, J. and Sutherland, V. (1995). Occupational stress in social services: A study of social workers and home help staff. *British Journal of Social Work*, 25 (3), pp. 313–331.

Bradt, L., and Bouverne-De Bie, M. (2009). Welfare to justice. *British Journal of Social Work*, 39, pp.113–127.

Brammer, A. (2015). *Social Work Law*. (4th Ed.). Harlow, Pearson Education.

Brandon, M., Belderson, P., Warren, C., Howe, D., Gardner, R., Dodsworth, J. & Black, J. (2008). *Analysing child deaths and serious injury through abuse and neglect: what can we learn? A biennial analysis of serious case reviews 2003–2005*. London, Department for Children, Schools and Families.

British Association of Social Workers (2018). *Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Work in England: Guidance on using the 2018 refreshed PCF*. Birmingham, BASW.

British Association of Social Workers. (2016). *Professional Capabilities Framework*. Retrieved at: <https://www.basw.co.uk/pcf>. Accessed 28th June 2018

Broadhurst K and Mason C. (2014). Social work beyond the VDU: Foregrounding Co-Presence in situated practice – why face-to-face practice matters. *British Journal of Social Work*, 44 (3), pp.578–595.

Broadhurst, K., Wastell, D., White, S., Hall, C., Peckover, S., Pithouse, A.,

- Thompson, K., Davey, D. (2010). Performing 'initial assessment': identifying the latent conditions for error at the front-door of local authority children's services. *British Journal for Social Work*, 40 (2), pp. 352-370.
- Brookfield, S. D. (1983). *Adult Learning, Adult Education and the Community*. Milton Keynes, Open University Press.
- Brown, J. S. and Duguid, P. (1998). Organizing knowledge. *California Management Review*, 40, pp. 90–111.
- Brown, K. and Young, N. (2008). Building capacity for service user and carer involvement in social work education. *Social Work Education*, 27 (1), pp. 84-96
- Bruner, J. (2004). Life as narrative. *Social Research*, 71 (3), pp.691–710
- Bryan, A. Hingley-Jones, H. and Ruch, G. (2016). Relationship based Practice Revisited. *Journal of Social Work Practice* 30 (3), pp. 229-233.
- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*, Oxford, OUP.
- Burck, C. (2005). Comparing qualitative research methodologies for systemic research: the use of grounded theory, discourse analysis and narrative analysis. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 27, pp. 237–262.
- Burke, S., Schmidt, G. Wagner, S., Hoffman, R., and Hanlon, N. (2017). Cognitive Dissonance in Social Work. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 11 (3), pp. 299-317.
- Butler, I and Pugh, R. (2004). The Politics of Social Work Research. In Lovelock, R. Lyons, K. and Powell, J (Eds.). *Reflecting on Social Work Discipline and Profession*. Aldershot, Ashgate.
- Butler, I. and Drakeford, M. (2001). Which Blair project? Communitarianism, social authoritarianism and social work. *Journal of Social Work*, 1 (1), pp. 7-20.
- Caelli, K. (2001). Engaging in phenomenology; is it more of a challenge than it needs to be? *Qualitative Research*, 11 (2), pp. 273-281.

Cambridge P., Parkes T (2006). The Tension between competence and specialization in adult protection: An evaluation of the role of the adult protection co-ordinator. *British Journal of Social Work*, 36 (2), pp. 299-321.

Campbell, D. T. (1988). *Methodology and epistemology for social science: Selected papers.* (Ed. E. S. Overman.) Chicago, IL, USA, University of Chicago Press.

Campbell, R. (2001). Heidegger: Truth as Aletheia. In Small, R (Ed) *A hundred years of phenomenology: Perspectives on a philosophical tradition.* Burlington VT, Ashgate. Pp.73-89.

Caplan, N. (1979). The Two Communities Theory and Knowledge Utilization. *American Behavioural Scientist*, 22(3), pp.459–470.

Caputo, R., Epstein, W., Stoesz, B., and Thyer, B. (2015). Postmodernism: A Dead End in Social Work Epistemology. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 51 (4), pp. 638–647.

Carew, R. (1979). The place of knowledge in social work activity. *British Journal of Social Work*, 9 (3), pp. 349–364.

Carey, M. (2016). Journey's end? From residual service to newer forms of pathology, risk aversion and abandonment in social work with older people. *Journal of Social Work*, 16 (3), pp. 344-361

Carey, M. (2008b.). The quasi-market revolution in the head: Ideology, discourse, care management. *Journal of Social Work*, 8, (4), pp. 341- 362.

Carey, M. (2008a). Everything must go? The privatization of state social work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 38 (5), pp. 918–935.

Carey, M. and Foster, V. (2011). Introducing 'Deviant' Social Work: Contextualizing the Limits of Radical Social Work whilst Understanding (Fragmented) Resistance within the Social Work Labour Process. *British Journal of Social Work*, 41 (3), pp. 576–593.

Carey, M. and Foster, V. (2013). Social Work, Ideology, Discourse and the Limits of Post-Hegemony. *Journal of Social Work*, 13 (3), pp.248-266

Carpenter, J., Webb, C., Bostock, L. and Coomber, C. (2015). Effective supervision in social work and social care. Research Briefing 43. London, SCIE.

Carr, W., and Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming Critical*. Lewes, Falmer Press.

Carson, A., M. and Fairbairn, G. J. (2002). The whole story: towards an ethical research methodology. *Nurse Researcher*, 10 (1), pp.15-29.

Carson, E., King, S. & Papatraianou, L. H. (2011). Resilience among social workers: the role of informal learning in the workplace. *Practice*, 23, (5), pp. 267–278.

Casselmann, B. (1972). On the practitioner's orientation towards research. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 42, (3), pp. 211-233.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*. London, Sage.

Christensen, L B, Johnson, R B and Turner, L A (2010). *Research Methods, design and analysis (11th Ed)*. Boston, MA, Allyn and Bacon.

Christie, A and Weeks, J (1998). Life experience: A neglected form of knowledge in social work education and practice. *Practice*, 10 (1), pp. 55-68.

Chu, W. and Tsui, M. (2008). The nature of Practice Wisdom in social work revisited. *International Social Work*, 51 (1), pp. 47-54

Chun-Sing Cheung, J. (2017). Practice wisdom in social work: an uncommon sense in the intersubjective encounter. *European Journal of Social Work*, 20 (5), pp. 619–629.

Clance, P. and Imes, S. (1978). The Imposter Phenomenon in high achieving women: Dynamics and therapeutic intervention. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, 15 (3), pp.241-247.

Clapton, G., Cree, V.E., Allan, M., Edwards, R. Forbes, R., Irwin, M., Paterson, W. and Perry, R. (2006). *Grasping the Nettle: Integrating Learning and Practice Revisited and Reimagined*. *Social Work Education*, 25 (6), pp. 645-656.

Clark, C.L. (1991). *Theory and Practice in Voluntary Social Action*. Aldershot: Avebury.

Clarke, A.E. (2005). *Situational Analyses: grounded theory after the postmodern turn*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.

Clark, C. (1995). Competence and Discipline in Professional Formation. *British Journal of Social Work*, 25 (5), pp.563–580.

Clarke, J and Newman, J. (1997). *The Managerial State*. London, Sage.

Clarke, J. (2004). Dissolving the Public Realm? The logics and limits of neo-liberalism. *Journal of Social Policy*, 33 (1), pp. 27–48.

Clarke, J. (1996). After social work. In Parton, N. (Ed). *Social Theory Social Change and Social Work*. London, Routledge.Pp.36-60.

Clegg, S., Kornberg, M. and Pitsis, T. (2005). *Managing and organisations. An introduction to theory and practice*. London, Sage.

Code, L. (1991). *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge*. New York, Cornell University Press.

Cohen, L., Mannion, L. and Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education (5th Ed)* .London/New York, Routledge, Farmer.

Cohen, S. (1975). It's all right for you to talk: Political and sociological manifestos for social work action. In Bailey, R. and Brake, M. (Eds.), *Radical Social Work*. London, Edward Arnold. Pp. 76–95).

Collier, A, (1994). *Critical Realism: An Introduction to Roy Bhaskar's Philosophy*. London, Verso.

Collingwood, P., Emond, R., and Woodward, R. (2008). The Theory Circle: A Tool for Learning and for Practice. *Social Work Education*, 27 (1), pp.70-83.

Collins, S. (2008). Statutory Social Workers: Stress, Job Satisfaction, Coping, Social Support and Individual Differences. *British Journal of Social Work*, 38 (6), pp.1173–1193.

Collins, E. and Daly, E. (2011). Decision making and social work in Scotland: The role of evidence and practice wisdom. Available at: www.iriss.org.uk/sites/default/files/decision-making-wisdom-iriss-2011.pdf. Accessed 15th May 2018.

Collinson, C. and Parcell, G. (2001). *Learning to Fly: Practical Lessons from one of the World's Leading Knowledge Companies*. New York, Capstone.

Cooper, A. and Lousada, J. (2005). *Borderline Welfare: Feeling and Fear of Feeling in Modern Welfare*. London, Karnac Books.

Cooper, J. (2012). Cognitive dissonance: Revisiting Festinger's end of the world study. In Smith, J. and Haslam, A. (Eds.), *Social psychology: Revisiting the classic studies*. Los Angeles, CA, Sage Publications. Pp. 42–56.

Corby, B., Shemmings, D., Wilkins, D. (2012). *Child Abuse: An Evidence Base for Confident Practice*. (4th.Ed.). Maidenhead, OUP.

Cournoyer, B. (2000). *The social work skills workbook (3rd Ed.)*. Belmont, CA. Wadsworth.

Cree, V. E. (2003). (Ed.). *Becoming a Social Worker*. London, Routledge.

Cree, V. E. (1995). *From Public Streets to Private Lives: the changing task of social work*. Aldershot, Avebury.

Cree, V.E. (2011). Introduction: reading social work in Cree, V.E. (Ed.) *Social Work: A Reader*. Abingdon, Routledge.

Cree, V.E., Macaulay, C. and Loney, H. (1998). *Transfer of Learning: A Study*. Edinburgh, Scottish Office Central Research Unit.

Creswell, J W. (1998). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five traditions*. London, Sage.

Creswell, J.W., Hanson, W.E., Plano, V.C., Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative Research Designs: Selection and Implementation. *The Counselling Psychologist*, 35 (2), pp.236-264.

Croisdale-Appleby, D. (2014). Re-Visioning Social Work Education: An Independent Review. London, Department of Health, available online at www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/285788/DCA_Accessible.pdf

Cross, K.P. (1981). *Adults as learners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Curnock, K. and Hardiker, P. (1979). *Towards Practice Theory; Skills and Methods in Social Assessments*. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. London, Sage Publications.

Cushman, P. (1995), *Constructing the Self, Constructing America. A Cultural History of Psychotherapy*. New York, Addison Wesley.

CWDC Research Team. (2009). *Newly qualified social workers. A report on consultations with newly qualified social workers, employers and those in higher education*. Leeds, CWDC.

Daley, B. J. (2001). Learning and professional practice: A study of four professions. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 52 (1), pp. 39–54.

Danermark, B. (2006). Socialt Arbete och Kunskap – Tre Metateoretiska Mönster [Social Work and Knowledge – Three Meta-Theoretical Patterns], in Blom, B., Morén, S., and Nygren, L. (Eds.) *Kunskap i Socialt Arbete [Knowledge in Social Work]* Stockholm: Natur och Kult. Pp.33–48.

Davies, B., Browne, J., Honan, E., Laws, C., Mueller-Rockstroh, B., and Ptersen, E. B. (2004). The ambivalent practices of reflexivity. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10 (3), pp. 360-389.

D'Cruz, H. and Jones M. (2004). *Social Work Research: Ethical and Political Contexts*. London, Sage.

DeMartini, J. R. and Whitbeck, L. B. (1986). Knowledge Use as Knowledge Creation. Re-examining the Contribution of the Social Sciences to Decision Making. *Science Communication: Linking Theory and Practice*, 7(4), pp.383–396.

Department of Health. (2015). Knowledge and skills statement for social workers in adult services. London, HMSO.

DeRoos, Y. S. (1990). The development of practice wisdom through human problem-solving processes. *Social Service Review*, 64, pp. 276–287.

Doel, M and Shardlow, S. (2005). *Modern Social Work Practice: Teaching and Learning in Practice Settings*. London, Routledge.

Doherty, P. and White, S. (2012). Knowledge for reflexive practice. In Gray, M., Midgely, J. and Webb, S.A. *Sage Handbook of Social Work*. London, Sage. Pp. 211-223.

Dominelli, L. (1996). De-professionalising social work: Anti oppressive practice, competences and post modernism. *British Journal of Social Work*, 26 (2), pp.153-175.

Dominelli, L (2005). Social work knowledge: Contested knowledge for practice. In Adams, R., Dominelli, L. and Payne, M. (Eds.). *Social Work Futures: Crossing Boundaries, Transforming Practice*. Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan. Pp. 223-236.

Dominelli, L. and Hoogvelt, A. (1996). Globalization and the Technocratization of Social Work. *Critical Social Policy*, 16 (47), pp. 45-62.

Dominelli, L. (2002). *Feminist Social Work: Theory and Practice*. Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Dominelli, L. and McLeod, E. (1989). *Feminist Social Work*. Palgrave, Macmillan.

Downie, R.S. and McNaughton, J. (2000). *Clinical Judgement Evidence in Practice*. Oxford, OUP.

Drauker, C. B. (1999). The critique of Heideggerian hermeneutical nursing research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 30 (2), pp. 360-373.

Dreyfus, H. L., & Dreyfus, S. E. (1998). Frictionless forecasting is a fiction. In Akerman, N. (Ed.). *The necessity of friction*. Boulder, CO, Westview Press. Pp. 267–289.

Dreyfus, H.L. and Wrathall, M.A. (2009). *A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism*. Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell.

Drury Hudson, J. (1997). A model of professional knowledge for social work practice. *Australian Social Work*, 50 (3), pp. 35-44.

Drury-Hudson, J. (1999). Decision making in child protection: the use of theoretical, empirical and procedural knowledge by novices and experts and implications for fieldwork placement. *British Journal of Social Work*, 29 (1), pp. 147-169.

Dunn, W. (1983). Measuring Knowledge Use. *Science Communication: Linking Theory and Practice*, 5(1), pp. 120–133.

Dustin, D. (2007). *The MacDonaldisation of Social Work*. Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing.

Dybicz, P. (2004). An Inquiry into Practice Wisdom. *Families in Society. The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 85 (2), pp.197-203.

Dyson, S. and Brown, B. (2006). *Social Theory and Applied Health Research*. Maidenhead, Open University Press.

Eatough, V. and Smith, J.A. (2008). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. In Willig, C. and Stainton-Rogers. W. (Eds.). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology*. London, Sage. Pp. 179-194.

Edwards, A. (2010). *Being an Expert Professional Practitioner. The Relational Turn in Expertise*. London, Springer.

Eisner, E. (1991). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. New York, Macmillan.

England, H. (1986). *Social Work as Art: Making Good Sense for Practice*. London, Allen and Unwin.

Epstein, I (2009). Promoting harmony where there is commonly conflict: Evidence–informed practice as an integrative strategy. *Social Work in Health Care*, 48 (3), pp. 216-231.

Eraut, M. (1994). *Developing Professional Knowledge and Competence*. Lewes, Falmer Press.

Eraut, M. (2000). Non-formal learning and tacit knowledge in professional work. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 70, pp.113-136.

Eraut, M. (2004). Informal learning in the workplace. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 26 (2), pp. 247–273.

Eraut, M. (2007). Learning from other people in the workplace. *Oxford Review of Education*, 33 (4), pp.403-422.

Eraut, M. (2008). *How professionals learn through work*. University of Surrey. Accessed online via Proquest 2nd October 2017.

Eraut, M. (2011). Informal learning in the workplace: evidence on the real value of work-based learning (WBL). *Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal*, 25 (5), pp. 8-12.

Erikson, E. H. (1959). *Identity and the Life Cycle*. New York, International Universities Press.

Erikson, E. H. and Erikson, J. M. (1997). *The Life Cycle Completed: Extended Version*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Eriksson, I. (1990). Use of Research and Different Discourses in Social Work. *Science Communication*, 12 (1), pp.14–26.

Etzioni, A. (1969). *The semi professions and their organisations*. New York, Free Press.

Evans, R. J., and Donnelly, G. W. (2006). A model to describe the relationship between knowledge, skill, and judgment in nursing practice. *Nursing Forum*, 41(4), pp.150–157.

Evans, T. and Harris, J. (2004). Street-level bureaucracy, social work and the (exaggerated) death of discretion. *British Journal of Social Work*, 34 (6), pp. 871–895.

Evans, T., and Hardy, M. (2010). *Evidence and Knowledge for Practice*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Everitt, A., Hardiker, P., Littlewood, J., and Mullander, A. (1992). *Applied Research for Better Practice*. London, MacMillan.

Fawcett, B., Featherstone, B., Fook, J., and Rossiter, A. (2000). *Practice Research in Social Work: Postmodern Feminist Perspectives*. London, Routledge.

Featherstone, B., White, S. and Morris, K. (2014). *Re-imagining Child Protection*. Bristol, Policy Press.

Fenwick, T. and Nerland, M. (2014). Sociomaterial professional knowing, work arrangements and responsibility, new times, new concepts? In Fenwick, T. and Nerland, M. (Eds.). *Reconceptualising Professional Learning. Sociomaterial knowledges, practices and responsibilities*. Abingdon, Routledge. Pp.1-7.

Ferguson, H. (2004). *Protecting Children in Time*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Ferguson, H. (2003). Outline of a critical best practice perspective on social work and social care. *British Journal of Social Work*, 33 (8), pp.1005-1024.

Ferguson, H. (2005). Working with violence, the emotions and the psycho-social dynamics of child protection: Reflections on the Victoria Climbié case. *Social Work Education*, 24 (7), pp. 781–795.

Ferguson, I. (2008). *Reclaiming Social Work: Challenging Neo-liberalism and Promoting Social Justice*. London, Sage.

Ferguson, I. (2017). Hope over fear: social work education towards 2025. *European Journal of Social Work*, 20 (3), pp. 322-332.

Ferguson, I. and Lavalette, M. (2006). Globalization and global justice: Towards a social work of resistance. *International Social Work*, 49, (3), pp. 309–318.

Festinger, L. (1957). *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. California, Stanford University Press.

Findlay, L. (2009). Debating Phenomenological Research Methods. *Phenomenology and Practice*, 3 (1), pp. 6-25.

Finlay, L. and Gough, B. (Eds.). (2003). *Reflexivity: A Practical Guide for Researchers in Health and Social Sciences*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Fish, S. and Hardy, M. (2015). Complex issues, complex solution: applying complexity theory in social work practice. *Nordic Social Work Research*, 5 (1), pp. 98-114.

Fisher, T. and Somerton, J. (2000). Reflection on action: the process of helping social work students to develop their use of theory in practice. *Social Work Education*, 19 (4), pp. 387-401.

Flaskas, C. (2007). Systematic and psychoanalytic ideas. Using knowledges in social work. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 21 (2), pp.131-147.

Flexner, A. (1915). *Is social work a profession?* Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction. Chicago. IL, Hildman Printing. Pp. 576-590.

Fook, J. (2000). Deconstructing and reconstructing professional expertise. In Fawcett, B., Featherstone, B., Fook, J. and Rossiter, A. (Eds.). *Practice Research in Social Work: Postmodern Feminist Perspectives*. London, Routledge. Pp.105-120.

Fook, J. (2012). *Social work: A critical approach to practice (2nd Ed.)*. London, Sage.

Fook, J. (2007). Uncertainty: the defining characteristic of social work. In Lymbery, M. E. F. and Postle, K. (Eds.). *Social Work: A Companion for Learning*. Los Angeles, USA. Sage. Pp. 30-39.

Fook, J. (2011). Uncertainty: the defining characteristic of social work? In Cree, V.E. (Ed.). *Social Work: A Reader*. Oxford, Routledge.

Fook, J. and Pease, B. (1999). *Transforming Social Work Practice: Postmodern Critical Perspectives*. London, Routledge.

Fook, J., Ryan, M. and Hawkins, L. (1997). Towards a theory of social work expertise. *British Journal of Social Work*, 27 (3), pp. 399–417.

Fook, J., Ryan, M. and Hawkins, L. (2000). *Professional Expertise: Practice, Theory and Education for Working in Uncertainty*. London, Whiting and Birch.

Forte, J.A. (2014). *An Introduction to Using Theory in Social Work Practice*. New York, Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York, Random House.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power /Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings. 1972-1977*. New York, Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1984). *Power: The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-84 v.3*, London, Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1984a). Nietzsche, genealogy, history. In Rabinow, P. (Ed.). *The Foucault Reader*. New York, Pantheon. Pp. 76–100.

Frank, A. W. (2010). *Letting stories breathe: A socio-narratology*. Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York, Continuum Press.

Freire, P. (1990). A Critical Understanding of Social Work. *Journal of Progressive Human Services*, 1 (1), pp. 3-9. Binghamton, New York, Haworth Press.

Freund, A., Cohen, A., Blit-Cohen, E. and Dehan, N. (2014). Professional Socialization and Professional Commitment in Social Work Students - A Longitudinal Study. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 2014 (1). <http://proceedings.aom.org/content/2014/1/10679>

Furness, S., and Gilligan, P. (2004). Fit for purpose: Issues from practice placements, practice teaching and the assessment of students' practice. *Social Work Education*, 23, (4), pp. 465-479.

Gallagher, M.P. (1999). *Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith and Culture*. London, Darton, Longman and Todd.

Gallagher, P.M. (2013). *Social Work and Social Theory: Making Connections*. Bristol, Policy Press.

Galvani, S. and Forrester, D. (2008). What Works in Training Social Workers about Drug and Alcohol Use? A Survey of Student Learning and Readiness to Practice: Final Report for the Home Office (October 2008), London, Home Office, available online at www.beds.ac.uk/departments/appliedsocialstudies/staff/sarah-galvani/galvani-forrester-horeport2008.pdf

Gambrill, E. (2006). *Social Work Practice: A Critical Thinker's Guide*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Gambrill, E. (2001). Social Work: An Authority-based Profession. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 11 (1), pp.166-175.

Gambrill, E. (2008). Evidence-Based (Informed) Micro Practice: Process and Philosophy. *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work*, 5 (3-4), pp.423-452.

Gardner, A. (2014). *Personalisation in Social Work*. London, Sage.

Gee, J. P. (2000). Identity as an analytic lens for research in education. *Review of Research in Education*, 25, pp. 99-125.

Geertz, C. (1988). *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as author*. Stanford, Stanford University Press.

Gelman, C. R., Baum, N. (2010). Social work students' pre-placement anxiety: An international comparison. *Social Work Education*, 29 (4), pp. 427-440.

Gerrans, P. (2005). Tacit knowledge, rule following and Pierre Bourdieu's philosophy of social science. *Anthropological Theory*, 5 (1), pp. 53-74.

Gettier, E.L. (1963). Is Justified True Belief Knowledge? *Analysis*, 23 (6), pp.121-123.

Gherardi, S. (2014). Professional knowing-in-practice: rethinking materiality and border resources in telemedicine. In Fenwick, T. and Nerland, M. (Eds.) *Reconceptualising Professional Learning. Sociomaterial knowledges, practices and responsibilities*. Abingdon, Routledge. Pp.11-24.

Ghere, R.K. (2008). Book Review. *Public Integrity*, Spring, pp.184-188.

Gibbons, J. and Gray, M. (2002). An integrated and experience-based approach to social work education: the Newcastle model. *Social Work Education*, 21 (5), pp. 529-549.

Gibbons, J. and Gray, M. (2004). Critical thinking as integral to social work practice. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 24, pp.19-38.

Gibbs, T., Brigden, D. and Hellenberg, D. (2004). The Education versus Training and the Skills versus Competency debate. *South African Family Practice*, 46 (10), pp.5-6.

Gibson, M. (2015). Shame and guilt in child protection social work: New Interpretations and Opportunities for Practice. *Child and Family Social Work*, 20, pp. 333–343.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Giorgi, A. (2008). Concerning a serious misunderstanding of the essence of the phenomenological method in psychology. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 39, (1), pp. 33-58.

Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. (1967). *Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Mill Valley, CA, Sociology Press.

Glyn, A. (2006). *Capitalism Unleashed*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Goldenberg, D, and Iwasiw, C. (1993). Professional socialization of nursing students as an outcome of a senior clinical preceptorship experience. *Nurse Education Today*, 13 (1), pp. 3-15.

Goldstein, H. (1990). The knowledge base of social work practice: Theory, wisdom, analogue, or art? *Families in Society*, 71 (1), pp. 32–43.

Goldstein, H. (2001). *Experiential Learning: A Foundation for Social Work Education and Practice*. Washington, DC, CSWE.

Golightley, M. M. and Holloway, M. (2017). Editorial: ‘The Child Is Father of the Man’: Social Work with Adults. *British Journal of Social Work*, 47 (1), pp.1827–1830.

Gomory, T. (2001). Critical Rationalism (Gomory’s Blurry Theory) or Positivism (Thyer’s Theoretical Myopia). *Journal of Social Work Education*, 37 (1), pp. 67-78

Goppner, H.J. and Hamalainen, J. (2007). Developing a Science of Social Work. *Journal of Social Work*, 7 (3), pp. 269-287.

Gordon, J. and Cooper, B. (2010). Talking Knowledge - Practising Knowledge: a critical best practice approach to how social workers understand and use knowledge in practice. *Practice*, 22 (4), pp. 245-257.

Gordon, J., Cooper, B., and Dumbleton, S. (2009). How do social workers use evidence in practice? Final report from the PBPL funded project. Milton Keynes, OUP.

Gorman, H. and Postle, K. (2003). *Transforming Community Care: A Distorted Vision*. Birmingham, Venture Press.

Gove, M. (2013). Getting it right for children in need: Speech to the NSPCC. 12 November, available online at www.gov.uk/government/speeches/getting-it-right-for-children-in-need-speech-to-the-nspcc

Grady, M. and Keenan, E. (2014). Beyond the manual: Using research and evidence in social work practice. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 42 (2), pp.101–106.

Grant, S. (2016). Constructing the durable penal agent: Tracing the development of habitus within English probation officers and Scottish criminal justice social workers. *British Journal of Criminology*, 46 (4), pp.750–768.

Grant, S. and McNeill, F. (2014a). The quality of probation supervision: Comparing practitioner accounts in England and Scotland. *European Journal of Probation*, 6 (2), pp.147–168.

Grant, S. and McNeill, F. (2014b). What matters in practice? Understanding “quality” in the routine supervision of offenders in Scotland. *British Journal of Social Work*. Advance Access published May 26, 2014, doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcu056.

Grant, S., Sheridan, L. and Webb, S. A. (2017). Newly Qualified Social Workers Readiness for Practice in Scotland. *British Journal of Social Work*, 47 (2), pp.487–506.

Grau, C. (2007). Bad dreams, evil demons and the experience machine: Philosophy and the Matrix. In Perry, J., Bratman, M. and Fisher, J.M. (Eds.), *Introduction to Philosophy: classical and contemporary readings*. (4th Ed.). New York, Oxford University Press.

Gray, I., Parker, J. and Immins, T. (2008). Leading communities of practice in social work: Groupwork or management? *Groupwork*, 18 (2), pp. 26-40.

Gray, L., Sharland, E., Heinsch, M. and Schubert, L. (2015). Connecting Research to Action: Perspectives on Research Utilisation. *British Journal of Social Work*, 45 (7), pp. 952–1967.

Gray, M. and Schubert, L. (2013). Knowing what we know about knowledge in social work: The search for a comprehensive model of knowledge production. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 22 (4), pp. 334-346.

Gray, M. and Webb, S.A. (2008). Social work as art revisited. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 17 (2), pp.182–193.

Gray, M. and Webb, S.A. (2013a). (Eds.) *Social Work Theories and Methods* (2nd Ed.). London, Sage.

Gray, M. and Webb, S.A. (2013). (Eds).The New Politics of Social Work. Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan.

Gray, M., Joy, E., Plath, D. and Webb, S. A. (2015). What Supports and Impedes Evidence-Based Practice Implementation? A Survey of Australian Social Workers. *British Journal of Social Work*, 45 (2), pp. 667–684.

Gray, M., Joy, E., Plath, D. and Webb, S.A. (2012). Implementing Evidence-Based Practice: A Review of the Empirical Research Literature. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 23 (2), pp.157-166.

Gray, M., Plath, D. and Webb, S.A. (2009). *Evidence-Based Social Work: A Critical Stance*. London, Routledge.

Green, L. (2006). Pariah profession, debased discipline? An analysis of social work's low academic status and the possibilities for change. *Social Work Education*, 25 (3), pp. 245-264.

Green, L. and Clarke, K. (2016). *Social Policy for Social Work*. Cambridge, Policy.

Grimwood, T. (2016). *Key Debates in Social Work and Philosophy*. Abingdon, Routledge.

Gringeri, C.E., Wahab, S. and Anderson-Nathe, B. (2010). What makes it feminist? Mapping the landscape of feminist social work research. *Afflia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, 25 (4), pp.390-405.

GSCC (2002). *Codes of Practice for Social Care Workers and Employers*. London, General Social Care Council.

Guba, E.J. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In Denzin N. K. and Lincoln Y.S. (Eds.). *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage. Pp.105-117.

Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (2009). *Analyzing narrative reality*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Haastrup, L. and Damgaard Knudsen, L.E.D. (2015). Theory and practice in the workshop: Using the gaps. *Nordic Psychology*, 67, (2), pp.117–135.

Habermas, J. (1986). *Theory and Practice*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Hall, C., Sarangi, S. and Slembrouck, S. (1999). The legitimation of the client and the profession: identities and roles in social work discourse. In Sarangi, and Roberts, C. (Eds.). *Talk, Work and Institutional Order: Discourse in Medical, Mediation and Management Settings*. Mouton de Gruyter, New York. Pp. 293-322.

Hall, C., Slembrouck, S. and Sarangi, S. (2006). *Language Practices in Social Work: Categorisation and Accountability in Child Welfare*. London, Routledge.

Halling, S. Leifer, M. and Rowe, J. O. (2006). Emergence of the dialogic approach: Forgiving another. In Fischer, C.T. (Ed.) *Qualitative Research Methods for Psychology: Introduction through Empirical Studies*. New York, Academic. Pp. 247-278.

Halling, S. (2008). *Intimacy, transcendence, and psychology: closeness and openness in everyday life*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan

Hanmer, J. and Statham. D. (1988). *Women and Social Work: Towards Women Centred Practice*. Basingstoke, BASW/Macmillan.

Hardiker, P. and Barker, M. (1979). *Theories of Practice in Social Work*, New York, Academic Press.

Hardiker, P. and Barker, M. (2015). *Towards Social Theory for Social Work*. In Lishman, J. (Ed.). *Handbook for Practice Learning in Social Work and Social Care*. (3rd Ed.) London, Jessica Kingsley. Pp. 61-79.

Hardwick, L. and Worsley, A. (2011). *Doing Social Work Research*. London, Sage.

Harlow, E. (2003). New managerialism, social service departments and social work practice today. *Practice*, 15 (2), pp. 29-44.

Harlow, E., Berg, E., Barry, J. and Chandler, J. (2013). Neoliberalism, Managerialism and the Reconfiguration of Social Work in Sweden and the United Kingdom. *Organization*, 20 (4), pp. 534-550.

Harris, J. (1999). State Social Work and Social Citizenship in Britain: From Clientelism to Consumerism. *British Journal of Social Work*, 29 (6), pp. 915-937.

Harris, J. (1998). Scientific Management, Bureau Professionalism, New Managerialism: The Labour Process of State Social Work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 28 (6), pp.839-862.

Harris, J. (2003). *The Social Work Business*. London, Routledge.

Harris, J. and White, V. (2009). Intensification, individualisation, inconvenience, interpellation. In Harris, J. and White, V. (Eds.). *Modernising social work: Critical considerations*. Bristol, Policy Press. Pp. 165–171.

Hartman, A. (1992). In search of subjugated knowledge. *Social Work*, 37 (6), pp. 483–484.

Hatlevik, I. and Smeby, J.C. (2015). Programme Coherence and Epistemological Beliefs. *Nordic Psychology*, 67 (2), pp.136-153.

Hawkins, L., Fook, J. and Ryan, M. (2001). Social workers' use of the language of social justice. *British Journal of Social Work*, 31 (1), pp.1-13.

Hay K. and Brown K. (2015). Social work practice placements in Aotearoa New Zealand: Agency managers' perspectives. *Social Work Education*, 34 (6), pp.700–715.

Healy, J. (1998). *Welfare Options: Delivering Social Services*. St Leonards, NSW, Allen and Unwin.

Healy, K. (2000). *Social Work Practices: Contemporary Perspectives on Change*. London, Sage.

Healy, K. (2008). Critical commentary on 'social work as art revisited.' *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 17 (2), pp.194–195

Healy, K. (2014). *Social Work Theories in Context: Creating Frameworks for Practice*. (2nd Ed). Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

.

Healey, M. and Jenkins, A. (2000). Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory and Its Application in Geography in Higher Education. *Journal of Geography*, 99 (5), pp.185-195.

Healy, K. and Meagher, G. (2007). Social Workers' Preparation for Child Protection: Revisiting the Question of Specialisation. *Australian Social Work*, 60 (3), pp. 321-335.

Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and Time*. New York, Harper and Row.

Heinsch, M., Gray, M. and Sharland, E. (2016). Re-conceptualising the link between research and practice in social work: a literature review on knowledge utilisation. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 25 (1). pp. 98-104.

Hemy, M., Boddy, J., Chee, P., Sauvage D. (2016). Social work students "juggling" field placement. *Social Work Education*, 35 (2), pp. 215–228.

Heydt, M.J. and Sherman, N.E. (2005). Conscious Use of Self: Tuning the Instrument of Social Work Practice with Cultural Competence. *The Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work*, 10 (2), pp. 25-40.

Hicks, S. (2016). Theory in social work: a conceptual review of the literature. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 25 (4), pp 339-414.

Higgins, M., Popple, K. and Crichton, N. (2016). The Dilemmas of Contemporary Social Work: A Case Study of the Social Work Degree in England. *British Journal of Social Work*, 46 (1), pp. 619–634.

Higgins, M. (2015). The struggle for the soul of social work in England. *Social Work Education*, 34 (1), pp. 4-16.

- Higgins, M. (2013). The dilemmas of contemporary social work: A case study of the social work degree. Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of London South Bank University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, (July 2013).
- Higham, P. (2006). *Social Work: Introducing Professional Practice*. London, Sage.
- Hildreth, P. (2000). 'Going the Extra Half Mile'. *International Communities of Practice and the Role of Shared Artefacts*. PhD Thesis, University of York.
- Hingley-Jones, H. and Ruch, G. (2016). 'Stumbling through'? Relationship-based social work practice in austere times. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 30 (3), pp. 235–248.
- HMSO (1982), Cmnd. 8616. *Efficiency and Effectiveness in the Civil Service*. London, HMSO.
- HMSO (1988b). *Efficiency Unit, Improving Management in Government: The Next Steps, Report to the Prime Minister*. London, HMSO.
- Hoadley, C. and Kilner, P. G. (2005). Using technology to transform communities of practice into knowledge-building communities. *SIGGROUP Bulletin*, 25 (1), pp. 31–40.
- Hodgkin, S. (2002). Competing demands, competing solutions, differing constructions of the problem of recruitment and retention of frontline rural child protection staff. *Australian Social Work*, 55 (3), pp.193-203.
- Hood, R. (2018). *Complexity in Social Work*. London, Sage.
- Hooks, B. (1984). *Feminist Theory: From margin to centre*. Boston, South End Press.
- Horn, I. S., Nolen, S. B., Ward, C. J. and Campbell, S. S. (2008). Developing practices in multiple worlds: The role of identity in learning to teach. *Teacher Education Quarterly* (Summer), pp.61-72.

Hothersall, S. J. (2016). Epistemology and social work: Integrating theory, research and practice through philosophical pragmatism. *Social Work and Social Sciences Review*, 18 (3), pp.1-35.

Hothersall, S.J. (2017). 'Everyday knowledge': A mixed-methods study using factor analysis and narrative approaches to explore social worker's knowledge. *Social Work and Social Sciences Review*, 19 (2), pp. 33-64.

Houle, C. (1981). *Continuing Learning in the Professions*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Hoyle, E. and Wallace, M. (2005). *Educational leadership*. London, Sage.

Howe, D. (1987). *An Introduction to Social Work Theory: Making Sense in Practice*. Aldershot, Arena.

Howe, D. (1980). Inflated States and Empty Theories in Social Work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 10, pp. 317-340

Howe, D. (1986). *Social Workers and their Practice in Welfare Bureaucracies*. Aldershot, Gower Publishing Company.

Howe, D. (2002). Relating Theory to Practice. In Davies, M (Ed.) *Companion to Social Work* (2nd Ed). Oxford, Blackwell. Pp. 81-87.

Howe, D. (1987). *An Introduction to Social Work Theory*. Aldershot, Wildwood House.

Howe, D. (1996). Surface and depth in social work practice. In Parton, N. (Ed.), *Social Theory, Social Change and Social Work*. London, Routledge. Pp. 77-97

Howe, D. (1994). Modernity, postmodernity and social work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 24 (5), pp. 513-532.

Howell, K. E. (2013). *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Methodology*. London, Sage.

Huberman, M. (1983). 'Recipes for Busy Kitchens': A Situational Analysis of Routine Knowledge Use in Schools. *Science Communication*, 4 (4), pp. 478–510.

Hudson, H. (1997). Brute facts. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 75, (1), pp. 77-82.

Hugman, R. (2001). Post –welfare social work? Reconsidering post postmodernism, post Fordism and social work education. *Social Work Education*, 20 (3), pp. 322-333.

Hugman, R. (1991). *Power in the Caring Professions*. Basingstoke, Macmillan.

Hugman, R. (2003). Professional Values and Ethics in Social Work: Reconsidering Postmodernism? *British Journal of Social Work*, 33 (8), pp.1025-1041.

Hugman, R. (2009). But is it Social Work: Some reflections on mistaken identities. *British Journal of Social Work*, 39 (6), pp.1138-1153.

Humphrey, C. (2006). Tomorrow's social workers in the UK. *European Journal of Social Work*, 9 (3), pp. 357-373.

Humphries, B (2008). *Social Work Research for Social Justice*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Husserl, E. (1970a). *Logical Investigations*. New York, Humanities Press.

Husserl, E. (1954/1970b). *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenology*. Translated by David Carr, Evanston, IL, Northwestern University Press

Hycner, R. H. (1985). Some guidelines for the phenomenological analysis of interview data. *Human Studies*, 8, pp. 279-303.

Iversen, A.C. and Heggen, K. (2016). Child welfare workers use of knowledge in their daily work. *European Journal of Social Work*, 19 (2), pp.187-203.

Jack, G. and Donnellan, H. (2010). Recognising the person within the developing professional: Tracking the early careers of newly qualified childcare social workers in three local authorities in England. *Social Work Education*, 29 (3), pp. 305–318.

Jacobson, W.B. (2001). Beyond Therapy: Bringing Social Work Back to Human Services Reform. *Social Work*, 46 (1), pp. 51–61.

Jani, J., Pierce, D., Ortiz, L., and Sowbel, L. (2011). Access to intersectionality, content to competence: Deconstructing social work education diversity standards. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 47 (2), pp. 283–301.

Jenkins, R. (1996). *Social Identity*. New York, Routledge.

Jesson, J. Matheson, L. and Lacey, F.M. (2011). *Doing Your Literature Review: Traditional and Systematic Techniques*. London, Sage.

Jeyasingham, D. (2014). Open spaces, supple bodies? Considering the impact of agile working on social work office practices. *Child & Family Social Work*. Advance Access published February 17, 2014, doi:10.1111/cfs.12130.

Johnson, Y. and Munch, S. (2010). Faculty with practice experience: the new dinosaurs in the social work academy? *Journal of Social Work Education*, 46 (1), pp. 57-66.

Johnsson, E. and Svensson, K. (2005). Theory in social work: some reflections on understanding and explaining interventions. *European Journal of Social Work*, 8 (4), pp. 419-433.

Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee and Association of Professors of Social Work (2013). *Frontline: Joint Statement from JUC SWEC and APSW*.

Jones, C. (1999). Social Work: Regulation and managerialism. In Hexworthy, M. and Halford, S. (Eds.). *Professionalism and the New Public Managerialism in the Public Sector*. Buckingham, OUP.

Jones, C. (2001). Voices from the front line: State social workers and New Labour. *British Journal of Social Work*, 31 (4), pp. 547–562.

Jones, C. (2005). The neo-liberal assault: Voices from the front line of British state social work. In Ferguson, I., Lavalette, M. and Whitmore, E. (Eds.), *Globalisation, global justice and social work*. London, Routledge. Pp.95-106.

Jones, C. and Lavalette, M. (2004). *Social Work: Qualification and Professionalism*. A Submission to UNISON Industrial Action Committee, 21 December. Unpublished, University of Liverpool.

Jones, C., Ferguson, I., Lavalette, M., and Penketh, L. (2004). *Social work and social justice: a manifesto for a new engaged practice*. <http://www.liv.ac.uk/sspsw/manifesto/Manifesto.htm>. Date of access 14th April 2018

Jones, J., Gallop, L. (2003). No Time to Think: Protecting Reflective Space in Children's Service. *Child Abuse Review*, 12 (2), pp.101-106.

Jones, K., Cooper, B. and Ferguson, H. (2008). *Best Practice in Social Work: Critical Perspectives*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Jones, R. (2014). The best of times, the worst of times: social work and its moment. *British Journal of Social Work*, 44 (3), pp. 485-502.

Jootun, D., McGhee, G., Marland, G.R. (2009). Reflexivity: promoting rigour in qualitative research. *Nursing Standard*, 23 (23), pp. 42-46.

Jordal, K and Heggen, K (2015). When life experience matters: A narrative exploration of students' learning in nursing education. *Nordic Psychology*, 67 (2), pp.104–116

Jordan, B. (1990). *Social Work in an Unjust Society*. Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Jorgensen, E. R. (2005). Four philosophical models of the relation between theory and practice. *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, 13 (1), pp. 21–36.

Joynes, V.C.T. (2014). *Exploring the professional identity of health and social care staff via experiences of interprofessional education and collaborative practice*. Unpublished PhD. University of Leeds.

Kadushin, A. and Harkness, D. (2014). *Supervision in Social Work*. New York, Columbia University Press.

Kam, P.K (2014). Back to the 'social' of social work: Reviving the social work profession's contribution to the promotion of social justice. *International Social Work*, 57 (6), pp.723 –740.

Karpf, M. (1931). *The Scientific Basis of Social Work*. New York, Columbia University Press.

Kazdin, A.E. (2008). Evidence –based treatment and practice: New opportunities to bridge clinical research and practice, enhance the knowledge base and improve patient care. *American Psychologist*, 63 (3), pp.146—159.

Kazi, M. (2000). Contemporary perspectives in the evaluation of practice. *British Journal of Social Work*, 30 (6), pp.755-768.

Kekwaletswe, R.M. (2007). Social presence awareness for knowledge transformation in a mobile learning environment. *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT)*, 3 (4), pp. 102-109.

King, N. and Horrocks, C. (2011). *Interviews in qualitative research*. London, Sage Publications.

Kirk, S. and Reid, W.J. (2002). *Science and Social Work*. New York, Columbia University Press.

Kitagawa, F. and Lightowler, C. (2013). Knowledge exchange: A comparison of policies, strategies and funding incentives in English and Scottish higher education. *Research Evaluation*, 22(1), pp.1-14.

Kjørstad, M. (2008). Opening the black box – Mobilizing practical knowledge in social research: Methodological reflections based on a study of social work practice. *Qualitative Social Work*, 7 (2), pp.143–161.

Klein, W. C. and Bloom, M. (1995). Practice wisdom. *Social Work, Journal of the National Association of Social Workers*, 40 (6), pp.799–807.

Kleinman, P. (2013). *Philosophy: An Essential Primer on the History of Thought*. Massachusetts, Adams Media.

Knight, P. (2006). Quality enhancement and educational professional development. *Quality in Higher Education*, 12 (1), pp. 29–40.

Kolb, D.A. (2014). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. (2nd Ed.). Pearson, FT Press.

Kondrat, M.E. (1992). Reclaiming the practical: Formal and substantive rationality in social work practice. *Social Service Review*, 66 (2), pp. 237-255.

Koufogiannakis, D. and Brettle, A. (2016). In Koufogiannakis, D. and Brettle, A. (Eds). *Being Evidence Based in Library and Information Practice*. London, Facet Publishing.

Kwong, W.M. (1996). Local Knowledge, Indigenous Practice. *Hong Kong Journal of Social Work*, 30 (1), pp.22-30.

Laming, Lord. (2003). *The Victoria Climbié Inquiry*. London, TSO, Cm 5730.

Laming, H. (2009). *The Protection of Children in England: a Progress Report*. London, TSO.

Landman, T (2012). Phronosis and Narrative Analysis. In Flyvbjerg, B., Landman, T. and Schram, S. (Eds), *Real Social Science: Applied Phronosis*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. Pp. 27-47.

Landry, R., Nabil, A. and Moktar, L. (2001). Utilization of social science research knowledge in Canada. *Research Policy*, 30 (2), pp. 333–349.

Langan, M. (2011). Rediscovering radicalism and humanity in social work. In Lavalette, M. (Ed.). *Radical social work today: social work at the crossroads*. Bristol, Policy Press. Pp.153-164.

Langenbach, M. (1995). Phenomenology, Intentionality and mental exercises. *History of Psychiatry*, 6 (22), pp.209-224

Larrivee, M-C., Hamelin-Brabant, L. and Lessard, G. (2012). Knowledge translation in the field of violence against women and children: An assessment of the state of knowledge. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34, pp.2381-2391.

Lavalette, M. (2011). Social work in crisis during crisis: Whose side are we on? *Canadian Social Work Review/Revue Canadienne de Service Social*, 28 (1), pp.7–24.

Lavalette, M. and Ferguson, I. (1999). Social Work, Postmodernism and Marxism. *European Journal of Social Work*, 2 (1), pp. 27-40.

Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Law, S. (2008). *Philosophy*. London, Dorling Kindersley.

Lawler, J. and Bilson, A. (2010). *Social Work Management and Leadership: Managing Complexity and Creativity*. Abingdon, Routledge.

Lawler, J. and Harlow, E. (2005). Postmodernization: A phase we are going through? *Management in social care*. *British Journal of Social Work*, 35 (7), pp.1163–1174.

Lee, N. (2009). *Achieving your Professional Doctorate. A Handbook*. Maidenhead, Open University Press.

Lee, P. (1982). Some contemporary and perennial problems of relating theory to practice in social work. In Bailey, R. and Lee, P. (Eds.). *Theory and Practice in Social Work*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell. Pp.15-45.

Leonard, M. (2007). Interviews. In Miller, R. and Brewer, J. (Eds.). *The A-Z of Social Research*. London, Sage.

Leonard, P. (1997). *Postmodern Welfare: Reconstructing an Emancipatory Project*. London, Sage.

Leveridge, M.J. (2003). Preparation for practice: Developing and Assessing DipSW students' pre-placement competence. *Social Work Education*, 22 (3), pp.321-327.

Levin, E. (2004). *Involving Service Users and Carers in Social Work Education*. London, Social Care Institute for Excellence.

Levy, S., Aiton, R., Doig, J., Dow, J.P.L., Brown, S., Hunter, L. and McNeil, R. (2016). Outcomes focused user involvement in social work education: applying knowledge to practice. *Social Work Education*, 35 (8), pp. 866-877.

Lewis, G. (1996). *Situated Voices. Black Women's Experience and Social Work*. *Feminist Review*, 53 (1), pp 24-56.

Liles, R. E. (2007). Response to "Licensing social work faculty: An issue of ethics?" *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, 4 (1), pp.1-2.

Litchfield, M. (1999). Practice Wisdom. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 22 (2), pp. 62-73.

Lonergan, B. (1958). *Insight: A study on human understanding*. London, Longman Green.

Long, A., Grayson, L. and Boaz, A. (2006). Assessing the quality of knowledge in social care: Exploring the potential of a set of generic standards. *British Journal of Social Work*, 36 (2), pp. 207-226.

Lopez, J. and Potter, G. (2001). *After Postmodernism: An Introduction to Critical Realism*. London, Athlone Press.

Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde*. Freedom, CA, Crossing Press.

Loseke, D.R. and Cahill, S.E. (1986). Actors in Search of a Character: Student Social Workers' Quest for Professional Identity. *Symbolic Interaction*, 9 (2), pp. 245-258.

Louchkova, I. and Adams, A. (2001). Research in Social Work. In Adams, A., Erath, P. Shardlow, S. (Eds). *Key Themes in European Social Work; Theory, Practice, Perspectives*. Dorset, Russell Publishing House. Pp. 27-38.

Lymbery, M. (1998). Care Management and Professional Autonomy: The Impact of Community Care legislation on Social Work with Older People. *British Journal of Social Work*, 28 (6), pp.863- 878.

Lymbery, M. (2001). Social work at the crossroads. *British Journal of Social Work*, 31 (3), pp.369-384.

Lymbery, M.E. F. (2003). Negotiating the Contradictions between Competence and Creativity in Social Work Education. *Journal of Social Work*, 3 (1), pp. 99–117.

Lymbery, M. (2004). Managerialism and care management practice with older people. In Lymbery, M. and Butler, S. (Eds.). *Social Work Ideals and Practice Realities*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Lymbery, M. (2012). Social Work and Personalisation. *British Journal of Social Work*, 42 (4), pp.783-792.

Lymbery, M. (2014). Social Work and Personalisation: Fracturing the Bureau-Professional Compact? *British Journal of Social Work*, 44 (4), pp. 795-811.

Lymbery, M. and Postle, K. (2010). Social Work in the Context of Adult Social Care in England and the Resultant Implications for Social Work Education. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 40 (8), pp. 2502–2522

Lynch, M (2010). 'Expert' as a social category and expertise as a relational phenomenon. In 4S Annual Meeting 2010 held jointly with Japan Association of Science, Technology and Society. Tokyo, Japan.

Lyons, K. and Manion, K. H. (2004). Goodbye DipSW: Trends in student satisfaction and employment outcomes: Some implications for the new social work award. *Social Work Education*, 23 (2), pp. 133–148.

Lyotard, J.F. (1984). *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

MacDermott, D. and Campbell, A. (2016). An examination of student and provider perceptions of voluntary sector social work placements in Northern Ireland. *Social Work Education*, 35 (1), pp. 31–49.

MacDonald, G. (2008). The evidence based perspective. In Davies, M. (Ed). *The Blackwell Companion to Social Work*, (2nd Ed.). Oxford, Blackwell. Pp. 424-430.

Machlup, F. (1979). Uses, Value, and Benefits of Knowledge. *Science Communication*, 14 (4), pp.448–466.

Mackay, T. and Zufferey, C. (2014). ‘A who doing a what?’ Identity, practice and social work education. *Journal of Social Work*, 15 (6), pp. 644-661.

Maidment, J. and Beddoe, L. (2012). Is social work supervision in “good heart”? A critical commentary. *Australian Social Work*, 65 (2), pp. 163-170.

Maidment, J. and Egan, R. (Eds). (2016). *Practice Skills in Social Work and Welfare: More Than Just Common Sense*. (3rd Ed.). New South Wales, Allen and Unwin.

Mäkitalo, A. (2012). Professional learning and the materiality of social practice. *Journal of Education and Work*, 25 (1), pp. 59-78.

Malone, S. (2003). Ethics at home: informed consent in your own backyard. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16 (6), pp.797-815.

Mannheim, K. (1936/1985). *An Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*. San Diego, CA, Harcourt.

Marsh, D., Ercan, S. and Furlong, E. (2018). A Skin is not a Sweater: Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science. In Lowndes, V., Marsh, D. and Stoker, G. (Eds.). *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. (4th Ed.). Basingstoke, Palgrave. Pp.177-198.

Marsh, P. and Fisher, M. (2008). The development of problem-solving knowledge for social care practice. *British Journal of Social Work*, 38 (5), pp. 971–987.

Marsh, P. and Fisher, M. (2005). Developing the evidence base for social work and social care practice, Social Care Institute for Excellence. *Using Knowledge in Social Care Report no 10*, pp.52. Available at: <http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/reports/report10.pdf>.

Marsh, P. and Triseliotis, J. (1996). Ready to practise? Social workers and probation officers: Their training and first year in work. Aldershot, Avebury.

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. B. (2010). Designing qualitative research. Sage Publications.

Mathews, I. and Crawford, K. (2011). Evidence –based Practice in Social Work. Exeter, Learning Matters.

Matthews, S., Harvey A. and Trevithick P. (2003). Surviving the swamp: Using cognitive-behavioural therapy in a social work setting. *Journal of Social Work Practice* 17 (2), pp. 163–172.

Mathie, A. and Cunningham, G. (2002). From Clients to Citizens: Asset-Based Community Development as a Strategy For Community Driven Development. Coady International Institute, Occasional Paper Series, No. 4.

Mattaini, M.A. (1995). Knowledge for Practice. In Meyer, C.H. and Mattaini, M.A. (Eds.). *The Foundations of Social Work Practice*, Washington, National Association of Social Workers. Pp. 59–85.

Maxwell, N., Scourfield, J., Le Zhang, M., de Villiers, T., Hadfield, T. et al. (2016). Independent evaluation of the Frontline pilot, London: Department for Education.

Mayhew, J. (1999). Theory, Practice and the Psychology of Expertise. *Social Work Education*, 18 (2), pp.195–205.

Maynard, M. (1994). Methods, practice and epistemology: The debate about feminism and research. In Maynard, M. and Purvis, J. (Eds.). *Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective*. London, Taylor and Francis. Pp.10-27.

McCracken, S.G. and Marsh, J.C. (2008). Practitioner expertise in evidence –based practice decision making. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 18 (4), pp.301-310.

McDermott, R. and Douglas, A. (2010). Harnessing Your Staff's Informal Networks. *Harvard Business Review*, 88 (3), pp.1-7.

McDonald, C., Harris, J. and Wintersteen, R. (2003). Contingent on Context? Social Work and the State in Australia, Britain and the USA. *British Journal of Social Work*, 33 (2), pp. 191-208.

McDonald, R. (2004). Individual identity and organisational control: empowerment and modernisation in a primary care trust. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 26 (7), pp. 925-950.

McDonald, A., Postle, K. and Dawson, D. (2008). Barriers to retaining and Using Professional Knowledge in Local Authority Social Work Practice with Adults in the UK. *British Journal of Social Work*, 38 (7), pp.1370-1387.

McDonald, C. and Jones, A. (2000). Reconstructing and re-conceptualising social work in the emerging milieu. *Australian Social Work*, 53 (3), pp.3-11.

McGowan, J. (1991). *Postmodernism and Its Critics*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

McLaughlin, K. (2008). *Social Work, Politics and Society: From Radicalism to orthodox*. Bristol, Policy Press.

McLaughlin, H. (2012). *Understanding Social Work Research (2nd Ed.)*. London, Sage.

McLeod, S. A. (2017). Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Retrieved from www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html

McNeece, C. and Thyer, B. (2004). Evidence-based practice and Social Work. *Journal of Evidence Based Social Work*, 1 (1) pp.7-25.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Mies, M. (1993). Towards a methodology of feminist research. In Hammersley M. (Ed.). *Social Research, Philosophy, Politics and Practice*. London, Sage. Pp. 64-82.

Miller, C. (2004a). *Producing Welfare*. Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan.

Miller, K. (2004b). Beyond the Front Stage: Trust, Access and the Relational Context in Research with Refugee Communities. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 33 (3-4), pp. 217-227.

Miller, T. and Bell L. (2012). Consenting to what? Issues of access, gatekeeping, and informed consent. In Miller, T., Birch, M., Mauthner, M. and Jessop, J. *Ethics in Qualitative Research (2nd Ed.)*. London, Sage. Pp. 61-75.

Mills, C. (1959). *The sociological imagination*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Mitchell, P.F. (2011). Evidence-based practice in real-world services for young people with complex needs: New opportunities suggested by recent implementation science. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33 (2), pp. 207-216.

Moran, D. (2000). *Introduction to Phenomenology*. London, Routledge.

Moriarty, J. and Manthorpe, J. (2013). Shared expectations? Reforming the social work qualifying curriculum in England. *Social Work Education*, 32 (7), pp. 841–853.

Moriarty, J., Manthorpe, J., Stevens, M. and Hussein, S. (2011). Making the transition: Comparing research on newly qualified social workers with other professions. *British Journal of Social Work*, 41 (2), pp.1340–1356.

Morris, K., White, S., Doherty, P. and Warwick, L. (2015). Out of time: theorizing family in social work practice. *Child and Family Social Work*. 22 (S3). Available online <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12257>.

Morrison, T. (2009). The role of the scholar-facilitator in generating practice knowledge to inform and enhance the quality of relationship-based social work practice with children and families: A Critical Review and Analysis. Unpublished PhD available at <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/9005/>

Morse, J. M. and Field, P. A. (1995). *Qualitative research methods for health professionals*. (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks CA, Sage.

Munro, E. (1998). Improving social workers' knowledge base in child protection work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 28 (1), pp. 89-105.

Munro, E. (2002). The Role of Theory in Social Work Research: A Further Contribution to the Debate. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 38 (3), pp. 461-470.

Munro, E. (2011). *The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report: A Child Centred System*. London, Department for Education.

Murphy, T. (2016). Voices from the frontline: The Frontline programme: conservative and the creation of a social work officer class. *Critical and Radical Social Work*, 4 (2), pp. 279–87.

Murphy, E. and Dingwall, R. (2007). Informed Consent, Anticipatory Regulation and Ethnographic Practice. *Social Science and Medicine*, 65 (11), pp.2223–2234.

Napier, L. and Fook, J. (2000). *Breakthroughs in Practice: Theorising Critical Moments in Social Work*. London, Whiting and Birch.

Narey, M. (2014). *Making the education of social workers consistently effective: Report of Sir Martin Narey's independent review of the education of children's social workers*. London, Department for Education.

Narhi, K. (2002). Transferable and Negotiated Knowledge. *Journal of Social Work*, 2 (3), pp.317–336.

Nelson, R. R. and Winter, S. G. (1982). *An Evolutionary Theory of Economic Change*. Cambridge, MA and London, the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Nevo, I. and Slonim-Nevo, V. (2011). The Myth of Evidence-Based Practice: Towards Evidence-Informed Practice. *British Journal of Social Work*, 41 (6), pp.1176-1197.

Nicoll, K. and Harrison, R. (2003). Constructing the Good Teacher in Higher Education: the discursive work of standards. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 25 (1), pp.23-35.

Nixon, S. and Murr, A. (2006). Practice learning and the development of professional practice. *Social Work Education*, 25 (8), pp. 798–811.

Noble, C., and Irwin, J. (2009). Social work supervision: An exploration of the current challenges in a rapidly changing social, economic and political environment. *Journal of Social Work*, 9 (3), pp.345-358.

Nonaka, I. (1991).The knowledge-creating company. *Harvard Business Review* November-December, 69 (6), pp. 96-104.

Nonaka, I. (1994). A Dynamic Theory of Organizational Knowledge Creation. *Organization Science*, 5, (1), pp. 14-37.

Nonaka, I. and Takeuchi, H. (1995). *The knowledge-creating company: how Japanese companies create the dynamics of innovation*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

NSPCC (Nov 2013). Getting it right for children in need, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/getting-it-right-for-children-in-need-speech-to-the-nspcc>

O'Brien, M. and Penna, S. (1998). *Theorising Welfare: Enlightenment and Modern Society*. London, Sage.

O'Connor, S. J. (2007). Developing professional habitus: A Bernsteinian analysis of the modern nurse apprenticeship. *Nurse Education Today*, 27 (7), pp. 748–754.

O'Keefe, D. J. (2002). *Persuasion: Theory and research* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.

Oliver, M. (1990). *The Politics of Disablement*. Basingstoke, MacMillan.

Ooi, S. L., Rae, J. and Pak, S. C. (2016). Implementation of evidence-based practice: A naturopath perspective. *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice*, 22, pp. 24-28.

Orlikowski, W. (2002). Knowing in practice: enacting a collective capability in distributed organizing. *Organization Science*, 13 (3), pp. 249-273.

Orlikowski, W. (2006). Material knowing: the scaffolding of human knowledgeability. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 15 (5), pp. 460-466.

Orme, J. and Shemmings, D. (2010). *Developing Research Based Social Work Practice*. Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Ormiston, G.L. and Schrift, A.D. (1990). *The Hermeneutic Tradition: From Ast to Ricoeur*. Albany, State University of New York Press.

Osmond, J. (2005). The knowledge spectrum: A framework for teaching knowledge and its use in social work practice. *British Journal of Social Work*, 35 (6), pp. 881–900.

Osmond, J. (2006). Knowledge Use in Social Work Practice: Examining its Functional Possibilities. *Journal of Social Work* 6 (3), pp. 221–237.

Osmond, J. and O'Connor, I. (2004). Formalizing the Uniformalised: Practitioners' Communication of Knowledge in Practice. *British Journal of Social Work*, 34 (5), pp. 677–692.

Osmund, J and O'Connor, I (2006). Use of theory and research in social work practice: Implications for knowledge based practice. *Australian Social Work*, 59 (1), pp. 5-19.

O'Sullivan, T. (2005). Some Theoretical Propositions on the Nature of Practice Wisdom. *Journal of Social Work*, 5 (2), pp. 221-242.

Pack, M. and Cargill, J. (Eds.). (2015). *Evidence Discovery and Assessment in Social Work Practice*. Hershey PA., IGI Global.

Padgett, D. (2012). *Qualitative Methods in Social Work: Challenges and Rewards*. London, Sage.

Palinkas, L. A., Aarons, G. A., Chorpita, B. F., Hoagwood, K., Landsverk, J. and Weisz, J. R. (2009). Cultural exchange and the implementation of evidence-based practices: two case studies. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 19 (5), pp. 602–612.

Parker, J. and Doel, M. (2013). *Professional Social Work*. London, Learning Matters.

Parton, N. (1998). Risk, Advanced Liberalism and Child welfare: The Need to Rediscover Uncertainty and Ambiguity. *British Journal of Social Work*, 28 (1), pp. 5-27.

Parton, N (2000). Some Thoughts on the Relationship between Theory and Practice in and for Social Work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 30 (4), pp. 449-463.

Parton, N. (2003). Rethinking Professional Practice: The Contributions of Social Constructionism and the Feminist "Ethics of Care". *British Journal of Social Work*, 33 (1), pp. 1–16.

Parton, N. (2008). Changes in the Form of Knowledge in Social Work: From the 'Social' to the 'Informational'? *British Journal of Social Work*, 38 (2), pp. 253-269.

Parton, N. and O'Byrne, P (2000). *Constructive Social Work: Towards a New Practice*. London, Palgrave MacMillan.

Parton, N. and Marshall, W. (1998). Postmodernism and discourse approaches to social work. In Adams, R. Dominelli, L. and Payne, M. (Eds.). *Social Work, Themes, Issues and Critical Debates*. Basingstoke, MacMillan. Pp. 240-249.

Pawson, R., Boaz, A., Grayson, L., Long, A. and Barnes, C. (2003). *Types and quality of knowledge in social care*. London, Social Care Institute for Excellence.

Payne, M. (1998). Social work theories and reflective practice. In Adams, R. Dominelli, L. and Payne, M. (Eds.). *Social Work, Themes, Issues and Critical Debates*. Basingstoke, MacMillan. Pp.119-137.

Payne, M. (2001). Knowledge Bases and Knowledge Biases in Social Work. *Journal of Social Work*, 1 (2), pp. 133-146.

Payne, M. (2007). Performing as a wise person in social work practice. *Practice*, 19 (2), pp. 85-96.

- Payne, M. (2009). Social work theories and reflective practice. In Adams, R., Dominelli, L. and Payne, M. (Eds.). *Social Work, Themes, Issues and Critical Debates*. Basingstoke, MacMillan. Pp.119-137.
- Payne, M. (2015). *Modern Social Work Theory*, (4th Ed.). London, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Payne, R. (1980). Organisational stress and support. In Cooper, C. and Payne, R. (Eds.). *Current Concerns in Occupational Stress*. London, Wiley.
- Payne, G. and Payne, J. (2004). *Key Concepts in Social Research*. London, Sage.
- Pease, B. and Fook, J. (1999). (Eds.). *Transforming Social work Practice; Post Modern Critical Perspectives*. New South Wales, Allen and Unwin.
- Pels, D. (2000). Reflexivity one step up. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 17 (3), pp.1-25.
- Perakyla, A. and Vehvilainen, V. (2003) Conversation analysis and the professional stocks of interactional knowledge. *Discourse in Society*, 14 (6), pp.727-750.
- Peters, R. S. (1966). *Ethics and Education*. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Petersen, A.C. and Olsson, J.I. (2015). Calling Evidence-Based Practice into Question: Acknowledging Phronetic Knowledge in Social Work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 45 (5), pp.1581–1597.
- Philp, M. (1979). Notes on the Form of Knowledge in Social Work. *Sociological Review*, 27, pp.83-111.
- Pierson, J. and Thomas, M. (2013). *The Social Worker's Guide to Social Sciences: The Key Concepts*. Maidenhead, McGraw Hill.
- Pilalis, J. (1986). The Integration of Theory and Practice: A Re-examination of a Paradoxical Expectation. *British Journal of Social Work*, 16 (1), pp. 79-96.

Pithouse, A. and Scourfield, J. (2002). Ready for practice? The Dip SW in Wales. Views from the workplace on social work training. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 2 (1), pp. 7- 27.

Plath, D. (2014). Implementing Evidence-based Practice: An Organisational Perspective. *British Journal of Social Work*, 44 (4), pp. 905-923.

Plato (396 BC/ 1987). *Theaetetus*. Trans Waterfield, R. Harmondsworth, Penguin.

Polanyi, M. (1962). *Personal knowledge. Towards a post-critical philosophy*. London, Routledge.

Polanyi, M. (2009). *The Tacit Dimension*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (2004). *Practice and the human sciences: The case for a judgment-based practice of care*. Albany, State University of New York.

Postle, K. (1999). "Things fall apart: The centre cannot hold": Deconstructing and reconstructing social work with older people for the 21st century. *Issues in Social Work Education*, 19 (2), pp. 23–43.

Powell, F. (2001). *The Politics of Social Work*. London, Sage.

Powell, J. (2005). "Value talk" in social work research: reflection, rhetoric and reality. *European Journal of Social Work*, 8 (1), pp. 21–37.

Preston, S. and Aslett, J. (2014). Resisting Neoliberalism from within the academy: Subversion through an activist pedagogy. *Social Work Education*, 33 (4), pp. 502–518.

Preston-Shoot, M. (2004). Evidence, the final frontier? *Star Trek*, group work and the mission of change. *Groupwork*, 14 (3), pp. 18–43.

Price, S. L. (2009). Becoming a nurse: A meta-study of early professional socialization and career choice in nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 65 (1), pp.11–19.

- Prynn, B. (2008). Reflections on past social work practice: The central role of relationships. In Fraser, S. and Matthews, S. (Eds). *The critical practitioner in social work and health care*. Milton Keynes, OUP.Pp. 97-113.
- Punch, K.F. (2005). (2ndEd.). *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. London, Sage.
- Quinney, A. (2006). *Collaborative Social Work Practice*. Exeter, Learning Matters.
- Rabinow, P. (1984). (Ed.). *The Foucault Reader*. New York, Pantheon Books.
- Raelin, J. (2007). Towards an Epistemology of Practice. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 6 (4), pp. 495-519.
- Rafferty, J. and Steyaert, J. (2009). Editorial. *Social Work in the Digital Age*. *British Journal of Social Work*, 39 (4), pp. 589–598.
- Ramsden, S. (2010). *Practical Approaches to Co-production: building effective partnerships with people using services, families and citizens*. DOH. London, HMSO.
- Rapley, J. (2004). *Globalisation and Inequality: neoliberalism's downward spiral*. (2nd Ed). London, Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Rapley, T.J. (2001). The art(fulness) of open-ended interviewing. *Qualitative Research*, 1 (3), pp. 303–323.
- Rapport, F. and Wainwright, P. (2006). Phenomenology as a paradigm of movement. *Nursing Inquiry* 13, (3), pp. 228-236.
- Ravetz, J.R. (1971). *Scientific Knowledge and its Social Problems*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- Rawles, J. (2016). Developing social work professional judgment skills: Enhancing learning in practice by researching learning in practice. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 36 (1), pp.102–122.

Reamer, F.G (1994). The evolution of social work knowledge. In Reamer, F.G (Ed.). *The Foundations of Social Work Knowledge*. New York, Columbia University Press. Pp. 1-12.

Reed, J. and Ground, I. (1997). *Philosophy for Nursing*. London, Arnold.

Reid, W. (1994). The empirical practice movement. *Social Sciences Review*, 68 (2), pp.165-184.

Reid, W. J (2002). Knowledge for Direct Social Work Practice: An Analysis of Trends. *Social Services Review*, 76 (1), pp. 6-33.

Reid, K., Flowers, P. and Larkin, M. (2005). Exploring lived experience. *The Psychologist*, 18 (1), pp. 20-23.

Rein, M. and White, S.H. (1981). Knowledge for practice. *Social Service Review*, 55 (1), pp.1–41.

Riemann, G. (2005). Trying to make sense of cases: features and problems of social workers' case discussions. *Qualitative Social Work*, 4 (4), pp. 413–430.

Ritzer, G. (2000). *The McDonaldization of Society*. Thousand Oaks, CA. Pine Forge Press.

Rixon, A. and Ward, R. (2012). What difference does it make? Social work practice and post-qualifying awards. *Practice*, 24 (3), pp. 147–159.

Roberts, J. (2006). Limits to Communities of Practice. *Journal of Management Studies*, 43 (3), pp. 623-639.

Roberts, G. and Preston-Shoot, M. (2000). Law and Social Work. In Davies, M. (Ed.). *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Social Work*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Roca, E. (2007). Intuitive practical wisdom in organizational life. *Social Epistemology*, 21 (2), pp.195–207.

Rode, N. (2017). Defining social work is a never-ending story. *European Journal of Social Work*, 20 (1), pp. 64-75

Rogowski, S. (2010). *Social Work: The Rise and Fall of a Profession*. Bristol, Policy Press.

Rogowski, S. (2011). Managers, Managerialism and Social Work with Children and Families: The Deformation of a Professions? *Practice*, 23 (3), pp.157-167.

Rogowski, S. (2012). Social Work with Children and Families: Challenges and Possibilities in the Neo-Liberal World. *British Journal of Social Work*, 42 (5), pp. 921–940.

Rogowski, S. (2015). From Child Welfare to Child Protection/Safeguarding: A Critical Practitioner's View of Changing Conceptions, Policies and Practice. *Practice*, 27 (2), pp. 97-112.

Roscoe, K.D., Carson, A.M. and Madoc-Jones, L. (2011). Narrative social work: conversations between theory and practice. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 25 (1), pp. 47-61.

Rosen, A. (1994). Knowledge use in direct practice. *Social Science Review*, 68 (4), pp. 561-577.

Rosen, A., Proctor, E.E., Morrow-Howell, N. and Staudt, M. (1995). Rationales for practice decisions: Variations in knowledge use by decision task and social work service. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 5 (4), pp. 501-523.

Rosen, A. (2003). Evidence Based Practice: Challenges and Promises. *Social Work Research*, 27 (4), pp.197-208.

Roseneau, P. M. (1991). *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads and Intrusions*. Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press.

Rozack, N. (2000). Shifting Positions: Making Meaning in social work. In Napier, L. and Fook, J. (Eds). Breakthroughs in Practice: Theorising critical moments in social work. London, Whiting and Birch.

Rubin, A. and Bellamy, J. (2012). Practitioner's Guide to using research for evidence based practice. Hoboken, New Jersey, Wiley and Sons.

Ruch, G. (2005). Relationship-based practice and Reflective Practice: Holistic Approaches to Contemporary Child Care Social Work. *Child and Family Social Work*, 10 (2), pp.111-123.

Ruch, G., Turney, D. and Ward, A. (Eds). (2010). Relationship Based Social Work. London, Routledge.

Rutter, D. and Fischer, M. (2013). Knowledge Transfer in Social Care and Social Work: Where's the Problem? Kent, UK. Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU).

Saint-Onge, H. and Wallace, D. (2003). Leveraging Communities of Practice for Strategic Advantage. Burlington MA, Butterworth Heinemann.

Saltiel, D. (2016). Observing Front Line Decision Making in Child Protection. *British Journal of Social Work*, 46 (7), pp. 2104–2119.

Schalock, R. L., Verdugo, M. A., and Gomez, L. E. (2011). Evidence-based practices in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities: An international consensus approach. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 34 (3), pp. 273-282.

Schon, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. London, Temple Smith.

Schon, D. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner*. San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass.

Schon, D.A. (1995). Reflective inquiry in social work practice. In McCartt Hess, P. and Mullen, E.J. (Eds.). *Practitioner-Researcher Partnerships*. Washington, DC, NASW Press. Pp.31-55.

- Schutz, A. (1962). *Collected papers* (Vol. 1). The Hague, M. Nijhoff.
- Scott, D. (1990). Practice wisdom: The neglected source of practice research. *Social Work Journal of the National Association of Social Workers*, 35 (6), pp.564–568.
- Scourfield, J. and Pithouse, A. (2006). Lay and professional knowledge in social work: reflections from ethnographic research in a child protection team. *European Journal of Social Work*, 9 (3), pp. 323–337.
- Secker, J. (1993). *From theory to practice in social work: The development of social work students' practice*. Aldershot, Avebury.
- Shardlow, S. and Walliss, J. (2003). Mapping comparative empirical studies of European social work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 33 (7), pp. 921-941.
- Sharpe, E., Moriarty, J., Stevens, M., Manthorpe, J. and Hussein, S. (2011). *Into the Workforce: Report from a Study of Newly Qualified Social Work Graduates (September 2011)*. London, Kings College London, Social Care Workforce Research Unit, available online at www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/kpi/scwru/dhinitiative/projects/sharpeetal2011itwfinalreport.pdf
- Shaw, I. (2004). *Qualitative Evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.
- Shaw, I. (2013). Ways of Knowing. In Gray, M. and Webb, S.A. (Eds.). *Social Work Theories and Methods*. (2nd Ed.). London, Sage. Pp. 241-252.
- Shaw, S. (2016). *Review into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons: a report to the Home Office*. London, UK Stationery Office.
- Sheafor, B. W. and Horejsi, C. R. (2003). *Techniques and guidelines for social work practice*. (6th Ed.). Boston, MA, Allyn and Bacon.
- Sheldon, B. (1978). Theory and Practice in Social Work: A Re-examination of a Tenuous Relationship. *British Journal of Social Work*, 8 (1), pp.1- 22.
- Sheldon, B. and Chivers, R. (2000). *Evidence –based social care: A study of prospects and problems*. Lyme Regis, Russell House.

Sheldon, B. and MacDonald, G. (2009). *A Textbook of Social Work*. London, Routledge.

Sheldon, B., Chilvers, R., Ellis, A., Moseley, A., and Tierney, S. (2005). A pre-post empirical study of the obstacles to, and opportunities for, evidence-based practice in social care. In Bilston, A. (Ed.). *Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work*. London, Whiting and Birch, Pp. 11-50.

Sheppard, M. (1995a). Social work, social science and practice wisdom. *British Journal of Social Work*, 25 (3), pp. 265-293.

Sheppard, M. (1995b). *Care Management and the New Social Work: a Critical Analysis*. London, Whiting and Birch.

Sheppard, M. (1998). Practice validity, reflexivity and knowledge for social work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 28 (5), pp. 763-781.

Sheppard, M. (2006). *Social Exclusion and Social Work: The Idea of Practice*. Aldershot, Ashgate.

Sheppard, M., Newstead, S., Di Caccavo, A. and Ryan, K. (2000). Reflexivity and the development of process knowledge in social work: a classification and empirical study. *British Journal of Social Work*, 30 (4), pp. 465-488.

Sheppard, M. and Ryan, K. (2003). Practitioners as rule using analysts: a further development of process knowledge in social work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 33 (2), pp.157-176.

Sibeon, R. (1987). *A sociological study of the social work profession with special reference to social work education*. Unpublished PhD, University of Leicester.

Sibeon, R. (1989). Comments on the structure and form of social work knowledge. *Social Work and Social Sciences Review*, 1 (1), pp. 29-44.

Sibeon, R (1991). *Towards a New Sociology for Social Work*. Aldershot, Avebury,

Sim, S. (1999). *Derrida and the End of History*. Cambridge, Icon Books Ltd/Totem Books.

Sin, C.H. (2008). The role of intermediaries in getting evidence into policy and practice: some useful lessons from examining consultancy client relationships. *Evidence and Policy: A Journal of Research, Debate and Practice*, 4 (1), pp. 85–103.

Sinclair, I. (2008). Inspection: A quality-control perspective. In Davies, M. (Ed.). *The Blackwell Companion to Social Work*. (3rd Ed.). Oxford, Blackwell. Pp.449-557.

Singh, G., and Cowden, S. (2009). The social worker as intellectual. *European Journal of Social Work*, 12 (4), pp. 479–493.

Smeby, J.-C., and Heggen, K. (2014). Coherence and the development of professional knowledge and skills. *Journal of Education and Work*, 27 (1), pp. 71–91.

Smeeton, J. (2017). From Aristotle to Arendt: A phenomenological exploration of forms of knowledge and practice in the context of child protection social work in the UK. *Qualitative Social Work*, 16 (1), pp.14–28.

Smith, J. (1989). *The Nature of Social and Educational Enquiry: Empiricism versus Interpretation*. Norwood NJ, Albex Publishing Corporation.

Smith, J. A. (1996). Beyond the divide between cognition and discourse: Using interpretive phenomenological analysis in health psychology. *Psychology and Health*, 11 (2), pp. 261-271.

Smith, J. A. (2004). Reflecting on the development of interpretive phenomenological analysis and its contribution to qualitative research in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 1 (1), pp. 39-54.

Smith, J.A. (2011). Evaluating the Contribution of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. *Health Psychology Review*, 5 (1), pp. 9 – 27.

Smith, J. A. and Osborn, M. (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In Smith, J.A. (Ed.). *Qualitative psychology: a Practical Guide to Research Methods*. London, Sage. Pp.51-80.

Smith, J.A., Flowers, P. and Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: theory, method and research*. London, Sage.

Smith, M. and Nursten, J. (1998). Social workers experience of distress: Moving towards change. *British Journal of Social Work*, 28 (3), pp. 351–368.

Smith, M., Cree, V.E., MacRae, R., Sharp, D., Wallace, E. and O'Halloran, S. (2017). Social Suffering: Changing Organisational Culture in Children and Families Social Work through Critical Reflection Groups—Insights from Bourdieu. *British Journal of Social Work*, 47 (4), pp. 973–988.

Social Work Task Force (2009). *Building a safe and confident future: The final report of the Social Work Task Force*. London, Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Social Work Task Force, (2009). *Facing up to the Task: the interim report of the Social Work Task Force*. London, Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Social Work Reform Board (2011). *Building a safe and confident future improving the quality and consistency of initial qualifying social work education and training*. Available at: <http://www.collegeofsocialwork.org/uploadedFiles/TheCollege/Practice/Improving%20the%20quality%20and%20consistency%20of%20initial%20qualifying%20social%20work%20education%20and%20training.pdf> Accessed 06/12/16

Sommerfeld, P. (2014). Social work as an action science: A perspective from Europe. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 24 (5), pp. 586-600.

Spolander, G., Engelbrecht, L., Martin, L., Strydom, M. (2014). The implications of neoliberalism for social work: Reflections from a six-country international research collaboration. *International Social Work*, 57 (4), pp. 301–312.

Spradley, J. (1979). *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Starks, H. and Brown Trinidad, S. (2007). Choose Your Method: A Comparison of Phenomenology, Discourse Analysis and Grounded Theory. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17 (10), pp.1372-1380.

Stepney, P. and Ford, D. (Eds.). (2000). *Social Work Models, Methods and Theories: A Framework for Practice*. Lyme Regis, Russell House Publishing.

Stevenson, O. (1971). Knowledge for Social Work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 1 (2), pp. 225-237.

Stewart, A., Allard, T. and Dennison, S. (Eds.). (2011). *Evidence Based Policy and Practice in Youth Justice*. Melbourne, AU, Federation Press.

Stonequist, E. V. (1933). Review of the Scientific Basis of Social Work: A Study in Family Case Work. [Review of the book: *The Scientific Basis of Social Work: A Study in Family Case Work*. M. J. Karpf]. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 28 (2), pp. 226-227.

Stryker, S. (2002). *Symbolic Interactionism: A Social Structural Version*. Caldwell NJ, Blackburn Press.

Susen, S. (2015). *The Postmodern Turn in the Social Sciences*. London, Palgrave, MacMillan.

Swenson, C. (1998). Clinical social work's contribution to a social justice perspective. *Social Work*, 43 (6), pp. 527–537.

Swigonski, M. (1993). Feminist standpoint theory and questions of social work research. *Affilia*, 8 (2), pp.171-183.

Taleb, N. (2007). *The Black Swan*. London, Random House Publishing.

Tavris, C. and Aronson, E. (2007). *Mistakes were made (but not by me): Why we justify foolish beliefs, bad decisions and hurtful acts*. Orlando, FL., Harcourt Publishing.

Taylor, C. and White, S. (2006). Knowledge and reasoning in social work, educating for humane judgement. *British Journal of Social Work*, 36 (6), pp. 937-954.

Taylor, C. and White. S. (2000). *Practising Reflexivity in Health and Welfare*. Buckingham, OUP.

TCSW. (2012). *Professional Capabilities Framework*. Retrieved from <http://www.tcsw.org.uk/pcf.aspx>

Teater, B. (2014). *An Introduction to Applying Social Work Theories and Methods*. Maidenhead, OUP.

Tham, P. and Lynch, D. (2014). Prepared for practice? Graduating social work students' reflections on their education, competence and skills. *Social Work Education*, 33 (6), pp. 704–717.

Thomas, H. and Qiu, T. (2013). Continuing Professional Development: Accountability, Autonomy, Efficiency and Equity in Five Professions. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 61 (2), pp.161-186.

Thompson, L. J. and West, D. (2013). Professional development in the contemporary educational context: Encouraging practice wisdom. *Social Work Education*, 32 (1), pp.118–133.

Thompson, N. (1995). *Theory and Practice in Health and Social Welfare*. Buckinghamshire, OUP.

Thompson, N. (2000a). *Understanding Social Work: Preparing for Practice*. Basingstoke, MacMillan.

Thompson, N. (2000b). *Theory and Practice in the Human Services*. Buckingham, OUP.

Thompson, N (2006). *Anti-Discriminatory Practice*. London, Palgrave Macmillan.

Thompson, N (2010). *Theorizing Social Work Practice*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Thompson, N., Murphy, M. and Stradling, S. (1994). *Dealing with Stress*. Basingstoke, Macmillan.

Thompson, N. and Thompson, S. (2008). *The Social Work Companion*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Thyer, B. (2002). Discipline-Specific Knowledge for Social Work. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 38 (1), pp.101-113.

Thyer, B. and Wodarski, J. (2007). *Social Work in Mental Health: An Evidence-Based Approach*. Hoboken NY, Wiley.

Toom, A. (2012). Considering the artistry and epistemology of tacit knowledge and knowing. *Educational Theory*, 62 (6), pp. 621-640.

Trevithick, P. (2008). Revisiting the knowledge base of social work: A framework for practice. *British Journal of Social Work*, 38 (6), pp.1212-1237.

Trevithick, P. (2012). *Social work skills and knowledge: A practice handbook* (3rd Ed.). Maidenhead, OUP.

Trinder, L. with Reynolds, S. (2000). (Eds.). *Evidence based practice: A critical appraisal*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing.

Trinder, L. (2000). Reading the text: postmodern feminism and the 'doing' of research. In Fawcett, B., Featherstone, B., Fook, J., and Rossiter, A. (Eds.). *Practice Research in Social Work: Postmodern Feminist perspectives*. Abingdon, Routledge. Pp.39-61.

Tripp-Reimer, T. and Cohen, M. Z. (1987). Using phenomenology in health promotion work. In Duffy, M. E. and Pender, N. J. (Eds.). *Conceptual Issues in Health Promotion*. Indianapolis, Sigma Theta Tau. Pp. 121-127.

Turner, B. and Rojek, C. (2001). *Society and Culture: Principles of Scarcity and Solidarity*. London, Sage.

Tymieniecka, M. T. (2003). Introduction: Phenomenology as the inspirational force of our times. In Tymieniecka M.T. (Ed.). *Phenomenology worldwide: A guide for research and study*. London, Kluwer Academic. Pp.1-4.

Tyson, K. B. (1994). Author's Reply: Response to "Social Work Researchers' Quest for Respectability." *Social Work*, 39 (6), pp. 737–741.

Usher, R. and Bryant, I. (2012). *Adult Education as Theory, Practice and Research: The Captive Triangle*. London, Routledge.

Valutis, S., Rubin, D., and Bell, M. (2012). Professional Socialization and Social Work Values: Who Are We Teaching? *Social Work Education*, 31 (8), pp.1046-1057.

van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience*. London, ON, State University of New York Press.

van Manen, M. and Adams, C. A. (2010). Qualitative research: phenomenology. In Peterson, P., Baker, E. and McGaw, B. (Eds.). *International Encyclopaedia of Education*, Vol 6. (3rd Ed.). Oxford, Elsevier.

van Baalen, S. and Boon, M. (2015). An epistemological shift: from evidence-based medicine to epistemological responsibility. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, 21 (3), pp. 433–439.

Van de Ven, A.H. and Johnson, P.E. (2006). Knowledge for Theory and Practice. *Academy of Management Review*, 31 (4), pp. 802-821.

Wacquant, L. (2009). *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity*. Durham, NC, Duke University Press.

Wagstaff, C., Jeong, H., Nolan, M., Wilson, T., Tweedlie, J., Phillips, E., Senu, H. and Holland, F. (2014). The Accordion and the Deep Bowl of Spaghetti: Eight Researchers' Experiences of Using IPA as a Methodology. *The Qualitative Report*, 19 (24), pp.1-15.

Wallace, J. and Pease, B. (2011). Neoliberalism and Australian social work: Accommodation or resistance? *Journal of Social Work*, 11 (2), pp.132–142.

Warren, L. and Boxall, K. (2009). Service users in and out of the academy: collusion in exclusion? *Social Work Education*, 28 (3), pp. 281-297.

Wastell, D. and White, S. (2010). Technology as magic: Fetish and folly in the IT-enabled reform of children's services. In Ayre, P. and Preston-Shoot, M. (Eds.). *Children's Services at the Crossroads: A Critical Evaluation of Contemporary Policy for Practice*. Lyme Regis, Russell House. Pp. 107–114.

Wastell, D., White, S., Broadhurst, K., Hall, C., Peckover, S. and Pithouse, A. (2010). Children's services in the iron cage of performance management: Street level bureaucracy and the spectre of Svejksism. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 19, pp. 310–320.

Waterson, J. and Morris, K. (2005). Training in "social" work: exploring issues of involving users in teaching on social work degree programmes. *Social Work Education*, 24 (6), pp. 653–675.

Watson, F., Burrows, H., and Player, C. (2002). *Integrating Theory and Practice in Social Work Education*. London, Jessica Kingsley.

Webb, S.A. (2000). The Politics of Social Work: Power and Subjectivity. *Critical Social Work*, 1 (2). Available at <http://www.criticalsocialwork.com>. Accessed 22nd February 2018.

Webb, S.A. (2001). Some considerations on the validity of evidence-based practice in social work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 31 (1), pp. 57-79.

Webb, S. A. (2006). *Social Work in a Risk Society: Social and Political Perspectives*. Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan.

Webb, S. A. (2015). Professional identity and social work. Key note presentation to 5th International Conference on Sociology and Social Work: New Directions in Critical Sociology and Social Work: Identity, Narratives and Praxis. Glasgow, Caledonian University, Scotland.

Welch, V., Lerpiniere, J. and Young, E. (2014). *Scottish First-Line Managers' Views of Newly Qualified Social Workers' Preparedness for Practice: Findings from an Online Delphi Study*. Glasgow, Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland. Available at: <https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/52562>

Welman, J.C. and Kruger, S.J. (1999). *Research Methodologies for the Business and Administrative Sciences*. Johannesburg, SA, International Thompson.

Welton, D. (Ed.). *The Essential Husserl: Basic writings in transcendental phenomenology*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN, Indiana University Press

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of practice and social learning systems. *Organization*, 7 (2), pp. 225-246.

Wenger, E. (2007). Communities of practice. A brief introduction. *Communities of practice* [<http://www.ewenger.com/theory/>]. Accessed 2nd April 2018

Wenger, E., McDermott, R. and Snyder, W. M. (2002). *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge*. Boston, MA, Harvard Business School Press.

Wenger, E., Traynor, B. and de Laat, M. (2011). Promoting and assessing value creation in communities and networks: a conceptual framework. Heerlen, Open Universiteit.

Wetherell, M. and White, S. (1992). Fear of fat: young women talking about eating, dieting and body image. Unpublished manuscript, Open University.

White, S. (1997a). Beyond Retroduction? Hermeneutics, Reflexivity and Social Work Practice. *British Journal of Social Work*, 27 (5), pp. 739-753.

White, S. (1997b). *Performing Social Work: an ethnographic study of talk and text in a Metropolitan Social Services Department*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Salford.

White, S., Hall, C. and Peckover, S. (2009). The descriptive tyranny of the common assessment framework: technologies of categorization and professional practice in child welfare. *British Journal of Social Work*, 39 (7), pp.1197-1217.

White, V. (2009). Quiet challenges? Professional practice in modernised social work. In Harris, J. and White, V. (Eds.). *Modernising social work: Critical considerations*. Bristol, Policy Press. Pp. 129–144.

Wilber, K. (2000). *Sex Ecology, Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution*. Boston, Shambhala.

Wiles, F. (2013). Not Easily Put into a Box: Constructing Professional Identity. *Social Work Education*, 32 (7), pp. 854-866.

Williams, L. and Sewpaul, V. (2004). Modernism, Postmodernism and Global Standards Setting. *Social Work Education*, 23 (5), pp. 555-565.

Williams, R., Faulkner, W. and Fleck, J. (Eds.). (1998). *Exploring Expertise*. New York, Macmillan.

Willig, C. (2001). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: adventures in theory and method*. Milton Keynes, Open University Press.

Willig, C. (2008). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology*. (2nd Ed.). Maidenhead, Open University Press.

Wilson, T.D. (2002). The Nonsense of Knowledge Management. *Information Research*, 8 (1), pp.1-33.

Wilson, G. and Campbell, A. (2013). Developing social work education: academic perspectives. *British Journal of Social Work*, 43 (5), pp.1005-1024.

Wilson, K., Ruch, G., Lymbery, M., et al (2011). *Social Work: An Introduction to Contemporary Practice* (2nd Ed). Harlow, Pearson Education.

Winter, K. and Cree, V. E. (2016). Social work home visits to children and families in the UK: A Foucauldian perspective. *British Journal of Social Work*, 46 (5), pp. 1175–1190.

Witkin, S. L. (1991). The implications of social constructionism for social work education. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 4 (2), pp. 37-48.

Wittgenstein, L. (1969). *On Certainty*. Trans by Anscombe, G.E.M. and von Wright, G.H. (Eds.). New York, Harper and Row.

Wojnar, D. and Swanson, K. (2007). Phenomenology: An Exploration. *Journal of Holistic Health*, 25 (3), pp. 172-180.

Woolgar, S. (1988) *Knowledge and Reflexivity: New Frontiers in the Sociology of Science*. London, Sage.

Wolpert, M., Fuggle, P., Cottrell, D., Fonagy, P., Phillips, J., Phillips, S., Stein, S. and Target, M. (2006). *Drawing on the Evidence: Advice for Mental Health Professionals Working with Children and Adolescents*. London, CMAHS.

Woods, T. (1999). *Beginning Postmodernism*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.

Woodward, R. and Mackay, K (2008). Exploring the place of values in social work education. Paper delivered at the JSWE Conference, Cambridge, 9-11 July (www.jswec.co.uk/presentations. JSWEC%201%202008%20-%20values.ppt)

Worsley, A.R.C (2018). Personal communication.

Wright Mills, C. (1959). *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Yam, B. (2004). From vocation to profession: the quest for professionalization of nursing. *British Journal of Nursing*, 13 (16), pp. 978-982.

Young, M. F. D. (2008). *Bringing knowledge back in: From social constructivism to social realism in the sociology of education*. London, Routledge.

Zald, M. N. (1995). Progress and cumulation in the human sciences after the fall. *Sociological Forum*, 10 (3), pp. 455–479.

Zeira, A. and Rosen, A. (2000). Unravelling 'tacit knowledge': What social workers do and why they do it. *Social Service Review*, 74 (1), pp.103–123.

APPENDIX 1 UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER

[Scanned copy attached]



Research, Innovation and Academic
Engagement Ethical Approval Panel

Research Centres Support Team
G0.3 Joule House
University of Salford
M5 4WT

T +44(0)161 295 2280

www.salford.ac.uk/

21 February 2017

Dear Anthony,

RE: ETHICS APPLICATION–HSR1617-47–‘Applying theory to practice: the lived experiences of social workers in adult services.’

Based on the information you provided I am pleased to inform you that application HSR1617-47 has been approved.

If there are any changes to the project and/or its methodology, then please inform the Panel as soon as possible by contacting Health-ResearchEthics@salford.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Sue McAndrew.

Sue McAndrew
Chair of the Research Ethics Panel

Appendix 2: Participant Recruitment Email

Letter to Local Authority Adult Service Departments

From: Anthony Hesketh [mailto:Hesketha@edgehill.ac.uk]
Sent: 21 October 2016 13:46
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Research possibilities.

Dear [REDACTED],

I am the Programme Leader for the BA (Hons) Social Work at Edgehill University and I am doing some research for my Professional Doctorate in Health and Social Care on how social workers in the adult sector use knowledge in social work.

I will be looking to recruit social workers to interview about these issues and I wonder if, as one of our partners, you could send the information to the relevant sectors asking for participants. I have to follow such processes as it would be unethical to directly approach people in case they felt pressured to take part. If you are able to do so, I would send you the material to you to forward.

I wonder also if Social Services have an Ethics Panel to assess such requests. Prior to working in higher education, I was a social worker, manager and staff development for over 20 years and I am unaware of such processes but I would be grateful if you know of such panels in your authority.

I look forward to hearing from you soon. My details are below if you wish to ring me for further information.

Anthony Hesketh,
Programme Leader for Social Work
Department of Social Work,
Edgehill University,
Ormskirk,
Lancs.
L39 4QP
Tel [REDACTED] or mobile [REDACTED]

Appendix 3: Participant Invitation Letter and Information Leaflet

Dear participant

Title of study: Applying theory to practice: the lived experiences of social workers in adult services

Name of Researcher: Anthony Hesketh

I am writing to you about the research I am conducting for my Professional Doctorate in Health on how social workers understand and use knowledge in practice. **I have received permission from your organisation to approach staff to participate in this project.** Your manager has identified you as a member of staff who may be interested in taking part and sharing your views with me. I am keen to discuss your perspectives on the gap or space, real or perceived, between the domains of practice and theory in social work and explore your experiences of how practitioners think and talk about theory/practice issues. It is important to point out that there are no wrong or right answers in the questions posed.

I would be very happy if you consider participating in my study and I envisage that the findings will help us to shape the way we teach about these issues to students on the various social work education courses.

Before you decide whether you would wish to participate, you need to understand why the research is being done and what we will be asking you to do. Please take time to read the attached information sheet carefully. If anything you read is not clear or you would like more information please contact me using the contact details on the attached sheet, or telephone on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Hesketh,

Tel [REDACTED]

Email: a.hesketh@edgehill.ac.uk

Anthony Hesketh

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title of study: **The use and application of knowledge to practice: the lived experiences of social workers in adult services**

Name of Researcher: Anthony Hesketh

Invitation paragraph

I am conducting a pilot study which is exploring the experiences of social workers in adult services in applying of theory to practice. **I have received permission from your organization to approach staff to participate in this project.** I would like to invite you to take part in this research study but before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information (contact details can be found at the bottom of this sheet).

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the research is explore and understand the processes involved in the integration of social work theory and practice from the perspective of the practitioner. The literature on this issue highlights that the relationship between social work theory and practice is ever problematic with frequent mention of the 'gap' between theory and practice However a brief of the literature reveals that researchers have hardly questioned what social workers themselves mean when these issues are discussed in the practice arena.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part in an interview as you are a qualified social worker who works in the adult field of practice.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. Once you have made the decision to participate I will then ask you to sign a consent form to show that you agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. If you decide not to take part, then I will respect your decision and it will not affect you in any way.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to take part you will be asked to participate in a one interview at either your place of work (subject to the agreement of your manager), or at Edgehill University. The interview will last up to 90 minutes. With your permission, all interviews will be digitally recorded.

Once I read over the interview and if there is any additional questions for you, I may, with your agreement, call you and request a second interview to ask for clarification or more information. Participation in this possible second interview is also voluntary. You may choose not to participate in a second interview, or may stop either of the interviews at any time.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are minimal risks involved as the information required will be about your professional experiences and perspectives about the relationship between theory and practice in your professional work. As stated above, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to justify your decision.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

I cannot promise that the study will help you personally or professionally, but the information that I get from all interviews may help to improve the way we engage with these issues in teaching and supervising students on pre and post qualification courses.

What if there is a problem?

If you have any concerns, questions or complaints you can contact my supervisors :

Dr Michaela Rogers, School of Nursing, Midwifery, Social Work & Social Sciences ,The University of Salford , Salford, Greater Manchester M6 6PU. Email m.m.rogers@salford.ac.uk

And

Dr Alison Brettle, School of Nursing, Midwifery, Social Work & Social Sciences ,The University of Salford , Salford, Greater Manchester M6 6PU. Email a.brettle@salford.ac.uk

If you remain dissatisfied please contact Anish Kurien, Research Centres Manager, Research and Enterprise, G-08, Joule House, Acton Square, University of Salford, Salford, M5 4WT. t: +44 (0) 161 295 5276 // email: a.kurien@salford.ac.uk

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

The information collected during the study will be kept anonymous and stored securely. I will use a pseudonym (an alternative name) for you so that your real name will not be kept with the recordings or transcripts of the interviews. Information will be stored by the researcher in a locked filing cabinet or on a password protected computer. When the study is finished all of the information collected will be stored in a locked drawer at the university, for a minimum of 3 years and it will then be destroyed.

What will happen if I don't carry on with the study?

As noted above, you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason, and we will destroy any information that you have given us. However, the information that you provide during your interview cannot be withdrawn once a report of the research has been finalised and published. The time frame for withdrawal is 6 months after the interview.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results will be reported through my dissertation which is a public document and also it may disseminated through conference presentations and written publications. Your name will not be included on any research reports and all data will be presented anonymously.

Who is organising or sponsoring the research?

I am organising the research as part of my Professional Doctorate qualification. It is not being sponsored by any individual, group or institution.

Further information and contact details:

Anthony Hesketh, Senior Lecturer/Programme Leader
Faculty of Health and Social Care, Edgehill University, Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 4QP.
Tel. No. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] mobile [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Email hesketha@edgehill.ac.uk

Appendix 4 Participant Consent Form

Title of study: The use and application of knowledge in practice: the lived experience of social workers in adult services

Name of Researcher: Anthony Hesketh

Please complete and sign this form **after** you have read and understood the participant information sheet. Read the statements below and answer yes or no, as applicable, in the box on the right hand side.

- | | | |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet, for the above study. I have had opportunity to consider the information and ask questions which have been answered to my satisfaction. | <input type="text" value="Yes/No"/> |
| 2. | I understand that taking part is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without my rights being affected. | <input type="text" value="Yes/No"/> |
| 3. | If I do decide to withdraw I understand that the information I have given will be destroyed.
The time frame for withdrawal is 6 months after the interview. | <input type="text" value="Yes/No"/> |
| 4. | I agree to take part by being interviewed, which will be audio (sound only) recorded. | <input type="text" value="Yes/No"/> |
| 5. | I understand that my personal details will be kept confidential by the researcher. | <input type="text" value="Yes/No"/> |
| 6. | I understand that my anonymised contribution will be used in the research report, other academic publications and conferences presentations. | <input type="text" value="Yes/No"/> |
| 7. | I agree to take part in the study. | <input type="text" value="Yes/No"/> |

Name of participant	Date	Signature
Name of person taking consent	Date	Signature

Appendix 5

Interview Guide

Introductions /Where do you work?

Tell me about a typical day for you as a social worker? What sort of activities do you get involved with?

In your experience of doing social work, what helps you most in your daily practice? What helps you in your assessments and interventions?

What kind of knowledge do social workers use?

Where does it come from?

Can you describe a case/intervention in which you have been involved which you are aware of using knowledge /theory in relation to the client?

What kind of knowledge was it?

In what way did that knowledge work in the situation described?

From what source did it come (manager, colleagues, earlier theoretical studies, earlier experiences etc.?)

Does life experiences or events influence you or not in making professional decisions? If so how? Where does this experiential knowledge come from?

Do you talk about cases with colleagues? Do you discuss theory and knowledge in these discussions?

In your experience as a social worker what do you use knowledge for? Does it have a purpose for you?

What is your experience of applying theory/knowledge and practice? Is it possible?

What do you think about the 'space' or 'gap' between theory and practice? Is it real or imagined? What is in that space/gap?

What is it about the relationship between theory and practice that is experienced as difficult? What factors increase or decrease the gap between them?

What is your experience of 'practice wisdom' (that knowledge said to be a combination of knowledge including experience of practice) .Do you use such a source of knowledge? What does it consist of?

Vignette

Mrs Smith is an eighty three year old female, suddenly bereaved by the death of her husband who was also her carer. Mrs Smith has moderate dementia but otherwise she is well. She has two children, a son who has lived in Australia for

three years and a daughter only five miles away. Mrs Smith's daughter is reluctant to help as they have always had a fractious relationship but she visits weekly to check on her mother. Her son has contacted the duty team to express concern that his mother is being financially abused by his sister.

Appendix 6 Lancashire County Council research approval letter

[scanned PDF copy of email]

Fw: Research Application Form

Anthony Hesketh

Sun 05/02/2017 21:53

To: Anthony Hesketh <Hesketha@edgehill.ac.uk>;

From: Rump, Rachel <Rachel.Rump@lancashire.gov.uk>

Sent: 21 November 2016 10:38

To: Anthony Hesketh

Subject: RE: Research Application Form

Hi Anthony

Both the Head of Service and the Principal Social Worker have approved your research application.

As soon as you have received ethical approval from the University, please let me know. Once this has happened, if you send me the letter that you would like us to send out requesting volunteers etc, the PSW will send this out for you.

Thanks and good luck!

Rachel

Rachel Rump

Skills, Learning and Development

Lancashire County Council

██████████

rachel.rump@lancashire.gov.uk

Appendix 7 Liverpool City Council research approval letter

[scanned PDF copy of email]

Fw: research

Anthony Hesketh

Mon 06/02/2017 14:10

Inbox

To: Anthony Hesketh <Hesketha@edgehill.ac.uk>;

From: Maple, Mike <Mike.Maple@liverpool.gov.uk>

Sent: 06 February 2017 08:36

To: Anthony Hesketh

Subject: RE: research

Morning Anthony.

I can confirm that agreement has been given for you to approach Social Workers from the South Locality of Liverpool City Council and enable progress with you research.

The Social workers have agreed to be involved and await your contact.

Regards

Mike Maple

Appendix 8 Knowsley Council research approval letter

[scanned PDF copy of email]

Anthony Hesketh

Sun 05/02/2017 21:40

Inbox

To: Anthony Hesketh <Hesketha@edgehill.ac.uk>;

From: Barson, Lisa <Lisa.Barson@knowsley.gov.uk>

Sent: 21 October 2016 14:17

To: Anthony Hesketh

Cc: Williams, John Alexander

Subject: RE: Research possibilities.

Hi Anthony,

I am happy to say that our service manager John Williams is happy to discuss this in more detail with you. I have copied John into this email and his mobile number is Mobile: [REDACTED]
Please feel free to keep in touch as we are always looking for innovative way of working across the partnership.

Warm regards

Lisa Barson

Workforce Development Practitioner

HR Service

Tel: [REDACTED]

Mob: [REDACTED]

Email: lisa.barson@knowsley.gov.uk

Knowsley Council | Westmorland Road | Huyton | L36 9GL



Follow us on Twitter @KnowsleyCouncil #MakeADifference

FW: Research Info

Williams, John Alexander <John.Williams@knowsley.gov.uk>

Tue 08/11/2016 14:33

To: Williams, John Alexander <John.Williams@knowsley.gov.uk>;

Cc: Anthony Hesketh <Hesketha@edgehill.ac.uk>;

 1 attachments (18 KB)

Appendix 1 Information on the Research Study.doc.docx;

Hi All.

You have been blind copied (bcc) into an email on behalf of Anthony Hesketh of Edge Hill University.

Anthony is completing a PHD and wants to interview approx. 12 social workers as part of his research.

Applying theory to practice: the lived experiences of social workers in adult services

Can I ask that you forward to your teams via bcc with the attached.

Any colleagues that would like to participate can contact Anthony direct and he can then discuss the input required.

Thanks John

From: Anthony Hesketh [mailto:Hesketha@edgehill.ac.uk]

Sent: 31 October 2016 17:17

To: Williams, John Alexander

Subject: Research Info

Hello John ,

I attach an information sheet on my proposed research for your perusal and sending out to your teams. I hope it is ok .

I look forward to hearing from you soon .

Regards

Anthony

Anthony Hesketh,
Programme Leader for Social Work
Department of Social Work,
Faculty of Health and Social Care,

Appendix 9 Sefton Council research approval letter

[scanned PDF copy of email]

RE: Research

Jan Sorsby <Jan.Sorsby@sefton.gov.uk>

Tue 25/10/2016 17:12

To: Anthony Hesketh <Hesketha@edgehill.ac.uk>;

Hello,

I hope you are well.

Just to let you know that I have forwarded your email on to our Principal SW for Adult Services.

Best wishes

Jan Sorsby

Learning and Development Officer

Workforce Development Team

Corporate Learning Centre

Sandringham Rd

Ainsdale

PR8 2PJ

██████████

Generic e mail address

training.services@sefton.gov.uk

Appendix 10. Example of transcript of interview – Martha

Interview subject

Speaker key

S1 Speaker One

S2 Martha

Timecode	Speaker	Transcript
00:00:03	S1	Hello, Martha. Could you tell me where do you work?
00:00:07	S2	Sefton Council, on the adult's team, adult social care.
00:00:11	S1	Can you tell me what's a typical day for you as a social worker, what sort of activities you get involved with?
00:00:17	S2	Okay. Well, we're on what we call a hope team. So, it's quite fast short term work, although we carry complex long term cases. We cover adults who have learning disabilities, physical disabilities, older people and older people mental health problems. I'm also an amp so, I have to cover an amp rota daytime. And much of our work involves assessing adults and their carers, commissioning services, reviewing and duty work, crisis work.
00:01:00	S1	And that's on a day-to-day basis, is it?
00:01:02	S2	Yeah.
00:01:02	S1	There's no differentiation.
00:01:05	S2	No. I suppose when I'm on the amp rota that's a different role. So, it takes me away from my care management role. But usually, I'm care managing really.
00:01:35	S1	Sorry about that. Can you tell me, Emma, what kind of knowledge do social workers use?
00:01:45	S2	I would say, certainly, legislative knowledge where every day, we're working under the Care Act as it is now. Mental Health Act. And sort of practice knowledge. We do have a fairly okay training unit. But mainly, practice knowledge and legislation.
00:02:11	S1	Is it. When you say, practice knowledge, what do you mean by that?

00:02:15	S2	I suppose the experience you've gathered over the years affects how I work day-to-day, certainly. The teams change significantly, week by week, month by month, where we get a number of newly-qualified social workers coming through. We also support students on our team. So, you're forever using...you practice experience to support and teach them as they come through. Sorry what was the question?
00:02:55	S1	Where do you think it comes from, practice knowledge? What do you mean by it?
00:03:02	S2	It comes from... well, with me, it's certainly experience. I never felt once I qualified, that I was ready to practice. I joke now saying I still feel new. I've been there 16 years. And I think my practice knowledge comes from the experience I've had working. That's what I draw on with students with new starters, with my day-to-day case management, my past experience in work.
00:03:30	S1	How does that experience differ or not from what you learn on the course?
00:03:40	S2	Oh, it's massive, I think. I feel like I left very unprepared. Never felt once I qualified that I was ready for practice.... Like I've only just learned how to do social work whilst working. I wasn't prepared once I graduated, even on placements. They were never quite tailored to...I suppose one of them was. But yeah, it's only through working. And still now, I am still gaining sort of practice knowledge now through different cases, different training opportunities. I joke now saying I still feel new and I've been here for 16 years... I never really understood how all this knitted together. ..It was a mystery. (Laughs)
00:04:13	S1	What is this practice knowledge then what does it look like or consist of?
00:04:21	S2	I think it's your experience through work, your life experiences as well. Because when you first start in social work... well, I was a lot younger. You know, I've gone through different life experiences. So, I think that helps. I can relate to service users from my own personal experiences. So, I suppose practice knowledge is your life experience and the experience you gather through the years, through different cases. It's like the experience I've had working of different cases
00:04:55	S1	You've heard about practice wisdom. Do you think that knowledge has to come from experience and practice mixed with what you've learned on a course, academic, some kind of amalgamation of it? Do you sort your source of knowledge? Is that similar to practice knowledge to you or...?
00:05:19	S2	Did you say, do I use...?
00:05:20	S1	Practice wisdom.

00:05:24	S2	Do you mean, do I kind of refer to it or am I using it without really let's say calling it (Overlapping Conversation).
00:05:30	S1	Both, yes.
00:05:30	S2	Okay. Well, I'm not consciously aware that I'm using practice wisdom in my day-to-day work, but I suppose when I think about it I am. And even through sort of CPD as well, that's developing me, and I suppose my wisdom. I suppose it's an amalgamation of training and practice experiences. I still don't feel though I would relate it ever back to my academic. I feel like my practice wisdom is only coming through work experience and ongoing training and development.
00:06:16	S1	Can you think of a case, so, an intervention, in which you've been involved with, which you're aware of using knowledge or theory in relation to the client?
00:06:28	S2	Yeah. do you want a specific...?
00:06:30	S1	Yeah, please, if you can think of one. Yeah.
00:06:32	S2	I've been working with a gentleman now for about the past four years. He's like a son to me. He's learning disabled, on a guardianship ward so there's mental health knowledge that I need to consider daily. But also, he requires a lot of tasks (Overlapping Background Noise) I'm working with him all the time. More recently, while I've been head down, getting on with it, setting him tasks. I have thought about the theory I'm using. I don't often do that because it's always head down, get on with it. But with this gentleman I have...But also...although I did my placement on a learning disability team, much of my say, first 10 years in the post was with older people. So, when we reconfigure and we were working with learning disabled people, I was a little bit (Overlapping Background Noise) experience in that area. So, working with this gentleman has developed my (Overlapping Background Noise) it's developed how I approach and work with service users with learning disability. But I have drawn on my past experiences. I have drawn on theories, I suppose, that I have considered way back when I was at the university. And also, like just to have knowledge around sort of mental health and the carer and stuff. But with him, because it's quite intense on a day-to-day when I'm in work, I'll always have to deal with this case because of his needs. I'm always having to think and develop myself and think about my sort of knowledge to enable me to work with him and his staff, and his family. So, have I answered that?
00:08:41	S1	What sort of knowledge then do you use with him, what kind of knowledge? You've referred to certainly legislative knowledge as the law. I'm just clarifying. You referred to the task centred, which obviously is social work theory as well, isn't it, with your knowledge.

00:08:56	S2	Yeah.
00:08:58	S1	Was there anything else that you would use with him? (Overlapping Background Noise) practice wisdom in a word or the practice knowledge...knowledge of cases?
00:09:17	S2	I suppose personal knowledge or... I have to draw on other people's knowledge like community nurses and social psychiatrists. So, I'm always again, liaising with other professionals.
00:09:30	S1	Do you think social workers do that a lot, that sort of collective knowledge drawing upon?
00:09:37	S2	I think in a lot of cases, yeah. I think you've got to. I think we're forever convening best interest meetings with other professionals to make that [inaudible 00:09:49] to disciplinary decision. I think we do it a lot. Yeah
00:09:54	S1	Do you do it informally as well as formally, like [inaudible 00:09:56]?
00:09:57	S2	Oh, yeah. I'll always ring the CPN and say, "He's been on the phone." He's this, he's that. And then, we'd, possibly from that, arrange a more formal meeting.
00:10:08	S1	Do you have any of those sorts of things within your office as well? Like your collective...is it like almost a collective knowledge or whatever?
00:10:16	S2	In team meetings, there's been a suggestion to bring cases to them so we can openly discuss them. It's never happened. Because they're very much team meeting or the business, and then, you're done. But there's a lot of informal discussions around cases, a lot of sort of peer support (Overlapping Background Noise) possibly in groups of say about four. It's never...when you say collective, not massive, not on a massive scale.
00:10:51	S1	In the knowledge that you use with that particular guy, what particular sources do you think that came from? Where did you get that knowledge that you use with that man?
00:11:11	S2	I would say...It's different aspects with him. If I'm talking about a psychiatric illness and his learning disability, I'm drawing knowledge from his...the help and health colleagues. In terms of his guardianship order, I draw knowledge from Mental Health Act and the implications of that in terms of guardianship. And on a more kind of sort of personable level, I'd say my knowledge from a personal point of view because I don't mother him but... I think that's the wrong word. But he relies a lot on me to talk to him every day, every hour of the day. So, I have to say, "No, you ring me at 9:00 and on Tuesday, we'll have a natter then" and that type of thing. And that's wrong. So, (Overlapping Background Noise) sort of personal experience, how to be nice to people, I suppose.

00:12:05	S1	In some respects, what do you think describes his relationship best (Overlapping Conversation).
00:12:09	S2	Yeah.
00:12:09	S1	Do you feel that's important in the work that you do forming relationships with people?
00:12:16	S2	Most definitely, yeah. And again, knowing... setting boundaries and particularly with certain client groups. I think with others...I think you've got to be mindful of relationship based practice depending on the client group you're dealing with, with older people. He's a young learning disabled man. So, it's very different in how you sort of...well, for me, how I work with each client group.
00:12:49	S1	When you suggested mothering him, what form does that take, possibly mothering him?
00:12:55	S2	I think sort of setting boundaries, a bit of discipline, a bit of sort of day-to-day advice on hygiene, diet, exercise, which he has staff that should be doing that. But I think possibly, he's becoming more reliant on me for that type of thing.
00:13:21	S1	Well, you mentioned, too, about the knowledge you use in that particular case. In what way, do you think, that knowledge works in the situation described? They're not trick questions. It's just a question of you know, lived experience of yours, social counselling knowledge work.
00:13:56	S2	Specifically, in...
00:13:56	S1	In his case, in that particular case.
00:14:01	S2	It's knowing...so, the knowledge I've got, whether it's from work experience or personal experience, it's knowing how to support him the best and most appropriate way. It's knowing how to step back, become more involved, use knowledge from other people. It's knowing how to progress with the case and support him in the best way I can. I suppose without it, you stop.
00:14:35	S1	Interesting. Do you ever think in terms of discuss theory and knowledge with colleagues in formal settings? It's suggested that you're always think talking about it in staff meetings but you don't. Is there no forum where that would be talked about, whether it might be with your supervisor or other people?
00:15:08	S2	I suppose I do, because in my practice education, I do it with students weekly informal supervision with them. If I've not got a student then, really day-to-day, there's no forum for myself and my colleagues to do that supervision. It does not allow for it. It's often kind of well, the computers are down. Shall we spend some time reflecting on a case? And it's like, no, let's just cancel supervision. And there's that kind of joke around shall we sit and reflect or discuss theories? More on a one to one. If someone comes to me for advice

		about a case, maybe a newly qualified or whoever, then, we may have a kind of think about this, think about that discussion. But it's usually one to one, not collective.
00:16:05	S1	Is it? Do you feel that life experiences or events influence you or not in making professional decisions?
00:16:17	S2	Professional decisions. Most definitely, yeah, without a shadow of a doubt.
00:16:21	S1	How?
00:16:24	S2	I suppose it makes me a little bit more human. I try and come across as more human to the service user. I will relate things like oh, well, I had a family member who had Alzheimer's. This was my experience. Tell me yours. I still get a fear. You can see a fear from, particularly the older people, that I'm going to whisk them away and plunk them in a home. And so, talking about my experience and talking about how I can support them, put them at ease almost instantly, really. even with younger adults, we do transitions cases. I'm able to talk about my own children. I think there's always been a bit of a kind of feeling that you shouldn't talk about your personal...there should be boundaries. Of course, there should be. But I think managed right, I will discuss my own personal experience because I think it helps (Overlapping Conversation).
00:17:29	S1	Yeah. I suppose it depends if you're doing it as a trigger or to unburden...to unburden would be wrong though, isn't it? You use it as a trigger. I always did that. You'd say, "Well, my mother had dementia. I can have some idea what it's like to lose somebody to that sort of thing, really." And it does create links, doesn't it? It creates a sort of rapport with people.
00:17:52	S2	Yeah. Puts them at ease, makes them realise that you're not some kind of stand-offish kind of professional, doesn't it ?
00:18:04	S1	Do you think personality matters in social work?
00:18:07	S2	Yes, definitely. I've worked with people that have made me shudder. I've seen people in their practice that have thought how is that supporting and empowering people?
00:18:19	S1	What sort of practice do you always get, thinking about the...?
00:18:28	S2	(Pause) I've seen colleagues with colleagues almost rubbish them, say, "I'm not telling you." A newly qualified person has come up and said this person, "Can you tell me about this?" And they said, "No. I'm not telling you. I'm sick of telling social workers this." I nearly wept. And then, even on the phone to service users, very kind of domineering, oppressive, controlling. But thankfully, they have now retired.

00:19:11	S1	What do you think that was? What do you think it is? Is that a type of knowledge or skill? What is it that they're lacking?
00:19:22	S2	Compassion, understanding. I suppose personal skills really in how to handle people, practice wisdom.
00:19:44	S1	[inaudible 00:19:44] on it really. But actually not doing it. You often hear it what is said about the...we talk about the gap between theory and practice or knowledge and practice. Theory is knowledge, you know what I mean. It's just like packaged knowledge, as it were. You think theory, [inaudible 00:20:03] it's crisis intervention. It's all based like knowledge. But we talk about the gap or space between theory and practice. I just thought really, do you think there's an issue between theory and practice? What's your experience?
00:20:24	S2	When you say an issue, what (Overlapping Conversation)?
00:20:25	S1	Integrate. How do you integrate it? How do you apply knowledge to social work? You know, we're taught at university, this is knowledge. Right. You go out on placement and you apply it. But when people talk about a gap between or the theory gap between the others, as if there's a problem. But I just wonder, what is it in practice do you experience?
00:20:48	S2	This bit about integrating what we learned. I always felt a bit of a cheat... (laughing) ...I'm having to think quickly .I don't know if I'd see it as a problem. I think it's being conscious of it. And to be honest I think once you've left the kind of academic world and you're now in practice, you become less aware of it, and you're not afforded the time to kind of think about it. Although when you do and you are, you know that you...it's there and your knowledge is there. you're working, you're doing it. I think but because you're not thinking about it all the time, you're conscious about it all the time. Is that the gap?
00:21:26	S1	It could be. It's a gap or a space between. Some people talk about that not quite fitting together. So, what do you think the social work role is? Because what's in that gap or space? What is in the...? You know if you think in terms of this is knowledge or a theoretical base. This is your practice. And people talk about the issues between the two, or the gap or space. What do you think is in that? What's in the gap?
00:22:04	S2	I don't know. Because when you do think about it, does that gap close? Does the gap disappear? So, there actually is nothing in the gap. So, when you're consciously applying your knowledge in your theory and your practice, there's no gap, is there?
00:22:23	S1	Interesting.
00:22:25	S2	But when someone suddenly said, "Right...What theory are you using? What knowledge are you using?" You think, I don't know. I just did it. So is that a

		gap. I don't know if there is. is this conscious competence or incompetence? (Laughs). I don't know. I'm getting flustered. (Laughs)
00:22:34	S1	How would you integrate theory and practice then? How would you say, you know, you work in somebody...you've lost somebody, whatever. And you might draw on that, I don't know. How would you utilise knowledge? How do you integrate it with the practice? Because [inaudible 00:22:57]...Thompson would say there's no theory as practice. You might be unconscious of it. You might not be conscious of what you're using, but there's theory in everything. And it depends upon sometimes whether you're conscious because sometimes we're theorising and it's like not a positive theory. It's not positive knowledge. It could be sort of common sense which is oppressive. How do you take knowledge and use it in practice? How do you take the theory? Like with a student, how would you do that, or a client?
00:23:33	S2	Well, the students and clients, I would always...particularly...not necessarily with people who've...Someone's died, put their experience and their loss through dementia or whatever, I might talk about...not often. But I might talk about say, I don't know, [inaudible 00:23:52] and loss, attachment and loss. But I probably wouldn't say that to the service user. I wouldn't say, "Right. I'm going to talk to you about a theory." I might talk to them about the stages of grief. I may not mention the theorists. But if that would be with the service user, I might talk about, "You know, it's right to feel anger or frustration." With a student, I would probably (Overlapping Background Noise) go and research this theory, and then, bring it back to supervision. So, it's more...what's the word? It's more sort of...with the client, I suppose it's more...I want to say, covered up, but I don't mean that. I'm not being explicit about a theorist to them.
00:24:51	S1	It's for different purposes, isn't it, really?
00:24:53	S2	Yeah. Whereas with a student, I'm more explicit. Go and find out about the theorists, go and find out what they said, then, feed back to me.
00:25:03	S1	Does it work?
00:25:03	S2	With the students? I would say so, yeah. And I think it...you can see them developing or it gets them thinking about what they've researched. And then, now they're applying it. With service users, possibly not. It might help at that moment, you know, what you're feeling is okay, and it's normal. Whatever. As soon as they walk out the door, it's probably gone.
00:25:33	S1	Because it's interesting. Because sometimes, just like different theory or knowledge. You've got theory which informs practice, and then, theories which obviously you intervene with. You know, for example, crisis intervention, task centred, systems theory. But then, you've got that type of

		theory which just...for example, you've got somebody in front of you who's just experienced grief, you know, as you say, losing somebody to dementia or death or whatever. Then, in a sense, we're not actually intervening with that. We're using it to be able to understand what's possibly going on in that person's life. But we're not intervening with it, are we? Like you would do it with say, we're using a piece of legislation to actually curtail them or promote them or whatever. How do you do that with a student? Do you ever say to students, "How do you use this knowledge? You've researched this knowledge now. Can you tell me what it does for you to enable you to understand that person better?" Do you ever utilise those particular thoughts when you're supervising a student, for example?
00:26:47	S2	I suppose when we're doing like case analysis about...or even your observed practices about what did you do? Why did you do it? How would you have done it differently? Maybe not all the time. No.
00:27:15	S1	Interesting. Because if knowledge is intrinsic to social work, and yet, we don't make it explicit, what do you think follows from that or doesn't follow from it?
00:27:34	S2	Well, it will be forgotten, won't it? And then, that gap appears. So, if we're not explicit about it with the students while they're on placement and learning, and through...[inaudible 00:27:49] work was it (Overlapping Conversation)? Does that help?
00:27:55	S1	I suppose it does in a sense, doesn't it? Because it's focused, isn't it really. And it's obviously a bit of a bureaucratic process so that you've got to be able to demonstrate learning and demonstrate understanding.
00:28:11	S2	But that might help once they've gone through that probation [inaudible 00:28:17], maybe.
00:28:18	S1	I've interviewed quite a few people now, and the literature says often they don't use theory or knowledge consciously. They never have the time to do it. And some people say that's dangerous, you're not using...But most of those comments would come from academics who write about it.
00:28:43	S2	About it being dangerous.
00:28:44	S1	Yeah, it's dangerous. What do you think social workers would say? Or what do social workers say about that? Because it's quite common. (Overlapping Conversation) everybody has said... everybody I've interviewed has said, "I'm not really consciously thinking about it."
00:29:00	S2	Yes. Well, you kind of...it's almost like a luxury, isn't it, to be afforded the time to be consciously aware of theory. Because in fact it's great when you are given time to think about a case because you know that you're using theory. You know that you're using your knowledge. You might think, "Oh, I'm glad I did it that way. I'm glad...I should have done it this way." But often

		because it's head down, you're not afforded the time. So, you're not consciously doing it. Is it proper? No, I don't think it is. I don't think it's dangerous. I suppose...
00:29:39	S1	Perhaps dangerous is a bit strong. Is it proper? Is it what you should do?
00:29:49	S2	No. But then, we should have capped case loads and we should be allowed half an hours reading time a week and things like that. And we should have supervision. And we should have a case load waiting book. But in the sort of climate we're in, you're just not...so, it's not proper. You should be allowed time. You should be allowed sort of peer reflection and things. But you're not so you're not always able to be conscious about what you're doing.
00:30:22	S1	Because there are problems. It's suggested at times there are problems with not theorise...with not being conscious of theory. Like, for example, you might be drawing on things which are unhelpful, you know what I mean. You're not necessarily drawing on positive things for people, really.
00:30:41	S2	You might be practising dangerously and...
00:30:44	S1	You could be in some ways.
00:30:44	S2	And not aware of it. Or not guided to be doing something differently. Because you're not being afforded the time to think about how you might do it differently or what knowledge you're applying. And I think forums like supervision should perhaps be the time to think about you practising your knowledge. More often, it's not. Usually, it's not. It's all about...
00:31:10	S1	What is it talking about then?
00:31:11	S2	Cases in terms of where you're up to. Can you close it? Can you take more? A bit about development, safeguarding. There's also sectional communication, but no one knows what that means or what you put in it. So, it's never, "Why did you do that with that case?" Never that.
00:31:39	S1	I understand child care is moving more into that again.
00:31:42	S2	All right.
00:31:43	S1	After the traumas of the child abuse scandals they've had really. I've heard that supervision is becoming more reflective about what you do and your people cases, what you use. Interestingly though, in child care, from what I understand, it's expected that theory is made explicit particularly in reports to courts. Evidence based. I just wondered is there no such movement within adult social work?
00:32:18	S2	Well definitely I'd say I think in some way, practice has been made sharper under the new legislation... There is a best interest assessor. And all of your assessments when you're considering a deprivation of liberty...has to include recent case law and why dolls exist, that type of thing. So, you've got to

		include it in your assessments. But every assessment you'll read has a big block of considering this due to the Baroness Hale and the Cheshire West judgement and the acid test. So, it's just copied and pasted, it's just bang, then, you're right. You [inaudible 00:33:05]. So, again, more so it includes why you're doing it. But there's a risk. It's lost because you just bung it in.
00:33:17	S1	So, if you were doing the best interest assessment. Think of one you've done recently or whatever. What knowledge are you drawing on for that, for the best interest assessment?
00:33:29	S2	Again it's (Overlapping Background Noise) and your Dols. And you're looking at... I suppose I'm looking at knowledge of how this person should be managed. What's appropriate for them in terms of their environment?
00:33:54	S1	What knowledge is that, do you know?
00:33:58	S2	(Pause) I would say that in sort of my practice knowledge of going into different homes for the past 16 years and knowing what's right for this person and what isn't, what I'd like to see happening for them and what I don't like to see. And I've only got that through knowing what's a good home and good staff. And a manager that's talking to me about how do I intend to manage this person compared to (Overlapping Background Noise).
00:34:29	S1	Do you mean residential [inaudible 00:34:31]?
00:34:33	S2	Yes.
00:34:32	S1	And where does that knowledge come from when you say about what you would like to see in a good home?
00:34:39	S2	From the past experience... I wouldn't have got that in my first year of post graduating.
00:34:44	S1	So, does that mean that you've got some sort of idealised view of what a good home is? Do you carry it around with you?
00:34:50	S2	No. Not idealise. Because I think every home has its own issues... I would take it from an individual. Like the gentleman I've just done my most recent best interest assessment on, isn't necessarily in the best home. I'm more interested in how they're managing his needs. Family have place...family have chosen that home. It's up to them. But I know what the manager's telling me and how they're going to meet those needs, whether it's appropriate from what I might have heard 10 years ago.
00:35:35	S1	What are those needs he's specifically got?
00:35:40	S2	Well, he was a priest, actually. He wanted to do the affirmation (Overlapping Background Noise). He wants the affirmation. So, he was a priest. So, his religion is very, very important to him. So, the manager was telling me that when it becomes (Overlapping Background Noise) worked out that one to

		one time with him, with the Bible, with a prayer book really calms him down as opposed to Diazepam. And whereas I know the home he'd just come from tended to use the Diazepam as opposed to the Bible. Now, it's not the best home but I just thought, yeah, you know. Whereas, if I'd had gone to that home 15 years ago and they'd said, "When he gets agitated, we use Diazepam," I'd probably have gone, "Oh, yeah. Good." You know. So, yeah, I'm more kind of I suppose aware of an individual's needs rather than sort of homes.
00:36:39	S1	Is there any in particular...those particular...that work, do you see any issues around the relationship between your theory and your practice in best interest assessors?
00:36:57	S2	Yes, I suppose I do. But why do I...? I think it's a different...because I'm in a different role, I've got a different hat on, than me just kind of case managing sort of quick, quick turnaround cases. I suppose I'm afforded more time.
00:37:20	S1	(Overlapping Background Noise) best interest.
00:37:21	S2	Yeah. And I don't mean a case reduction time. So, of course, you've got his best interest. Don't touch any of your other cases. I don't mean that. But I suppose more (Overlapping Background Noise) more thorough. My contact with his family's history, previous wishes and feelings. So, I'm given more kind of time and space to do that. Whereas other cases I'm just like, "Right. What do you need? What can we do?" Do you know what I mean?
00:37:59	S1	Yeah, interesting. So what brings the knowledge, the theory together with the practice? If we said there's a gap and you said...well...I think you were suggesting there's only a gap when you're not there, when you're not thinking about it, really.
00:38:21	S2	Yeah. When you're not conscious.
00:38:24	S1	When you're not conscious about it.
00:38:26	S2	When you do think about it then it is there, the knowledge, the theories there...
00:38:32	S1	So, what brings the knowledge and the theories together? What is in the middle that brings this and this together? What's the sort of funnel? In the sense you have got that, you've got like in the sense you got quite clearly, knowledge practice. So what is it that bring these two together?
00:38:56	S2	You mean like the service users, the people, the cases?
00:39:02	S1	Yeah, what brings...? For example, if you talk of practice, we tend to be thinking, don't we, of cases with the practice. So, say you've got the person here, the service user, the knowledge here. And you know, people talk about

		space or gap. What is it that bring that together with that to be a sense of that?
00:39:23	S2	For me? It would be yeah, the worker, you would say, who's...
00:39:31	S1	So, what helps or hinders the worker in doing that, in bringing things together, from your experience?
00:39:43	S2	Pressure, work load.
00:39:45	S1	Is it?
00:39:46	S2	Yeah. Work load, pressure, external pressures.
00:39:51	S1	Such as?
00:39:54	S2	Well, I could leave at 7:00 p.m. but I've got to leave at 5:00 to get the kids after school club. But if I could just stay for five more minutes, I could just finish this off. So, external pressures I mean from (Overlapping Background Noise) personal and family life. And pressure to kind of take cases, take more cases and do more duties, do (Overlapping Background Noise) round of duty.
00:40:21	S1	So, it's (Overlapping Background Noise) that social work in some ways, we (Overlapping Background Noise) force people to a nine to five, Monday to Friday role, don't we? Because of the constraints of service provision. But is that the best way to manage people, really? Or manage a carer or the issues?
00:40:41	S2	I think they try you know; you have flexible working arrangements. We're afforded flexi...we do have flexi time. So, if you can get in at half seven, you're allowed to try and take that flexi time. It's a completely different matter because you're told, "Well, have you got the flexi time to take?" Yeah. Have you sent an email this week saying that you can't take cases? Someone said, "Well, no, I haven't actually." Why? Well, it would question that if you haven't got the time to take cases, how have you got the time to take flexi?
00:41:24	S1	How have you got the time to work over (Overlapping Conversation)?
00:41:26	S2	That's what I said. So, the counter argument is that because I worked over last week. That's how I got the cases. And they're so... I think that's from the kind of manager's perspective. I've been told off for talking.
00:41:40	S1	Talking.
00:41:41	S2	Oh, yeah. I was telling someone how I dropped a pallet of eggs on my drive. And I could feel these eyes.
00:41:48	S1	You're joking.
00:41:49	S2	On what ground. And I said, "Are you okay?" And they said, "Well, if you've got time to talk, you've got time to take..." Yeah. So, (Laughter) I know. And

		that was only very recently. In terms of being micromanaged and pressure, I suppose that's where you know, that gap is. Yeah.
00:42:20	S1	It's interesting, that idea though, where you say, "What's in the gap or the spaces?" You as the social worker, you would bring this together with this, really. And you talk in terms of the issues that a social worker might feel, first in bringing them together in terms of pressure, work load in a sense of that might impact upon your ability to integrate theory and practice in a meaningful way. Do you think there's anything else in terms of the preparedness or lack of preparedness or any other issues from your experience, that impacts upon that integration?
00:42:57	S2	Preparedness you mean if someone, perhaps just coming into social work? (Pause) Again, I think ASY, I think there are more protective case load. And if they're sort of warned on how to manage it and manage the pressure that they will inevitably experience, that might help. I'm also very conscious when students come on placement, of where they sit, because the colleague I was talking about before, and there are others, are very negative. And I think for newly qualified and for students to be sat in that negative environment, it doesn't protect them from them, and those vibes. So, then, they may experience that gap quicker than if they're kind of encouraged and supported with more positive colleagues.
00:44:12	S1	Do you think that negativity affects learning?
00:44:16	S2	Oh, yeah. Absolutely. You can see it just cuts people off if you stop, you stop asking. They go...they kind of shrink away. I can see people approaching managers because they're all...Because where I sit, I can kind of almost see the whole office. And I can see new...we've got like four new starters, and I can see them approach the managers. But because they're very much kind of don't bother me, they literally sort of shrink and walk away.
00:44:54	S1	Interesting.
00:44:55	S2	Sad. [inaudible 00:44:56]. I will go up and I'll say, "Helen, are you okay?" But when I've got the time.
00:45:04	S1	So, time's a big issue.
00:45:09	S2	Oh, yeah. For sure, yeah.
00:45:10	S1	Has it always been like that? You've been doing it 16 years, a long time.
00:45:17	S2	No, I don't think it has ever felt so pressured. So, no. I think it was always oh, you've had that case quite a while. Close it. Have a new one. There's always been the expectation to take cases and that's always there. That's fine. You're there to work aren't you. But the pressure...Because we've lost resources. We've lost staff. The pressure has intensified, without a doubt.

00:45:48	S1	And then, obviously impacts upon social work. Because some social workers are that [inaudible 00:45:53] that joins things together in the gap. Do you think in a sense, there's the right preparedness? What do you think about that? Because you're taking students as well in terms of are people, social workers, prepared for the role that they do in apply in theory to practice? Because it's a perennial problem. I mean, I go out to students on super placements now, you know, tutor and visits. And invariably, you know, you're filling the form in. And at the midpoint review, you know, they invariably say like you know, "What's up? What's ongoing with this?" Well, yeah, theory and practice, theory to practice, you know, consolidation. So, it's never...I don't believe have ever been to anybody yet, and I've been doing social work for 40 odd...No, for 30 odd years. I've never been to a situation where they say, "Yeah, that's fine. That's great."
00:46:44	S2	Yeah.
00:46:45	S1	Are they always prepared?
00:46:52	S2	When you say 'we,' the (Overlapping Conversation).
00:46:55	S1	The social work profession. Are we prepared as workers for that role of integrating theory and practice?
00:47:03	S2	Prepared as in welcoming a new starter or a student?
00:47:07	S1	Well, both, both yourself and that (Overlapping Conversation) all of us really.
00:47:14	S2	No, we're not prepared. I think because the longer you come into the profession, (Pause) I suppose the bigger the gap then, isn't it? So, like you say whether ASYE, it's still there, isn't it? You're still consciously thinking about your development, your knowledge now you're applying it. But then, the longer you're in it, you're not using...you're becoming less conscious.
00:47:53	S1	Is that because it becomes absorbed in your, parts of you, and you don't have to think about it? Or you don't need to think about it in the same way?
00:48:01	S2	Possibly. Yeah.
00:48:00	S1	Can I ask as well about just knowledge, about knowledge use, how you use knowledge? You know, like for example you're doing an assessment of somebody, you're gaining knowledge of the person, et cetera. How do you use that knowledge? What do you think it's for?
00:48:26	S2	Well, it's to support or improve their lives isn't it? It's like gathering the various elements of a person's life and placing them against the backdrop of a bigger picture, I think, which can make sense of what's going on in their lives So, I'm using what they're telling me to make better their circumstances, whatever that is, whether that's through then I use it to tell a...My managers just like you're telling a beautiful story. It really got me in tears. She said

		that on Wednesday, because I needed a placement for this lady. So, yeah, you're using it to make better, I suppose.
00:49:03	S1	So, you know, the persons want something. You're gaining knowledge from them, you're taking personal knowledge to form a story, which is right, a story about that person. Because you need to have the story of the person, see if the person is...But you know also presumably, what the eligibility criteria, that's knowledge, isn't it, eligibility criteria. How do you use that knowledge that you get from the person, the person's story, knowing there's an eligibility criteria?
00:49:40	S2	Well, I use the knowledge to form my assessment, and then, I'd go and complete my assessment. And then, I'd draw on the knowledge to link it to my eligibility and then, consider need and resources that are available to me....I can't say that's all there is really... It's like a process that gives shape to something. It is like writing a story.
00:50:15	S1	Do you feel that knowledge is ever used in other ways? ... you're an agent to the local authority. And therefore you have to assess people for services. You're assessing the need and assessing the welfare, whatever you call it these days, and to meet the needs or to improve the well-being. And you know that they...
00:50:45	S2	Yeah. Oh, yeah. From a sort of practice experience, I know what I need to say to get someone to support that they need from the manager's perspective may not necessarily...they may not necessarily think they need it. So, I can write what I need to write.
00:51:12	S1	And do you think...would you consider that being economical with the truth? Or would you consider it a professional opinion or both?
00:51:23	S2	I would say it's more a professional opinion because equally, I wouldn't give everyone whatever they want.
00:51:31	S1	Why wouldn't you?
00:51:35	S2	Because at that time, I would consider...it would be my professional opinion that they don't necessarily need it. Jennifer was talking about before she wants to move house every week, and I have to say no. Whereas someone else who is desperate for someone to come and cook the tea, but we don't do meal course anymore because of cuts and all of that. But I'll say, "Well, do you need someone to come and prompt your medications as well and to empty your commode?" No, no. I'll say, "Well, you do." That type of thing I would do because otherwise they wouldn't have a hot meal. And on my assessment I'd be guiding it that they've got other support needs to enable them to get that [inaudible 00:52:31].
00:52:32	S1	They're not supposed [inaudible 00:52:34] this post to doing that.

00:52:37	S2	Well, you could order the frozen meals even if you can't put them in the microwave. Or you can...some of the local cafes do a hot meal delivery payment.
00:52:47	S1	So, it looks like [inaudible 00:52:49] do it now. Meals on Wheels.
00:52:49	S2	Meals on Wheels. It's a travesty. About three years there was no Meals on Wheels.
00:52:55	S1	Was that general through those authorities?
00:52:57	S2	I assume so. No, it isn't in Sefton for about the past four years. And the value of that service. Just by seeing someone, that's probably reduced. Well, I think we're probably getting more calls now for meal prep and social isolation because they're not getting that hot meal at 12:00 or probably about 11:00.
00:53:17	S1	They always used to complain about it. Oh, (Overlapping Conversation). They did that [inaudible 00:53:24], (Laughter). You know what I mean. They can't eat but they seemed to eat it when I was working...
00:53:31	S2	I mean, I'm not a pushover, put it that way. But I know when there's a need but it may not necessarily...it might need a little bit more elaboration.
00:53:49	S1	And you use the knowledge, you've got are systems...systems knowledge. What you're suggesting is you're using systems knowledge to meet people's needs because you know you wouldn't particularly meet it if you didn't, in a sense, write in a certain way.
00:54:11	S2	Yeah. Which you'll only get from experience. Because I've seen newly qualified social workers and their assessment and they're very factual and accurate and...but they [inaudible 00:54:26]. And they may not necessarily meet the criteria, or need to meet the criteria. And I do say to students or newly qualified, "Think about this. What about this?"
00:54:40	S1	Can you talk about that though? Is that something which you could talk about openly within a team?
00:54:49	S2	No.
00:54:52	S1	But do you think other people do that, from your experience.
00:54:55	S2	Talk about it openly or use it? Yeah. I think we probably do. I could probably identify a few of them.
00:55:05	S1	I think it's because, in a sense, there's a recognition, isn't there, a clash between our values and the authority we work for. So, there's always a dilemma, it seems to me, between yeah, you are an agent to the local authority. But you're also here, because you're motivated, hopefully, by compassion and understanding for people who've got difficult lives.

00:56:17	S2	Yeah and it's not about giving people what they want, when they want every time. It's about knowing the difference when actually someone does need it.
00:56:27	S1	So, you wouldn't openly say that to the manager though.
00:56:29	S2	No.
00:56:30	S1	But you think the manager knows those games go on?
00:56:33	S2	Oh, sure they do. I'm sure they do. Well, we'd hope they do. Yeah.
00:56:43	S1	Okay. Well, thank you very much. We terminate at 2:00. Thank you.

[00.56.45]

[End of Audio]

Duration 56 minutes 45 seconds

Appendix 11. Example of interview log

Interview Log 15th March 2017

OMG that was a long interview. Mostly my fault as he was an interesting character with lots on stuff to mull over. We were interrupted three times during the interview which shows how busy and pressured social workers are today. Not like in my day at all. We had more time to think and do. This is the most noticeable feature of Rob's conversation. You can almost hear **the 'busyness'** (is that a word?) **in his voice and see his brain ticking over quickly**. I felt almost embarrassed to be taking his time but on the other hand he seemed to want to offload, to tell someone about his work. He seemed to need the **validation from external source**. Maybe he doesn't get it from **supervision? No it's functional but** ok. Conscious not to make him feel that he needs to perform as clever. It's his experience that I'm looking for.

Talked a lot about his **ambivalence about statutory social** work. He clearly values what he does and thinks it is essential but he has a sense, even if it's faint, that it isn't what it could be. He doesn't have any experience of the 'old' social work before care management but he has some knowledge from colleagues and books which tell him it was different and maybe better? However **doesn't wholly go along with the idea that social work is somehow lesser than it was**. Knows about Erikson and stages of life- integrity v despair - and thinks it's applicable to understanding some older people but how can he use it to engage with people when he is problems which are far more serious and important? **'We're not here to fix people?'** What are you here for? **If he went on a 'wild goose chase' looking into existential problems, he'd have no time to deal with 'real' problems** like dealing with someone's ability to meet basic needs like eating. Almost like he **compartmentalises social work world** into reality and 'ivory towers thinking'. Repeats a lot **'to be honest'** emphasizes his points that he knows what it's like in the **real world** and I **m really not part of it**.

Knows a lot about knowledge and values law and experiential knowledge. Has **reverence in some way for academic knowledge and research but it's not really real**. Not always relevant in the real world. There we go again, the **'real world'**. The real world is statutory social work. Experiences that real world in his daily practice – of people struggling with poverty, disability, frailty, housing problems, and dementia. Research knowledge experienced as less important as often out of date, the old social work. **Articles about social work in Peru, not valid**. If **there is a gap, it's because sometimes it is not relevant**, not applicable to today. **'Sometimes'** figures a lot. **Doesn't want to reject academy**. He's benefitted from it but it's not **always** useful. Felt he was telling me how it was in practice, but not too much in case I thought he was being negative towards the university. Stressed he liked his studies. But. ? Gave example of postmodern thinking. All interesting but SW relies on reality/truth not only interpretation e.g. safeguarding. **'In reality' repeated** six times

Likes reading and keeping up to date with social work **but time is a problem**. Work consumes him. Seems very diligent. Very committed. **Weight of world on his shoulders. Money is the problem**, cuts in budgets has effected the team and its ability to help. **But got to keep with registration. Got to learn and show learning. Got to keep up with colleagues**.

He was almost frightened of talking about knowledge, hesitant at times, perhaps fearful that he would be judged badly by me. I'm from the other world/ little does he know. Despite gentle reminders, he seemed almost embarrassed at times, about discussing knowledge as if I would mark him out of 10. I need to practice more relaxed attitude to participants

Appendix 12. Developing Emerging Themes

Table excerpt from anonymised transcript: Martha

Exploratory comments/feelings	Original transcript	Emerging themes
<p>Knowledge from outside formal learning, from personal experiences, from married and family life.</p> <p>Development of rapport / allay fears and create alliance</p> <p>Purpose of personal exposure matters. Role of boundaries</p>	<p>Never felt once I qualified that I was ready for practice. I joke now saying I still feel new and I've been here for 16 years...I never really understood how all this knitted together. It was a mystery</p> <p>suppose it makes me a little bit more human. I try and come across as more human to the service user. I will relate things like oh, well, I had a family member who had Alzheimer's. This was my experience. Tell me yours. I still get a fear. You can see a fear from, particularly the older people, that I'm going to whisk them way and plunk them in a home. And so, talking about my experience and talking about how I can support them, put them at ease almost instantly, really. even with younger adults, we do transitions cases. I'm able to talk about my own children. I think there's always been a bit of a kind of feeling that you shouldn't talk about your personal...there should be boundaries.....</p> <p>. I suppose it depends if you're doing it as a trigger or to</p>	<p>Not prepared? never fully prepared?</p> <p>Complex issue here. Never completely understand it ?</p> <p>Making links ? Personal v professional self</p> <p>Use of own experience is helpful</p> <p>Uncertainty.</p>

<p>Repeated 'isn't it?' , doesn't it? Fearful of judgement from me? Hesitancy.</p>	<p>unburden...to unburden would be wrong though, isn't it? You use it as a trigger. I always did that. You'd say, "Well, my mother had dementia. I can have some idea what it's like to lose somebody to that sort of thing, really." And it does create links, doesn't it? It creates a sort of rapport with people. Puts them at ease, makes them realise that you're not some kind of stand-offish kind of professional, doesn't it ?</p>	<p>Professional expertise merges with personal experience</p> <p>Professional persona?</p>
<p>Negative experiences of others effects</p>		
<p>'Luxury' suggests extravagance</p>	<p>it's almost like a luxury, isn't it, to be afforded the time to be consciously aware of theory.</p>	
<p>Theory is an extravagance for practice?</p>	<p>Because when you are given time to think about a case. You know that you're using theories. You know that you're using your knowledge.</p>	
<p>Use</p>	<p>You might think, "Oh, I'm glad I did it that way. I'm glad...I should have done it this way." But often because it's head down, you're not afforded the time. So, you're not consciously doing it. Is it dangerous?</p>	<p>Unconscious use of knowledge/theory</p>
<p>No time to think , Get on with job .</p>	<p>No, I don't think it is. I don't think it's dangerous. I suppose...</p>	<p>Crisis in social work</p> <p>Barriers to thinking.</p>
<p>Procedural matters –high priority</p>	<p>And I think forums like supervision should perhaps be the time to think about you practising your knowledge. More often, it's not. Usually, it's not.</p>	<p>Role of supervision</p>

<p>Managerialism</p> <p>Paucity of reflection</p> <p>Difficult moment . Seems afraid of admitting her limitations to me. Searching for an answer seems almost an attempt to show her worth.</p>	<p>It's all about... cases in terms of where you're up to. Can you close it? Can you take more? A bit about development, safeguarding. There's also sectional communication, but no one knows what that means or what you put in it. So, it's never, "Why did you do that with that case?" Never that.</p> <p>No, we're not prepared. I think because the longer you come into the profession, (Pause) I suppose the bigger the gap then, isn't it? So, like you say whether ASYE, it's still there, isn't it? You're still consciously thinking about your development, your knowledge now you're applying it. But then, the longer you're in it, you're not using...you're becoming less conscious.</p>	<p>Neo liberalism and NPM</p> <p>Lack of support</p> <p>Gap relates to consciousness of issues. More conscious when just qualified? Gap closes when thinking about issues?</p> <p>Is thinking explicitly required?</p>
<p>Knowledge is there to help/sifting out details/</p>	<p>Well, it's to support or improve their lives isn't it? It's like gathering the various elements of a person's life and placing them against the backdrop of a bigger picture, I think, which can make sense of what's going on in their lives So, I'm using what they're telling me to make better their circumstances, whatever that is, whether that's through then I use it to tell a...My managers just like 'you're telling a beautiful story. It really</p>	<p>Knowledge Use to understand/ To make a difference</p>

<p>Determined to maintain a professional persona even in the light of austerity cuts.</p> <p>Practice experience/knowledge of system's</p> <p>Elaboration?</p> <p>Sharing of value base/social justice</p>	<p>got me in tears'. She said that on Wednesday, because I needed a placement for this lady. So, yeah, you're using it to make better, I suppose.</p> <p>Yeah. Oh, yeah. From a sort of practice experience, I know what I need to say to get someone to support that they need from the manager's perspective may not necessarily...they may not necessarily think they need it. So, I can write what I need to write</p> <p>I'd would say it's more a professional opinion because equally, I wouldn't give everyone whatever they want. I'm not a pushover, put it that way. But I know when there's a need but it may not necessarily...it might need a little bit more elaboration.</p> <p>Which you'll only get from experience. Because I've seen newly qualified social workers and their assessment and they're very factual and accurate and... And they may not necessarily meet the criteria, or need to meet the criteria. And I do say to students or newly qualified, "Think about this. What about this?"</p>	<p>Knowledge used to link private troubles to public issues.</p> <p>Story telling</p> <p>Putting case forward Influencing</p> <p>Experienced worker. Manipulate system?</p> <p>Emphasis on experience/knowledge. Prepared to bend rules?</p> <p>Professional stance.</p> <p>Selective strategy</p> <p>Compassion/ethical stance ?</p>
--	---	---

		<p>Community of practices/passing of knowledge /experience from established practitioner to those less experiences , Hidden knowledge Subverting knowledge. Knowledge to cut.</p> <p>Education. Pass on learning. From experienced worker to novice. Hierarchy</p>
--	--	---

Appendix 13. Literature search

The reason for the literature review is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject and its context and to locate possible gaps in the current literature that need further exploration (Jesson et al 2011). The searches started around 2014 were undertaken iteratively since then. The following methods were employed in the literature review:

A search of the electronic databases from 1979 to 2018 Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts, Social Care Online, Social Services Abstracts, psychINFO and the Web of Science and Web of Knowledge. Searches of journal databases were also made, focusing on titles that address social work theory and practice, such as the British Journal of Social Work, Journal of Social Work, Social Work Education, Australian Social Work, Social Sciences Review, Practice. In the search, I used the terms social work theory and practice/ application of knowledge/transfer of knowledge/knowledge use/ integration of knowledge / theory practice gap/theory practice space/evidence based practice along with Boolean operators as appropriate.

Also a manual search was undertaken as Aguirre and Bolton (2014) note database searches are not always comprehensive and key word searches of library catalogues at Salford and Edgehill Universities were explored to locate relevant material alongside bibliographies to identify any material omitted from the examination of catalogues and databases.

The review examined books, government publications, PhD theses and peer reviewed and other articles predominantly from the following journals: British Journal of Social Work; European Journal of Social Work; Journal of Social Work Education; Practice; Journal of Practice Teaching; Social Work Education; Australian Social Work; International Journal of Social Welfare. These are among the main journals for the social work profession which use the English language and are mostly peer reviewed. All the pieces were in English and drawn from the UK, Australia, Canada, and U.S.A with a few studies from Hong Kong, Kuwait, and Sweden. Most stemmed from the social work field, with a few from education, nursing and management.