AN INVESTIGATION OF THE TRAINING EXPERIENCES OF THE
FOURTH YEAR STUDENT NURSES:
A CASE STUDY OF THE PORT ELIZABETH NURSING CAMPUS.

BRIDGET SMITH
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FOURTH YEAR STUDENT NURSES:

A CASE STUDY OF THE PORT ELIZABETH NURSING CAMPUS.

By

BRIDGET SMITH

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

of

Masters in Public Administration in the Faculty of Arts

at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

PROMOTER: DR DEREK TAYLOR

JANUARY 2009
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Richard,
our two daughters,
Junay and Shenese
and three sons,
José, Jody and Shane for their
patience, love and support.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I hereby wish to express my sincere gratitude to the following individuals:

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- Hendrieka Nel and Warda Hendricks for their assistance and support,

- The Department of Health, Eastern Cape, for the financial assistance.
DECLARATION

STATEMENT 1

This work is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Public Administration.

Signed ....................................

Date ...........................................

STATEMENT 2

I, Bridget Smith, hereby declare that:

- The dissertation is the result of my own work/investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references. A bibliography is appended;
- This research paper has not been previously submitted in full or partial fulfilment of the requirements for an equivalent or higher qualification at any other recognised institution.

Signed ....................................

Date ...........................................

STATEMENT 3

I, hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for interlibrary loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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SUMMARY

Nursing lecturers are faced with the challenge to adapt their teaching styles and attitudes to accommodate the new nursing student that enters the nursing field. These students have expectations and demands which differ highly from past students. Another challenge for lecturers is the demands of a nursing curriculum. The students that commenced with the four year course during 2005 at the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus experienced negativity with regards to their training. The objectives of the study are to explore and describe the training experiences of the fourth year student nurses of the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus and to co-construct guidelines to assist nursing lecturers to gauge the understanding of students during their four years of nursing training.

The participants used for the study were all fourth year nursing students. They had positive and negative experiences of their training during the four years. The negative experiences related to the demands of the curriculum, lecturers’ poor subject knowledge and insufficient material resources needed for their studies. Regardless of the negativity experienced, students encountered positivity with regards to lecturers’ attitudes.

The researcher focused on a qualitative study using an explorative, descriptive, contextual and phenomenological approach. A semi-structured approach was adopted to obtain data. Once consent was obtained from the relevant authorities, four fourth year nursing students were interviewed. The interviews were conducted by an independent role-player within the Department of Health to ensure an unbiased approach. Guba’s model was used to assess trustworthiness and data was analysed. Ethical considerations were ensured throughout the research process. Themes and sub-themes were identified. Based on the research findings, guidelines were co-constructed to assist nursing lecturers to better understand
nursing students during their training. The findings of the study will be brought to the attention of nursing lecturers and management personnel of the campus. It was concluded that nursing students need to be consulted on issues concerning their training and development before implementation, and that they be respected and cared for as students based on their human rights.
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CHAPTER 1
OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

“Every member of the profession, including the neophyte entering the nursing school has a duty to protect and enhance the image of the profession”

Charlotte Searle (2004:38)

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The challenge confronting the Department of Health was to produce as many competent professional nurses to meet the health needs of society as it can. Nurses have been trained at nursing colleges for decades and programmes have become more advanced over the years. In the theoretical context of the training they learn about professionalism, accountability, management, leadership, role-modeling, problem-solving, decision-making and responsibility.

The primary goal of nurses was to provide the best service to each and every individual under their care. In order for nurses to be able to do this, they are familiarized with many aspects, facets and functioning of the human body on a theoretical basis. It was expected of them to use the acquired knowledge and to apply it to the clinical field. The quest for self realization of these nurses should therefore be assisted by nurse educators.

Plans for educational intervention must include the students’ needs in totality and ways should be adopted on how to deal with these in the classroom. These needs are based on the Bill of Rights and it also includes the psychological, emotional and spiritual needs. It was only when nurses were placed in the clinical setting that they experienced real nursing. If their experience in the theoretical field was unsatisfactory, it might have a negative impact on service delivery once they were placed in the clinical setting.
Any curricular programme that has as a major aim the development of the student in terms of both cognitive and personal development, must begin with the identification of those needs and anxieties which may hamper or threaten effectiveness in teaching and learning. Developing of strategies, which could be implemented to meet the student needs and concerns and lead to problem resolutions, are more likely to succeed where there is student involvement. In a democratic society like South Africa, it is expected that the Batho Pele Principles be respected and adhered to. Student involvement will be covered under the principle of consultativeness and transparency in the sense that they were included in the teaching and learning process to ensure for their own success.

Determining the needs of students is an important factor as it enhanced the main elements of effective education. The aim of this study is also to identify those internal features or factors affecting the academic achievements of students from their first year until their final year of study and what their experiences were during the four years.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The focus of the study was to explore and describe the student nurses’ experiences of their training during a comprehensive course. The study will be conducted at a public nursing campus located in the Nelson Mandela Metropole. This campus provides theoretical as well as practical training to student nurses which assists them to become professional nurses.

After 20 years of nursing and 3 years of being a nursing lecturer, the researcher noticed that student nurses have become more demoralised over this period of time. Student nurses expressed more negative feelings towards their training and the profession. Statements are being heard by the researcher on a daily basis where the study will be conducted:
“Oh! Nursing is going down the drain and I would not like to go with.”

Statements made by well-known public figures (as sometimes published in the media) also play a role in how student nurses viewed their position in this profession. At times it affected them and what they think about their studies negatively:

“Well, as some politicians say: we are from the streets with no proper qualifications; I can just as well only aim for 50%.”

or

“Why did I choose this profession? If I knew it was going to be so depressing, I would have never even thought of doing it.”

The above statements were made in front of peers. It confirmed the stigma of nursing carried by student nurses during their training. During the researcher’s career and mostly the last years of being a nursing lecturer, statements like those that have been mentioned above have become a matter of concern and prompted the researcher to initiate this study of the fourth (4th) year student nurses' experiences during their training. It has been noticed by the researcher that fewer student nurses complete their training. This could be due to many factors that prohibited student nurses to be successful with their studies. Having an understanding of the student nurse's experience, facilitated the researcher to co-construct guidelines to assist the management of the nursing campus to ensure effective and efficient nursing training and learning.

During the 4 years of nursing training, there were students who resigned because of the perception the students had of what is involved in being a student nurse and the
actual experience in the classrooms. According to Harvey and Murray (1997:383), the early abandonment of a programme is related to unhappiness or poor performance. Most students seemed to believe that nursing was about being in-charge of a ward, handing out medicines and giving out orders to other nurses. The researcher has experienced the verbal comments of students that they “did not expect the studies to be so hard and that they had to buy so many books, they do not like it”. This could be due to a number of factors which include the following:

- Students have experience prior to their entry into the nursing field of qualified nurses being in an office and giving orders or not attending to patients’ needs.

- Attitudes of lecturers towards students. As a lecturer, the researcher often heard students say I wish that lecturer can teach us everything, she really treats us well.

- The inability of students to adapt to a language which was not their mother-tongue. Students come from different backgrounds such as those who only received their secondary school training in Afrikaans or Xhosa. This made it difficult for them to communicate easily and students refrained from participating in class. A lecturer can thus be of the opinion that the students are unco-operative and not interested in their studies.

- Minimal resources (for example, finances) to acquire the necessities to be successful in their studies. Some students entered the profession to provide for their families and send the stipend home that they receive. They therefore had little left to obtain the necessary material for their education.

- Inability of students to form relationships with the different cultural groups. Every student is unique and comes from a different social background. The morals and values they were taught at home are invariably being tested in the classrooms. Students become frustrated and irritated with the attitudes of some of their fellow-students and find it difficult to adapt.
Due to the above-mentioned factors, these students lost interest in their theoretical teaching and learning which resulted in poor performance. Students also experienced some degree of conflict in the classroom because of the different ways they were being taught. It is important for students to receive proper and thorough training in class because they have to apply the theory to the practical field at the end of the day. The current fourth year students commenced their training in 2005. The group started off with 89 first year students and only 20 students were about to complete their training successfully in 2008. For the purpose of the study, the researcher will focus on the experiences of these fourth year nursing students during the 4 years of their training.

Student nurses are expected to use and develop their cognitive, psychomotor and affective skills. The important skill for students and for the purpose of the study was the development and utilisation of their cognitive skills. According to White (2001:154), cognitive skills enable a student to think, recall and apply knowledge, analyze, synthesize, improvise, conceptualize and evaluate. Students are expected to think critically in order for them to analyze data, construct their observations in a scientific manner and apply the knowledge gained in the classroom and the practical field. Students need to know that they are cared for in the classroom and can expect their lecturers to accompany them through the course.

To the best of the researcher’s knowledge, minimal research has been conducted on this topic. This in itself has stimulated the researcher’s interest to initiate the study. The identified campus is one of five campuses in the Eastern Cape which was accredited in 2004 and is fairly new in its existence.

1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives were to:

- Explore and describe the fourth year student nurses’ experiences of their training at a public Nursing Campus; and
Co-construct guidelines to assist nursing lecturers to better understand student nurses during their training.

1.4. STRUCTURES OF ACCOMPANIMENT

The lecturer is viewed as the accompanier of the student and both the lecturer and the student ought to build an understanding and a relationship which requires certain structures for accompaniment. Kotzé (1998:10) identified the structures of accompaniment that should be observable and experienced in the process as follows:

1.4.1. Relationship structures

This structure refers to the relationship between the nursing student and the lecturer including other senior management at a nursing school. Student nurses who enter the nursing profession will not be prepared to co-operate and become involved unless they feel a sense of belonging and that they are cared for. They have a need to trust and be trusted and the only way it can be possible was when they believe they are in capable hands. The lecturer must therefore display a sincere, warm and caring attitude towards the student.

A student expects a nurse educator to understand him/her fully as he/she believes those educators were once students as well. The relationship must also be built on understanding and recognition from both sides. The student must understand and give recognition to his/her lecturers and vice versa. Both role-players must be engaged in earning respect for each other's individuality, expectations, experiences, differences and personalities. A relationship which was built on trust, honesty, admitting when wrong and correcting those mistakes, can only assist both the lecturer and student to cope with the development and educational challenges in the classroom.

Recognition of authority is of utmost importance. Students should know which channel of communication to follow and they must know who is in-charge. They
should honour and respect the lecturer not only as an individual, but as a person who is more knowledgeable than they are. The lecturer must portray an attitude of a professional role-model, act responsibly and be an outstanding leader to the students.

1.4.2. Course structures

The intensity of the relationship is dependent on the degree of student assistance and support. As the student enters the nursing field as a neophyte, he/she is totally dependent on the lecturer for guidance and leadership. As the student progress through the course, this relationship decreases and the student becomes gradually independent.

1.4.3. Actualisation structures

To ensure that the outcomes of the programme are reached, both the lecturer and the student become actively involved in education and teaching of nursing. The student grows and realizes that he/she can accept more responsibility. This builds the student's self-esteem and he/she becomes more confident and is even prepared to take risks. The lecturer also becomes aware that the student has grown in personal strength and that he/she starts appreciating his/her own achievements.

1.4.4. Goal structures

Meaningful relationships develop between the student and the lecturer. He/She starts to identify with norms, values and the challenges associated with nursing education in the classroom. The student is thus able to make his/her own decisions and be responsible and accountable for the outcome of those decisions.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were based on the discussions of the aforementioned problems:
What were the fourth year student nurses’ experiences of their training at a Public Nursing Campus?

What guidelines can be co-constructed to assist nursing lecturers to better understand student nurses during their training?

1.6. CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

1.6.1. Co-construct

Co-construct refers to a togetherness process, including stakeholders in this research, in order to create and add new meaning during the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:129). The stakeholders in this study include the student nurses, lecturers, managers and representatives from the student council.

1.6.2. Four-year integrated programme

A four-year diploma programme for education and training as a nurse in general nursing science, psychiatry, midwifery and community nursing science which leads to the registration with the South African Nursing Council (SANC), Regulation R425 (22 February 1985 as amended).

1.6.3. Guidelines

Rules or instructions that are given by an official organisation telling one how to do things (Oxford Advanced Students Dictionary, 2005:663).

1.6.4. Student nurse

For the purpose of this study, the researcher has defined a student nurse as a person undergoing education and training at an accredited nursing school, which has complied with the prescribed conditions and has furnished the prescribed particulars (Nursing Act no. 50 of 1978 as amended, section 23).
1.6.5. Experience
Experience is what happens to a person; what is seen, felt, done or lived through. (World Book Millenium, 2000:749). The aim of this study is to explore and describe the experiences of fourth year student nurses at a nursing campus.

1.6.6. Accredited Nursing School
Accredited Nursing School is a nursing school which has been granted accreditation or approval for the school and its educational programmes from the South African Nursing Council and has met the requirements of the relevant regulation to offer these programmes that lead to specific qualifications (Kotze, 2000: 31).

1.6.7. Nursing Lecturer
A nursing lecturer is a registered professional with a formal qualification in nursing education appointed at a nursing school or campus to teach students in class and accompany them in the clinical field. The nursing lecturer will be accountable for the academic development of the nursing student during his/her training as a nurse at the nursing school.

1.6.8. Learning
Learning can be defined as a process of being modified, more or less permanently, by what happens in the world around us, by what we do and by what we observe. Learning involves change. It is concerned with the acquisition of habits, knowledge and attitudes. It enables the individual to make both personal and social adjustments (Roux, 2001:6).

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design and method will be outlined:
1.7.1 Research design

The proposed study is qualitative in nature which includes explorative, descriptive and a contextual study based on a semi-structured, phenomenological approach to inquiry. A brief outline of the study will follow:

- **Qualitative Research**

  According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:134), qualitative research studies serve one or more purposes: it can reveal the nature of certain situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems or people; they enable a researcher to gain new insights about a particular phenomenon, develop new concepts or theoretical perspective about the phenomenon and discover problems that exist within the phenomenon; allow a researcher to test the validity of certain assumptions, claims, theories or generalisations within real-world context; provide a means through which a researcher can judge effectiveness of particular policies, practices or innovations.

  From the above, the purpose is that the researcher focuses on activities taking place in the present. It gives the researcher the ability to observe the situation first hand and from a perspective of others. It is thus possible to identify weaknesses and to test whether data collected is real. Evaluation of a research study can be done which assists in the finalization of the process. With this approach the researcher would like to understand the student nurses' experiences during their training at a Nursing Campus in the Nelson Mandela Metropole.

- **Explorative Research**

  Babbie and Mouton (2006:79) states that this approach is typical when a researcher examines a new interest or when the subject of a study itself is relatively new. The researcher wants to become familiar with lived experiences of student nurses and exploration is thus required. New knowledge will be obtained that will lead ultimately to a better understanding of those experiences.
Descriptive Research

A major purpose of many social scientific studies is to describe situations and events. The researcher observes and then describes what was observed (Babbie & Mouton, 2006:80). The student nurses' experiences will be described in an effort to obtain complete and accurate information for this study.

Contextual

Babbie and Mouton (2006:272) state that the aim is to describe and understand events within the concrete, natural context in which it occurs. The context may differ in different research studies but it has a major significance in qualitative research.

Phenomenological approach

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport (2006:264), a phenomenological study is a study that attempts to understand people’s perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation. The researcher focused on what will be studied and how it will be studied. This type of study examines human experiences through description that is provided by the people involved.

1.7.2. Research method

Qualitative methods focus on inductive, holistic, emic, subjective and process-orientated research methods used to understand, interpret, describe and develop theory pertaining to a phenomenon or a setting (Morse & Field, 1996:199). It can be noted that the methods used for qualitative research are based on own ideas or opinions and experiences, the use of particular facts and examples to form general rules or principles, consideration of a complete being and not just part of it and following a specific sequence to obtain information. Phase One consists of data collection and data analysis.
1.7.2.1 Phase One

During this phase exploration and description of the student nurses' experiences during their training at a Public Nursing Campus will be identified. The sections that are included in phase one are as follows:

- **Sampling strategy**
  Random-purposive sampling will be utilized. This sampling is judgmental of nature and it involves the conscious selection by the researcher of certain aspects to be included in the study (Burns & Grove, 1999:475). The researcher will make use of purposive sampling where the researcher can select the sample on the basis of own knowledge of the population, its elements and the nature of the research aims (Babbie & Mouton, 2006:166). Kerlinger in De Vos et al (2005:193) explains that sampling is when any portion of a population or universe is taken as representative of that population or universe.

This study will be effective because the individuals under study will represent people who have experience of the phenomenon being studied. The researcher will focus on certain criteria to be used for the selection of the sample.

- **Data collection method**
  Interviews will be used based on a phenomenological approach as a means of data collection. Interviewing is the predominant mode of data or information collection in qualitative research (De Vos et al, 2005:287). The researcher aims to conduct interviews with student nurses so that their experiences of training at the nursing campus can be utilised to serve as guidelines for nursing lecturers to assist with their training.

- **Analysis of data**
  Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data (De Vos et al, 2005:333). During this stage the audio-taped
information will be transcribed and analysed. A descriptive method will be used and themes identified.

- Literature review
Review of literature serves a bibliographical function for readers, indexing the previous research on a given topic (Babbie & Mouton, 2006:566). With the literature review, findings of the study will be compared and similarities and differences will be determined from existing data. Literature review should be based on the research problem under study (Mouton, 2005:91).

1.7.2.2 Phase Two
The co-construction of guidelines to assist nursing lecturers to better understand student nurses during their training will be supported by the information obtained from the data analysis and the literature review.

1.8. TRUSTWORTHINESS
Another approach to clarify the notion of objectivity as it is manifested in qualitative research is found in the influential work of Guba in Krefting (1991:215) which defines different strategies of assessing the mentioned criteria. For them, the key criterion or principle of good qualitative research is found in the notion of trustworthiness: neutrality of its findings or decisions (Babbie & Mouton, 2005:276). Krefting (1991:215) outlines trustworthiness under Guba’s model. This model which consists of four criteria will be used:

- Truth value
Discoveries made of the living experiences of human beings and how informants perceive it, give rise to truth value. The strategy to ensure truth value is credibility (Krefting, 1991:215). De Vos et al (2005:346) states that credibility is the alternative to internal validity, in which the goal is to demonstrate that the inquiry was
conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described.

- **Applicability**
  Transferability is the criterion used against which applicability is assessed (Krefting, 1991:216). Babbie and Mouton (2006:277) refers to transferability as the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents.

- **Consistency**
  Guba (in De Vos, 1998:351) mentions that the criterion for consistency is dependability. De Vos *et al* (2005:346) mentions that dependability is the alternative for reliability, in which the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for study, as well as changes in the design created by increasingly refined understanding of the setting.

- **Neutrality**
  Guba (in De Vos, 1998:351) states that confirmability is the criterion against which neutrality is measured. Babbie and Mouton (2006:278) outlines it as the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not of the biases of the researcher.

1.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Every citizen has the right to be protected against any harm whether it is his name, person, identity or property. The researcher will ensure that every effort is made to ensure that no harm is caused to any of the participants exposed to the study.
Participants will be assured that they may withdraw at any time from the research study. Written and informed consent will be obtained from the students, the relevant stakeholders - for example the managers of the Nursing College and the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus, the student representative council and the Ethics Committee of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Ethical considerations will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

1.10. CHAPTER DIVISION

**Chapter One: Overview of study**
Chapter One referred to the introduction, problem statement, research questions and objectives, a brief layout of the research methodology, concept clarifications, ethical consideration and the chapter organization in this study.

**Chapter Two: Literature review**
Chapter Two is concerned with the consultation of literature, journals, legislation and other publications.

**Chapter Three: Research design and method**
Chapter Three focuses on a detailed discussion on the research design and the method to be used to obtain data.

**Chapter Four: Data analysis**
Data analysis will be done in Chapter Four after the interviews have been conducted and the audio-taped information is analysed. Themes will be identified and compared with relevant literature.
Chapter Five: Guidelines, recommendations and conclusion.

The conclusion and co-construction of guidelines which is based on the themes will follow in Chapter Five. Recommendations will be provided and a summary on the preceding chapters will be presented.

1.11. CONCLUSION

The researcher has identified a possible problem during the training of student nurses at the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus. It has been observed that the number of student nurses has decreased in each year of their training and that fewer nurses became qualified at the end of their fourth year. One of the objectives of the study is to describe and explore the fourth year student nurses' experiences of their training at a Public Nursing School. It will thus enable the researcher to better understand these experiences and co-construct guidelines which will assist in the training and the development of student nurses. Chapter two will give an outline of the literature review.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter one has given a brief outline of the research study. The research problem was explained and objectives were highlighted. Nursing education revolves around the student and his/her endeavours to become a professional. The educator should possess personal, teaching, professional and leadership qualities. The nursing school should also comply with the legislative requirements to be able to function as an education institution for the development of student nurses. This chapter will focus on the literature review relevant for the purpose of this study.

2.2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to understand the purpose of the study, more information must be gathered on the topic under study. Brink (1996:76) defines literature review as a process that involves finding, reading, understanding and forming conclusions about the published research and theory on a particular topic. According to Creswell (1994:21), literature control should be done inductively so that a description of the experiences of participants should be seen and not merely read in literature. The researcher will thus identify similarities and differences through literature review and place findings within the context of existing literature. Lloyd (1997:16) states that it is exciting to ultimately consult the literature and find comparisons and deviations from the findings of the researcher's study. The researcher will compare information obtained from different sources to give clarity on the research study. A brief history of nursing education will be outlined.
2.3. BRIEF HISTORY OF NURSING EDUCATION

According to Mellish and Paton (2004:98), the founding of an institute of nursing to train nurses was influenced by Elizabeth Fray in 1840. The first training school for certification of nurses was established in 1883 and started by Sister Henrietta Stockdale (Searle, 2004:11). Teaching in hospital schools of nursing was undertaken within a Nurse Education Department. According to Klopper (2004:25), the first school for training of nurses was established in 1877 and Mellish & Paton (2004:31) states that the first college of nursing was opened in 1945. The current comprehensive course that allows a nurse to qualify as a general nurse and midwife, including a community and psychiatric nurse, was introduced in 1982 (Klopper, 2004:26).

The first trained and qualified nurses to come to South Africa came from England in 1874. In 1890 Natal commenced with its first training of nurses. Lectures were also given by doctors on basic science and diseases. Matrons and sisters gave demonstrations on procedures used in nursing. In the early twenties, qualified tutors who had received their education overseas were introduced. This made the nurse dependent on the doctor and only in 1944 was the nurse given the authority to practice on her own (Searle, 2004:137-138). It was because of this fact that nurses were regarded as the subordinates of doctors, and the doctor was viewed as the person in charge of a nurse.

The first students to be admitted for training were enrolled in 1937. They completed their training in 1939 at the Universities of the Witwatersrand and Cape Town. The University for Pretoria instituted a one year diploma course for tutors in 1949. Diplomas were obtained in Nursing Education at many universities and the degree for Nursing Education, B.Cur (I et A) was introduced in 1970 (Mellish & Paton, 2004:68-69). To date this degree programme is still running as a post basic course for nurses to become qualified nurse educators in nursing management and education.
2.4. ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN NURSING EDUCATION

Government plays a major role in Nursing Education as it currently resorts under the Department of Health. Nursing Education is being implemented based on the legislative requirements, rules and regulations set by government and authoritative bodies such as the South African Nursing Council. Mellish, Brink and Paton (2004:81) outline other resources such as journals, up-to-date library facilities and institution material prepared for nurse educator’s needs, photocopying facilities, infrastructure, staff development programmes and other material resources to ensure that effective and efficient teaching and learning is taking place. To ensure the availability of these resources is the responsibility of government.

According to Searle (2004:11), the introduction of all the training courses for nurses has a common purpose – the improvement of the quality of care of the patient through the improvement of the education and skills of the nurse and midwife. For the purpose to become a reality, the government-of-the-day should ensure that an environment conducive to training and development is established and maintained.

Motshidi (2000:29) mentions that South Africa has witnessed a lot of innovations and transition in various nurse education activities which has given rise to the establishment and implementation of the outcome-based curriculum. This is due to the main aim of government which is focus on communities and the challenges to transform the health system. Therefore emphasis has been placed on Community Based Learning to enable students to develop a global awareness on health issues around them.

The Nursing Act, which was amended several times before 1978, made provision for nurses based on racial groups. The government then repealed and replaced the act with Act no. 50 of 1978 and in 1992 all mention of race was deleted from the Act (Mellish & Paton, 2004:79). Government eventually accepted the fact that the division along racial lines was not acceptable and new amendments were implemented.
Botes (1997:50) was of the opinion that it is important that decisions on the future of nursing education be considered scientifically from all perspectives. Wrong decisions of the past are still haunting nursing education today.

Government legislation, therefore, forms the basis around the execution of nursing and nursing education. To ensure that all nurses and students receive equal treatment in nursing, a new Act has been promulgated. This Act refers to the new Nursing Act 33 of 2005 which replaces the Nursing Act 50 of 1978. The Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998) makes provision for fairness and equity in all sectors of governance including nursing education. These Acts could not have been promulgated without the involvement and approval of government. Only with all the relevant resources and structures in place will it be possible to empower students and give them the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills.

2.5. EMPOWERING THE NURSING STUDENT

The nursing student is a person undergoing education and training at an accredited nursing school and who has complied with the prescribed conditions and has furnished the prescribed particulars (Nursing Act no. 50 of 1978 as amended, section 23). Nursing students are seen as adults and are expected to behave in an adult manner. The development of thought is necessary as the student must function as an independent practitioner and apply the scientific methods which he/she is taught (Klopper, 2000:2).

Nursing students undergo a study programme to become skillful and proficient in order to render a service to communities. Learning should be about change, change in the way these students think and how they experience the world around them. For the purpose of this research, the world of these students refers basically to their experiences at a public nursing campus during their four years of training.
The student in nursing comes into the profession already capable of directing a
great deal of his/her own life, a great deal of independent thought and action. As the
student nurse progresses from dependence to independence, he/she needs to be
treated as such. This does not mean that the senior student nurse is left without
guidance, but the number of formal teaching encounters, lectures and the like
should decrease and be substituted by learning packages, modules or other
activities (Roux, 2001:12).

Students grow during their training and it is expected of them to become less
dependent on the lecturer as they progress from one year to the next. Each of these
students experiences his/her educational development differently but they are still
being prepared in a professional manner for the future. Opportunities must be there
or be created which will make learning easy for the student's development. So many
changes have taken place since the start of a training school in 1860 by Florence
Nightingale.

Tremendous developments have occurred and these developments have impacted
on the education of the student or student nurses over the years. Simmons et al (in
Bezuidenhout,1994:26) are of the opinion that: a new breed of nurses is needed to
match the demands of today's changing world – nurses who are willing to stand up
and be accounted for their own convictions, persons who know their own worth and
skill.

The issue was therefore to acquire the best suitable individual who will take on the
challenge to improve his/her skills and broaden his/her knowledge. This implied that
careful selections of new recruits must take place. An awareness of empowerment
must exist amongst those assisting these individuals during their training to become
competent professionals.

Bezuidenhout (1994:26) defined empowerment as a consciously activated process
of mutual influence and therefore it needs a willing initiator or nurse educator who
wants the student nurse to realise his/her potential. Through empowerment, the
student nurse may experience some positivity during his/her four years of training at a nursing campus. Bezuidenhout (1994:26) stated that empowerment is characterised by a number of actions. These are:

◆ to allow action to take place (that is, to set direction for action);
◆ to assign activity (that is, to know to whom to allocate);
◆ to entrust activity (that is, to enlist a vision);
◆ to evaluate activity (that is, to diagnose and direct activity);
◆ to adapt (that is, to be flexible);
◆ to equip (that is, to require or to assist);
◆ to prepare (that is, to establish commitment); and
◆ to enable (that is, to provide the means).

The nurse educator has a vital role to play in the empowerment process of the student nurse. The educator must act as a facilitator and ensure that all obstacles are removed that may hinder the nursing student to reach his/her full potential. Bezuidenhout (1994:27) further explained that the facilitator must also know his/her own strengths and weaknesses. To participate in the process of empowerment and to successfully initiate growth and development of the student, nurse educators should have a good command of skills such as strategic programme planning, empathy, flexibility and adaptability, implementation of knowledge, evaluation and teamwork.

Bezuidenhout (1994:44) was also of the opinion that nurse educators should support the belief that students should be challenged to make choices, to probe, to examine ethical questions and to elicit their own answers. This way students will feel that they are worthy of being a student and that their contributions are of great value to their development. Students need to feel that they belong to a group. The environment they find themselves in should be comfortable enough for them to reach their full potential.
2.6. CREATING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The aim of teaching is to make student learning possible and the role of the educator is to create a context that is conducive to learning (Klopper, 2000:4). Klopper (2000:9) further explained that the creation of a context conducive to learning is exemplified in the activities performed by the learning accompanist (lecturer) in order to facilitate deep-holistic, life-long learning. It is thus clear that the lecturer must ensure an environment that will meet the needs of students to enable them to be successful with their learning.

The learning environment must make it possible for students to be able to acquire knowledge and retain it for life. If students are to achieve a positive learning experience, it is vital that they receive adequate supervision and mentoring (Channell, 2002:34). The act of mentoring and facilitating is implied in the teaching role and therefore, is concerned with making things possible for another, through a process which makes it simpler for the person to achieve his/her goal (Mellish, et al, 2004:75). Nurse educators are expected to facilitate learning in the classroom thus ensuring that students participate in their teaching and learning. Students learn when they realize that knowledge will help them handle life circumstances. It allows them to move to the next stage of their education and training in order to grow professionally and personally.

The environment cannot be established and maintained by the nurse educator only. Student nurses should take responsibility as early as possible to make the passage through training as painless as possible and to maintain a positive attitude. They should also take responsibility for their own learning from the start (Gillan & Weeks, 2001:22). Being a student and becoming successful, requires planning, self-motivation and self-discipline.

Channell (2002:35) suggested that it is important for students to master the skill of learning how to learn. For example: library work should be planned and students can spend time in a library exploring a variety of information sources. This way
students contribute to creating an environment conducive to learning for them. The responsibility, therefore, does not only rest with the educator but they have a shared responsibility in the success of effective teaching and learning.

Rutter (2006:280) explained that many departments do not have a research and information section or a library to disseminate knowledge of best practice. She was of the opinion that there may well be an underlying appreciation for the relevance of research, and enthusiasm for it, but it is often seen as difficult to find the time or institutional support for such activity for students. Access to these facilities allows an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. It is expected of students to do research but unfortunately not all departments are equipped with the necessary resources to assist students in creating a conducive environment for themselves.

The South African Nursing Council's philosophy and policy also expressed views with regards to professional nursing education, in that a variety of learning opportunities covering the full spectrum of the curriculum must be provided. A learning experience occurs in a learning environment created by the person presenting the learning material and is utilised by the student nurses to achieve the objectives (SANC, 1992:5). Educators are faced with the challenge of adapting their teaching styles to accommodate a new generation of students. Colleges and universities are becoming more and more technology-wise to ensure that students receive the best training.

Skiba & Barton (2007:2) stated that traditional classroom teaching is no longer effective with modern students because they have not only changed radically but the education system has also changed. They were of the opinion that a Net Generation System as a teaching strategy should be utilised and they describe this Net Generation member as an assertive, self-reliant, curious person who is enmeshed in an interactive culture that centers on certain themes. These themes include:
➢ **Fierce independence:** their sense of autonomy derives from their experiences of being an active information seeker and creator of information and knowledge.

➢ **Emotional and intellectual openness:** the Net Geners (the individuals using technology) value the openness of the online environment, like anonymity, and communicate through numerous tools.

➢ **Inclusion:** they view the world in a global context and move towards greater inclusion of diversity.

➢ **Free expression and strong views:** with access to knowledge resources at their fingertips, they are assertive and confident.

➢ **Innovation:** this group is constantly trying to push the technology to its next level and figure out how to create a better world.

➢ **Preoccupation with maturity:** armed with knowledge, they strive to be more mature than their predecessors.

➢ **Investigations:** curiosity, discovery and exploration are the key for this generation.

➢ **Immediacy:** this generation views the world as a continuous service and demands real time and fast processing.

➢ **Authentication and trust:** they know the need to verify and check resources and authenticate people.

This generation may demand a new learning paradigm that will assist them in achieving their goals. This type of teaching will focus on a student-centered model of education as the student will be actively engaged in his/her own learning and thus view the educator as an expert and mentor. Teaching strategies should include
mobile methods where students can access information even after hours and still experience the presence of the educator even if not in a classroom.

The new generation of students lives in a mobile world and it seems to be effective with regards to communication purposes for them. If this way of teaching and learning can become a reality, it might just improve the success rate of student nurses completing their training. The student nurses’ experience at a nursing campus during their four years of training might change drastically due to the use of Net Generation.

2.7. ACCOUNTABILITY OF A NURSE EDUCATOR

Mellish & Paton (2004:152) are clear about the fact that the quality of professional role models and guidance given to the student to assist him/her in achieving professional maturity is of importance to his/her development and is part of the lecturer's (educator's) accountability. This relates to the area where the teaching and learning is taking place to ensure that the student receives the best quality of service.

According to Mellish & Paton (2004:155), the Nurse Educator is accountable to the student for the following:

- being excellent role models of the values and behavioural norms of the profession;

- providing constant guidance and assistance along the road to professional adulthood;

- ensuring that other role-players are aware of the specific educational needs of students at their stage of development;

- being an excellent role model;
keeping his/her own knowledge up to date;

planning the curriculum according to what the student needs to learn in terms of the current health care situation;

carefully planning teaching and learning methods;

objective and fair evaluation;

creating an environment conducive to learning;

advocacy on behalf of the students.

Apart from the above accountability, an effective nurse educator is also skillful in interpersonal relationships. The skill involves being sensitive to student issues, feelings and problems; taking personal interest in students; being fair in all academic issues and other dealings; creating an atmosphere in which students feel free to express themselves and showing to the students that he/she cares through a sense of warmth.

Lecturers should move away from the strict, autocratic type of teaching and become more flexible in the classroom. This does not mean that respect and discipline will be disregarded but it can only enhance effective learning. Students feel more comfortable with an educator who understands them thus their progress in the classroom is also proof of that. Rogers (in De Young, 1990:4) is of the opinion that students learn more in classrooms where lecturers are student-orientated and empathetic.

Rogers (in Quinn, 1995:101) illustrates his student-orientated approach to learning through certain principles and his emphasis is on relevance, student participation and involvement, self evaluation and the absence of threats in the classrooms. Lecturers, therefore, must learn to see the world through the eyes of the student and focus on the present, although preparations are done for the future.
In a diverse country like South Africa, there are many different cultures and beliefs. It should be understood by the lecturer that the student will come across students with different personalities, attitudes, morals and values. These differences can disrupt a classroom if they are not well understood by the lecturer or handled in a professional manner. It is thus important for the lecturer to be acquainted with ways and means to ensure that the student is well conversant with the factors that can be a barrier to learning in the classroom and to implement strategies to eliminate those barriers.

2.8. FACTORS INFLUENCING LEARNING

Mellish & Brink (1993:83) are of the opinion that certain factors do affect the students' abilities to learn and develop academically. These factors can have a positive or negative impact on the individual. The factors include the following:

2.8.1. The individual: any individual learns for his/herself. Every student learns at his/her own pace and should not be judged.

2.8.2. Motivation: students are motivated by interest, needs and desires, ideals and attitudes.

2.8.2.1. Interest:

A lecturer must find out what interests the students and allow them to take part or use it in the learning environment.

2.8.2.2. Needs and desires:

- The need to be recognised: as an individual and human being. Students should be encouraged and praised when they deserve to be;
- **The need to learn**: every person has a need to know and acquire knowledge or to be up to date with changing trends in society;

- **The need to succeed**: students will want to complete their studies and it is imperative for them to know they are succeeding;

- **The need to feel that what they are doing is relevant**: lecturers must bear in mind and constantly point out connections between knowing, learning and doing;

- **The need to feel part of a team – to belong to a group**: Each individual is a social being and needs not to be isolated; students must feel that what they are doing is very important; building team spirit should be encouraged;

- **The need to achieve maximum potential**: therefore students need constant guidance from lecturers to make this possible.

2.8.2.3. **Ideals**:

Students entering the profession are enthusiastic and idealistic and can be denigrated by senior colleagues. Ideals should be used as motivators instead of milestones. Student nurses entering the profession already have their minds set on where they want to go and what they want to do after completion. It is important that they receive professional support and not discouragement from succeeding.

2.8.2.4. **Attitudes**:

Students have settled modes of thinking. These include honesty, loyalty, courtesy, sympathy, diligence and perseverance. It is a fact and reality that students do come from different backgrounds and to some students certain attitudinal factors are not so important. This is all the more reason for the lecturers to assist students with and to instill these values as early as possible in their training.
2.9. CONCLUSION

Government shares some responsibility for nursing education and its role in the development of nursing education is undeniable. Empowerment enforces the cooperation between a nursing student and the nurse educator and it also allows for freedom of development. Both parties, therefore, establish a commitment towards each other. They should guide and support each other to obtain their set objectives.

The lecturer of nursing today has a comprehensive responsibility. The most significant reward for the lecturer lies in the innovative elements of contributing to the development of professionals. The lecturer must be aware that the student is involved in creating a better future and the growth of the nursing profession. Chapter Three will focus on the research design and method.

“A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.”

(Author unknown)
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

3.1. INTRODUCTION
The literature review was highlighted in the previous chapter. This chapter will focus on a detailed discussion on the research design and the method to be used to obtain the data. The objectives are to explore and describe the training experiences of the fourth year student nurses at a nursing campus and to co-construct guidelines that will assist the nursing lecturers to better understand the student nurse during his or her training.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN
A qualitative approach was used which includes an explorative, descriptive and contextual based study which reflects the experiences of the fourth year student nurse at a nursing campus. The research design is discussed as follows:

3.2.1. Qualitative Research
Qualitative research is a systematic, participative approach used to describe life-experiences and to give meaning to them (Burns & Grove, 1999:338). This type of research design was utilised by the researcher since the focus of the study is based on the experiences of the fourth year student nurses. This research approach provided information to the researcher to assist in understanding the experiences of the student nurses which was not well known or particular familiar to the researcher.

The experiences of the participants provided valuable information in understanding their experiences and thus supported the researcher in co-constructing guidelines in order for lecturers to better understand student nurses during their training. It gave the researcher the ability to observe the situation first-hand and from the perspective of others. It was thus possible to identify weaknesses and to test whether data collected was real.
According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:134), qualitative research studies serve one or more purposes: it can reveal the nature of certain situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems or people; it enables a researcher to gain new insights about a particular phenomenon, develop new concepts or theoretical perspectives about the phenomenon and discover problems that exist within the phenomenon; it allows a researcher to test the validity of certain assumptions, claims, theories or generalisations within a real-world context; provide a means through which a researcher can judge the effectiveness of particular policies, practices or innovations.

The researcher thus focused on the fourth year student nurses’ experiences as they described it. Hence it was possible to identify weaknesses and to test whether the data collected was real.

Babbie and Mouton (2006:53) are of the opinion that qualitative researchers attempt always to study human action from the insider’s perspective. The qualitative researcher should have special qualities which will assist in the effectiveness of the study. According to Creswell (1994:145), qualitative researchers should have certain characteristics. They include the following:

- **Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than outcomes of the products.** The researcher focused on the training experiences of the fourth year student nurses. The participants therefore shared their views with regards to their training to ensure the success of the process. The researcher only focused on their experiences and did not judge the outcome of their experiences.

- **They are interested in meaning, which is how people make sense of their experiences and structures of their world.** The researcher basically showed interest in how the participants experienced their training.
The qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. The researcher made means possible for information to be obtained from the participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. The interviewer allowed the participants to describe their experiences on an individual basis. An environment that was quiet, private and comfortable for the participants was established in order for data to be collected without any interruptions.

This type of research involves fieldwork where the researcher goes to the participants, the site or institution to observe or record behaviour in its natural setting. The interviews were conducted in a private venue and an environment conducive to allowing the participants freedom to express themselves. Signs were utilised to avoid unnecessary disturbances which could have had a negative influence on the process.

The researcher is interested in the process, meaning and understanding gained through words or pictures. The researcher will use audio tapes in order to capture data after completion of the interviews. This way the researcher will also find it useful to describe the student nurses' experiences in more depth after data has been analysed. The researcher will also obtain consent from the participants to utilise an audio tape and anonymity will be ensured.

The process of this research is inductive in that the researcher builds up concepts, hypotheses and theories from detail. Once data was collected and the interviews completed, the researcher formulated themes for this specific study.
3.2.2. Explorative Research

Babbie and Mouton (2006:79) state that this approach is typical when a researcher examines a new interest or when the subject of a study itself is relatively new. The researcher wants to become familiar with training experiences of fourth year student nurses and thus exploration is required. Polit & Hungler (1999:20) are of the opinion that this type of research is of an investigative nature: exploring the phenomenon, the manner in which it is manifested and other factors to which it is related. This research was used when there was not much known about the topic and additional investigations needed to be done to obtain more information.

It was imperative for the researcher to explore and become more familiar with the training experiences of the fourth year student nurses to gain more insight. It allowed the researcher to co-construct guidelines which will assist the nursing lecturers, clinical mentors, management staff and all other academic staff that play a major role in the training and development of these students to understand the concerns or fears that the fourth year student nurses have during their training. Through exploring the training experiences of the fourth year students at the nursing campus, new knowledge was generated and insight gained in understanding their experiences.

3.2.3. Descriptive Research

A major purpose of many social scientific studies is to describe situations and events. The researcher observes and then describes what was observed, (Babbie & Mouton, 2006:80). Its purpose is to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally occurs, (Burns & Grove, 1999:192).

The fourth year student nurses did, on a voluntary basis, express their personal experiences to the researcher and how they perceived them. These experiences were captured as they had occurred in the training environment. The student nurses’ experiences will be described in an effort to obtain complete and accurate
information for this study. A descriptive method usually involves interviews which the researcher implemented.

3.2.4. Contextual
Babbie and Mouton (2006:272) state that the aim is to describe and understand events within the concrete, natural context in which they occur. The context may change in different research studies but it has a major significance in qualitative research. A contextual design is one where the phenomenon of interest is the immediate environment and the physical location of the people studied (Holloway & Wheeler, 1998:192). The participants provided information about their experiences during the four years of nursing training at the nursing campus in Port Elizabeth.

3.2.5. Phenomenological approach
According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport (2005:264), a phenomenological study is a study that attempts to understand people’s perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation. The researcher focused on what will be studied and how it will be studied. This type of study examines human experiences through description that is provided by the people involved. The purpose of this approach is to describe the participants’ training experiences at the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus.

Bracketing is also an important aspect of phenomenological studies. It means to suspend what the researcher knows about the experiences being studied (Burns & Grove, 1999:362). The researcher utilised the service of a neutral person as an assistant who is a qualified and competent professional. The researcher is a lecturer at the same campus where the participants are studying and, to avoid bias, the assistant conducted the interviews. The assistant listened carefully to what the participants communicated and did not influence any of the responses.

The researcher did elicit the ‘human side’ of the participants through focusing on the semi-structured approach. The research method will now be discussed.
3.3. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method is divided into 2 phases which involve data collection and data analysis. Phase 1 explores and describes the training experiences of fourth year student nurses at the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus. Phase 2 involves the description of guidelines which will be used by nursing lecturers, students and college personnel involved in the education and training of student nurses. These guidelines will serve as a tool to direct those involved in nursing training as to how to better understand the experiences of the fourth year student nurses.

3.3.1. Phase 1: *Exploration and description of the training experiences of the fourth year student nurses of the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus.*

The following components are included in this phase: sampling, data collection and data analysis. Each of these components will be discussed separately.

3.3.1.1. Sampling strategy

Random-purposive sampling was utilised. This sampling is judgmental by nature and it involves the conscious selection by the researcher of certain aspects to be included in the study (Burns & Grove, 1999:475). The researcher made use of purposive sampling where the researcher selected the sample on the basis of own knowledge of the population, its elements and the nature of the research aims (Babbie & Mouton, 2006:166). Kerlinger in De Vos et al (2005:193) explains that sampling is when any portion of a population or universe is taken as representative of that population or universe.

The population, for the purpose of the study, included only the student nurses who have commenced with the 4-year diploma course and are in their final year of training at the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus. The researcher focused on certain criteria to be used for the selection of the sample. The following selection criteria have been used:
The participants:
- must be in their final year of training;
- must have commenced with the 4-year diploma course at the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus;
- must be well-versed in English;
- must represent different racial and gender groups (that is, black, white and coloured; male/female); and
- can be of any age (age is not a selection criterion with the recruitment process for nursing candidates at the campus and for the purpose of the study it will not be considered).

3.3.1.2. Data collection method

Interviews were used based on a semi-structured approach as a means of data collection. An independent role-player within the Department of Health conducted the interviews to ensure an unbiased approach. Interviewing is the predominant mode of data or information collection in qualitative research (De Vos et al, 2005:287). The interviewer conducted semi-structured interviews. It is one of the most widely used methods of data collection in qualitative research. According to Zorn (2008:1), a semi-structured interview is neither highly structured nor unstructured. It offers topics and questions to the interviewee but is carefully designed to elicit the interviewee’s ideas and opinions on the topic of interest as opposed to leading the interviewee towards pre-conceived choices.

An audiotape recorder, of which the participants have been informed and agreed to, was used during the interviews. Information was captured on tape which was transcribed verbatim (exactly the way the participants said it). The names of participants were not linked to any of the tapes but it was coded and destroyed after the research. The sample size is four (4) participants from the group of twenty-one (21) final-year students. The interviewer also used a separate document to record information about the participants’ reactions and non-verbal cues. Field notes were
made by the researcher after the interviews about the interview situation and what the researcher’s impression was.

No assumptions were made by the interviewer or the researcher in order to allow for as much information to be collected as possible. Interviews were done with student nurses so that their experiences of training at the nursing campus can be utilised to serve as guidelines for nursing lecturers to assist with their training. An interview agenda with relevant questions will be used by the interviewer to allow the participant to talk freely during the interview. It is important that the questions are meaningful to the interviewee.

3.3.1.2.1. Facts about semi-structured interviews:

- It involves the use of additional questions;
- It triggers the interviewee to talk and gives the researcher the opportunity to hear what they have to say about a particular aspect of their life or experience;
- It is important to understand the meaning of what the respondent says. For the purpose of this study the interviewer must be aware of linguistic variability and the respondents must be well versed in English as it was one of the sample selection criteria;
- A rapport between interviewer and participant must be established and ethical consideration must be considered throughout the process (that is, the interviewer should not abuse the opportunity to make the respondent reveal more than that with which he/she is comfortable); and
- It is important that the questions are meaningful to the respondent.

3.3.1.2.2. Advantages of the semi-structured interview:

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport (2002:302), the semi-structured interview involves the following:

- More flexibility for interviewer and participant during the interview;
- It is used where an issue is controversial or personal;
The researcher is able to follow up particular interesting avenues that emerge in the interview; and

The researcher has a set of predetermined questions on an interview schedule but the interview will be guided by the schedule rather than be dictated by.

Louw & Edwards (2005:40) state that:

- A few questions are asked to get participants talking, (it can thus be viewed as a conversation);
- Participants are encouraged to use their own words and express themselves in their unique way;
- Interviewers work from a list of general topics but have greater freedom to explore areas of interest;
- The interviewers ask certain questions to ensure that all points are covered; and
- They allow the participants to provide in-depth information about their lives.

3.3.1.3. Interviewing techniques and tips for the researcher:

According to De Vos et al (2002:293), the researcher should apply certain interview techniques to ensure effectiveness. Complying with certain criteria can only assist the researcher to obtain information of a high standard. These criteria state as follows:

- **The participant should do 90% of the talking; allow him/her to tell the story**; the researcher must not initiate the discussion but rather listen;
- **Questions should be easy to understand and words should make sense to them**; terms that the participant is not familiar with can only retard the process and participants might lose interest;
- **Ask one question at a time**; the researcher should therefore wait for a response from the participant;
• Ask questions that require more than just a “yes” or a “no” response; the need to obtain more information to assist in co-constructing guidelines;
• Ask experience/behaviour questions before asking question on opinions or feelings;
• Avoid leading questions; the researcher should not include answers in the questions to be asked;
• Repeat key questions throughout the interview; the interviewer can reiterate question that carry the most weight and that will supply best quality information;
• Encourage a free rein, but maintain control; the researcher should not allow the participant to be in-charge of the interview;
• Allow for pauses in the conversation and give the participant a chance to think of what he/she wants to add; silence in an interview gives the participant an opportunity to reflect on what he/she really wants to say. Crabtree & Miller (1999:98) state that the interviewer must keep the story flowing and maintain narrative competence. This is achieved through floating prompts that include:
  ❖ Silence: this is the permissive pause that gives control to the participant;
  ❖ Attentive lean: when the researcher leans toward the participant and nods at the responses;
  ❖ Eyebrow flash: as a non-verbal communication method as well;
  ❖ Affirmative noise: which indicates that the researcher is listening and understanding for example, ‘uh-uh’;
  ❖ Echo-prompt: when the researcher repeats the last word of the participant; and
  ❖ Reflective summary: when the last statement of the participant is summarised.
• Return to incomplete points; the participants should be given the opportunity to return to any questions that were not answered successfully;
• Do not interrupt the participant rather jot down questions to be asked at a later stage; this might lead to the researcher losing out on valid information;

• Monitor the effect of the interview on the participant and be sensitive; the researcher should use his/her discretion to intervene sensibly if noted that the participant appears uncomfortable by a question;

• Avoid switching the recorder on and off; this can distract the participant and hamper the interview; and

• Conclude with general questions and end at a reasonable time; do not end the interview while the participant is still explaining or providing relevant information about a question that has been asked; allow the participant to complete what he/she wants to say; prepare the participant for when the interview will be completed.

3.3.1.4. Types of research questions that can be used:

Different kinds of questions can be used in semi-structured interviews. The types of questions that can be used are summarised as follows:

- **Descriptive questions** which prompt the participant to give a general idea of what happened or what it feels like;

- **Structural questions** which prompt the participant to identify structures and meaning to use to make sense of the world;

- **Contrast questions** allow the participant to make distinctions between events and experiences. (for example, Why did you choose this particular campus for your training?); and

- **Evaluative questions** are more about the participant’s feelings, about someone or something (Zorn, 2008:1). (For example, have you ever felt disappointed or felt bad about a situation on campus?).
3.3.1.5. Preparations for the interview

In order to ensure effectiveness and efficiency for the interviews, the researcher made proper arrangements before the time for participants to feel comfortable during the interview; it is advisable to make proper arrangements in preparation for such interviews. Valenzuela & Shrivastrava (2008:10) are of the view that the following aspects should be taken into consideration when preparing for qualitative interviews:

- **Choose a setting with the least distraction;** the environment should be quiet and the participant should be able to focus 100% on the interview throughout the whole process. The setting was of a private nature for the purpose of the type of method that was being used;

- **Explain the purpose of the interview;** any individual needs to know what is expected of him or her. The interviewer should therefore reiterate the purpose of the interview or the study if needed;

- **Address terms of confidentiality;** participants need to know and feel that they are protected. They were assured once again of the ethical issues and their rights during the interview. Confidentiality will be discussed under ethical consideration;

- **Explain the format of the interview;** the interviewer made it clear to the participant whether questions will be asked and when these will be directed at the interviewee. It is also important to inform participants that the conversation will be recorded and that notes will be made during the interview which was explained by the researcher;
Indicate how long the interview usually takes; it is also important to alert the participants as to the length of the interview and the timeframes must be adhered to. Taking too long can result in the participant losing interest;

Provide contact information of the interviewer; the participants need to build a trust relationship with the researcher and it is advisable to provide contact details if the need arises for them to communicate for specific reasons;

Allow interviewee to clarify any doubts about the interview; the interviewee should not feel threatened in an interview and he/she should be allowed to express him/herself freely; and

Prepare a method for recording data, for example taking notes, recording; information needs to be captured for data analysis at a later stage. The interviewer should enter the interview setting well prepared and not fumble around during the interview.

3.3.1.6. Data analysis

According to Trochim (2002:99), data analysis in social research involves three major steps and is stated as follows:

- **Preparation of Data** which involves organising the data for analysis. Data Preparation involves checking data for accuracy, transcribing it and developing a database structure to integrate various measures;
- **Inferential statistics** - to test a hypothesis;
- **Descriptive statistics** - are used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. They provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Together with simple graphics analysis, they form the basis of virtually every quantitative analysis of data. With descriptive statistics you are simply describing what is depicted by the data.
In most research studies, the analysis section follows the above three phases of analysis. Descriptions of how the data was prepared tend to be brief and to focus on only the more unique aspects to the study, such as specific data transformations that are performed. The descriptive statistics that are actually looked at can be voluminous. In most write-ups, these are carefully selected and organised into summary tables and graphs that only show the most relevant or important information.

Usually, the researcher links each of the inferential analyses to specific research questions or hypotheses that were raised in the introduction, or notes any models that were tested that emerged as part of the analysis. In most analysis write-ups it is especially critical to not "miss the forest for the trees". If you present too much detail, the reader may not be able to follow the central line of the results. Often extensive analysis details are appropriately relegated to appendices, reserving only the most critical analysis summaries for the body of the report itself (Trochim, 2002:99). Phase 2 will follow in the next discussion.

3.3.2. Phase 2
3.3.2.1. Description of guidelines
This phase included the co-construction of guidelines to assist nursing lecturers to better understand the fourth year student nurses during their training and was supported by the information obtained from the data analysis and the literature review. The interviews were analysed and themes were established. The transcribed interviews will be handed to an expert in the field of qualitative research decoding. Themes were then discussed in order to reach consensus.

3.4. TRUSTWORTHINESS
Another approach to clarify the notion of objectivity as it is manifested in qualitative research is found in the influential work of Guba (in Krefting, 1991:215) which defines different strategies of assessing the mentioned criteria. For them, the key criterion or principle of good qualitative research is found in the notion of
trustworthiness: neutrality of its findings or decisions (Babbie & Mouton, 2006:276). Krefting (1991:215) outlines trustworthiness under Guba’s model. This model will be used and consists of four criteria:

3.4.1. TRUTH VALUE
Discoveries made of the living experiences of human beings and how informants perceive it, give rise to truth value. The strategy to ensure truth value is credibility (Krefting, 1991:215). De Vos et al (2005: 346) state that credibility is the alternative to internal validity, in which the goal is to demonstrate that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described. According to Babbie & Mouton (2006:277), credibility is achieved through the following “procedures”:

3.4.1.1. Prolonged engagement: stay in the field until data saturation occurs. The researcher must spend sufficient time with the participants in order to build trust and to become familiar with the students. As a result, the information to be collected will indeed be accurate and the participant’s experiences will be identified clearly. The researcher will be familiar to the participants because of classroom involvement and the situation will not be too strange to the students.

3.4.1.2. Persistent observation: look for multiple influences and search for what counts and what does not. The information given by the student must be relevant and the students must not digress from the present situation.

3.4.1.3. Triangulation: to collect information about different events and relationships from different points of view. For the purpose of this study a literature review was done and selected fourth year students who are attending classes at the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus, will be interviewed.
3.4.1.4. *Referential adequacy*: this involves the material to be used for documentation or recording of information. For this study a tape recorder will be used to record interviews and the interviewer will also make notes.

3.4.1.5. *Peer briefing*: this is done with a similar status colleague who is outside the context of the study. The researcher will make use of peer evaluation whereby the research process and findings will be discussed with impartial colleagues. Confidentiality will be ensured.

3.4.1.6. *Member checks*: the aim is to assess the intentionality of the respondents, to correct for obvious errors and to provide additional volunteer information. The research findings are checked to make sure they are true to experience and it involves those who participated in the research.

3.4.2. APPLICABILITY
Transferability is the criterion used against which applicability is assessed (Krefting, 1991:216). Babbie and Mouton (2006:277) refer to transferability as the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents. The qualitative researcher does not maintain or claim that knowledge gained from one context will necessarily have relevance for another context or for the same context in another timeframe. The reader of the study must therefore demonstrate transferability.

3.4.3. CONSISTENCY
Guba (in De Vos, 1998:351) mentions that the criterion for consistency is dependability. De Vos *et al* (2005:346) state that dependability is the alternative for reliability, in which the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for study as well as changes in the design created by increasingly refined understanding of the setting.
Babbie & Mouton (2006:278) state that an inquiry must also provide its audience with evidence that if it were to be repeated with the same or similar respondents in the same context, its findings will be similar. The measures to be used to ensure consistency include triangulation, dense description of research methods, code-recode procedure and peer evaluation.

3.4.4. NEUTRALITY

Guba (in De Vos, 1998:351) states that confirmability is the criterion against which neutrality is measured. Holloway & Wheeler (1998:168) are of the opinion that confirmability means that the data is linked to its sources for the reader to establish that the conclusions and interpretations arise directly from it. Babbie & Mouton (2006:278) outline it as the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not of the biases of the researcher.

They are also of the view that the audit trail must be considered which allows researchers to process the research and the reader to understand the decisions made. To conduct such a trail involves reviewing at least six classes of data:

- The raw data – example the tape recordings;
- Data analysis – example the findings of the study;
- Data reconstruction – example the themes, findings and conclusions;
- Process notes – methodology notes, trustworthiness notes and audit trail notes;
- Intentions and dispositions – example the proposal and expectations;
- Development information – example the interview schedules and types of questions.
3.5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) requires that human dignity and the advancement of human rights and freedom are upheld. Ethics is the foundation of committed service to humankind and should not be considered a deterrent (Pera & Van Tonder, 2005:32). Every citizen has the right to be protected against any harm whether it is his name, person, identity or property. The researcher ensured that every effort was made to ensure that no harm was caused to any of the participants exposed to the study.

Participants were assured that they may withdraw at any time from the research study. Written and informed consent will be obtained from the students, the relevant stakeholders – for example, the managers of the Nursing College and the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus, the Student Representative Council and the Ethics Committee of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

The participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any stage of the proceedings. The respondents were asked to give their contributions anonymously, without providing names. They gave their informed consent to participate in the study and participation was voluntary. There were certain ethical principles that need to be considered that will protect the participants in the research study from harm or risks. Babbie & Mouton (2006:521) summarise certain of the most important ethical agreements that prevail in social research and they include the following:

3.5.1. Voluntary participation

No one should be forced to participate and the participants must be informed that no special rewards must be expected. For the purpose of this research study, the participants made their services available to the researcher.
3.5.2. No harm or discomfort
People being studied should never be injured by social research regardless of their voluntary participation. If the researcher has any reason to suspect that by continuing with the research it will result in undue stress or discomfort, it must be aborted. It may be the first encounter for the participants to take part in a research study which requires them to reveal things about themselves and their experiences. The researcher must therefore be very sensitive to their feelings and reassure them of withdrawal from the study at any time.

3.5.3. Privacy
Burns & Grove (1999:162) explain that it is the freedom of the individual to determine the time, extent and general circumstances under which private information will be shared with or withheld from others. Participants, who have given their consent to participate, have the right to expect that the data they will supply in the research remains private. To ensure that the participant’s rights are respected, the researcher complied with anonymity and confidentiality.

3.5.4. Anonymity
In any research that is being undertaken, it is vital that the identity of the participants is protected. For the purpose of the study the researcher strictly adhered to this principle (and others) as the participants will remain nameless. The information that the participants revealed was not linked to any individual. Identification numbers or codes were used to ensure anonymity.

3.5.5. Confidentiality
All information discussed and obtained through the interviews will be kept confidential. The data collected will not be shared with any person outside the study and the participants were ensured that such information will be utilised to co-construct guidelines to assist nursing lecturers to better understand the experiences of the fourth year student nurses during their training. Access to data will only be permitted if the participants have consented to it. If the data was going to be
published by the researcher after the study, the participants were to be informed before consent is given to participate in the study.

It is important to assess how much confidentiality the researcher can guarantee as the participants will be sharing very personal information. The researcher must also consider how confidentiality of individuals will be preserved when the data is analysed and reported. Related issues include who has access to the data and who “owns” it (Sewell, 2008:2). Anonymity and confidentiality are very important in this study since the participants may fear intimidation and harassment by others.

3.5.6. Informed consent

The participants in a study must be informed about the study and what it entails before consent is obtained. According to Leedy & Ormrod (2005:101), participants should be told the nature of the study to be conducted and given the choice of either participating or not participating and being supplied with an informed consent form with all the relevant details on it.

For the purpose of this study, participants were given an informed consent form which briefly described the nature of the study, what participation involved, risks involved (if any), ethical issues and contact details of the researcher including that of the researcher’s supervisor. After being informed of potential risks and benefits the participants were therefore required to give written permission agreeing to participate. The researcher has subsequently obtained consent from the following role-players:

- Consent Form for participants (refer to ANNEXURE A)
- Human Ethics Committee of the specific university (refer to ANNEXURE B)
- The Head of the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus (refer to ANNEXURE C)
- The Student Representative Council (SRC) (refer to ANNEXURE D)
- The interviewer to conduct the interviews (refer to ANNEXURE E)
3.5.7. Risk assessment and promises:

It is important that all potential risks are considered and included in the consent process and the issue is what the participant will receive in return for sharing their time and insights with the researcher (Sewell, 2008:3). If the researcher makes promises, such as copies of the report that will be given to participants, these promises must be kept. The researcher must clearly state risks attached to the research before participants give their consent.

3.6. CONCLUSION

Chapter three focused on the research design and method, trustworthiness and ethical issues in research. The two phases of the research method were explained. Phase one outlined the semi-structured interviews as well as the data collection method. Phase two focused on the description of guidelines. Data analysis will be done in Chapter four after the interviews have been conducted and the audio-taped information analysed. Themes will be identified and compared with the relevant literature.
CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION
The research design and method were described in Chapter three. Chapter four will focus on identifying themes derived from the data collected and will be discussed in a narrative manner with relevant quotations from the participants. Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed *verbatim* within 3 days of conducting the interview.

4.2. OPERATIONALISATION OF DATA
The interviewer conducted 4 interviews from a group of 21 fourth year students. Five participants volunteered to be interviewed but one participant withdrew two hours before commencement of the interviews due to unforeseen circumstances. Based on the ethical principles, the participant was allowed to freely withdraw from the process. The semi-structured interviews lasted approximately 35 minutes each and no new information was obtained after completion of the interviews.

The researcher decided to focus on this group of nursing students as a large number of students were unsuccessful and did not proceed to their fourth year of study. The group commenced in 2005 with 98 nursing students. In the third year, the number dropped to 44 students and thereafter only 21 students successfully completed the third year and were promoted to their fourth year. In this study the students had positive and negative experiences relating to their nursing training at the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus. With this study, the aim of the research was, therefore, to sensitize the nursing lecturers to the uniqueness of the students’ needs and how they can offer support to the students during their nursing training.
4.2.1. Analysis of semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interviews will briefly be discussed as follows:

The participants displayed the following characteristics:

- The ages ranged between 23 and 27 years;
- Two were Afrikaans-speaking females and two were English-speaking females; (the candidates preferred the research being conducted in English);
- Two of the participants were coloured females, one participant a white female and one a Xhosa female;
- No males took part in the study as the fourth year student nurses group only consisted of females;
- All four the participants commenced their four year nursing training in 2005 at the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus;
- The participants were well-versed in English and communicated fluently with the researcher.

Apart from the one participant who withdrew, the other participants remained throughout the research process. The data collected during the interviews was transcribed and analysed. An independent coder, who is experienced in qualitative research study, assisted in analysing the data. Themes were identified which related to the fourth year student nurses’ experiences at the Nursing Campus. Once the data was analysed, the decoder and the researcher agreed on identified themes. It was also confirmed that no further interviews were needed.

4.2.2. The interview:

The participants were eager to talk about their training experiences and they were appreciative of the fact that someone was listening to them:

“… Mam [referring to the interviewer], I am so happy that I have the opportunity to talk about what I am going through with my nursing training and I thought I will leave the campus without anybody listening to our complaints…”
The researcher highlighted the process of the interview to the participants. The ethical considerations were once again pointed out with emphasis on confidentiality, privacy and anonymity. The participants gave written consent to the researcher for inclusion in the study. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time and that participation was voluntary.

The question posed to the participants at the beginning of the interview is as follows:

“Have you encountered any good or positive experiences during your four years of nursing training? And if yes, provide some examples.”

The interviewer used sub-questions when the participant revealed a statement that was not clear and the interviewer wanted the participant to expand on the issue. This allowed the interviewer to obtain more information without asking too many questions. All the participants had positive and negative experiences. The negative experiences were very intense and the positive experiences were acceptable to the participants. The identified themes will be discussed.

4.3. IDENTIFIED THEMES
The major theme that was prevalent in the interviews by the participants included the difficulties they experienced with the four year diploma curriculum and the inability to cope with the theoretical work during their third year of training.
Table 1. Identified themes based on the training experiences of the fourth year student nurses at the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN THEMES</th>
<th>SUB-THEMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The nursing students experience negativity during their four years of nursing training at the nursing campus.</td>
<td>➢ Students experience the theoretical aspect of the curriculum as stressful and felt that the workload is unevenly spread over the four years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Students felt insecure and expressed confusion due to sudden changes taking place within the curriculum without prior consultation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Students expressed that some lecturers are not familiar with the content of their subject and that they portray a negative attitude towards them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Students expressed that material resources are inadequate or not immediately available on commencement of each year which affects their ability to perform well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students experience some satisfaction and positivity during their four years of training.</td>
<td>➢ Students expressed that most of the lecturers are caring and empathetic towards their feelings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4. DISCUSSION OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

The main themes and sub-themes will be discussed and the discussion will be based on literature review and information collected during the interviews.

4.4.1. NURSING STUDENTS EXPERIENCE NEGATIVITY DURING THEIR FOUR YEARS OF NURSING TRAINING AT THE NURSING CAMPUS.

The fourth year nursing students had negative experiences related to their training at the nursing campus. These students were satisfied with the theory they receive in the programme but the uncertainty and dissatisfaction is specifically related to the amount of work students have to internalize over a short period of time.

Mellish, Brink and Paton (2001:7) are of the opinion that Nursing Education is the process whereby students are guided, assisted and provided with the means which enable them to learn the art and science of nursing so that they can apply it to the nursing care of people who need such care. Students must therefore be guided to gain knowledge and become skillful in order to accept responsibility for their actions. The nursing lecturers must therefore fulfill this role and support the student nurses through their four years of training until completion of the course. Students regard their lecturers as their leaders and role-models whom they trust and on whom they depend.

These students were faced with many challenges in the classroom setting that affected their ability to succeed. Some of these challenges ultimately resulted in nursing students becoming demotivated although they have gained some knowledge to a certain degree during their nursing training. The sub-themes will be discussed:

4.4.1.1. Students experience the theoretical aspect of the curriculum as stressful and felt that the workload is unevenly spread over the four years:
The research will explain the experiences of the students as expressed during the interviews. The fourth year nursing students experienced the third year of their training as stressful and depressing. They expressed their emotions over the high failure rate which dropped from 98 students in the first year to 21 students in the fourth year:

- Students experience the curriculum as stressful:

  “… in the third year people [referring to the students] wished they were never born … they were booked off for stress because we did Midwifery, Psychiatry, Community and General Nursing Science … it is all the major subjects …”

  “… in our third year there were too much major subjects, four major subjects and if you fail one you will have to repeat the year …”

  “… the course was so packed in our third year mam (referring to interviewer), it was very stressful for us. We did all four majors in one year…”

Louw & Edwards (2005:609) state that people can deal only with a certain amount of stress; that is, they have a limited tolerance. They are also of the opinion that if this tolerance is exceeded or when they no longer can deal with demands, temporary or permanent damage occurs. The four major subjects which were done in the third year by the fourth year nursing students resulted in them becoming stressed. The heavy workload contributed to them being off sick and expressing negative feelings about the third year. What emerged from the interviews was that the students felt they had no control over the curriculum and had to comply with the syllabus.

4.4.1.2. Students felt insecure and expressed confusion due to sudden changes taking place in the curriculum without prior consultation.
The insecurity experienced by the fourth year nursing students was due to the fact that they had to learn and cope, in a very short period of time, with the new and unexpected changes related to the curriculum. These changes caused them to experience some fear and anxiety. Kleehammer, Hart & Keck (1990:185) conceptualize anxiety as a feeling of tension or uneasiness based on a previewed threat. According to Frisch & Frisch (1998:175), anxiety is a state where a person has strong feelings of worry or dread. The students expressed their feelings as follows:

“… um I feel that we, the students sometimes are not considered when these changes pop up … just sudden changes are made …”

“… just to add mam, we are the people doing the course and we know what is best for us, we can give some ideas … it is not nice to worry whether you will pass or not … because things keep on changing …”

These feelings of anxiety prohibit students from studying properly and their performance is thus of a low standard. They tend to focus on the theory only for examination purposes and thereafter it is not important for them to remember it. The students stated the following:

“… you are so stressed, you don’t really take in to remember, you just read so you can pass and now after the exams you can’t remember what you have learned …”

“… I failed all the Midwifery tests and I’ve never seen 43% in my life … Psychiatry was just as difficult to grasp …”

“… this type of curriculum is not student friendly … we are being called “cup a soup” nurses because of this instant thing … we just have to produce marks … I think they must just throw this curriculum out …”

The teaching and learning of the fourth year nursing students is thus compromised due to the frustration and anxiety they experienced. Stress was one of the main
factors throughout data collection especially in relation to the curriculum and the workload.

Kleehammer et al (1990:183) state in their study of anxiety-producing situations for students, that there is a curvilinear relationship between anxiety and learning. They state that decreased learning occurs in the presence of high anxiety, because the student is scared of making mistakes and does not focus on the learning that must take place. The students mentioned the following with regards to the curriculum which caused much of their frustration:

“… this curriculum that I’m in, they keep changing and new things come up … and we must just go with it … like um … some of us are married and have families to consider …”

“… this curriculum is not working and they are not doing a thing about it although we suffer and complain to management … a whole year’s work is done in two days and the lecturers only touch a few stuff in class which is important …”

“… we did not even do the ward sister programme in this curriculum … it could have helped us to be better professionals but it was taken away … change is good but the changes they made affected us negatively …”

“… the one day they (referring to lecturers) say you must do this thing and the next day they say … oh! It is a new thing in the curriculum; you must do it like this now …”

According to Mellish, et al (2001:86), it must be ensured that “new material” is not simply added to existing curricula without careful assessment of what has already been taught, what is relevant and what is essential. Curriculum planning must be planning based on investigations of reality and design to achieve order.
It is further mentioned by Mellish, *et al* (2001:94) that a curriculum is never complete and it must be reviewed and refined constantly to meet new needs. Quinn (1980:95) is of the opinion that a curriculum needs constant review in order to keep up with rapid changes but the curricula should not be changed whenever something new comes up.

Changes to a curriculum must be based on the needs or shortcomings that exist within a programme and such changes should not discredit a student in any way. Students enter the nursing course to learn the art and science of nursing and they can only achieve this with the assistance of a well-planned and developed curriculum.

This does not mean that “experts” should sit down and decide what they think the student of a basic programme should know. Such an exercise would be too subjective and the curriculum would be overloaded (Mellish, *et al*, 2001:86). All decisions about what to include in a curriculum involve value judgements and the philosophy of the nursing school will influence this to a large extent (Quinn, 1980:95). An assessment needs to be done on what the needs of the students are and decisions should not be based only on the ideas of certain individuals or groups in authoritative positions. Those involved with the teaching and education of the nursing students in the classroom must be included in the planning and the development of a curriculum.

Lecturers should also be knowledgeable and skillful in teaching and educating nursing students. The lecturers play a major role in the personal and professional development of the nursing students. Students need stability and direction during their training which can only be supplied by those in the teaching field.

4.4.1.3. Students expressed that some lecturers portray a negative attitude towards them and that they are not familiar with the content of their subject.
Students experience the attitudes of lecturers negativity by:
Lecturers can either promote or discourage learning, depending on their attitude. During the study, it was observed that the students did not feel free to or comfortable with communicating with most of the lecturers at the nursing campus. It was verbalized during the interviews that some of the lecturers portrayed negative attitudes towards the students which imposed a threat to the student-lecturer relationship. The following quotations expressed this view:

“… some tutors (lecturers) scream and shout at us but you just learn to control your anger …”

“… the attitudes of some of the lecturers … um … if we complain or raise a concern, they don’t understand and say we must accept it …”

“… even if we complain, we get ignored and they (lecturers) think … oh um … we’re making life difficult for them … and um … their attitudes are very negative towards us …”

Muller (1998:337) states that a student is always able to recall the negative and positive role-models in his or her training. The lecturer has a duty to share in the professional development of the nursing student. These students require expert support and guidance during their training and this should never be overlooked.

A student’s performance can be retarded if the student experiences any form of negativity from his/her role-model or leader. This will result in a student not participating in activities in class which is to the benefit of his/her learning and development. His/her learning is facilitated by the attitudes of his/her lecturers. Lecturers play a big role in shaping the students’ professional behaviour to ultimately take the responsibility to become an independent, qualified and competent nurse practitioner.
Mellish, *et al* (2001:72) state that an effective educator emphasises important points during teaching, clarifies ideas and points out significant relationships. They motivate students and correct their mistakes without belittling them and communicate clearly what is expected of them. Communication should be clear and in a language that everybody understands. According to Mellish, *et al* (2001:309), communication is the process concerned with the flow of information, the circulation of knowledge and ideas in human society and the propagation and internalisation of thoughts. Students expressed that some lecturers speak in languages they are not familiar with as stated below:

“… some lecturers will speak in a language we don't know and you are too scared to tell them every time you do not understand … they just ignore you and make you feel bad …”

If an explanation is given in a language that is not familiar to all the students in the classroom, the lecturer should translate the same information to all the students in the required language of their training. In this case, the required language for the four year nursing course is English and it is expected that students will be taught in this language. Students might feel unaccepted, defensive or on guard if they do not know what is being said or discussed in class.

The positive attitude of a lecturer towards a student can only assist the student to become confident during his/her nursing training. The students are concerned about the authoritative attitude of some lecturers. As identified during the interviews, lecturers made it clear that they do not want to be questioned by students:

“… there are people (lecturers) who are leaders … who are autocratic leaders, and they do not listen to us … they will simply ask, who is the lecturer, you or me …”

A good teacher is one who has an enthusiasm, not only for the subject but for life itself. He/she conveys this enthusiasm and vitality to his/her students in every word he/she speaks (Klopper, 2000:42). Students have rights and they should be treated
with utmost respect and dignity. South Africa is currently undergoing social transformation and leaders should thus adopt the correct leadership style to be able to comply with certain legislation such as Basic Human Rights. A lecturer that portrays an autocratic leadership style will not be able to obtain full co-operation and participation from students. This will ultimately affect their ability to learn and can result in negative outcomes. A lecturer must, therefore, be knowledgeable on all aspects of life.

- Students experience the knowledge base of some lecturers as poor:

  “Some of them (lecturers) they are unprepared, so this, um … it is not like a communication breakdown, it’s when somebody is not prepared for something …”

  “You get the person (lecturer) who will walk into the classroom and starts talking, she gives no topic, no objective and you try to write down … so you are lost and you do not know what she is talking about …”

  “… um… I think it is too much lecturers for one subject … um because they come in one after another and they don’t even have the full knowledge about the topic …”

As role models for student nurses, all lecturers should prepare lectures very well and know the facts (Mellish et al, 2001:310). Mellish et al (2001:72) further state that according to research findings of studies on nurse educators (lecturers), it was identified that knowledge is an important characteristic of an effective educator. Lecturers must, therefore, possess a knowledge that extends beyond their field of instruction. Students build a trust relationship with the lecturer who knows what he or she is talking about.

Kotzé (2002:27) states that nursing revolves around the student and the student’s endeavours to become a professional nurse. The teacher of nursing should,
therefore, have a thorough knowledge base of the subject matter and the teaching/learning approach best suited to it.

A lecturer that has a wide knowledge base on a subject plays a motivating role in a student’s academic life. Students will strive to excel in these subjects and would not want to disappoint the relevant lecturer. Lecturers must not only be knowledgeable but they must be competent in transferring or communicating valid, reliable and important information to the students.

4.4.1.4. Students expressed that material resources are inadequate or not immediately available on commencement of each year which affects their ability to perform well.

Resources that serve as guidelines should be available at all times to assist students to succeed in their studies. Students need to know what is expected of them. Even when they are out of the classroom they should have clear guidelines which direct them on the theory to be covered for study purposes.

“… and um … there was no study guides for Psychiatry and one of the lecturers from Midwifery made study guides for us out of the goodness of her heart … the other study guides came very late …”

“… the study guides only came in the middle of the first year … round about June … and just a month before our final exams in the second year they send us a new study guide …”

Klopper (2000:95) states that a study guide is a written guide which serves as a clue, road map, guide and framework of a course, whereby the lecturer reflects his/her teaching approach to the student and structures learning activities. It is a means of communication which, as an instrument of learning accompaniment, probably stimulates and motivates the student towards independence. Kotzé (2002:21) mentions that a study guide is an instrument designed to introduce students to the structure and the content of a particular course of study or module, it provides direction and information required to promote preparation for learning and
independent study and presents to students an overview of academic work to be managed over a period of time.

A student will perform best if he/she is motivated to learn. If the students receive the relevant resources well in advance, it will encourage them to produce quality work. The learning process will thus become meaningful and students will learn to be more self-confident. Study guides can contribute to a large extent to the student’s ability to obtain results of a high standard. It will also assist the student to arrange his/her work systematically and in an organised manner which will make the content easy to understand. A study guide contributes to a student becoming familiar with unknown content of a specific subject. It thus orientates the student to new content. It will assist the student to work independently and aid in the successful completion of a course. Students feel that they can even prepare themselves in advance but they do not have the proper material resources to do so. As stated in the interviews:

“… we can even go through the following year’s study guides during the December holidays so that we know what is expected of us the next year … but we get it so late …”

Students feel that they need to be involved in participating in the teaching and learning process. This will allow them to become more motivated and eager to learn. They can plan their personal time schedules and it will give them an idea of additional resources to consult which will contribute to their academic development.

Klopper (2001:95) states the following:

- A student learns best when he/she is motivated to learn. By means of a study guide, the necessity and usefulness of the content is pointed out to the student. The learning process then becomes meaningful and the student realises the usefulness of the learning content;
• The study guide makes it possible for the student to determine his/her own solution within limits. It promotes creativity because the student’s self-directedness, autonomy and initiative are respected. Involvement in the learning process is increased, while the study guide provides a balance between stimulation and support, thus promoting the student’s self-confidence;

• The study guide organises and systematises learning content which is presented meaningfully. Learning content is divided into units which can be handled with more ease by the student. It is important, however, to present the total content to the student before indicating the different elements;

• Good communication between the lecturer and the student is stimulated because the information contained in the study guide can be discussed mutually.

According to Greyling (in Klopper, 2001:96), the study guide serves as:

• An instrument to introduce a student and orientate him/her so that he/she becomes familiar with the discipline and formal requirements of the subject.
• It provides a general overview of the subject or course.
• It serves as a means of communication.
• It encourages independent work amongst students.
• It assists students to work systematically.

The study guide increases educational efficiency and assists in a more organised and systematic way of teaching and learning. Students feel more comfortable if they know what is expected of them and if they are guided with clear objectives to reach their goals. Students in the nursing field are all adults and they prefer more structured, well-planned material resources to affect their purpose. They will
demonstrate an interest in learning when their needs are met through the provision of the required learning material for a specific course.

Kotzé (2002:24) further states that a study guide is an essential instrument in the individualisation of teaching and learning in a student/learning focused and personalised educational approach. It gives structure to the student and adds to the meaningfulness of a subject. Although some of the material resources were not readily available to students, they had some positive experiences during their training. These experiences will be focused on in the next discussion.

4.4.2. NURSING STUDENTS EXPERIENCE SOME SATISFACTION AND POSITIVITY DURING THEIR TRAINING.

Throughout the interviews students indicated that they experienced some satisfaction during the 4 years of training. It became clear that students were satisfied with certain aspects during their training.

4.4.2.1. Students experienced most of the lecturers as caring and empathetic towards their feelings;

Mellish, et al (2001:73) are of the opinion that the caring educator’s attitude towards students is characterised by deep respect, providing support and encouragement and listening attentively. The caring educator is aware that each person is a unique being with his/her own needs and that each person has the right to dignity, worth and autonomy.

There are some positive remarks by students about lecturers that are friendly towards them. Students felt that they could communicate with the majority of the lecturers about issues that concern them academically or personally. They showed empathy towards the students and treated them like adults. In this study students
felt appreciated and secure if they could relate to a lecturer about their concerns. The following quotations reveal the perceptions of students about most of the lecturers:

“… most of the tutors (lecturers) are nice at the college, most of them are encouraging and show us positive things about life …”

Louw & Edwards (2005:587) state that empathy is the ability to attend to, respect and understand the feelings of others. People who have the qualities of empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence are usually experienced as warm and comfortable to be with. Frisch & Frisch (2002:102) state that for communication to be therapeutic it must convey a respectful attitude, one that supports the individuality and self-esteem. Students will reveal their personal feelings to a lecturer who understands them and with whom they feel comfortable. Without hesitation, they will approach these lecturers and communicate their thoughts and feelings. It will also give them a sense of relief that someone is listening.

It is important for students to know that people care and that they belong to a certain group. People need to know that they are worthy of something and one way of showing this is to accept people for who they are and to portray a caring and empathetic attitude towards them.

“… I can still remember my first year when we went to one of the tutors because we thought we had failed Biological Nursing Science and she calmed us down and kept on calling us to put us at ease …”

It is clear, from the students’ perspectives, that they had positive experiences with some lecturers which gave them some hope for success. These lecturers showed that students are real people with real feelings who need guidance and support through their training.

“… one lecturer shared in our pain and frustration and she genuinely cried with us …”
Quin (1988:44) states that the most important factor is the relationship that exists between the teacher and the student and it requires:

- **Genuineness**, when the teacher comes across as a real person and shows normal reactions to the student;

- **Trust and acceptance**, when the teacher accepts the student as a person in his/her own right and as a person who is worthy of respect and care;

- **Empathic understanding**, when the teacher puts him/herself in the student’s shoes in order to see and understand things from the student’s perspective.

People who contribute positively to the teaching and learning of students are caring, genuine, empathetic and trustworthy lecturers. These attributes increased feelings of belonging and acceptance which will ultimately motivate students to improve their standards of learning.

**4.5. CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the data, which was obtained through the transcribed interviews, was analysed, themes and sub-themes were identified to describe the experiences of fourth year students during their nursing training. Literature research was done, themes and sub-themes were verified and re-contextualised within existing literature.

The study revealed that the fourth year students had various experiences related to their training at the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus. Through the study, the researcher realised that human and material resources play a major role in the academic development of student nurses. The need to provide the students with an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning can optimize the possibility of a success rate of high quality which can result in an end product of competent, qualified and motivated professionals.
5.1. INTRODUCTION
In Chapter four data was analysed and themes were identified related to the experiences of the fourth year nursing students during their training at the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus. Guidelines will be co-constructed and recommendations will be formulated. These guidelines will be brought to the attention of the nursing lecturers and those in the academic development and training of the nursing student at the nursing campus.

The objectives of the study were to:
- Explore and describe the fourth year student nurses' experiences of their training at the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus.
- Co-construct guidelines to assist nursing lecturers to better understand student nurses during their training.

In the opinion of the researcher the above objectives were reached on completion of this study.

5.2. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY
The study emanated from verbal comments made to the researcher by nursing students regarding the frustration and dissatisfaction with the curriculum and certain negative experiences at the nursing campus during their training. The study was undertaken to identify the seriousness of the problems and whether they, in fact, existed. The information that was obtained during the interviews including the analysis done on the literature revealed that certain problems do exist.

The conclusions that were reached concerning the experiences of the fourth year nursing students included the following:
The students experienced stress and frustration due to:

- Insecurity and confusion due to sudden changes taking place in the curriculum which resulted in:
  - Uneven spread of major subjects over the four years of training;
  - Students experiencing stress due to theory overload in one specific year of the course;
- Material resources that are inadequate or not immediately available on commencement of each year which affect their ability to perform well;
- Feelings of frustration due to negative attitudes of certain lecturers towards students;
- Students experienced the knowledge base of some lecturers as poor;
- Students also experienced attitudes from most of the lecturers as caring.

Observations made by the researcher during this study included certain conditions and circumstances under which the nursing students had to proceed with their studies.

The following research questions (based on a semi-structured approach) were posed to the participants in an effort to pursue the first objective:

- Have you encountered any positive experiences during your training? If yes, please provide examples.
- Were you ever reluctant to attend class? If yes, what are the reasons for this?
- Have you ever had negative experiences or felt disappointed about any situation on campus? If yes, please provide examples.
- How is your education and training on campus preparing you to become a professional nurse?
What has motivated you to come thus far with your training?

The objective was reached through exploring and describing the training experiences of the fourth year nursing students. As explained in Chapter 1, paragraph 1.4, certain structures, such as accompaniment, are required for both the lecturer and the student to build an understanding relationship.

5.3. LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY
The following limitations were identified:

- Only students from the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus were interviewed;
- Only the fourth year nursing students that commenced their training in 2005 participated in the study;
- The study does not include the experiences of students from other nursing campuses in the Eastern Cape.

5.4. GUIDELINES
5.4.1. Pre-amble
The guidelines recommended are based on the findings of the research. These guidelines will assist the lecturers at the nursing campus to better understand and support the nursing students through their training. The principles of Nursing Accompaniment (as stated in Chapter 1) will form the basis of the guidelines for the purpose of this study.

The lecturer is viewed as the accompanier of the student and both the lecturer and the student should build an understanding relationship which requires certain structures for accompaniment. The principles of Nursing Accompaniment (as stated in Chapter 1) will form the basis of the guidelines for the purpose of this study. Kotzé (1998:10) identified the structures of accompaniment that should be observable and experienced in the process as follows:
Relationship structures

This structure refers to the relationship between the nursing student and the lecturer including other senior management at a nursing school. Student nurses who enter the nursing profession will not fully co-operate or take part in activities unless they feel a sense of belonging and that they are cared for. They have a need to trust and to be trusted and the only way it can be possible is when they believe they are in capable hands. The lecturer must, therefore, display a sincere, warm and caring attitude towards the student.

A student expects a nurse educator to understand him/her fully as he/she believes those educators were once students as well. The relationship must also be built on understanding and recognition from both sides. The student must understand and give recognition to his/her lecturers and vice versa. Both role-players must be engaged in earning respect for each other's individuality, expectations, experiences, differences and personalities. A relationship which is built on trust, honesty, admitting when wrong and correcting those mistakes, can only assist both the lecturer and student to cope with the development and educational challenges in the classroom.

Recognition of authority is of utmost importance. Students should know which line of communication to follow and they must know who is in charge. They should honour and respect the lecturer not only as an individual, but as a person who is more knowledgeable than they are. The lecturer must portray an attitude of a professional role-model, act responsibly and be an outstanding leader to the students.

Course structures

The intensity of the relationship is dependent on the degree of student assistance and support. As the student enters the nursing field as a neophyte, he/she is totally dependent on the lecturer for guidance and leadership. As the student progress through the course, this relationship decreases and the student becomes gradually independent.
Actualisation structures

To ensure that the outcomes of the programme are reached both the lecturer and the student become actively involved in education and teaching of nursing. The student grows and realizes that he/she can accept more responsibility. This builds the student's self-esteem and he/she becomes more confident and is even prepared to take risks. The lecturer also becomes aware that the student has grown in personal strength and that he/she starts appreciating his/her own achievements.

Goal structures

Meaningful relationships develop between the student and the lecturer. He/she starts to identify with norms, values and the challenges associated with nursing education in the classroom. According to Kotzé (1998:11), goal structures refer to the objectives that direct the accompaniment events and which the student who is being assisted in the accompanying process will eventually realise. The lecturer should identify factors that cause emotional trauma to students and implement corrective measures accordingly. The student is thus able to make his/her own decisions and be responsible and accountable for the outcome of those decisions.

5.4.2. Guidelines to assist lecturers in better understanding of students during their four years of nursing training.

The analysed data that was obtained through the interviews indicated that the students had negative and positive experiences during their training at the nursing campus. The guidelines to be formulated will optimize the academic support and better understanding of fourth-year nursing students by the lecturers. The guidelines will be outlined in tabular form as follows:
Table 2. Guidelines to optimize academic support of fourth year nursing students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Guidelines</th>
<th>Sub-Guidelines</th>
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<tr>
<td>Create an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning to promote the academic progress of students.</td>
<td>a) Develop a well structured, acceptable student orientated curriculum for fourth year nursing students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ <em>Implement an accredited curriculum which will assist in obtaining competent qualified professionals.</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ <em>Eliminate sudden changes to a learning programme or curriculum</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ <em>Provide counseling services</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>b) Eliminate feelings of insecurity and confusion through effective planning and management of educational resources:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ <em>Ensure proper planning and management of the material resources</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ <em>Develop and manage an orientation programme</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ <em>Equip students with the required resources for effective teaching and learning</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>c) Eliminate conflicting attitudes of lecturers and facilitate maximum support and effective teaching through:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ <em>Warmth</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ <em>Empathy</em></td>
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5.4.2.1. Create an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning to promote the academic progress of students.
To create an environment that will facilitate effective teaching and learning which will improve the academic performances of the nursing students, the following must be included:

5.4.2.1.1. Develop a well-structured, acceptable student orientated curriculum for fourth year nursing students.

Before students can commence with a programme, clear specific and achievable objectives must be set.

- Implement an accredited curriculum which will assist in obtaining competent qualified professionals.

Accreditation is the means whereby the South African Nursing Council (SANC) grants recognition to a school and its educational programmes which meet the requirements of the relevant regulations. Such accreditation is programme specific, and it confers upon a school the legal right to offer educational programmes (Kotzé, 2002:31).
• Educational institutions are to comply with the principles and guidelines provided by SANC for accreditation.

• Regular inspections and monitoring of academic standards at campus level by SANC and prompt feedback on outcomes.

• Ensuring that educational institutions comply with requirements before continuing or commencing with a course.

• Reviewing and renewing of programmes in consultation with SANC.

• Do comparison between the current and previous curriculum and make adjustments based on what was successful and student-friendly.

• Adopt yearly evaluation structures to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum.

• Include all role-players in the evaluation process including students.

• Decentralize the drawing up and marking of examinations papers.

• Establish a local examination forum/body which is to consist of the lecturers at campus level and the affiliated university to compile examination papers and memoranda.

➤ *Eliminate sudden changes to a learning programme*

• Changes only to be made once a specific course has been completed.

• Consultation with students and lecturers before changes are made.

• Do an analysis or evaluation on the effects of changes to the student’s ability to learn.

• Do research on effects of previous changes made.

• Identify relevance of changes to a programme.

• Uniformity and consistency with changes.

➤ *Provide counseling services*

• Establish “experience” or “promotion” interviews for students at different levels (successful and unsuccessful students to be interviewed on their experiences during that current year of study).
• Counseling service on campus specifically for nursing students for the duration of their training.
• Appointment of a qualified and experienced person to meet counseling needs of students.
• Availability of a counselor at an appropriate venue, dates and times.
• Ensuring that the advancement of human rights, dignity and freedom are upheld, that is, confidentiality.

5.4.2.1.1. Eliminate feelings of insecurity and confusion through effective planning and management of educational resources.

The study guide contributes a great deal to creating a learning environment and the development of a student. Students will feel motivated if they are supplied with the means which guide them to achieve success.

➢ Ensure proper planning and management:
  • Planning and formulation of study guides at least six months before commencement of a new group of fourth year nursing students.
  • Involve lecturers from all levels and disciplines in the planning and formulation of study guides.
  • Provide students each year with written proof of their shortcomings that will prohibit them from completing the course, that is, insufficient hours due to absenteeism.
  • Include the relevant role-players in the planning process of the study guides, for example the university of affiliation and the South African Nursing Council.
  • Compiling of study guides in correlation with the relevant prescribed and recommended literature for the course.
  • Decentralise ordering and storage of material resources.
  • Appoint a local service provider for the campus to obtain these resources on time.
Equip students with the required resources for effective teaching and learning:

- Ensure updated policy and procedure manuals are in place regarding material resources for academic requirements.
- Ensure open door policy and immediate response to student complaints.
- Establish a well controlled computerized system for students to access required resources.

If the proper educational resources are not available, are unrealistic to obtain or do not match the student’s needs, it is useless to continue with interventions (Klopper, 2001:77). Many variables have an impact on the quality of education that nursing students receive. These variables range from material to financial resources including changes to programmes and structures.

According to Muller, Bezuidenhout & Jooste (2006:37), change implies any variation from the status quo, from a condition of stability to one of instability, a shift from the predictable to the unpredictable, or one from the known to the unknown. If this change cannot be measured, it causes insecurity.

Any changes taking place to the learning content or material of a student whilst he/she is busy with a course can result in confusion, frustration and insecurity. Induction programmes are one of the structures that will assist the students to feel secure and confident when embarking on the nursing course.

Develop and manage an orientation programme

A student feels more secure if they know where they are going to and what is expected of them. Quinn (1980:327) states that its purpose is to assist the new member to become acquainted with policies, develop a sense of identity and belonging. Louw & Edwards (2005:794) mention that it is the process through which the newcomer is introduced and it increases the chances of the newcomer adjusting quickly to the new environment. The student will feel less
anxious once he/she is somehow familiar with the environment. The orientation or induction programme needs to address the following:

- **Expectations and the requirements that the student must meet, that is, related to:**
  - objectives of South African Nursing Council and the curriculum;
  - the layout of the course over the four years;
  - the academic hours to be completed for the duration of the course;
  - assessment criteria;
  - required years of study;
  - uniform;
  - financial implications; and
  - required material resources and objectives for the course.

- **Policies, rules and regulations of the college, that is, related to:**
  - absenteeism/attendance;
  - examinations;
  - exclusions/failures;
  - effects of pregnancy while studying;
  - communication channels and structures; and
  - labour organisations, etc.

- **Legislation relevant to nursing training, that is, regulations, directives, Acts, and guidelines;**
- **Impact and management of stress, disaster or conflict situations such as strikes and stay-aways during training; and**
- **Conditions of service for students based on legislative requirements.**
5.4.2.1.2. Eliminate conflicting attitudes of lecturers and facilitate maximum support and effective teaching.

Students have always been and will always be observers of the personalities and attitudes of their lecturers. These students will thus monitor specific characteristics and decide thus what they like and what is acceptable for them and may include personality traits such as a sense of humor, fairness and kindness. A lecturer’s personality cannot promote learning but it can have an effect on the student’s ability to learn or improve his/her performances. Other traits of a lecturer that can assist to facilitate maximum support and effective teaching include:

- **Warmth**
  
  In order for a student to feel valued, the lecturer must exhibit a positive attitude towards him/her. Such a lecturer must demonstrate the following:
  
  - Be approachable and available when students require assistance.
  - Utilize an appropriate tone of voice when addressing students.
  - Be friendly and portray this through smiling as well.

- **Empathy**
  
  Empathy is the ability to attend to, respect and understand the feelings of others (Louw & Edwards, 2005:587). In order for a student to feel valued, the lecturer must exhibit a positive attitude towards him/her. Such a lecturer must demonstrate the following:
  
  - Be sensitive to the feelings of students.
  - Understand what the student is going through.
  - Place him/her in the student’s position and accept them for who they are.

- **Non-judgmental approach**
  
  To be non-judgmental means to act without biases and preconceptions.
The students who enter the nursing school come from different backgrounds and lifestyles and this results in a multi-cultural group in one classroom. Lecturers must, therefore, assist them to become acquainted with a nursing culture of uniformity and good standards. The lecturers must therefore:

- Attend communication courses to improve communication abilities;
- Be consistent with the required language use for the nursing course;
- Treat every student based on his/her individuality;
- Always treat students as human beings;
- Give recognition for the rights of student;
- Not make comparisons of students based on their intellectual abilities;
- Not expect students to behave in a certain way because of their cultural identity;
- Consult students first and avoid being prescriptive;
- Not to cast any blame but to evaluate circumstances first;
- Avoid destructive criticism;
- Learn about the different cultures and beliefs;
- Never entertain negative criticism of one student towards another but rather intervene and correct the situation;
- Comply with disciplinary procedures and avoid favouritism;
- Be fair and consistent with punitive measures;
- Communicate to students not to feel guilty about failure but encourage them to strive for the best;
- Never give up on a student but assist him/her to find solutions to improve his/her circumstances; and
- Always be conscious of the Batho Pele Principles and sensitise students to the importance thereof.
➢ Trust

Once a foundation of trust has been laid, it provides a secure atmosphere for both student and lecturer. This allows the student to grow towards maturity and it creates an avenue for open communication between the two. The following can be utilized:

- Admit when wrong and learn to apologise for mistakes;
- Be honest at all times;
- Be open and transparent about issues concerning the student;
- Have an open door policy and good communication skills;
- Have the skill and desire to solve conflict;
- Give appraisals and positive feedback when it is needed;
- Encourage students to use their strengths positively and make them feel hopeful;
- Never discriminate, intimidate or insult a student unfairly; and
- Respect students as human beings.

➢ Active listening

The lecturer must be a good listener in order to build the student’s self-esteem and encourage him/her to actively participate in his/her development.

- Assess situations and adjust accordingly;
- Listen with sincerity and stay calm;
- Do not interrupt the student during his/her reply;
- Avoid facial expressions that can intimidate the student;
- Allow the student time to express him/herself;
- Make eye contact during a conversation or explanation by a student;
- Let the student know you are listening; that is, through inhibiting “yes” or “that’s good” responses;
• Give constructive feedback on the student’s response; and
• Assist the student positively when needed during his/her efforts or responses.

➢ Caring

Professional value is expressed through conduct, feelings, imagination, knowledge and action (Pera & Van Tonder, 1996:59). When students feel that lecturers care about them, they feel valued and appreciated. Students are thus motivated to give their best during their training and development. A caring lecturer will show respect and genuine concern to students.

Booyens (1998:585) believes that it is important to clarify the concept “caring” as it lays the foundation for instilling a culture of caring into the registered nurse of a caring profession. Haegart (2001:29) is of the opinion that people’s knowledge and understanding of this concept will definitely have an impact on how they execute caring actions. A lecturer that portrays a caring attitude will bring meaning to a student’s life. The lack of a caring attitude by lecturers could reflect negatively on nursing education and also damage the image that lecturers should portray as role-models.

➢ Enthusiasm and knowledge

Enthusiastic teachers bring life and positive energy to a classroom. This is characterised by qualities such as alertness, intensity, vigour, and movement. Teacher enthusiasm includes two basic components: a sincere interest in the subject, vigour and positive energy (Hamachek, 1993:429). Quinn (1980:156) states that evidence suggests that the enthusiasm of the teacher is a characteristic which is particularly valued
by students and this can be indicated by the use of emphasis and tone of voice and also by the use of non-verbal signals.

An enthusiastic lecturer can affect students positively in the sense that their interest in the subject might increase which will ultimately improve their performance. The lecturer who demonstrates a good knowledge base and enthusiasm needs to:

- Be alert;
- Renew knowledge and demonstrate an attitude of continuous development;
- Be up to date with latest technology and literature relevant to teaching and learning;
- Organise and plan in advance;
- Give verbal signals when changing topics;
- Use different tones of voice when teaching;
- Show emotions such as joy with certain responses;
- Have a sense of humour;
- Be positive at all times;
- Show sincere interest in the subject;
- Avoid incorporating every good point gained from observation of other lecturers and be innovative; and
- Being oneself: the lecturer must identify the individuality quality that he/she possesses and use it.

5.5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Limitations have been identified and for the purpose of this study recommendations will be discussed under the following headings.
5.5.1. Recommendations related to Nursing Education:

- Communication Skills Training to form part of an induction programme.
- Nursing lecturers to attend Communication Skills Training to assist them during the training of nursing students.
- Campus personnel and students to be made aware of all legislation related to human rights.
- Induction programme to form part of the training programme of students.
- Agreement between the nursing college and affiliated universities to decentralize compiling of examination papers and memoranda.
- Decentralizing the ordering and acquiring of material resources.
- Adopting the “old” curriculum which seems more student-friendly and make adjustments if needed.
- Regular visits and inspections at campus level by SANC for quality purposes.
- Yearly evaluation on effectiveness of curriculum and consultative adjustments.

5.5.2. Recommendations related to student assistance:

- Interviews with students on experiences during each year of study.
- Conflict and stress management courses for lecturers and students.
- Student assistance or Wellness Facilities on campus for students.
- Transparency and consultation with regards to student issues.

5.5.3. Recommended Research

Based on the research study and the findings, the following are recommended for future research:

- A replication or comparative study can be initiated on the experiences of the nursing students at the different campuses in the Eastern Cape. Focus can be
placed on each year group respectively or comparisons can be done between the different campuses.

- Research can be done on the relevance and value of the above guidelines on implementation thereof.
- Research can be initiated on the role that the South African Nursing Council plays at the current Nursing Education institutions.
- Further research can be implemented on the effects of nursing lecturers’ attitudes towards the academic performance of students.
- Research can be done to determine the quality of professionals produced with utilisation of the “old” curriculum versus the “new” curriculum.

5.6. CONCLUSION

The study produced evidence that the fourth year nursing students encountered some negative and positive experiences during their training at the nursing campus. The provision of material resources is crucial in the academic development of the students. Particular attention should be given to the curriculum development and those involved in the formulation thereof. It was evident that the students experienced stress-provoking situations which had an impact on their performances.

It is evidently clear and understood that education has changed over the years. It, therefore, is necessary to be constantly aware that human beings must be treated with respect and dignity regardless of their status and value systems. Those in managerial or supervisory positions should know what is expected of them and they should adopt strategies to become more knowledgeable and competent than those under their care.

In order for students to be successful, the teaching and learning environment should be equipped with the necessary and most important resources in order for them to be successful. To be able to assist government’s aim to train and retain nurses in the country who can contribute to meet the diverse and growing needs of society,
serious consideration must be given to create a conducive environment for the training and development of nurses before they commence a nursing course.

“The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers, gives not of his wisdom but rather his faith and lovingness.”

(Kahlil Gibran)
BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Books:


2. Journals:


3. Legislation:


4. Unpublished Notes:


5. Websites:


ANNEXURE A: STUDENT CONSENT FORM
A. DECLARATION BY OR ON BEHALF OF PARTICIPANT
(Person legally competent to give consent on behalf of the participant)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I, the participant and the undersigned</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.D. number</td>
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</table>

OR

<table>
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<tr>
<th>I, in my capacity as</th>
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<tr>
<td>of the participant</td>
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<td>I.D. number</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Address (of participant)

| Initial |

A.1 I HEREBY CONFIRM AS FOLLOWS:

I, the participant, was invited to participate in the above-mentioned research project that is being undertaken by Mrs. B.L. Smith of the Department of Political science in the Faculty of Arts of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

2. The following aspects have been explained to me, the participant:

2.1 **Aim:** The investigators are studying: the fourth year student nurse's experiences at the Port Elizabeth Nursing College.

The information will be used to/for: co-construct guidelines which will assist lecturers to better understand the students during their training.
2.2 **Procedures:** I understand that there will be no procedures performed.

2.3 **Risks:** no risks are involved

2.4 **Possible benefits:** As a result of my participation in this study, the researcher will get to know the experiences and perceptions of the fourth year student nurses and that of their significant others.

2.5 **Confidentiality:** My identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description or scientific publications by the investigators.

2.6 **Access to findings:** Any new information/or benefit that develops during the course of the study will be made available on request.

2.7 **Voluntary participation/refusal/discontinuation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My participation is voluntary</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tr>
<td>My decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect my present or future care/employment/lifestyle</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>FALSE</td>
</tr>
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</table>

3. The information above was explained to me/the participant by

Mrs. B. Smith

in Afrikaans  English  X  Xhosa  Other

and I am in command of this language/it was satisfactorily translated to me by

(name of translator)  N/A

I was given the opportunity to ask questions and all these questions were answered satisfactorily.

4. No pressure was exerted on me to consent to participation and I understand that I may withdraw at any stage without penalisation.

5. Participation in this study will not result in any additional cost to myself.
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<th>Signed/confirmed at</th>
<th>on 20</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature or right thumb print of participant</td>
<td>Signature of witness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full name of witness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEXURE B: HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE CONSENT
Dear Sir/Madam

Application to conduct research

The writer of this letter is currently engaged in her Magister in Public Administration at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth. One of the requirements of the degree is to conduct a research study. I am presently employed at a nursing campus in the Nelson Mandela Metropole and hereby would like to request your permission to undertake a research study amongst student nurses at the campus. The title of the research is: **An investigation of the training experiences of the fourth year student nurses: A case study of the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus.** The focus of the study is to explore and describe the learning experiences of the fourth year nurses during their 4 years of training so that guidelines can be co-constructed to assist lecturers in better understanding the challenges faced by the students.

Data will be collected by means of in-depth interviews with a phenomenological approach. The researcher aims to conduct interviews by the end of September. Once the data has been analyzed and identified themes verified, guidelines would be
formulated for nurse educators. A copy of these guidelines will be made available to the
lecturers at the campus where the students receive their training.

The researcher will attempt to adhere to all ethical principles of research. The
participants will be informed about the purpose of the research study and may withdraw
from the interview at any time.

A copy of the proposal and requests for consent is enclosed for your approval. The
research will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Derek Taylor and the interviews
will be conducted by Miss E. Carolus, a professional nurse within the Department of
Health to ensure an unbiased approach. Should you have any queries, please contact
Dr. Taylor at 041 504 3812 during office hours.

Thank you for considering my request

Yours faithfully

B.L. Smith
(Researcher)
Ref: H/08/ART/PGS-008

5 November 2008

Student number: 201312591

Mrs BL Smith
33 Moregrove Road
Westering
Port Elizabeth
6025

Dear Mrs Smith

“AN INVESTIGATION OF THE TRAINING EXPERIENCES OF THE FOURTH YEAR STUDENT NURSES: A CASE STUDY OF THE PORT ELIZABETH NURSING CAMPUS?”

Your above-entitled application for ethics clearance served at the RTI Higher Degrees sub-committee of the Faculty of Arts Research, Technology and Innovation Committee. We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the Committee.

The Ethics clearance reference number is H/08/ART/PGS-008, and is valid for three years, from 5 November 2008 – 5 November 2011. Please inform the RTI-HDC, via your promoter, if any changes (particularly in the methodology) occur during this time. An annual affirmation to the effect that the protocols in use are still those for which approval was granted, will be required from you. You will be reminded timeously of this responsibility.

We wish you well with the project.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Ms Jannet Nxati
FACULTY OFFICER

cc: Promoter/Supervisor
     HoD
     School Representative: Faculty RTI
ANNEXURE C: CONSENT FROM CAMPUS HEAD
The Campus Head  
Lilitha college of Nursing  
Private Bag X6047  
Port Elizabeth  
6000  
Dear Sir/Madam

Application to conduct research

The writer of this letter is currently engaged in her Magister in Public Administration at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth. One of the requirements of the degree is to conduct a research study. I am presently employed at a nursing campus in the Nelson Mandela Metropole and hereby would like to request your permission to undertake a research study amongst student nurses at the campus. The title of the research is: An investigation of the training experiences of the fourth year student nurses: A case study of the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus. The focus of the study is to explore and describe the learning experiences of the fourth year nurses during their 4 years of training so that guidelines can be co-constructed to assist lecturers in better understanding the challenges faced by the students.

Data will be collected by means of in-depth interviews with a phenomenological approach. The researcher aims to conduct interviews by the end of September. Once the data has been analyzed and identified themes verified, guidelines would be formulated for nurse educators. A copy of these guidelines will be made available to the lecturers at the campus where the students receive their training.
The researcher will attempt to adhere to all ethical principles of research. The participants will be informed about the purpose of the research study and may withdraw from the interview at any time.

The research will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Derek Taylor and the interviews will be conducted by a colleague within the Department of Health to ensure an unbiased approach. Should you have any queries, please contact Dr. Taylor at 041 504 3812 during office hours.

Thank you for considering my request

Yours faithfully

B.L. Smith
(Researcher)
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
LILITHA COLLEGE OF NURSING IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE CONSORTIUM OF UNIVERSITIES
(WSU, NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN AND FORT HARE)
PORT ELIZABETH CAMPUS
Private Bag X 8047, PORT ELIZABETH, 6000, Republic of South Africa
Telephone: (041) - 373 7829    Fax: (041) - 373 2614

Reference: Q/2  Enquiries: Mrs. CB Chetty  Date: 2008/10/20

Dr. Taylor
NMMU

Dear Dr. Taylor

RESEARCH: ASSESSMENT OF THE TRAINING EXPERIENCE OF THE FOURTH YEAR STUDENT NURSES AT PORT ELIZABETH CAMPUS – MRS. B. SMITH

Permission is hereby granted for Mrs. Smith to continue with her research.

Yours faithfully

CB CHETTY
CAMPUS HEAD
ANNEXURE D: CONSENT FROM STUDENT COUNCIL
The Chairperson
Student Representative Council
Lilitha College of Nursing
Port Elizabeth
6000

Dear Sir/Madam

Application to conduct research

The writer of this letter is currently engaged in her Magister in Public Administration at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth. One of the requirements of the degree is to conduct a research study. I am presently employed at a nursing campus in the Nelson Mandela Metropole and hereby would like to request your permission to undertake a research study amongst student nurses at the campus. The title of the research is: An investigation of the training experiences of the fourth year student nurses: A case study of the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus. The focus of the study is to explore and describe the learning experiences of the fourth year nurses during their 4 years of training so that guidelines can be co-constructed to assist lecturers in better understanding the challenges faced by the students.

Data will be collected by means of in-depth interviews with a phenomenological approach. The researcher aims to conduct interviews by the end of September. Once the data has been analyzed and identified themes verified, guidelines would be
formulated for nurse educators. A copy of these guidelines will be made available to them at the campus where the students receive their training.

The researcher will attempt to adhere to all ethical principles of research. The participants will be informed about the purpose of the research study and may withdraw from the interview at any time.

The research will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Derek Taylor and the interviews will be conducted by a colleague within the Department of Health to ensure an unbiased approach. Should you have any queries, please contact Dr. Taylor at 041 504 3812 during office hours.

Thank you for considering my request

Yours faithfully

B.L. Smith (Researcher)
Nursing Lecturer
Reference:  Enquiries: Mrs. Mgijima  Date: 2008/11/05

For Attention:  Mrs. B. Smith
                PE Campus

Dear Madam

REQUEST FOR CONDUCTING A RESEARCH

This is to certify that you have been granted permission to conduct your research, provided that it is within the legal principles.

Thanking you

ZN MGIJIMA (Chairperson)
ANNEXURE E: APPLICATION TO INTERVIEWER
Miss E. Carolus
21 Peddie Street
Korsten
Port Elizabeth
6000

Dear Madam

Application for assistance to conduct interviews

The writer of this letter is currently engaging in her Magister in Public Administration at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University of Port Elizabeth. One of the requirements of the degree is to conduct a research study. I am presently employed at a nursing campus in the Nelson Mandela Metropole and hereby would like to request your permission to undertake a research study amongst learner nurses at the campus. The title of the research is: “An assessment of the training experiences of the fourth year student nurses with reference to the Port Elizabeth Nursing Campus”. The focus of the study is to explore and describe their experience during their 4 years of training so that guidelines can be co-constructed to assist lecturers in understanding the student nurse’s during their training.

Data will be collected by means of depth interviews with a phenomenological approach. The researcher aims to conduct interviews before the end of September and for this purpose the researcher would like to request your assistance in this regard. The researcher would also like to ensure unbiased implementation of the interviews and
hope that you will be able to meet the request. Once the data has been analyzed and identified themes verified, guidelines will be formulated for nurse educators. A copy of these guidelines will be made available to the educators and management at the campus where the learners receive their training.

The researcher will attempt to adhere to all ethical principles of research. The participants will be informed about the purpose of the research study and may withdraw from the interview at any time. You will be supplied with more information on the relevant dates, times and venues to conduct the interviews.

The research will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Derek Taylor. Should you have any queries, please contact Dr. Taylor at 041 504 3812 during office hours.

Thank you for considering my request

Yours faithfully

Mrs B.L. Smith
Researcher
ANNEXURE F: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED APPROACH

TITLE: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE TRAINING EXPERIENCES OF FOURTH YEAR STUDENT NURSES WITH REFERENCE TO THE PORT ELIZABETH NURSING CAMPUS.

RESEARCHER: MRS B.L SMITH INTERVIEWER: MISS C. CAROLUS

The highlighted questions were used during the interviews.

Question 1
What motivated you to become a professional nurse?

Question 2
Why did you choose this particular campus for your training?

Question 3
Have you ever encountered any positive or good experiences during your training? If so, please provide examples.

Question 4
How is your education and training on campus preparing you to become a professional nurse?

Question 5
Were you ever reluctant to attend class?

Question 6
How has the training on campus contributed to your development?
Question 7
Have you ever had negative experiences or felt disappointed about any situation on campus? If yes, please provide examples.

Question 8
What has motivated you to come thus far with your training?
ANNEXURE G: TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW
Interviewer: Have you ever encountered any positive or good experiences during your training? If so, please provide examples.

Participant: the 4 years was very challenging. I would say that it takes a very special person to go up for this course. There were some positive experiences, ...um...actually to get the 4 years behind your back and becoming a nurse in the end because you go through Psychology, Anatomy, Physiology, Sociology and all those things – and at the end you try to find your own values and things. So I would say it is a plus side. In our first year we went on a teambuilding camp and it was very uplifting, we got to know each other on a different level. Another positive thing is when a lecturer is clear about what he/she is about to teach. For example in midwifery, a lecturer will say: yesterday we did prolonged labour and premature rupture of the membranes, today we will start with occipito-posterior. This way we know where we are and what to do and we can follow the lecture and ask questions. This is very good and everyone should do it.

Interviewer: Have you ever had negative experiences or felt disappointed about any situation on campus? If yes, please provide examples.

Participant: the negative side is very stressful. The curriculum is so upside down. The one day they say one thing and the next day you must do something else. Then they will say, oh no, it’s a new thing you must do it this way, forget what we told you yesterday, you are suppose to follow this and this.

Interviewer: Yes?
The first year they gave us study guides round about June and we have started beginning February that year. The second year we got the study guides...we got it about in March, fairly early. Just a month before our final exams they sent us new study guides from Bhisho. All the work we did for General Nursing Science was not going to be in the exams because of the new study guide we received. There was no study guides for Psychiatry and one of the lecturers from Midwifery made us copies out of the goodness of her heart. The GNS and CNS study guides came also late that year and 90% of the study guide objectives did not come in the exams.

_Interviewer_: Are there any other examples of stressful events?

Participant: Oh yes, there is a lot. Like they say they are there to facilitate and they give group work. There is also this language barrier and some students do not want to do group work. Students say they are there to be taught not to teach other students. So when...um...the strong people basically do the work on their own for the group. For instance, you are doing group work you only concentrate on your topic but at the end of the day you write a test on all the work which was supposed to be presented by others in class. It is confusing or frustrating or maybe both...I don’t know how to put it. Even as one of the top achievers, you tend not to listen as the other person is presenting because your presentation is now finish. If one of the lecturers or facilitators or whatever they call them, if they do an overview of the topic, it normally helps us. Most of them do not do it, you don’t get the full picture and at the end of the day you sit with a 40% and they say (lecturers) a 40% is not a pass. So these are some of the negatives we experience at college. Not everything is negative but you need to get your head around everything to see the positive and make a better future for yourself and your family.
Interviewer: When you say everything is not negative, what are the other examples of positive experiences?

Participant: most of the time you make lifelong friends and the experience and knowledge that you are picking up and also… (silence)... because of the struggle through the four years I want to study education to help making a change. A student’s life is complicated, we don’t want lecturers or a curriculum to complicate a student’s life, it is complicated enough on its own.

Interviewer: You said you do not want lecturers to complicate a student’s life, can you expand on that?

Participant: Some of them (lecturers), not all of them, they are unprepared or they bring in a speaker who is also unprepared, so there is this…um… not like a communication breakdown, it is just when somebody is not prepared for something...

Interviewer: uh-uh

Participant: …the students pick it up then they don’t listen and don’t give input. You get the lecturer who will walk into the classroom and just starts talking. No topic or objectives are given and you try to write down what is being said. You become so lost and you are totally confused of what is being discussed in class. When you get home you try and find the work in the book and you can’t find it so you come back to the lecturer and inform him/her that you cannot find the work in the book. They will simply say it is not in your books go look it up. We do not expect them to give us their notes but at least if they can brief us on the topic it will guide us on what to do. Sometimes I wonder how I got this far, but I pulled through.

Both: Laughing
Participant: In the third year we wish we were never born. People in the third year were booked off with stress. We did all our major subjects in that year, General Nursing Science (GNS), Psychiatry, Midwifery and Community Nursing Science (CNS). Some of us carried subjects from the second year and I don’t know how we got here.

Interviewer: uh-huh…

Participant: The persons that came up with this 4 year course maybe thought of producing nurses quickly, but the quality is not being produced. The sisters in the wards also do not make it easy for us because we do not get enough learning opportunities in the wards so we do not learn enough. I think they must just throw this curriculum out…the old curriculum worked well.

Interviewer: How was the old curriculum?

Participant: The Old curriculum was…um…ok, second and first year we did all the minor subjects and GNS was done in the second and fourth year. The third year would only be six months for Psychiatry and six months for Midwifery and everybody passed whether they had a re-write or a supplementary. Nothing else was done in the third year. In fourth year we would do GNS and CNS and the students will only finish off their practical Midwifery books. But with this new curriculum, the one subject is intruding on the other subject and in fact we still owe so many hours at this stage of our final year, we don’t even know when we are going to finish our books because we’re leaving on the 5th December 2008. We still have to take part in other activities in January 2009 like HIV/AIDS and Leadership workshops. We can use this time to complete our books. This type of curriculum is not student friendly and they expect to produce good quality nurses at the end of the day. We’ve heard in the wards they call us the “cup-a-soup” nurses because of this instant thing that they just have to produce marks and nurses. There are too many subjects. The required hours for the practical
field have also gone up so the hours we spend in class are also less. I don’t know how people are going to make it or pass unless they are so dedicated to give up their social life and go to the lecturers after hours. This curriculum needs to be checked and changed…

(Silence)

Interviewer: Why do you say it needs to be changed?

Participant: They will end up every four years with 8 or 9 finalist. When we started we were 98 students in our first year and half of the class failed second year, then half of that number failed in third year and we ended up being 21 in our fourth year. There were students who said it was too stressful and they left. Some of us are just hanging in there. Bhisho is not listening to us and we wrote countless letters and we still got copies of the letters we wrote requesting them to change the curriculum because we are not coping with it. Not once did they show some sympathy or even respond stating that they will look into the matter.

Interviewer: Is there any other experiences you would like to share?

Participant: The going away part in Psychiatry is very nice. We got exposure to things we don’t normally see in P.E…like all the side effects of drugs on patients. Like at EDH (Elizabeth Donkin Hospital) you don’t get that interaction with the patients, they are under lock and key but at Fort England you sit outside with the patients and talk to them. You gain a lot of experience this way.

Interviewer: Is there any other positive experiences you’ve encountered?

Participant: When I started at the college I spoke very soft. Everybody use to complain about it but the fact that we had to present topics in class gave me confidence.
Working on my own also helped me to grow to a certain extend as an individual and a nurse.

*Interviewer: How is your education and training on campus preparing you to become a professional nurse?*

Participant: I am in two minds about that really, because you can get the course in 4 years faster but better like the people that trained in those years and they did GNS in 3 years and after that they could decide what they wanted to do. Those were the good nurses and they rendered quality care and they were called mini-doctors even overseas, but with us we are being called “cup-a-soup” nurses. It is a mixture of everything and you just add water. The subjects are too many, the lecturers too few and they are overworked. It is little things like this that gives you a setback to become a good professional nurse. The expectations are too much, like the lecturers will instruct us to hand in typed assignments but 90% of the class are not even exposed to computers.

*Interviewer: Were you ever reluctant to attend class?*

Participant: Yes, I failed all the Midwifery test and I’ve never seen 43% in my life…I did not even want to come back. One of my colleagues said: just go back don’t be stupid. The third year is too packed with work and …um… some of us carry subjects…and you tend to concentrate more on those subjects. Psychiatry was just as difficult to grasp…I think it is too many lecturers for one subject…um…because they come in one after the other and they don’t even have the full knowledge of the first topic that was presented by someone else. They say we are not going to touch on the previous topic we will just carry on with the next topic.
Interviewer: What has motivated you to come thus far with your training?

Participant: If they can bring one of our male lecturers back, it will be a good thing. He is a real gentleman and we learnt in a very strict way about punctuality, respect in class and doing the right thing at all times. He always motivated us and he taught us about change. He used to say no matter how small the change is that you want to bring, as long as you have achieved something positive.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you would like to talk about?

Participant: Not really, but I wanted to say is that I will never recommend anyone to study at this college; I know what I am talking about. This is all I have to say.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for participating.