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# **A MODEL FOR FACILITATION IN NURSING EDUCATION**

BY

**EUCEBIOUS LEKALAKALA-MOKGELE**

A statement that it is being submitted in accordance with the requirements for the

**Doctor of Philosophy**

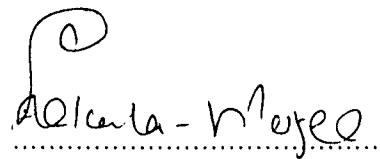
**degree in Faculty of Health Sciences,  
School of Nursing  
at the University of the Free State**

May 2002

PROMOTER:

Dr. P.P. du Rand

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**E. LEKALAKALA-MOKGELE**

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---

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**This study is dedicated to my late father**

**STEPHEN MOLEFE LEKALAKALA**

**Papa, you would have been very proud of me, you  
always believed in me!**

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# **OPSOMMING**

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Verandering in verpleegonderrig het 'n direkte invloed op opvoedkundiges in verpleegkunde omrede daar van hulle verwag word om op hoogte te wees met veranderinge wat in hulle professie plaasvind. Een van hierdie verandering is die weg beweeg van 'n tradisionele onderrig benadering wat dosent gesentreerd is na fasilitering wat 'n student gesentreerde benadering is. Hierdie benadering beklemtoon dat effektiewe leer nie kan plaasvind wanneer slegs inligting verskaf word nie maar dat aktiewe deelname van leerders belangrik is.

Die doelwit van hierdie studie was om 'n model te ontwikkel vir fasilitering in verpleegonderrig wat deur fasiliteerders as 'n riglyn vir fasilitering gebruik kan word. Dit is nie die intensie van die navorser om die model te beperk tot verpleegonderrig nie maar die beginsels van die model kan ook na ander vak dissiplines deurgetrek word.

'n Kwalitatiewe, verkennende beskrywende ontwerp wat kontekstueel is, is gebruik. Twee steekproewe is aangewend naamlik vir die fasiliteerders en die studente. Die vraag wat gevra is gedurende die in-diepte onderhoude aan die fasiliteerders en die studente was die volgende: ***“Hoe het u fasilitering as 'n onderrig/leer metode ervaar?”***

Ingeligte toestemming is van die fasiliteerders en die studente verkry. Tesch (1990) in Cresswell (1994:153-155) en Giorgi (1970) soos aangehaal deur Omery (1983:57-58) se metodes is gebruik om die data te analiseer. Bykomende is deduktiewe beredenerende strategieë aangewend. Resultate is deur die literatuur geverifieer. Voortvloeiend uit die resultate was dat fasilitering nuut is vir fasiliteerders omrede hulle opgelei is om lesings te gee en nie te fasiliteer nie. Fasiliteerders was gewoon daarna om in die verlede kontrole oor studente se leer uit te oefen. Dit was ooglopend dat dit vir hulle

moeilik was om verantwoordelikheid ten opsigte van leer met studente te deel.

Gedurende die onderhoude het die fasiliteerders aangedui dat hulle kwaliteite en vaardighede benodig om hulle rolle as fasiliteerders te vervul. Fasiliteerders benodig ook 'n aanpasbare persoonlikheid sodat hulle goeie interpersoonlikheid verhoudings met hulle studente kan aanknoop. Dit was ook duidelik dat studente nie gewoond is aan fasilitering nie omrede hulle gewoond is aan die lesingmetode op skool. Frustrasie en angs is deur die studente ondervind. Dit het egter beter geword toe hulle gewoond raak aan die proses van leer. Die studente het aangedui dat hulle deur 'n fasiliteerder wat vaardig is in fasiliteertegnieke gefasiliteer wil word. Fasiliteerders moet ook oor 'n aangename persoonlikheid beskik wat hulle sal ondersteun en hulle moet beskikbaar wees. 'n Uitgebreide literatuur studie was gedoen tydens die analise van data. 'n Model is daarna ontwerp volgens die gekombineerde metodes van teorie generering van Chinn en Kramer (1999) en Dult en Giffin (1985) so wel as die stappe van Lancaster en Lancaster (1992).

Konsepte wat verkry is van die resultate uit die onderhoude is saamgestel volgens die stappe van Copi (1986:157-161 in Krueger (1994:61-62). Maatreëls wat gebruik is om geloofwaardigheid in die proefskrif te waarborg was waardegetrouheid, toepasbaarheid, konsekwentheid en neutraliteit (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:290).

Konsepte is geklassifiseer en verwantskappe van konsepte is aangedui om verhoudings te bepaal. Die saamstel van gestruktureerde konsepte het hierop gevolg met die volledige visuele voorstelling van die model. Die model is beskryf en voorgelê aan kundiges vir evaluering. Terugvoer van die evalueerders is gebruik om die model aan te pas en te finaliseer. Daarna is die model weer geëvalueer en aanvaar. Die ontwerp van die model is 'n unieke bydrae in verpleegonderwys deurdat dit praktyk riglyne in 'n nuwe veld verskaf.

## **SUMMARY**

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Changes in nursing education have a direct influence on nurse educators because they have to keep abreast of the changes happening in their profession. One of these changes involves the move from traditional teaching approaches that are teacher-centred to facilitation, a student-centred approach. Student-centred approaches emphasize that effective learning cannot be limited to the delivery of information but that active participation of the learner is important.

The aim of this study was to develop a model for facilitation in nursing education which can be utilized by facilitators as a guideline to facilitate learning. It is not the intention of the researcher to limit the model to nursing education but to use the principles thereof to other disciplines.

Qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual design was used. Two main samples were used, namely the facilitators and the students. The main question that was posed during in-depth group interviews to both the facilitators and the students was: ***“How did you experience facilitation as a teaching/learning method?”***

Informed consent had been obtained from the facilitators and the students where the study was conducted. Tesch (1990) in Cresswell (1994:153-155) and Giorgi (1970) as quoted by Omery (1983:57-58) methods were used to analyze the data. In addition the deductive reasoning strategy was employed. The results were verified with literature control. Emerging from the results was that facilitation was new to facilitators because they were trained to lecture and not to facilitate. They were used to being in control of the students' learning. It was apparent that sharing responsibility was initially a problem for them.

During the interviews the facilitators indicated that they needed to have qualities and skills which will enable them to perform their facilitative roles. They also needed to have an adaptive personality so that they can have a good interpersonal relationship with their students. It was clear that the students were not used to facilitation because their experience at school were entirely based on a lecturing approach. Frustrations and anxieties were mentioned which the students indicated to have improved with time once they have adapted to this process of learning. The students mentioned that they wanted to be facilitated by a skilled facilitator, with a pleasant personality who will support them and be available to them. An extensive literature review was done with data analysis and thereafter a model was designed using the combined methods of theory generation of Chinn and Kramer (1999) and Dult and Giffin (1985) as well as the steps of Lancaster and Lancaster (1992).

Concepts obtained from the results of the interviews were defined according to the steps of Copi's (1986:157-161 in Krueger, 1994:61-62) for defining of the concepts. Measures that were used to maintain trustworthiness in this thesis are truth-value, application, consistency and neutrality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:290).

The classification of concepts and the relational concepts followed to formulate relationship statements, the result being to depict related concepts in structural form. The complete visual model was described and presented to experts for evaluation. Feedback from the evaluators was used to adapt and finalize the model. Thereafter the model was again presented to evaluators who approved and accepted it. The model is a unique contribution to nursing education because it set guidelines for a new field of learning in nursing education.

## **Keywords**

Facilitator, learner, self-directed learning, lifelong learning, critical thinking, reflective learning, group work, clinical facilitation and assessment.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **Introduction and problem statement**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Higher education in general is presently under both internal and external pressure to change and this transformation has also put nursing education in the spotlight of change (Republic of South Africa, 1995:5). Evidence of this change is the transfer of hospital-based to community-based education and the introduction of non-traditional methods such as problem-based learning (PBL), community-based education (CBE) as well as inquiry-based learning (IBL). These methods emphasize that effective learning cannot be limited to the delivery of information but that the active participation of the learner is essential.

Changes in nursing education have a direct influence on nurse educators because they have to keep abreast of the changes happening in their profession. Their role as teachers, governed by behaviourist ideology which is still dominant in educational programs in South Africa, should change to facilitators of learning. Nurse educators are also challenged to support community-based primary health care (PHC) systems (Shoultz, Kooker, Sloat & Hatcher, 1998:187-191). Central to this challenge is the desire to achieve meaningful, lifelong learning and personal growth. The focus on transformation in nursing education is the development of a student nurse to be a critical thinker and a self-directed learner.

The starting point would be the revision of the traditional teaching role of the lecturer which, according to Creedy and Hand (1994: 696-702) is characterized by the dominance and the control of learning by the teacher. Changing this role to that of a facilitator of learning means that the facilitator licenses the

students to assume control and direct their own learning (Andrews & Jones, 1996:357-365). Effective learning is possible when the role of the teacher is not that of a controller and provider of information but that of a facilitator and manager of the learning process (Erasmus & van Dyk, 1996:67). This necessitates the development of a model for facilitation because, in the past lecturers were trained to lecture and not to facilitate learning.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

### **1.2.1 The need to change the teaching methods in nursing education**

Learning by students has traditionally taken place in large classes where the teacher takes an authority role. The traditional didactic, teacher-centred view of education places the responsibility squarely on the teacher. The latter decides what is to be learned, when and how (Mulholland, 1994:38-42). This method is characterized by formal lectures. The lecture in a traditional sense means information is being conveyed verbally by the teacher with little teacher-student interaction (de Young, 1990:74).

Opponents of the lecture method claim that lecturers place students in a passive role and that it lends itself to the teaching of facts while placing little emphasis on problem-solving, decision making and analytic thinking. This culture of learning does not nurture the development of abilities to become an independent learner and does not support the principles of adult learning and self-direction (Musinski, 1999:23-30). Dissatisfaction with traditional education has been echoed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in the following statement:

*"The explosion of scientific information makes traditional curricula increasingly irrelevant, because they are based on what is known today, to the exclusion of how to learn what will be known tomorrow"* (Kentrowitz quoted in Frost, 1996:1047-1053).

Research indicates that traditional teaching methods tend to produce shallow, surface thinkers who rely on rote memory rather than understanding (Mulholland, 1994:38-42). Based on this, the teacher's role needs to be changed to facilitation so that learning may be meaningful and produce critical thinkers capable of clinical reasoning. Nurse educators are challenged to change their teaching role to facilitation. Weaver (1982), quoted by (Townsend, 1994:105) suggests that participants in the educational enterprise fall roughly into three categories namely *"those who learn, those who teach and those who facilitate"*. This indicates that as a strategy facilitation is something quite different from teaching.

The challenge to nurse educators is to change their methods of teaching, which are lecture dominant, to facilitation for several reasons. **Firstly**, the increase of adult learners in academy is undeniable (Roberts, 1995:1) and their learning needs differ from children's. They require an approach that will best suit their styles of learning. **Secondly**, nurses as learners find themselves in a unique position of becoming fast developing adults. The reason could be that most consumers of nursing care are adults. Learning by adults requires some adjustment on the part of the teacher to meet the different characteristics of learning (Nunnery, 1997:198). **Thirdly**, healthcare delivery system has changed as nurses in advanced practice provide care and promote health in all states of wellness and illness (McSweeney, Innerarity, Redland & Stufbergen, 1997:82-84). Medical education and services have moved from hospitals to communities (Cassimjee & Brookes, 1998:95-102; Dana & Gwele, 1998:58-64; Magzoub & Schmidt, 1998:797-802). Health care providers, especially nurses, help clients with decisions

about their own healthcare whether at individual, group or community level. The challenge for nurse educators is to establish strategies that enable students to develop as nurses who will facilitate client decision-making (MacIntosh, 1995:25-27). The time is ripe to prepare future nurse educators for a paradigm shift from the traditional pedagogical tutor-centred role expectation to facilitation based on the principles of adult education.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The new higher education policy as contained in the white paper (Republic of South Africa, 1997:1), directs tertiary institutions to broaden participation in education to satisfy the development needs of the whole society. In response to this the School of Nursing of the University of the Free State decided to change the traditional teaching method of the undergraduate nursing program to PBL as a teaching-learning method in 1997. Problem-based learning encourages student directed learning, fosters life-long learning, academic as well as research interests later in life and is closely connected to community-oriented education (Williams & Williams, 1994:355-367; Becker, 1999:5). In order to address the needs of society community-based education (CBE) was introduced at the same time. CBE is a means of achieving educational relevance to community needs (Fichardt & du Rand, 2000:3-10). The community is extensively used as a learning environment where the students, teachers and the community are engaged throughout the educational experience (WHO, 1985:1).

#### **1.3.1 Preparation for facilitators**

The planning of the curriculum for PBL in the School of Nursing of the University of the Free State was extensive. The focus was on the process of PBL and CBE and not much on facilitation. All lecturers were trained to lecture and not to facilitate learning. Lecturers attended several workshops

and conferences, locally and internationally but this seemed to be inadequate in preparing facilitators for their new role. This was confirmed by research conducted by Fichardt and Du Rand (2000:3-10) on assessing the perceptions of facilitators' of problem-based learning and community-based education in the School of Nursing of the Free State University. There was no role model or expert who could demonstrate good facilitation. Most of the facilitation was learned by trial and error. Facilitators struggled to adapt to this mode of teaching because there were no guidelines for facilitation.

### **1.3.2 The changing role of facilitators**

In the past lecturers were expected to teach, impart knowledge and "*fill the empty vessels*" (Conrick, 1994:237-254) and this was the basis of their training. Townsend (1994:106) states that educators are trained in the spirit of situation control and discipline. They have been socialized to believe that teacher power and authority are right and proper and they are reinforced in these beliefs by older more experienced colleagues. Gwele, (1997:275-284) found that traditional teacher programmes for qualified nurses do not prepare trainee teachers for teaching by problem-solving methods. According to Katz (1995:54) facilitation is an uncommon skill among academic teachers. It represents a dramatic shift in the locus of control in the classroom and in the clinical setting, it transforms the traditional teacher-student relationship, flattens the hierarchal structure and defines all involved as participants in the process of discovery.

The transition from traditional teacher to facilitator requires the learning of new skills. Educators must make important shifts in teaching behaviours and should be willing to examine their beliefs and values about issues such as authority, control, conformity, student-teacher relationships and ego rewards (Katz, 1995:55). The conversion of a teacher to a facilitator of learning means switching from "*content transmitter to process manager*". The rewards that

teachers get from *"controlling students is replaced by getting rewards from releasing"* students (Musinski, 1999:23-29).

Change is the most basic fact of life and yet the most difficult thing to deliberately achieve. One main reason people do not change is that they do not know what to change (Gosteli, 1997:39-41). Education plays an important role in facilitating change. It is necessary to provide a model and process for change to help prevent fixed ideas. Nurse educators should receive education and training leading to achievement of the skills for facilitating. A model will therefore be designed for facilitation in nursing education.

Less attention is paid to the characteristics and behaviours required of a facilitator to ensure that the process is optimally effective (Silins & Murray-Harvey, 1994:247). Facilitators of learning must have certain characteristics which will enable them to facilitate learning (Klopper, 1999:24). They should create a climate that encourages students to accept responsibility for their own learning. Interpersonal skills such as empathy, respect, concreteness, genuineness and emotional maturity are essential qualities required of a facilitator (Cilliers, 1995:7-11; Musinski, 1999:23-30). Facilitators also need a variety of skills and abilities to be able to fulfill their role. These include listening, observing, communicating and analyzing. This list is not exhaustive (Schwarz, 1994:12). The facilitator should embrace the fact that facilitation is learner-centred and taking charge of the learning process by the student should form the belief and values of the facilitator that the student is an adult responsible for his or her own learning. Facilitators must change their roles from being the ones who are responsible for student's learning and shift the responsibility to the students. The problem is that they do not know how to make this paradigm shift and this study will seek to identify the needs of facilitators regarding facilitation and the model will be based on those needs and experiences.

### **1.3.3 The needs of the students**

The majority of students entering university come from a traditional learning background and according to Conrick (1994:237-254) they have been indoctrinated over twelve years of the educational behaviourist theory. The students who register for the undergraduate nursing course come from school backgrounds where self-directed learning until recently has not been encouraged (Becker, 1999:4). Students therefore have to negotiate a range of adaptations as they make a transition from traditional learning behaviours to the self-directed, student-centred approach (Davies, 2000:14-21). The students of the school of nursing were expected to learn problem-solving to acquire knowledge in small groups with a facilitator and they were not used to this method of learning. They needed to be orientated and prepared to adapt to facilitation. They needed support from a skilled facilitator be able to adapt to this change.

Nursing students are regarded as adults due to the demands of their practice (Klopper, 1999:43). In support of this view Nunnery (1997:198) states that most consumers of nursing care are adults and parents, ageing clients who require a nurse who is able to provide for their needs. They become "*fast developing adults*" who care for people of all ages from children to the elderly. Tice (1997:18-21) states that adults represent an increasing segment of today's educational market. Giczkowski (1995:12-30) is of the opinion that these adults may be returning to the universities after having started families and establishing themselves in their communities. Boulton-Lewis, Wilss and Mutch (1996:84-106) found that students continuing tertiary study bring with them considerable informal and formal knowledge of the learning process derived from earlier formal study. It is clear from these statements that the general education in any university must respond to the needs of the students who enroll at these institutions (Giczkowski, 1995:12-30). Since students are unfamiliar with learning by using facilitation, their needs regarding the method

are not known. It is therefore important to make an assessment of their needs in order to develop a model to meet those needs.

## **1.4 RESEARCH PURPOSE**

The aim of this study is to develop a model for the process of facilitation in nursing education

### **1.4.1 Objectives**

- To identify the needs of the facilitators in different schools of nursing.
- To identify the needs of the students with regard to facilitation.
- To construct a model for facilitation according to the determined needs.

## **1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A qualitative research design was used because facilitation is an uncommon skill in academia and there is very little information on developing a model for facilitation. According to Field and Morse (1985:11) a qualitative approach should be used when little is known about a domain under study. An explorative descriptive and contextual approach was used to identify the needs of the facilitators and learners.

### **1.5.1 Data gathering**

Data was obtained by conducting focus group interviews with facilitators and students. This is a special kind of interview situation that is largely non-quantitative. In focus groups a researcher gathers six to 12 people in a room with a moderator to discuss one or more issues for one to two hours (Neuman, 1997:253; Venter, 1995:55-58). The purpose of the interviews for this study was to obtain in-depth information from few cases. This is

characteristic of qualitative research (Moloto, 1999:38). Data is collected until saturation is reached. The information obtained from interviews was used to construct a model. The model was submitted to experts for evaluation and/or acceptance.

### **1.5.2 Validity and reliability of the instrument**

Qualitative researchers use different criteria when defining reliability and validity. They use terms such as consistency, dependability, conformability, credibility and transferability (Leiniger 1991 in Brink 1996:124). Reliability and validity are discussed in Chapter 2.

## **1.6 VALUE OF THE STUDY**

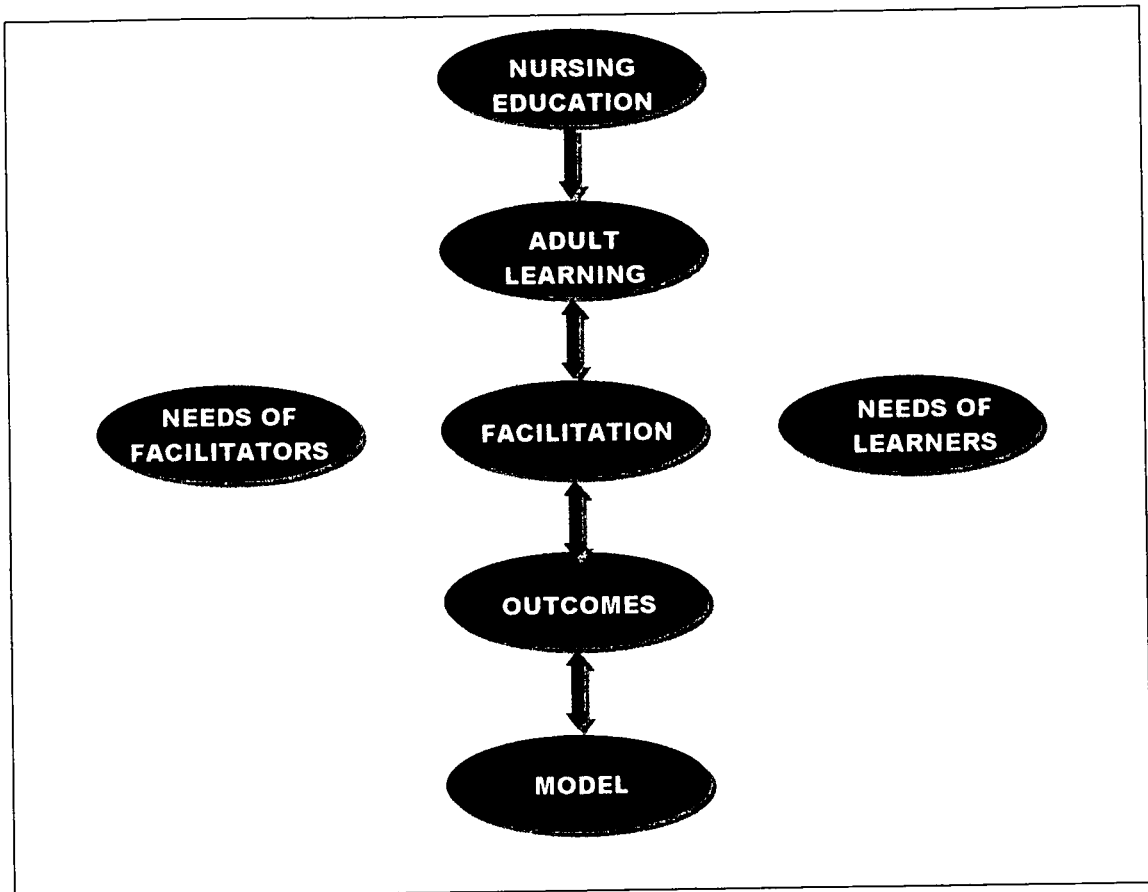
The researcher did not find any written guidelines for lecturers on how to facilitate in nursing education, although there is literature on facilitation in education in general, management and commerce. It seems as if individuals use their intuition when facilitating. The researcher believes that once a model is developed it can be used as a guideline provided for facilitation, and this will result in uniformity among facilitators. Experts from other institutions strengthened the validity of the model so that it may be used to meet the needs of institutions using non-traditional methods of teaching. A model can assist in conceptualizing different scientific talents and styles (Chinn & Jacobs, 1987:397). In this study those talents were sought among experts when the model was sent to them for evaluation. It will also serve to unify and give direction to facilitators.

## **1.7 ETHICAL ISSUES**

Respondents were fully informed about the research. Students were invited to participate freely and to mention their needs as well as problems without fear of victimization or intimidation. To prevent these concerns the researcher ensured anonymity of the respondents. No names were mentioned. Participants were also informed that they had the right to withdraw from the research if they did not want to continue. Anonymity of will involves the principle of individuals doing something based on their own deliberations. The researcher must respect the autonomy of participants to decide about their involvement in any research study (Gelling, 1999:39-42). To ensure that this ethical issue was adhered to the protocol was subjected to the critique of the Ethical Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the University of the Free State. Permission was sought from all authorities where research was conducted.

## **1.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

According to Figure 1 the context of this study is in nursing education. Facilitation is a learning approach and is based on the principles of adult learning. The facilitator and the learners are important characters in the situation. Both the facilitators and the learners have needs to be orientated, prepared and supported to adapt to this new mode of learning. These needs were assessed and the outcomes thereof will be used to develop a model for facilitation.



**FIGURE 1.1: Conceptual framework**

## **1.9 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

### **1.9.1 Nursing education**

Nursing education combines two disciplines, one is that of nursing and the other is education (Mashaba, 1994:4). Education is a deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills as well as outcomes of that effort (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1995:7). Nursing education is specifically directed at the development of the learner of nursing as an adult on a personal and professional level and should lead to cognitive, affective and psychomotor development of the learner as well as the achievement of the prescribed program objectives (South African Interim Nursing Council, 1996:1-2).

### **1.9.2 Adult learning**

Erasmus and van Dyk (1999:96) define adult learning in broad terms as the learning by adults which is aimed at assisting learners in fulfilling their roles as educators, workers, citizens and parents. Sandman (1997:5-6) defines adult learning as applying to formal and continuing education, non-formal learning, self-directed oriented setting and a wide spectrum of informal incidental learning, in which theory and practice-based approaches are equally valued. Adult learning is based on the assumptions that adults are self-directed learners who take responsibility for own learning, know what they need to learn and utilize their prior experience (Quinn, 1995:104; Davies, 2000:14-21; Norman, 1999:886-889).

### **1.9.3 Facilitation**

Facilitation is a learning process where students are led by a facilitator through their own paths of thinking to show how they come to a certain conclusion (White & Ewan, 1991:107).

### **1.9.4 Facilitator**

A facilitator is a person who has been assigned the responsibility of guiding students towards reaching objectives (Phillips, 1994:217). A facilitator is seen as a person who is comfortable with an adult approach to learning such that students take responsibility for their own learning (MacGill, 1986:149-154).

### **1.9.5 Adult Learner**

An adult learner in this study is a person registered at a university to study for nursing degree. The adult learner is by definition, someone with experience and that experience can and should be converted into an effective learning resource. This learner has reached maturity which allows movement away from dependency in many aspects of life, creating a capacity for self-direction which is reflected as a preferred learning style (Boaden & Bligh, 1999:25). In this study the word learner and student will be used interchangeably.

### **1.9.6 Outcomes**

Outcomes refer to the evidence of the data obtained from facilitators and learners.

### **1.9.7 Model**

A model is a symbolic representation of perceptual phenomena that vary in abstraction. There are physical models which are concrete such as pictures. Pictorial models attempt to reproduce important features of an event (Wesley, 1995:3). Abstract models are ideas, beliefs and knowledge of how things happen or how people behave, for example the teaching model focuses on how people learn (Pearson, Vaughan & Fitzgerald, 1997:1-20).

### **1.9.8 Small group**

Gregory and Thorley (1994:20) defines group work as gatherings for educational purposes with members interacting with one another where opportunities are provided which cannot be realized through individual learning situations. Different ranges of what is perceived to be a small group are described in the literature. Katz (1995:56) states that the ideal small group

should comprise no more than twelve to fifteen and no fewer than eight to 10 students. Steinert (1995:56) considers a small group to be consisting of six to 12 members.

### **1.9.9 Problem-based learning**

A definition of PBL is elusive because several variations have been developed (Chen, Cowdroy, Kingsland & Ostwald, 1994:7). Some researchers, such as Boud and Felletti (1991:18-41) define PBL as an integrative programme of study that engages students in problem-formulation and solving. Barrows and Tamblyn (1980:1) define it as the learning which results from the process of working towards the resolution of a problem. Fichardt (1996:59) states that it is an instructional method characterized by the use of patient problems as a context for students to learn problem-solving skills and acquire knowledge in a small group with a facilitator. For the purpose of this study PBL is an instructional method in which the students are self-directed in their learning using patient's problems to learn problem-solving skills.

### **1.9.10 Self-directed learning**

It is a student-centred approach to learning where students are forced into an active role in learning (Moloto, 1999:24). Brookfield (1985), as quoted by Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138), states that self-directed learning does not mean that students' works completely on their own but interact with resource people. They do not choose totally what they want to learn and are not total decision-makers but the curriculum is structured to assist learners to achieve their ultimate goals. Self-directed learning empowers the learners to take responsibility for decisions related to their learning and increases their autonomy.

### **1.9.11 Inquiry-based learning**

Inquiry-based learning is a flexible and open orientation towards learning that draws on the varied skills and resources of staff and students, in which staff are co-learners who guide and facilitate the student-driven learning experiences to achieve goals of nursing practice (Magnussen, Ishida & Itano, 2000:360-364).

### **1.9.12 Community-based education**

Magzoub and Schmidt (1998:797-802) define community-based education as a set of instructional activities that uses the community extensively as a learning environment. Hammad (1991:16-22) states that it is a means of achieving educational relevance to community needs and consequently, of implementing a community programme. It consists of learning activities that use the community extensively as a learning environment. Shoultz *et al.* (1998:187-191) define it as an approach that consists of an appropriate number of learning activities in a balanced variety of educational settings in both the community and a diversity of health care services at all levels, including tertiary hospitals.

### **1.9.13 Learner-centredness**

Learner-centredness may be defined as a teaching and learning climate where freedom in learning is enhanced and learners are allowed to choose and organize their own work according to their own preference (Moloto, 1999:16).

### **1.9.14 Critical thinking**

Wilkenson (1991:24) describes critical thinking as both an attitude and a process of reasoning concerned with intellectual skills. It is the art of reflecting about one's own thinking, while the individual tries to make his own thinking clearer, precisely accurate, relevant and consistent. Collier, McCash and Bartram (1996:9-10) state that the critically thinking nurse exhibits the following specific characteristics:

- **Nursing focused** maintains a clear focus on the domain of nursing.
- **Knowledgeable** able to retrieve defining characteristics from memory, analyze data quickly and communicate clearly.
- **Clinical experts** use each client encounter to add to their knowledge. They are able to identify the clinically relevant cues, diagnose the problem and initiate an appropriate plan of nursing care.
- **Open-minded** curious about cues and consider a variety of possible explanations for them.
- **Sensitive to interactional issues** sensitive to interactions between the nurse and client, the nurse-client-family or the client and others.

### **1.9.15 Lifelong learning**

Lifelong learning is adult learning that takes place within the life history paradigm (Field, 2000:323-334). Lifelong learning takes place in formal and informal education (Klopper, 1999).

### **1.9.16 Traditional instruction**

This is a method of teaching that places the responsibility of teaching on the teacher. The latter decides what is to be learned, when and how (Mulholland, 1994:38-420). Traditional teaching places the power in the teacher (Townsend, 1994:106). It assumes that the teacher knows best (Robson & Beary, 1995:9-10). Traditional teaching place students in a passive role and lends itself to the teaching of facts while placing little emphasis on problem-solving, decision-making and analytic thinking (Musinski, 1999:23-30). Students seldom have an opportunity to exchange thoughts and ideas. They speak only when the teacher asks them to do so (Gerlach, 1994:9).

## **1.10 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS**

- Chapter 1:** Introduction and problem statement
- Chapter 2:** Research methodology
- Chapter 3:** Discussion of facilitator's results and literature control
- Chapter 4:** Discussion of the student's results and literature control
- Chapter 5:** The model for facilitation in nursing education
- Chapter 6:** Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

## **1.11 CONCLUSION**

Facilitation is a learner-centred approach to teaching. The role of the facilitator is crucial for its success. It requires that the facilitator should be vested with the process and dynamics of learning. The learners are also important in the learning event because in facilitation they are expected to take more responsibility for their learning. Presently there is no model designed to train facilitators in nursing education to facilitate. This study is aimed at designing such a model.

# **CHAPTER 2**

## ***Research methodology***

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### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter presented the overview, the problem statement and the background of the study. In this chapter the research methodology will be discussed. Research strategies, methods of data collection and analysis, methods of ensuring validity and reliability as well as ethical considerations will be discussed. The orientation to the development of the model will also be included.

### **2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A qualitative research approach which is contextual is used in this study to explore and describe the experiences of the facilitators and the learners during facilitation.

#### **2.2.1 Qualitative Research**

According to Mason (1997:4) qualitative research is based on methods of data generation which are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data is produced. Qualitative research involves the studies which uses collection of variety of empirical material such as personal experiences that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives (Cresswell, 1998:15). Furthermore qualitative research is concerned with how people make sense of their lives (Brink, 1996:119). Other reasons for using qualitative research are to explore areas about which little is known and to gain intricate details about phenomena such as emotions and thought

processes that are difficult to extract through mere conventional research methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:11). Furthermore explanations of qualitative research are rich in detail and are capable of showing the complex processes of social life (Neuman, 1997:420) It is for these reasons that the researcher chose to employ this method in exploring the experiences of facilitators and learners for the purpose of designing a model for facilitation based on those needs.

Maykut and Morehouse (1994:43) characterize qualitative research as being exploratory and descriptive in focus, purposive in sampling and emphasis on humans as instruments.

### **2.3 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to explore and describe of the experiences of facilitators and learners in the context of nursing education, specifically in facilitation. It is by identifying the experiences of the learners that facilitators will know their needs and make provision to supply them. The purpose of this study is to design a model for facilitation after assessing the needs and experiences of both the facilitators and the learners with regard to facilitation.

#### ***Exploratory***

The purpose of using an exploratory study is to investigate little-understood phenomena, to identify or discover important categories of meaning and to generate hypotheses for further research (Marshall & Rossman, 1999:33). This implies that the focus of the research is to explore experiences, feelings and perceptions of facilitators and learners and to ascertain meanings that are engendered by such encounters. Facilitation is also a relatively unknown phenomenon in nursing education which needs further investigation. Thereafter central concepts will be identified from the data obtained that will form the basis on which the model for facilitation will be designed.

## ***Descriptive***

The descriptive nature of the research is to describe and document how data was collected. Precise information will be collected by conducting focus group interviews or discussions with facilitators and learners until saturation is attained.

## ***Contextual***

The basis of the contextual nature is the situations, instances, life events, or lived through experiences with particular meanings that are known to the people in their environment (Morse, 1994:106). This study is contextual in that it will focus on the needs of facilitators and learners as identified through their experiences in the academic atmosphere of nursing education.

## **2.4 DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND LITERATURE CONTROL**

According to Cresswell (1998:120) there are four basic types of information to collect in qualitative research namely, observations, interviews, documents and audio-visual materials. The research techniques used in this study are focus group interviews or discussions. The outcome of this study is not the generalization of results because of its explorative nature, but a deeper understanding of experiences from the perspectives of both facilitators and learners (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:44).

### 2.4.1 Focus group interviews

The focus group is a special kind of interview situation in qualitative research where the researcher gathers together six to twelve people in a room with a moderator to discuss one or more issues for one to two hours (Neuman, 1997:253). According to Chamane and Korttenbout (1996:23-25) focus group discussions are in-depth interviews whereby a limited number of interacting individuals with a common interest and characteristics relevant to the study topic are used to elicit information that could not be obtained by using other methods of data collection. Venter (1995:55-58) states that focus group interviews have proved to be most useful in finding out more about students' needs and problems from their perspective.

Basch (1987 in Sliep, 1994:4, and Krueger, 1994:18) describes a focus group interview as a qualitative research strategy which is defined as a "*technique in which a small number of informants, usually not more than 12, under the guidance of a moderator, talk about topics which are seen as important to research*". In this study a total of twelve focus group interviews were held. Four focus interviews were conducted with facilitators and eight with the learners. The number of participants in a group ranged between five and 10 members.

The **advantages** of focus group interview according to Creswell (1998:124) are seen in the following situations:

- Yielding best information because of interactions.
- When time to collect information is limited.
- When individuals interviewed one by one may be hesitant to provide information.

Holly and Wheeler (1996:151) added other **disadvantages** which include the following:

- One or two members may dominate group discussions.
- The group effect which may lead to conformity or to convergent answers.
- A person who is unable to verbalize feelings and thoughts will not make a good informant.

Kooker, Shoutz and Trotter (1998:283286) add another disadvantage which is the influence that the group can have on the data produced. In other words the opinions of the group may influence the perspectives of the individuals. This is also called censoring and conforming. One disadvantage that was observed in this study was the large amount of data obtained from the participants which required a great deal of time to analyze.

#### **2.4.2 The role of the researcher**

According to Moloto (1999:57) the researcher and moderator in focus groups interviews are one and the same. Holly and Wheeler (1996:148) state that the interviewer becomes the facilitator or the moderator. **In this research the researcher and the moderator were two different people.** The researcher was an observer taking field notes whereas the moderator was the facilitator of focus group discussions. Separating the role of the researcher and the moderator was done to reduce bias and increase reliability of data collection.

The researcher's role was to prepare the physical setting which was chosen by the facilitators in all the institutions that were visited to conduct focus interviews. Tape recorders were placed in an advantageous location where all could be used for recording (Holly & Wheeler, 1996:148). Two quality tape recorders were used to ensure that all data was captured in case of technical problem. The researcher welcomed and introduced the moderator to the facilitators and the students. Thereafter permission was sought to record

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interviews. Furthermore the researcher took field notes. Moloto (1999:57) states that the tasks of the researcher are to develop questions, facilitate the sessions, document data during the session, analyze the data and interpret the results. The researcher developed the research questions but did not facilitate the sessions as this was done by the moderator. Furthermore the researcher documented and analyzed the data.

### **2.4.3 The role of the moderator**

Millward (1995:281) refers to the art of moderating as process facilitation and declares that the skills of the moderator are fundamental to the effectiveness of the focus group interview. The moderator introduced the topic and confirmed the reason for conducting focus group interviews to the participants.

The literature indicates that the moderator should have certain qualities to enable her to conduct focus group interviews. Millward (1995:281) states that the moderator must be able to maximize self-disclosure by balancing the requirements of sensitivity and empathy on one hand and objectivity and attachment on the other. Holly and Wheeler (1996:149) believe that researchers or moderators should have the following **qualities**:

- must be flexible
- be open-minded
- have skills in eliciting information
- must be able to stimulate discussions
- have insight and interest in the ideas of the informants
- must have social and refereeing skills to guide informants towards effective interaction
- sometimes be able to exert control over informants and topics without directing the debate or coercing the participants
- have excellent communication skills and be able to build rapport (Gordon, 1999, 214).

An expert in the facilitation of focus groups interviews was approached to act as focus group facilitator or moderator at different sessions. The moderator was a psychiatric nurse specialist skilled and experienced in focus group management. She is also an expert in qualitative research and was familiar with the research and the learners. The moderator was skilled in stimulating discussions, had control over the group, highly trained to moderate, was flexible and open-minded.

Marshall and Rossman (1999:114) state that the role of the moderator is to create a supportive environment, ask focused questions and encourage discussions and expressions of differing opinions. The moderator appointed in this study was supportive to participants and was skilled in refocusing them to the research topic. Neuman (1997:253) states that the moderator should obtain cooperation and build rapport yet remain neutral and objective. In addition they should be flexible and keep the people to the topic. Maykut and Morehouse (1994:108) add that the role is less directing. These qualities were observed in the moderator during focus interviews.

#### **2.4.4 The process of focus group interviews**

Consent to conduct interviews was first obtained from the heads of departments and the schools of nursing by the researcher (see Annexure C). Holly and Wheeler emphasize that focus interviews must be carefully planned and informants should be contacted in advance of the interviews and reminded a few days before they start. After permission was granted (see annexure D) a letter was sent to facilitators and the students four months in advance to explain the purpose of conducting focus interviews (see Annexure E) and to obtain consent from them. Contact was maintained with the facilitators by means of telephone and e-mails to confirm the date and the times intended for focus group interviews. Two weeks before conducting interviews facilitators and the students were contacted and reminded to

expect the researcher. The same facilitators were asked to contact their students and arrange the time to avoid overlapping into their classes.

Permission was sought by the researcher from informants on the day that focus group interviews were conducted to record data on the audiotape. This was granted. Millward (1995:287) states that whatever type of recording used it is crucial first to obtain the consent of the participants by explaining the purpose of recording and assuring them of confidentiality. Four universities in South Africa were visited where facilitation as a teaching-learning method was implemented. The following open-ended question was asked to both facilitators and the students and it was:

***“How did you experience facilitation as a teaching-learning method?”***

The time focus group interviews took ranged between **one** and **two** hours. It took the researcher between **three** and **12** hours per interview to transcribe the data. The literature verifies that transcribing data is time-consuming as Maykut and Morehouse (1994:100) found that for a 1½ to two hours' interview the analyst should plan at least 20 hours of transcribing.

According to Moloto (1999:56) the key to conducting effective focus group interview is careful planning with respect to informants, the environment and questions. The researcher arranged that learners were grouped according to their year of study, in other words first and fourth year students were in separate groups. The reason was that the experiences were expected to be different and it was easy to obtain data from a homogeneous group. The researcher decided to include the first and the fourth year students for the purpose of obtaining the experience of those who have never being exposed to facilitation and those who had a great amount of exposure. However, the facilitators were all in one group, from first to fourth year. Facilitators have an educational background as lecturers but some had no facilitation skills and focus group interviews were based on the need for facilitation skills. It was

also important to observe the needs of the facilitators in various groups so as to adapt the model to meet such needs.

The researcher contacted one facilitator in each university to act as a co-coordinator and organizer of the venues since all institutions were more than 400 km away from the researcher. Information such as the use of tape recorders and the need for a quiet venue was furnished. Focus interviews were conducted during the academic period and most venues were used for learning. Coordinators provided the researcher with venues conducive to conducting focus interviews to the best of their abilities.

In all instances except one the venue for conducting interviews was quiet and conducive to audiotaping. One venue was noisy because renovations were in progress in the nearby block which was quiet disturbing. The researcher could not foresee this problem as she only arrived at that university on the day focus interviews were to be conducted. The assumption is that the coordinator should have perceived the problem and made provision for a better venue. Nevertheless the conversations were captured on the audiotape because a quality tape recorder was used.

#### **2.4.5 Field notes**

Whilst the moderator conducted focus interviews, the researcher took field notes. These are broad, more analytic and more interpretive than a simple listing of occurrences (Polit & Hungler, 1993:215-216). These writers state that it is essential for the researcher to record observations while still in the process of collecting information since memory failures are bound to occur if there is too long a delay. Furthermore the researcher must develop the skill of making detailed mental notes that can later be committed to paper. Breakwell, Hammond and Fife-Schaw (1998:223) and Neuman (1997:363-366) state that field notes aim to present the sequence of action and interaction but they are less concerned with describing behaviours and events. These notes were taken during focus interviews and analyzed simultaneously with the recorded

data. Spradely (1979) in Silverman (2001:227) suggest that the researcher should keep four separate sets of field notes and these are:

- short notes made at the time of the focus interviews.
- expanded notes made as soon as possible after each field session.
- a field journal to record problems and ideas that arise during each stage of field work.
- a provisional running record of analysis and interpretation.

The researcher wrote short notes at the time of the focus interviews and expanded the notes immediately after the interviews with the aid of recorded data. This step assisted in transcribing and was the first step of data analysis.

#### **2.4.6 Ethical considerations**

Informed consent was sought prior to conducting the focus group discussions. All participants were assured that confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained. This was assured as only the researcher had access to the audiotaped material. Audiotapes would be kept locked up in a safe place and only be erased after the research was completed. The use of real names was avoided. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary and they had the right to discontinue their participation if they felt uncomfortable or did not wish to continue. Informants agreed to be part of focus group discussions and none of them left before discussions were completed.

### **2.5 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE RESEARCH**

The goal of validity qualitative is not measurement but rather to know and understand the phenomenon being researched. It refers to gaining knowledge and understanding of the true nature, essence, attributes and characteristics of a particular phenomenon under study (Leininger, 1995:68). Reliability focuses on identifying and documenting recurrent, accurate and consistent or inconsistent features as patterns, themes and experiences.

**Validity and reliability of the focus group discussions were ensured by:**

- the evaluation and approval of the research protocol by the research committee of the School of Nursing.
- granting of permission to conduct the study by the ethical committee of the University of the Free State.
- objectivity was increased by making use of the facilitators where the research was conducted and not the researcher to choose the learners to participate in the focus discussions.
- the use of expert moderators to reduce bias and increase objectivity.
- free participation of respondents in the research.
- a pilot study was conducted with facilitators and the learners to increase reliability.
- data was presented to the co-coder for criticism and/or acceptance.

## **2.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data was analyzed by means of a combination of Tesch (1990) in Cresswell (1994:153-155) who described eight steps of analyzing data and the basic steps of Giorgi (1970) as quoted by Omery (1983:49-63).

The **eight** steps of Tesch (1990) are:

1. Get a sense of the whole. Read through all of the transcriptions carefully. Jot down some ideas as they come to mind.
2. Pick one interview or the most interesting, the shortest or the one on top of the pile. Go through it, asking, "What is it about?" Do not think about the meaning. Write thoughts in the margin.

3. Having completed this task for several informants, make a list of all concepts. Cluster together similar concepts. From these concepts cluster concepts into columns that may be arranged as major concepts, unique concepts and left over concepts.
4. Take this list and go back to the data. Abbreviate the topics as codes and write the codes next to the appropriate segment of the text. Try out the preliminary organizing scheme to see whether new categories and codes emerge.
5. Find the most descriptive wording for the concepts and turn them into categories. Reduce the total list of categories by grouping concepts that relate to each other. Draw lines between categories to show interrelationships.
6. Make a final decision on the abbreviation of each category and alphabetize these codes.
7. Assemble the data material belonging to each category in one place and perform a preliminary analysis.
8. If necessary, recode the existing data.

The **seven** steps of data analysis according to Giorgi (1970) are:

1. The description of the total experience (transcription). Hereafter the transcripts are read again to obtain the complete image.
2. Reading the transcript for the second time. Identifying of summaries so that these can be built to a whole.
3. The elimination of redundant information in the identified unit, clarifying or elaborating the meaning of the remaining units by relating them to each other and the whole.

4. Reflection on the given constituents and transforming of concrete information to usable scientific information.
5. The researcher then integrates and synthesizes the insight into a descriptive structure of the meaning of that experience.
6. Categorizing of the information according to repeated tendencies.
7. Submitting the final product to co-coder(s) for critique and/or acceptance.

The researcher read through all the transcripts, thoughts were written in margins. Similar concepts were clustered together. Data was then read for the second time comparing it to the list of concepts identified to form categories. Data belonging to the same category was assembled. Redundant information was identified and eliminated. Data was integrated and synthesized into descriptive structure of the experiences of facilitators and the learners. The final product was submitted to the co-coder for analysis (see Annexure E). These processes helped to reduce data to selective and usable information.

## **2.7 LITERATURE CONTROL**

Literature control was done to examine and verify trends and similarities in the data obtained. The result of the analyzed data from the transcribed material of the focus group discussions were used to identify, classify and categorize important themes and statements concerning the study.

## 2.8 SAMPLING

Qualitative researchers employ purposive sampling methods rather than random sampling (Maykunt & Morehouse, 1994:56-60). In qualitative research events, incidents and experiences are typically the objects of purposeful sampling (Sandelowski, 1995:179-183). According to Burns and Grove (1993:82) the researcher seeks individuals who are willing to describe their experiences with the phenomenon in question. There are no computations or power analyses that can be done in qualitative research to determine the minimum number of sampling units required and therefore the adequacy of sample size is relative and not size but the intended purpose is judged (Sandelowski, 1995:179-183).

The sample of this study was the facilitators and learners in the schools and departments of nursing of four South African universities using facilitation as a teaching-learning method. Focus groups are often conducted with a systematically selected sample (Matebesi, 1997:12). Different groups of learners were selected consisting of males and female of different ages in each group. A group consisted of the learners in the same year of study. Facilitators from first to fourth year were sampled together as recorded in point 2.4.4. The intended purpose was to determine the experiences of the facilitators and the learners regarding the facilitation process as a teaching-learning method.

Millward (1995:277), Neuman (1997:253) and Marshall and Rossman (1999:115) state the following criteria for sampling in qualitative research:

- The sample should reflect the segment of the population which will provide the most meaningful information.
- Group members should exhibit common characteristics to facilitate the sharing of experiences.
- The group should be homogeneous enough to reduce conflict but should not include friends or relatives.

- The groups should be unfamiliar to one another but share certain characteristics relevant to the study question.

Kamfer (1989:7-12) states that participants should be recruited to provide both similarities and contrasts. Furthermore screening must ensure that groups are composed of people who are representative of the areas to be explored.

In total **five** groups of facilitators and **seven** of learners were interviewed. The sample composed of facilitators and students who all had experience of the facilitation process. The facilitators, not the researcher, chose the students. This was important to increase the reliability of the research. The size of groups varied between 5 and 10 members. Data was collected until saturation point was reached. Each group of students consisted of males and females from different cultural backgrounds. They also differed in their level of academic achievement ranging from low, average to high achievers.

## **2.9 PILOT STUDY**

A pilot focus group interview was conducted with one group of facilitators and the learners to test whether research question generated appropriate responses. According to Kingry, Tiedje and Friedman (1990:124-125) taped material should be transcribed as soon as possible after the focus group discussions to prepare for analysis. After each pilot interview, the researcher and the moderator met to critique the session. They sought validation and feedback from one another regarding the process and the research question (Kooker *et al.*, 1998:283-286). The research question was found to be generating appropriate responses and was thus correct for the research.

## **2.10 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

According to Carey (1994) in Holly and Wheeler (1996:144) the selection of participants generally proceeds on the basis of their common experience related to the research topic. Carey (1994) adds that although participants share experiences, this does not mean that they all have the same views about the topic area, nor that they come from the same background or organization. Facilitators and the students volunteered to participate in focus group discussions. The researcher did not specifically select participants but the facilitators in different institutions where research was conducted made the selection. According to Millward (1995:277) and Neuman (1997:253) the group should be homogeneous enough to reduce conflict but should not include friends and relatives. Marshall and Rossman (1999:115) state that they should be unfamiliar to one another but share certain characteristics relevant to the study question. All participants were separate groups of first and fourth year students and a combined group of facilitators.

The researcher did not choose certain specific participants except for the fact that they were implementing the facilitation process as a teaching-learning method. The facilitators in the institutions where research was conducted selected the students and they included the following in each group:

- males and females
- different age groups
- diverse cultural backgrounds
- low, average and good achievers.

The above selection was representative of the sample required for the study.

## **2.11 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF DATA ANALYSIS**

Qualitative researchers use different criteria for reliability and validity. They use terms such as consistency, dependability, conformability, credibility and trustworthiness when referring to validity and reliability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:290, Leiniger, 1991 in Brink, 1996:124). In order to ensure the validity and reliability of this research, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) model of trustworthiness was used. Four criteria for trustworthiness in terms of true-value, applicability, consistency and neutrality will be discussed.

- Truth-value, using strategies of credibility
- Applicability, using strategies of transferability
- Consistency, using strategies of dependability
- Neutrality, using strategies of conformability.

### ***Credibility (truth-value)***

Truth-value determines whether the researcher has established confidence in the credibility of the findings of the research. In qualitative research credibility refers to internal validity (Brink, 1996:124). Factors taken into consideration are the confidence of the researcher regarding the truth of the findings, based on the research design, informants and context. Truth-value is usually obtained from the discovery of human opinions as they are viewed by the informants. Prolonged engagement will allow the researcher to identify recurring patterns, themes and values (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:290).

In this research cross-examination of data was carried out to confirm credibility of the results. A literature review was conducted to control the data by comparing it with available literature and relevant research.

The researcher conducted cross-examination by arranging for a moderator to be present during focus interviews whilst the researcher took field notes. The researcher and the moderator compared their data directly after focus group interviews.

### ***Transferability (applicability)***

Applicability refers to the degree to which the findings of a study can be transferred to other contexts, settings and other groups. It is seen as an important factor, which includes the ability to generalize from the findings to larger populations.

No generalization can be made in qualitative research because every research situation is made up of a particular researcher in particular interaction with particular informants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:316). Guba (1985) suggests that a more appropriate perspective would be transferability or fittingness as the criterion against which the applicability of qualitative data is assessed. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) transferability is the responsibility of the person wanting to transfer findings to another situation or population. The study will therefore provide only the description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion that transferability may be contemplated as a possibility. Facilitators in different settings may make use of the results and the model to improve their skills. They may also use the data of the learners to understand their needs and thoughts in order to support them.

### ***Dependability (consistency)***

**Consistency** determines whether the findings would be consistent if the inquiry were replicated with the same subjects in a similar context. Variability can be expected in qualitative research due to the fact that the instruments assessed are the researcher and informants, both of whom vary greatly within the research project. Seeing that qualitative research emphasizes the

uniqueness of the human situation, it is variation rather than identical replication that is sought (Field & Morse, 1985). Because variability can be expected in qualitative research, consistency is defined in terms of dependability. The research findings therefore depend on whether the facilitators and learners have had more experience of the facilitation process because; if they do then data will differ. An example is that facilitators who have facilitated for years will provide data which is different from that given by a novice facilitator based on their experience. The same will apply to the students. In ensuring consistency the researcher divided the learners in to different year groups.

### ***Conformability (neutrality)***

Conformability guarantees that the findings, conclusions and recommendations are supported by the data and that there is internal agreement between the investigator's interpretation and the actual evidence (Brink, 1996:125). Neutrality refers to the degree to which findings are a function solely of the informants and conditions of the research. Freedom from bias in the research procedures and results are important, not the researcher's prior notions, motivations and perspectives. In qualitative research the value of findings increases when the distance between the researcher and informants is decreased (Lincoln & Guba 1985:323). These writers shift the emphasis of neutrality from the researcher to the data. Neutrality of the data becomes the important factor and not the neutrality of the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (1985:323) further suggest that conformability is the criterion of neutrality which is achieved when truth-value and applicability of data is established. Neutrality was maintained in this research by the following:

- Being close to respondents when conducting focus group discussions during data collection increased the value of the findings and fulfilled this criterion. The moderator was closer to respondents because she was the one interacting with them.

- The moderator had no knowledge of the informants.
- Informants were not subordinates to the moderator.
- The moderator was not involved in the research except by conducting focus group discussions and becoming a co-coder during data analysis.
- The moderator was an expert with regard to group dynamics as she was a psychiatric nurse specialist with qualitative research experience.
- The moderator was an expert in conducting focus group interviews in an objective manner and that added to the maintenance of neutrality.

## **2.12 DEVELOPING THE MODEL FOR FACILITATION**

The combined methods of theory generation of Chinn and Kramer (1999) and Dult and Giffin (1985) as well as the steps of Lancaster and Lancaster (1992) for building the model were used for designing the model.

Chinn and Kramer (1999:97) use guides to describing the model in the following sequence:

- Describing the purpose for developing the model
- Identifying the concepts
- Defining the concepts
- Explaining relationships among the concepts
- Describing the structure
- Operationalization of the model

Dult and Giffin (1985) identified four steps for developing models viz:

- Identifying assumptions
- Defining concepts
- Establishing relationships
- Evaluating the model

According to Lancaster and Lancaster (1992:439-440) there are three steps for developing models namely:

- Clearly describing the system which is to be analyzed.
- Identifying major components of the model.
- Describing the goals and actual process of the steps taken.

In this research the model will not be described in any particular sequence but will include all the steps on model design of the sited authors.

In this study the following steps were used to design the model and these will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5:

- Describing the purpose of developing the model
- Describing the philosophy on which the model is based
- Identifying assumptions
- Identifying concepts
- Defining concepts
- Explaining relationships among the concepts
- Describing the structure
- Evaluating the model

The principles of Copi (1986:157-161, in Krueger, 1994:61-62) for defining concepts were applied. They are a traditional set of rules for this purpose.

**Principle 1:** A definition should state the essential attributes of the species and conventional connection of the term being defined. Copi (1986:158) warns that the conventional connotation of a term need not be an intrinsic characteristic of the things denoted by it, but might well have to do with the origin of those things, the relations they have to other things or the uses to which they are put.

**Principle 2:** A definition must not be circular. This rule forbids the use of antonyms as well as synonyms of the concepts being defined. If the definition is circular, it will fail in its purpose of reporting the meaning of its definition

**Principle 3:** A definition must be neither too broad nor too narrow.

**Principle 4:** A definition must not be expressed in ambiguous, obscure or figurative language, otherwise the definition will fail to perform its function of saying what it means. The use of obscure terms relative to the group who are to read the definition defeats the definition's purpose that of clarifying the meaning. A definition that uses figurative language may give some feeling for the use of the terms being defined, but cannot succeed in giving a clear explanation of what the definition means.

**Principle 5:** A definition should not be negative where it can be affirmative. The reason for this rule is that a definition is supposed to explain what a term means rather than what it does not mean, since for the vast majority of terms, there are far too many things that they do not mean for any definition possibly to be covered.

In defining the concepts for the model the above principles were used. The definitions state essential attributes they were intended to define. They are not circular and neither broad nor narrow. They are expressed in an unambiguous manner and they explain exactly what the terms mean.

## ***Reasoning strategies***

There are different reasoning strategies namely analysis, synthesis, induction and deduction (Moloto, 1999:42-44). In this research deductive reasoning was used.

### ***Deduction***

Deductive reasoning is reasoning from a general premise to a particular situation or conclusion (Burns & Grove, 1993:25, Jacox, 1992:354). The experiences of the facilitators and the learners were assessed and a model was designed based on those experiences.

#### **2.12.1 Steps of building a model**

##### ***The purpose of the model***

The purpose of the model is to provide a theoretical framework that will be utilized by nurse educators in the academic and clinical areas of learning. The model will also serve as a guideline for prospective and practising facilitators in nursing education.

##### ***Philosophy***

Philosophy, concept and theories are basic components of nursing models (Pearson *et al*, 1997:9). A philosophy is an explicit statement about what one believes and the values they hold. The model in this study is based on the philosophy of constructivism discussed in Chapter 5.

## ***Identifying assumptions***

Assumptions are basic principles that are accepted as being true on the basis of logic or reason, without proof or verification (Polit & Hungler, 1993:431). Assumptions are basic to all scholarly investigations but they cannot be proved since there is no valid basis for arguing their validity (Dult & Giffin, 1985). They are those basic givens or accepted truths that are fundamental to theoretic reasoning (Chinn & Kramer, 1999:95). This model is based mainly on the assumptions of the adult learning theory. Other assumptions relevant to this model are also included, namely those from symbolic interaction theory and some that have been derived from the concepts identified and explained in Chapter 5.

## ***Concept analysis***

This process allows the researcher to define and describe the concepts using different types of definitions. The principles of Copi (1986) for defining concepts are used in concept analysis.

## ***Establishing relationships***

After the concepts were defined, relationships between them were constructed. This step is concerned with establishing the existence of relationships between two or more concepts (Dult & Giffin, 1985:50). Relationships provide a link among and between concepts (Chinn & Kramer, 1999:90). The concepts are no longer seen in isolation but in relation and represent a higher level of complexity (Dickoff, James & Wiedenbach, 1968:415-435, in Nicoll, 1992:468-500). According to Chinn and Kramer (1999:90) the structure emerges from the relation of the theory. The relationship of and between major or central concepts must therefore be clear. Thereafter, individual concepts will be structured in forms to create greater

clarity. Relationships were established from the concepts identified and defined which were obtained from the data of the learners and facilitators.

### **2.12.2 Description of the model structure and process**

The structure emerged from the relationships of the concepts (Chinn & Kramer, 1999:92). The description of the model is presented in Chapter 6. A visual presentation of the model which will show the relation of the concepts to each other is also presented. The model was designed by defining the concepts in steps until a complete model was constructed.

### **2.12.3 Evaluation of the model**

The model was presented to specific groups of experts for further clarification and refinement. These experts were all doctorally prepared or had an equivalent degree in nursing education, education and were knowledgeable as well as experienced in qualitative research methods. These experts evaluated the model utilizing the criteria indicated by Pearson *et al.* (1997:218-222) as guidelines. A model is evaluated in terms of internal structure which applies to the description of the model itself and external structure which concerns the relationship between a model and the real world.

Evaluators were identified according to their expertise in education, nursing education and model design. They were contacted by telephone and agreed to evaluate the model. The chapter on the model was sent to them by e-mail as well as by post.

The evaluators were asked to evaluate the model according to a set instrument (see Annexure G). Two main criteria were included in the instrument namely internal structure and external validity of the model. The evaluation instrument was tested for reliability and validity by presenting it to experts for critique.

The internal structure of a model can be analyzed and evaluated by applying five broad criteria:

- Consistency
- Adequacy
- Logical development
- Level of development (Pearson *et al.*, 1997:218).

The external validity of a model can be analyzed and evaluated by applying six broad criteria:

- Reality convergence
- Usefulness
- Significance
- Discrimination
- Scope
- Complexity (Pearson, *et al*, 1997:218).

#### **2.12.4 Internal structure of a model**

Internal structure applies to the description of the model itself. It focuses on how the writer explains and develops the model

## ***Clarity***

Clarity refers to whether or not the model is easy to understand. The use of difficult language is not necessarily a block to clarity, but if the model is full of obscurity and fails to explain or define terms used, then it may not meet this criterion.

## ***Consistency***

Consistency refers to the use of words and concepts in the same way throughout. In evaluating a model for consistency, the evaluator looks for contraindications so that these may be avoided.

## ***Adequacy***

A model needs to be adequate for the purpose it sets out to achieve.

## ***Logical development***

A model should be logical that is, every tentative conclusion, prediction or position statement included in a model should be supported by both the presentation of the premise on which these are based and clear, supporting arguments. Bold statements which are not well supported and argued detract from a model's status. When assessing the logical development of the model, the reader focuses on the sequence of ideas and concepts and the conclusions drawn in the work.

## ***Level of development***

The final component of internal criticism assesses how well developed a model is. This can clarify if the model was hastily developed without sufficient thought and rigour and whether it little more than a series of unsupported statements.

### **2.12.5 External validity of a model**

External validity concerns the relationship between a model and the real world. Assessing the external validity of a model requires the assessor to move beyond the qualities of the model itself in an attempt to see how it measures up to contemporary nursing and society.

## ***Reality convergence***

Reality convergence asks the question: does the reality expressed by the researcher closely resemble that of the reader? This will be greatly influenced by the views held by the assessor. When assessing a model for reality convergence such personal views cannot be excluded but an awareness of them is important to judge adequately the degree to which a model achieves this criterion.

## ***Usefulness***

Models must be of use in practice. They should be clear about concepts central to practice.

## ***Significance***

This criterion refers to how important a contribution a model makes to current nursing thought and practice and to the future development of nursing. It involves asking: What new clarification does this bring to nursing?

## ***Discrimination***

A model should clearly differentiate the occupation, discipline, or activity it describes from others. In the case of a nursing model, it should therefore clearly differentiate nursing from other health care occupations such as occupational therapy. This criterion involves asking: Does the model describe nursing or could it easily apply to other occupations?

## ***Scope***

This criterion relates closely to that of adequacy in that it addresses how broad the model is. A nursing model needs to be sufficient in scope adequately to describe all facets of nursing. These include community care, health education and promotion. The scope of the model is therefore assessed by asking: To what extent does the model accommodate all of the specialty areas in nursing practice?

## ***Complexity***

Although clarity is important in a model, this should not be interpreted to mean that models should be overly simplistic. In assessing this criterion, the assessor is looking for sufficient complexity to render the model developed and rigorous.

## **2.13 FEEDBACK FROM EVALUATORS**

The feedback from evaluators and the adaptation of the model are discussed in Chapter 5.

## **2.14 SUMMARY**

In this chapter the research design and methodology were discussed. Specific measures to ensure validity and reliability were also discussed. The process of model development including principles of defining concepts as well as evaluation of the model were described.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### ***Discussion of the results and literature control***

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#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the following two chapters data analysis and literature control will be discussed. The focus of this research was to explore the experiences of facilitators as well as the students regarding facilitation with the intention of designing a model to meet those needs. Four universities in South Africa which use non-traditional teaching methods were visited. Traditional teaching methods are characterized by lectures where the content of the material is entirely within the control of the lecturer who control the pace of the delivery and the nature of the student activity (Brown & Smith, 1996:49).

Non-traditional methods are student-centred approaches where the students take more control of their learning. PBL exemplifies a non-traditional approach. It is a student-centred educational approach which suggests that students define for themselves their learning needs, choose the means of learning that are the most appropriate to them and decide when they know enough about the specific learning need (Charlin, Mann & Hansen, 1998:323-330). Facilitation of learning therefore relies less on traditional teaching techniques but more on techniques that tap the experience of the learner (Payne, 1992:17).

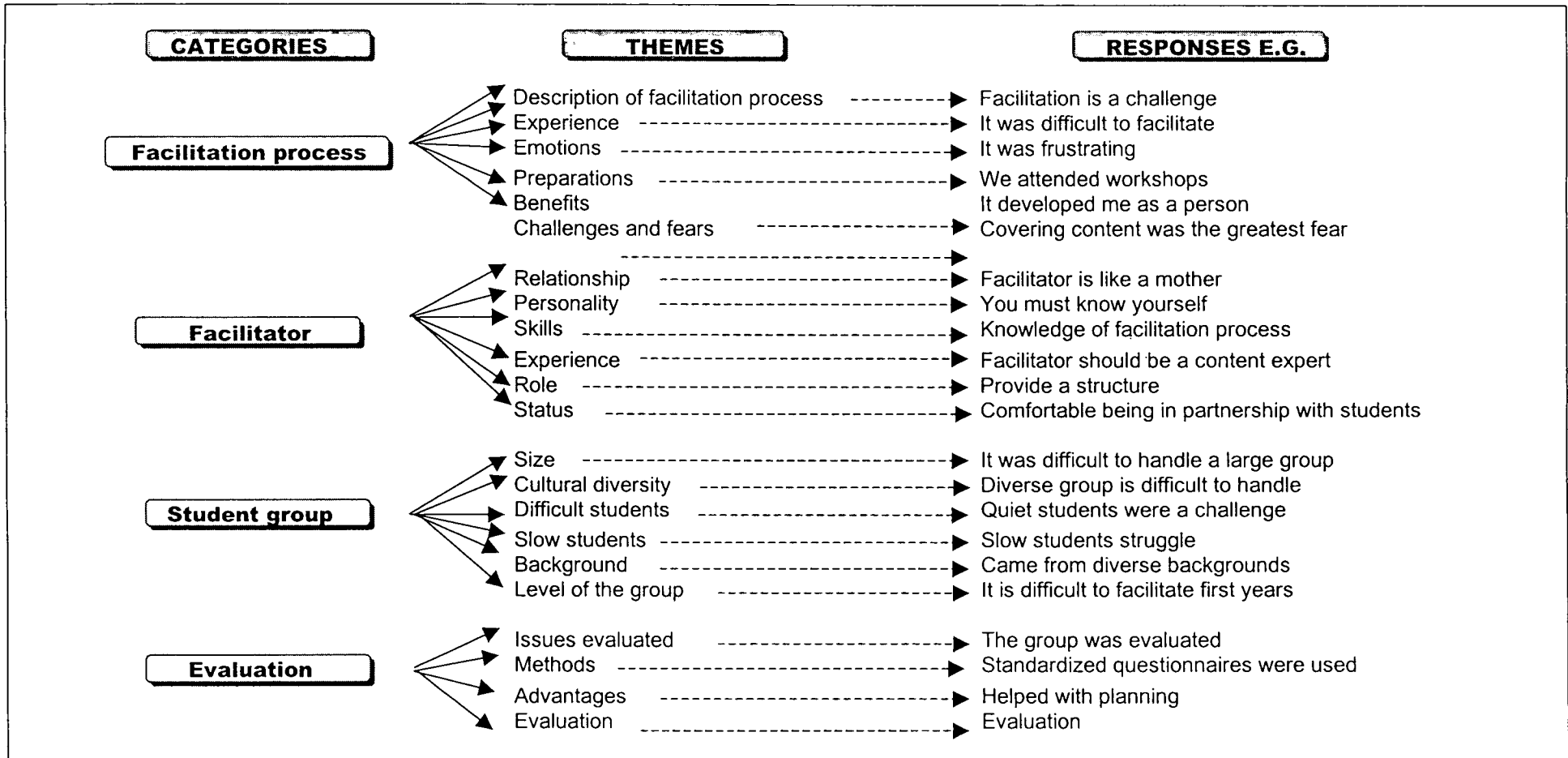
Focus interviews were held with facilitators and students. At the time of the research all the universities were using the problem-based method (PBL) of teaching and learning. The main question asked of both the facilitators and students was:

***“How did you experience facilitation as a teaching and learning method?”***

Four main categories were identified from interviewing facilitators and they included the:

- facilitation process
- facilitator
- student group
- evaluation

## DATA ANALYSIS OF FACILITATORS



**FIGURE 3.1: Framework for content analysis of facilitator's data**

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## **3.2 ANALYSIS AND LITERATURE REVIEW OF FACILITATORS' DATA**

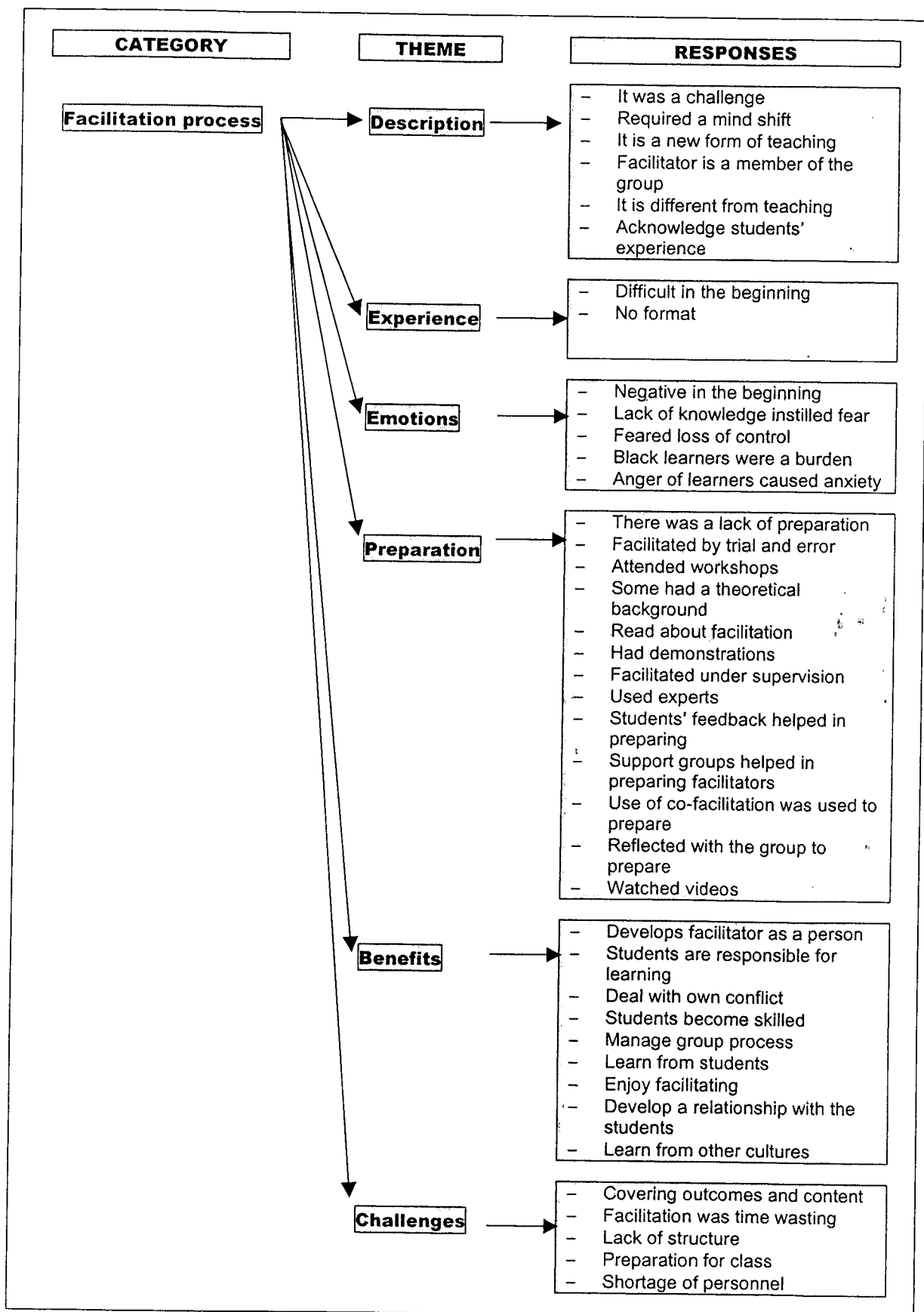
### **3.2.1 Introduction**

Four groups of facilitators of between five and seven members were interviewed. Four main categories were identified (see Figure 3.1).

Each category will subsequently be discussed.

## **3.3 FACILITATION PROCESS**

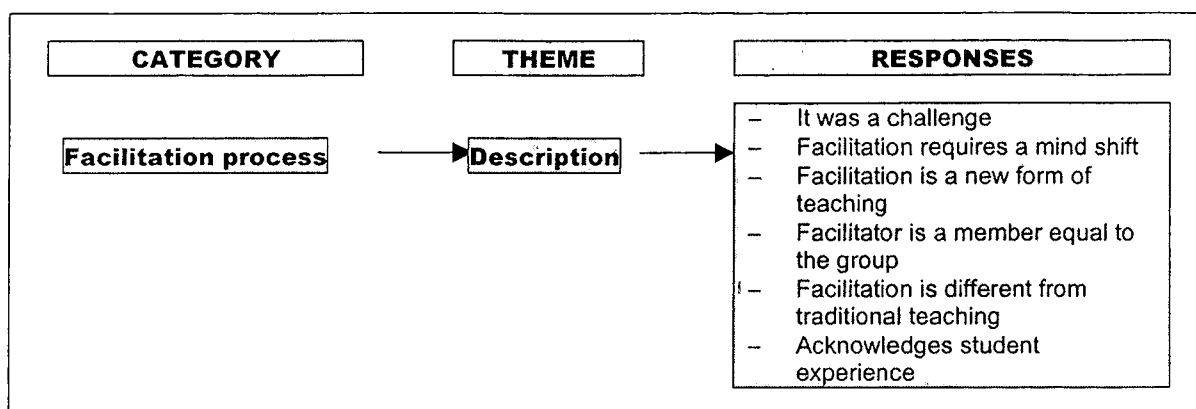
In this category the following themes are discussed: the description, experiences and emotions, orientation or preparation, advantages and disadvantages of the facilitation process (see Figure 3.2).



**FIGURE 3.2: Facilitation process**

### 3.3.1 Description of the facilitation process

Facilitators described the facilitation process in different ways as shown in Figure 3.3 below. The descriptions and the different responses are discussed below:



**FIGURE 3.3: Description of facilitation**

#### 3.3.1.1 Challenge

Facilitators described facilitation as a challenge for various reasons as expressed in the following quotation: *"I think facilitation is a challenge but I mean challenging in another way and in another sense. In the old traditional method you had this comfort zone around you. You were not required to be involved to the extent that you are involved now. You have to be more wide-awake definitely"*. According to this quotation the focus of the challenge is the changing roles and the difference between facilitation and traditional methods. Galbraith (1992:10-20) concurs with this statement by stating that challenge is a central feature of good facilitation. This process or challenge confronts learners with the opportunity to scrutinize, question and develop alternative ways of thinking and acting. An aspect which is central to the traditional approach namely the comfort zone was also mentioned. Spinks and Clements (1993:102) when describing a comfort zone

state that it allows people to feel safe in the knowledge that their views, opinions and beliefs will remain unchallenged. The same writers further state that it is a general feeling of comfort in the knowledge that **'by-and-large people will take us as they find us'**. In other words, they will not challenge or ask questions as to why things are as they find them. This comfort is inherent in the authority role of the teacher in traditional methods who is described by Dana (1997:41-43) as an *"external boss or dictator"* imparting knowledge. Townsend (1994:106) explains that in traditional teaching educators are trained in the spirit of situation control and discipline, they believe that power and authority are rights beneficial to the teacher. The learner has no power or authority to question the teacher.

Facilitators are more involved because of the role that they play which is that of an **expert, friend** and a **learner** (Academic Development Bureau, 1998:8). They are experts because they set the structure and process (Taylor, 1997:77). A facilitator said about being a learner **"You are also a learner because as they are learning they become experts especially with the content, they come with something that you have never seen"** and this is explicit about the position which the facilitator takes in a facilitating process. Friendship indicates a relationship of trust. As a challenge facilitation requires that facilitators should think and behave differently as discussed in the following theme.

In a study conducted in the second year course of the University of Ottawa School of Nursing on the design and implementation of problem-based learning, the facilitators mentioned that a challenge to them was learning the facilitator's role (Morales-Mann & Kaitell, 1999:13-19).

### **3.3.1.2 The need for a total mind-shift**

Facilitators mentioned that facilitation demands that they change their way of thinking and behaving in order to facilitate, as one facilitator said: *“It necessitated a total mind shift from content to problem-solving and it needed a person to be prepared to learn every day”*. Rees (1991:43) supports this aspect by stating that facilitators need to change their mind-set, leadership style and their behaviour of relating to those they facilitate to enable them to move from a controlling to a facilitating approach. No study was found on this aspect.

### **3.3.1.3 Facilitation: a new form of teaching**

Facilitators described facilitation as a different way of teaching. One said: *“Facilitation for me was a new form of teaching”*. The literature indeed describes it as a method of teaching with a difference. Brocbank and McGill (1998:145) describe facilitation as just another way of teaching where the teacher behaves in a different way by encouraging the group to contribute but ultimately telling them what to learn. Weaver (1982) in Townsend (1995:105) suggests that the educational enterprise falls into three categories, namely *‘those who learn, those who teach and those who facilitate’*, indicating that as a strategy facilitation is something quite different from teaching. Wilkenson and Felletti (1992) in Alavi (1995:53) say facilitation is a radical departure from the more traditional definition of teaching. However Katz (1995:52) insists that facilitation is not a denial of teaching but is a method of teaching which transforms the role of the teacher and alters the teacher/student relationship. This relationship focuses on power sharing which is discussed below.

### **3.3.1.4 Group membership and equality**

Facilitators view themselves as members of the group who are equal to the group. One facilitator said: *"You are a member of a group and you are equal to the group. You are part of the group. You don't see yourself as an outsider or in charge"*. This explains that the authority role falls away in facilitation. Another facilitator said: *"One should be able to work in a team, not being a leader but being part of the team and giving leadership over to another person and becoming a member"*. This equality is all about sharing power and responsibility for learning. According to the literature the facilitator should be committed to equality in the classroom and clinical setting. This is essential to empower students to take control of their own learning (Creedy, Horsfall & Hand, 1992:727-733). Students cannot begin to accept responsibility for their own learning and development unless the facilitator relinquishes some of what has been traditionally her responsibility. Within this power-sharing relationship the facilitator remains an authority in terms of academic discipline as she is involved in assessment and setting standards (Brockbank & McGill, 1998). The same authors assert that there should be transparency in the power relations which exist in the learning situation so that students can adjust and work productively. Caplow, Donaldson, Kardash and Hosokawa (1997:440-447) explain the extent to which facilitators use their inherent power as process dimension. They stated that this power which facilitators possess is derived from the authority of their formal position as staff members, as evaluators of students' performance and from the knowledge authority in the basic science. Studies have referred to this equality to co-learning where the facilitator and the student learn together. Becker (1999:160) in her research conducted on the evaluation of PBL in an undergraduate program of the University of the Free State states that the facilitators are considered as colleagues in the learning process, not as information sources.

### **3.3.1.5 Facilitation versus traditional methods**

Facilitators described the difference between the behaviour of a teacher in the traditional approach and in facilitation. They explained that in the traditional approach the teacher has all the control and authority and students accept everything from them. However, in facilitation the students have control over their learning and they mentioned that this challenged them, as one facilitator said: ***“In the traditional method, the teacher is always right. Here the student can actually challenge you if whatever you are saying is not right”*** Students are said to be involved, as one facilitator stated, ***“In facilitation the students are always aware of what we are doing unlike in the old lecture method where we are used to coming in and telling them what to do”***. The traditional method places the responsibility squarely on the teacher. The latter decides what is to be learned, when and how (Mulholland, 1994:38-420). It assumes that the teacher knows best (Robson & Beary, 1995:9-10). Traditional teaching places students in a passive role and lends itself to teaching facts while placing little emphasis on problem solving, decision-making and analytic thinking. This culture of learning does not nurture the development of abilities to become an independent learner (Musinski, 1999:23-30).

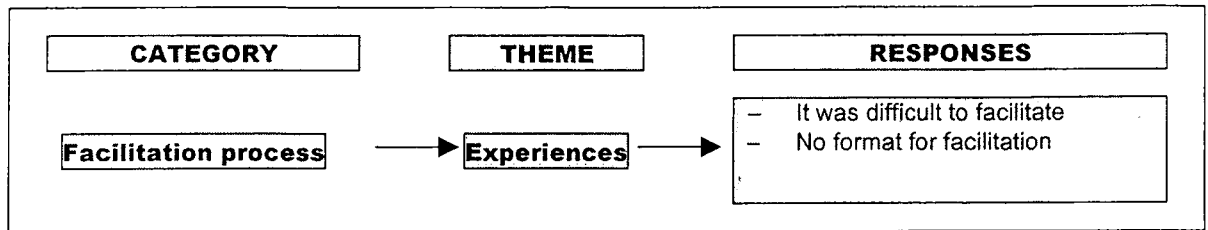
As opposed to traditional teaching facilitation represents a democratic shift in the locus of control and students are involved in their learning (Katz, 1995:54). Democracy in facilitation means sharing responsibility where both the students and the facilitator have much to say about learning and decisions are made democratically. The shift in the locus of control can cause some discomfort especially in teachers who are trained to be in control. Dana (1997:41-43), reflecting on her experience as a Master's student learning to facilitate in the University of Natal, mentioned that they were unhappy when they realized that in facilitation they were no longer in control and that control was shifted to the students.

### **3.3.1.6 Facilitation acknowledges students' experiences**

In describing facilitation, facilitators indicated that students bring their experiences to the classroom. One said: "*When you are facilitating you are dealing with students who are having their own experiences*". Silins and Murray-Harvey (1994:247-259) support this fact by stating that experienced facilitators should recognize that learners' existing knowledge might act as a positive force in the learning process. Schmidt (1983:11-16) suggests that the extent of prior knowledge is one of the major determinants of the nature and the amount of new information that can be processed. Other authors state that the essential factor in the acquisition of knowledge is that content must be linked to what is previously known (<http://imej.wfu.edu/articles/2001/1/03/ondex.asp>). Nursing learners are adult learners who have an accumulation of their own life experiences. Visser, Prince, Scherpbier, van der Vleuten and Verwijnen (1998:451-454) in their study in the medical school at the University of Maastricht on student participation in educational management and organization insist that learners in higher education are adults. According to Crew (1995:19-20) adults have a deep investment in their experience. When they find themselves in a situation where their experiences are not used, their interpretation is likely to be one of rejection.

### **3.3.2 Experiences of facilitators**

As indicated in Figure 3.4 facilitators mentioned that it was initially very difficult for them to facilitate.



**FIGURE 3.4: Experiences of facilitators**

### **3.3.2.1 Difficult in the beginning**

All four groups of facilitators mentioned that it was difficult for them to facilitate in the beginning for different reasons. One reason was that they were not used to this method of teaching. One facilitator said: *“In the beginning it was difficult because you are a teacher, you want to teach and talk, but after 4-6 months it becomes better to be a facilitator and let the group talk and you only talk when it is necessary”*. Another facilitator commented, *“I can say if you are a talkative person or you are a real lecturer in the traditional sense then it is difficult to back off”*. Among other frustrations and difficulties that facilitators experience when working with small groups is to concentrate on doing more listening than talking (Academic Development Bureau, 1998:26). The facilitators should give the learners an opportunity to do more of the talking otherwise the process will revert to a lecture. This aspect was found in a study by Andrews and Jones (1996:357-365) on problem-based learning in an undergraduate nursing program of the North East Wales Institute. It was found that frequent interruptions by the facilitator shifted the power base from the learners to the facilitator.

### **3.3.2.2 Lack of format**

Facilitators mentioned that facilitation was difficult because there was no procedure for facilitation. This was expressed by one who said: *“I came from the traditional program. Facilitation was something to get into and also*

***there was no format on how to facilitate***". Literature also document that it is difficult to give some meaningful "*hands*" on facilitation (Alavi, 1995:117). This phenomenon was also found in a study by Fichardt and du Rand (2000:3-10) on facilitators' perceptions of PBL and community based education (CBE) in the School of Nursing of the University of the Free State. They observed that facilitators did not know how to facilitate and thus highlighted that they wanted a framework indicating how to present the work. Neame (1981:94-98) advised that facilitators should be provided with a guide which outlines the problem structure and its flow.

The inability to facilitate emphasizes the fact that nurse educators are trained to use traditional methods such as lecturing and have less exposure to facilitation. In a study on staff development concerns during the implementation of problem-based learning in a nursing program of the University of Natal Gwele (1997:275-284) reported that traditional teacher education programs for qualified nurses do not prepare these trainees for teaching by non-traditional approaches.

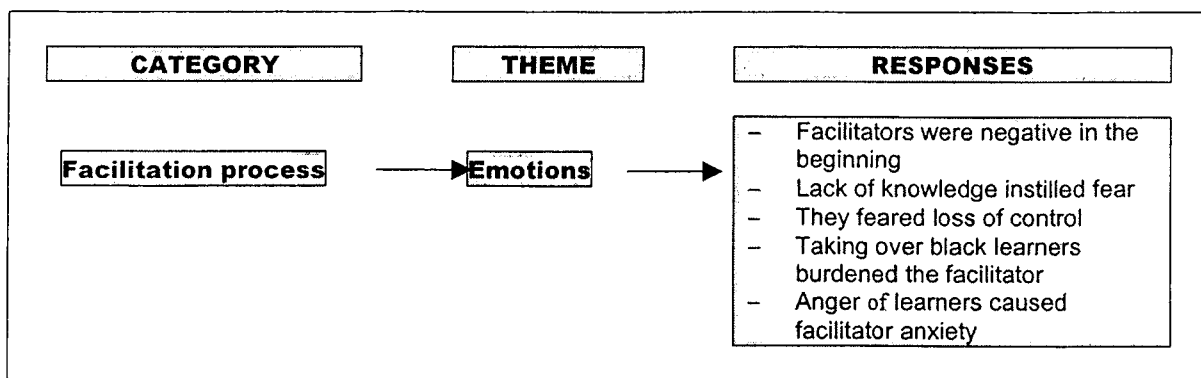
All of these examples emphasize the training of teachers in traditional methods. The traditional method places the responsibility squarely on the teacher who decides what is to be learned, when and how (Mulholland, 1994:38-42). The students then become the passive recipients of knowledge imparted to them (Musinski, 1999:23-29). The traditional method is so designed that the teacher is the only one who talks in the classroom. In facilitation as opposed to traditional teaching there is a shift in the locus of control and students are involved in their learning.

However all facilitators said as they grasped the process of facilitation it improved in time. An example was voiced by a facilitator: "***In the beginning it was difficult but after four to six months it became better to be a facilitator, for me it is now better to facilitate a group than to lecture. It has become very easy to facilitate***". This may indicate that facilitators gradually develop facilitation skills which makes them more comfortable with

facilitation. Creedy and Hand (1994:696-702) in their study on volunteer nurse educators who attended a 7-month professional development program centred on introducing pedagogical changes when adopting PBL found this to be true. They observed that educators who are implementing change in their teaching methods move first from not knowing about the innovation, second to obtaining information and preparing to implement it, third to using the innovation with different levels of sophistication. The same authors explain that educators initially focus on problems of classroom management and that through subsequent trial sessions the new strategy becomes routine, leading to the situation where educators are no longer struggling with the change and confidence is gained. The resultant gain in confidence allows educators to revise and refine teaching methods so that specific needs of the schools are addressed.

### 3.3.3 Emotions of facilitators

Facilitators experienced negative emotions the first time they acted in this capacity as indicated in Figure 3.5.



**FIGURE 3.5: Emotions of facilitators**

### **3.3.3.1 Expression of negative emotions**

Feelings of being frustrated, scared, devastated and anxious were expressed. These emotions may be due to several factors such as lack of knowledge of what is expected and lack of experience as noted in the following excerpts:

*"I was frustrated and devastated, they took over my group when I was gone. When I came back I didn't think I was handling it well. They asked me will I like out".*

*"I can say facilitation experience in the beginning is very difficult. I felt very nervous. In the first year we were like in the front of the battle line and it wasn't easy and we thought this thing was not going to work out .... Really it wasn't very progressive and there were feelings of impotence, frustrations and feelings of what I read in the book is not played out here. Feelings of you are the problem here".*

*"I was facilitating for the first time, I was scared. I did not know what to do".*

The emotions described above are basically the result of lack of knowledge of the facilitation process. Katz (1995:54-55) explains that facilitators who experience difficulty in facilitating do so because of the lack of experience and understanding of what facilitation involves.

Fichardt and du Rand (2000:3-10) (see point 3.3.2.2) observed the same negative feelings. They mention that facilitators experienced frustrations, felt incompetent and traumatized by facilitation. The same writers found that the role change from lecturer to facilitator leads to anxiety, uncertainties and frustrations.

### **3.3.3.2 Lack of knowledge instilled fear**

Another source of fear due to the lack of knowledge was that facilitators were not trained in this approach as they were prepared to give lectures. One facilitator's evidence was: *"When I came I was very afraid of this word facilitation because I was never trained like that. I had fears of having to come and facilitate which I was not trained at myself"*. Gwele (1997:275-284) found that the traditional education program for qualified nurses does not prepare trainee teachers to facilitate. Katz (1995:54) says that facilitation is an uncommon skill among academic teachers and that it is difficult to change their belief about their control role in the classroom. According to Musinski (1999:23-29), the conversion of a traditional teacher can be frightening.

Another facilitator indicated that although she was a good teacher the students made her feel unskilled as indicated in the following. *"I am a good teacher and these people are making me feel I wasn't worth my salary"*. This is in line with what Alavi (1995:116) mentioned that although facilitation may seem challenging it can often lead to anxiety and to a feeling of being unskilled. The same writer adds that this can lead to a retreat into defensiveness and a wish to give lectures, in other words to regain teacher control. Fichardt and du Rand (2000:3-10) in their study attributed this fear of lack of knowledge to the changing role from being a lecturer in a traditional teaching environment to facilitation.

### **3.3.3.3 Facilitators feared loss of control**

Loss of control was another source of negative emotions. One facilitator explained, *"In the first six months when we began, what we were seeing in the students was partly the anxieties demonstrated by us in terms of the process because we knew that we were not in control"*. Tubbs (1996:81) states that control in the history of schooling has been largely associated with discipline and punishment and that classroom control is

implicitly contained in the pedagogical and professional judgments which teachers must make in bringing pupil and content together. Loss of control is seen as a major source of fear for facilitators who feel the need to hold on to it (Musinski, 1999:23-29). Several writers mention the fear of loss of control. Katz (1995:55) says that the lack of the opportunity to explore value systems applying to the teaching-learning situation is the cause of this fear especially for those who value control in the classroom. In other words teachers who do not examine what they value in the classroom. They may value being in control or liberating the students. Steinert and Snell (1999:37-42) mention that most teachers fear that if the class is allowed to participate (as is the case with facilitation) the teacher will no longer be in control of either the material or the student and that chaos may reign. Facilitation clearly requires that the facilitator relinquish control and let the students take charge of their learning. Facilitators therefore have to do in-depth introspection in order to investigate if they are ready for the adoption of innovation with its consequences (Holtzhausen, 1998:33-36).

Dana (1997:41-43) in her study (see point 3.3.1.5) mentioned that they had ambivalent feelings when the term facilitator was introduced. She also mentioned that the teacher loses the position of '*external boss or dictator*' but takes the leadership role. This means that the facilitator is less controlling. Andrews and Jones (1996:357-365) also observed that facilitators and learners experienced difficulties because both were used to the teacher taking a more active role and controlling classroom activities.

#### **3.3.3.4 Taking over black learners was burdensome**

An additional emotional burden was mentioned by one facilitator who facilitated black learners who were struggling with the content. She stated: "*It was particularly hard for me as a black woman sitting and understanding the pain of those students going through emotions of not being able to say what you want to say, feelings of being inadequate.*"

*They were also frustrated and the pace of learning and the volume of theory was hard coming from rote learning and still struggling with the second language*". This may be a result of their educational background. Several studies have been conducted on the education of black students. Herbst, Schoeman and Hysamen (1993) in Holtzhausen (1999:2) found that African students lack the type of experience they need to be successful in a Western curriculum. Study of problems of learning among first year students in South African universities confirmed that the environment in which learning takes place in South Africa, particularly for black students, is disruptive and the control of education is fragmented. The language of science and technology (English) compounds the problem because most students come from an inferior, historically disadvantaged education system with poorly prepared teachers (Nyamapfene & Letseka, 1995:159-166). Home and educational backgrounds play a vital role in student achievement.

A study by McInerney (1998:53-56) in the Department of Nursing of the University of the Witwatersrand about the experiences of facilitators and learners when a PBL curriculum was introduced shows the same problem about a second language. This University uses English as a medium of instruction. The writer observed that the facilitators became aware that these learners were reluctant to participate in group discussions. They experienced difficulties because they first had to translate from English into the vernacular and then back again. They appeared slow and stupid. These learners needed more support which they received, after which they improved as they verbalized their thoughts.

### **3.3.3.5 Anger of learners caused anxiety in facilitators**

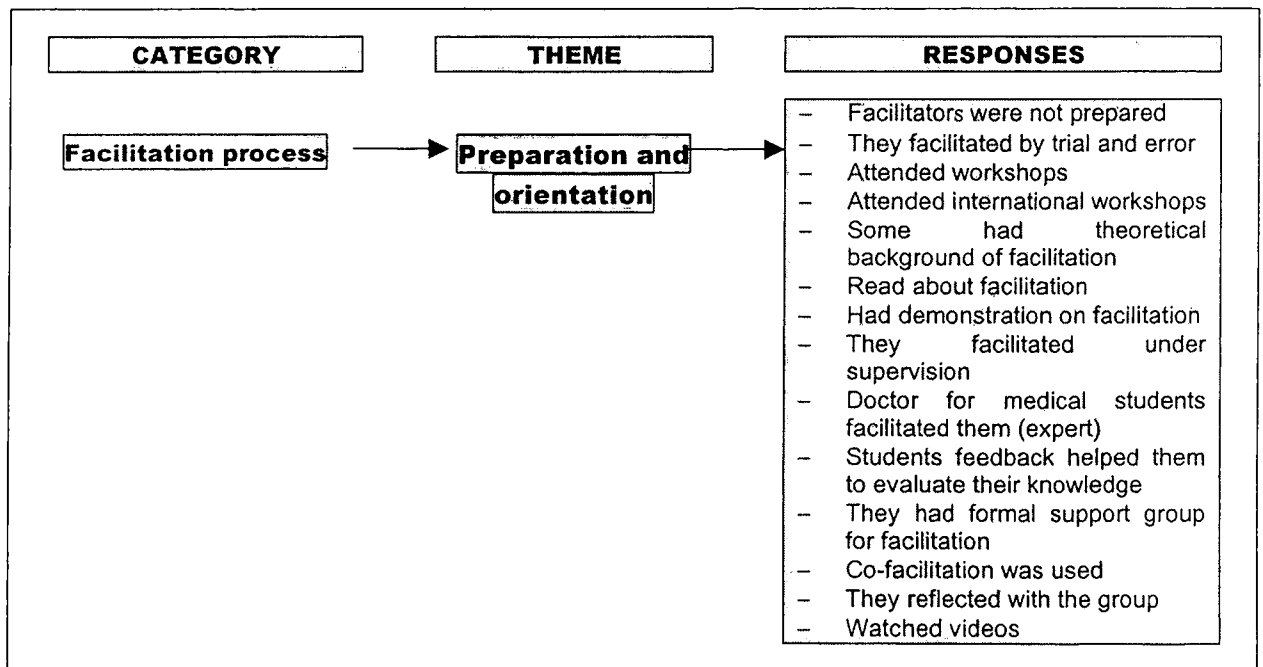
Facilitators mentioned that learners were angry about being facilitated and this caused anxiety on the part of the facilitators. The anger of learners may be attributed to resistance to change because even if it is a most basic fact of life, change is difficult (Gosteli, 1997:39-41). In explaining their anxieties and students' anger the facilitator said: ***"The students were very angry at the whole process because we were the only department using PBL and the rest were on traditional model. They needed to find an excuse and it was either the process or the facilitator and that was creating anxieties and frustrations in us"***. Saltzberger-Wittenberg *et al.* (1985) in Taylor (1997:25) confirm these feelings by stating that some students emotionally withdraw full of self-doubt and anxiety, while others become angry and attacking. These students feel overwhelmed by the perceived expectations of the system and this can provoke very strong reactions without students fully understanding what is causing them. A similar experience was found in a study by Edwards, Herbert, Moyer, Peterson, Sims-Jones and Verhovsek (1998:139-141) on preparing post-registered nursing students for community-based care at the University of Ottawa. In this study PBL was implemented within a more traditional method. Facilitators had to deal with student anxiety about the teaching approach. The researchers in the same study recommended that if a PBL course is offered within a more traditional curriculum it should be done in two semester courses to provide students with more time to gain competence in the PBL process. This anger seems to be a normal reaction of students because Conrick (1994:237-254) in his research about managing students' transition in PBL in the Griffith University nursing course observed that students reacted in the same way when they were first made to study in small groups. Those students displayed some degree of denial, they were angry and confused because they felt as though they were going in circles. The reason was that the learners were used to relying on their teachers as the source of information and suddenly they were expected to self-direct their

learning. The writer states that many initially expressed difficulty with the concept of student-centred learning.

### 3.3.4 Preparation for facilitation

#### 3.3.4.1 Introduction

From preceding the discussion of the experiences of facilitation it is quite clear that facilitators and students should be prepared and orientated to this new method of teaching and learning. This is particularly important because of the changing roles and responsibilities expected from both the facilitators and the learners. To clarify the data analysis in Figure 3.6 a literature review of different methods used to prepare facilitators for their role will be discussed.



**FIGURE 3.6: Preparation and orientation of facilitators**

### **3.3.4.2 Lack of preparation for facilitation role**

A group of facilitators mentioned that they started facilitation without any formal preparation. One stated that, *"We went into it without preparing ourselves on how to facilitate because we had been taught how to lecture and prepare lessons and suddenly we got into PBL and we had to discover inside that you need a different kind of skill"*. This confirms what Gwele (1997:275-284) states about the lack of preparation in facilitation of qualified nurses in traditional teacher education programs.

The literature stipulates that institutions implementing non-traditional approaches should develop their staff (de Grave, Dolmans & van der Vleuten, 1998:262-268) because even though facilitation may seem to be exciting and challenging it can, according to Alavi (1995:116) lead to anxiety. Nursing education courses must cover different ways of teaching. The study of Creedy and Hand (1994:696-702) mentioned in point 3.3.2.2 also indicates that nurse educators who were required to facilitate using PBL approaches of which they had little or no knowledge, voiced anxieties about changing from teaching strategies with which they were comfortable to facilitation.

### **3.3.4.3 Facilitation by trial and error**

Some indicated that they learned to facilitate by trial and error as indicated in the following statement, *"We basically learned by trial and error"*. Brocbank and McGill (1998:162) state that the adoption of a new mode of teaching, even in a small way is likely to bring about feelings of strangeness and awkwardness. It is not necessary that facilitators should learn to facilitate by trial and error as this can increase the possibility of fears and anxieties. Andrews and Jones (1996:357-365) support the previous statement by stating that there is a need for teacher preparation and emphasizing that there is a lack of facilitation expertise and this leaves many teachers to learn experientially or by trial and error.

According to Kaufman and Holmes (1996:371-377) the success of any educational innovation involves the preparation of the key staff for change and in this case the facilitators who will be driving the process. The preparation should include both theory and the practical aspects so that facilitators do not experience the harshness of their new role only when they are in the classroom or in the clinical setting as evidenced by a facilitator who said in an interview: ***“There is no guidance besides reading books and they don’t tell you practically what you are supposed to be doing, even watching a group didn’t help you that much. We had to discover when we were inside that you needed a different kind of skill”***. It seems that for this facilitator preparation was inadequate.

Morales-Mann and Kailell (2001:13-19) observed the same response from some facilitators who in spite of preparation described their knowledge as inadequate. These writers indicate that all facilitators in this particular study expressed the need for intensive individual and team preparation to improve skills. The lack of preparation was said to be unsettling and causing anxiety.

#### **3.3.4.4 Attendance of workshops and international visits**

All facilitators mentioned that they attended workshops in preparation for their facilitating role. Workshops were found to be an inadequate strategy for preparing facilitators. As one facilitator said: ***“Even when you go overseas, I have been to MacMaster, MacArthur and Brisbane. Every single one of them. It was just not enough”***. Gwele (1997:275-284) in her research at the University of Natal found the same scenario. She states that even though the staff were prepared by visits to MacMaster university and workshops, they acknowledged that these were not enough. Alavi (1995:117) states that orientation strategy should allow opportunity for practical experience and

reflection on those experiences and this may not necessarily be practical in workshops.

Fichardt and du Rand (2000:3-10) in their study in the School of Nursing of the University of the Free State observed that although facilitators attended several international workshops and national conferences to enable them to change their role, they experienced a level of anxiety, frustration and uncertainty. Facilitators need to know what is expected of them and what their role is in the classroom as facilitators. This can make facilitation a successful process without having to experience negative emotions.

Contrary to this assertion of the inadequacy of workshops as a method of preparation Grand'Maison and Des Marchais (1991:557-568) in their study at the Sherbrooke Medical School on preparing staff to teach in a PBL curriculum observed that student-oriented teachers seem to benefit more from workshops. The goals of the workshops were set and these helped the staff to understand PBL and to acquire skills in facilitating small groups.

#### **3.3.4.5 Theoretical background to facilitation**

One facilitator pointed out that she had a theoretical background: *"It was a different experience for me because I covered facilitation in my education. I had theoretical background on the education course I was doing on facilitation"*. This facilitator probably had a better chance of facilitating than those who were not exposed in this manner. Those who did not have a theoretical background expressed a need to have a course in facilitation. As one facilitator said *"What if we can have a short structured course where facilitators are trained and evaluated so that we can see if we are facilitating correctly. That can help a lot"*. Alavi (1995:117) asserts that for people beginning to facilitate, the most effective orientation strategy is the one which mirrors the processes which students undergo to be able to give a meaningful 'hands on' facilitation experience for facilitators. One

facilitator mentioned this experience when she said: *"What we used to do was to go through problems exactly as the student would approach a problem"*. They should be given a typical learning package resembling the one students use. Katz (1995:68) suggests that a carefully constructed facilitator's written guide should be included to the learning package. The researcher could not find any study on facilitators with a theoretical background of facilitation.

#### **3.3.4.6 Reading about facilitation**

Another way which facilitators orientated themselves was through reading the literature and this seemed to be inadequate according to this facilitator *"I read a lot about facilitation but knowing is not doing it correctly"*. This is because orientation strategies as stated by Alavi (1995:117) should provide opportunities for practical experience and reading does not give that experience. Facilitators need to practice facilitation in order to be competent. No study was found on preparing facilitators through reading.

#### **3.3.4.7 Facilitation demonstrations**

Facilitators indicated that they had demonstrations as a means of orientation done to help them grasp their facilitating role. The following excerpts bear testimony to this statement:

*"I remember when prof was sitting in with us trying to demonstrate to us how to facilitate and it never made sense even though they demonstrated to us"*.

*"We had somebody demonstrating how facilitation is done"*.

Alavi (1995:123) explains this demonstration as role-modelling of the facilitative process. The same writer states that seeing facilitation demonstrated expertly is an excellent introduction. He also found that facilitators become more comfortable in the role which includes having colleagues sit in and comment on facilitation strategies. Gwele (1997:275-281) mentions that the Head of Department was elected by facilitators in her University to act as the coordinator and to demonstrate facilitation skills. She also observed classroom activities and guided facilitators.

### **3.3.4.8 Facilitating under supervision**

Facilitating under supervision was another strategy used: *"We were given an opportunity to do facilitation under supervision, then we had a facilitator coming into our class now and then to observe how we were doing our facilitation. She was just criticizing constructively commenting on how we were doing it"*. This positive way of criticizing can help facilitators in gaining confidence in their facilitative skills. White and Stephenson (2000:604-606) explains supervised teaching as a process of practical training of teachers under an established teacher. Supervision and inspection are interrelated. Supervision is seen as a service to teachers both as individuals and groups and as a means of offering specialized help in improving instruction. Inspection on the other hand, is a small component of supervision. It entails purely rating and evaluating teachers using a set of standardized criteria (Ngcongco, 1996:183-187). Supervisors also become a source of support in that they share a burden of responsibility with the facilitators to reflect on the process, to identify the principles underlying the facilitation process and plan the next session (White & Stephenson, 2000:604-606).

Gwele (1997:275-284) pointed out that the head of the department played a supervisory role and was chosen as a coordinator by facilitators. She played a vital role in preparing facilitators for their role, she supported them, held regular feedback sessions and observed them in the classroom.

#### **3.3.4.9 Use of expert facilitator**

Facilitators also mentioned that they had an opportunity to observe an expert facilitating as indicated in this excerpt, ***“We had a doctor, an expert in psychology who worked with medical PBL students. The best skilled facilitators were in psychology”***. An expert can be defined as a person who is skilled in facilitation. This person can assume a supervisory role. Alavi (1995:120) states that an expert can work through the learning material with facilitators and help them reflect on the experience once the activity is over. In the study of McInerney (1998:53-56) facilitators spent one day workshop with an expert who was a visiting lecturer from McMaster University. This expert addressed many of the staff's fears, anxieties and queries.

#### **3.3.4.10 Students' feedback**

Feedback by students evaluating facilitators helped as noted in the following quotation. ***“Actually students did a lot of my training by evaluating me or saying that I talk too much but they still asked me to explain things to them”***. Fullan and Pamfret (1997) in Kaufman and Holmes (1996:371-377) explain strategies that can be used in preparing teachers and the feedback mechanism is one. Feedback mechanisms are formalized and students can rate their facilitator after each session with the results summarized and reported to each facilitator (Clack, 1997:32-35). Student feedback leads to the improvement of teaching performance (Leckey & Neill, 2001:19-32). However, the same writers state that the students from whom feedback has been obtained are not normally the beneficiaries of any subsequent improvement. Taylor (1997:87) supports these writers by stating that it is crucial for facilitators' professional development that they invite feedback about the way they have carried out their role. Student feedback is routinely collected in many medical schools and used as evidence to support proposals for course improvements. Visser *et al.* (1998:451-455) in their study (see point 3.3.1.6)

observed that obtaining direct feedback from students results in quality control. These researchers state that the students were able to identify problematic learning areas. Another study was conducted by Pinto, Rendas and Gamboa (2001:289-293) in the Faculty of Medical Sciences in Lisbon to evaluate tutors' performance. In this study teachers accepted and introduced changes after receiving feedback from the students.

#### **3.3.4.11 Support group**

Another aspect mentioned by facilitators was a support group. One facilitator said: *"We had formal support groups which helped us when preparing for facilitation"*. Several factors about support group are discussed in the literature. It is viewed as an excellent forum for facilitators to discuss both their problems and their success in processing a learning package (Katz, 1995:69). Teachers who have become facilitators mention that the support of colleagues, sharing feelings and staff development are key elements of successful facilitation (Brockbank & McGill, 1998:162). Small ad hoc groups may arise when a facilitator is experiencing some difficulty in helping a student group. Other facilitators might offer suggestions or reassurance or may offer to sit in with the group to diagnose the problem. (Alavi, 1995:120). Gwele (1997:275-284) highlighted the fact that the staff had a problem with support. Firstly there was inadequate or lack of support and there was ambivalence about the existence of staff support mechanisms. The same researcher states that even when staff were aware of a need for more support, there was a problem in trusting one another and feeling free enough to ask a colleague to observe one's performance in group facilitation sessions. Fichardt and du Rand (2000:3-10) found that facilitators expected the coordinator to provide them with support.

### **3.3.4.12 Use of co-facilitation**

According to Alavi (1995:123) co-facilitation is a strategy whereby colleagues sit in and take part in tutorials and comment on facilitation. This gives facilitators an opportunity to facilitate their peers and provides a safe environment for facilitators. The writer adds that it is another way in which facilitators can support themselves. In this process of co-facilitation facilitators work together, and model with each other within a teaching session. This scenario is evident in the following statement by a facilitator who was discussing her orientation: ***“We had a facilitator coming into our class now and then to observe how we were doing our facilitation. She was just criticizing constructively commenting on how we were doing it”***. Brockbank and McGill (1998:163) state that each pair of co-facilitators will discover their own preferred way of working. Further co-facilitation offers teachers the opportunity to receive feedback on the way they interact with students. Such activities help develop confidence and trust between facilitators as well as increasing the range of facilitation strategies. It is also helpful if meetings which deal with more pragmatic issues are held regularly so that day-to-day facilitators can clarify issues and share understanding.

Gwele's study (1997:275-281) reflects the use of support when stating that the coordinator was involved in classroom observations which offered an opportunity to guide the facilitators and the teaching-learning process when needed. Gradually as the facilitators became comfortable with their roles, the coordinator became more of a non-participant observer in the class session.

### **3.3.4.13 Use of reflection**

Facilitators also mentioned that they used reflection as a means of orientation. One said: ***“We were reflecting with the group what you did right or wrong”***.

According to the literature the importance of reflection cannot be overstressed. Alavi (1995:123) says it is particularly important in the orientation week that facilitators reflect on activities at the end of each day and again in the last session of the week. Atkins and Murphy (1993) in Scalan and Chernomas (1997:1138-1143) in their research on developing the reflective teacher state that reflection has been linked to other mental processes such as to ponder, examine or scrutinize. According to these authors (1997:1138-1143) there is consensus that there is a lack of clarity in the literature with regard to the definition of reflection. They state that the process of reflection is used in education in a wide range of professional fields on the premise that it facilitates understanding of the self within the dimension of practice and encourages critical thinking skills in the student. No study was found on the use of reflection as a means of preparation for facilitation.

#### **3.3.4.14 Watching of videos**

Finally facilitators said that they watched videos to orientate themselves and this is evident in the following excerpt: ***“When we started we saw some videos and listened to what people said but there was no actual teaching”***. The researcher could not find the information on orientating facilitators using videos. It can only be concluded that even after watching videos facilitators will still need to practise to facilitate.

In summarizing the theme on preparation some facilitators mentioned that they were not prepared to facilitate and others facilitated by trial and error. Those who were prepared used different strategies such as workshops, demonstrations and facilitation under supervision.

Fichardt and du Rand (2000:3-10) **recommend** the following for preparing facilitators:

- recruitment and in-depth training in theoretical aspects and skills of facilitators
- use of co-facilitation for new facilitators
- regular group and individual support for facilitators to relieve tension, identify needs and address uncertainty and problems
- continuing training in all facets of facilitation.

Alavi (1997:117) suggests the following to be useful for orientation:

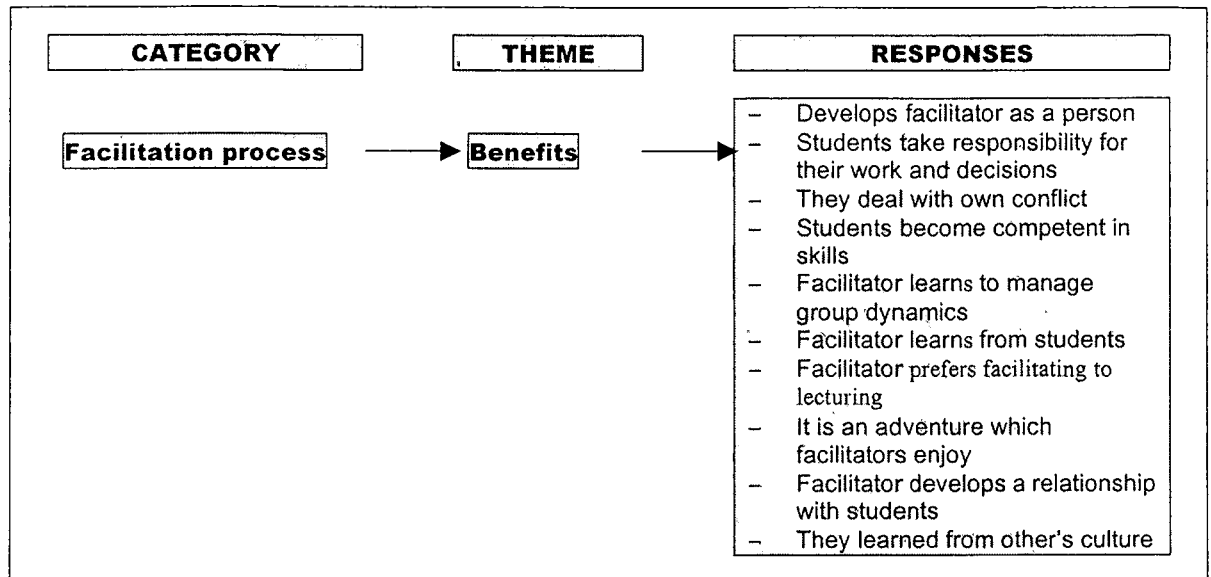
- creation of a climate of acceptance
- active exposure to PBL
- sharing of experiences by both staff and students
- role-modelling of the facilitative process
- introduction of learning packages and development of trigger material
- opportunity for reflection by those who have experience in facilitation.

Having discussed the literature review of facilitator's preparation the discussion of the benefits of facilitation will follow.

### **3.3.5 Benefits of facilitation**

#### **3.3.5.1 Introduction**

Facilitators mentioned benefits of facilitation for themselves and for the students. These benefits will be discussed as reflected in Figure 3.7 and be supported with literature review.



**FIGURE 3.7: Benefits of facilitation**

### **3.3.5.2 Development of facilitator and students**

Facilitators indicated that the process of facilitation developed them personally and professionally. This is evident in the following statements made when facilitators were discussing its advantages: *“I like to say that facilitation is an adventure and transformation, you just grow and you learn a lot. The experience is negative and positive but it is an enjoyable adventure. It pays seeing the students developing and growing as well”*.

*“I think facilitation develops a facilitator as a person as well as what was previously said. The students are also developed they aren’t just passive people anymore. It develops the facilitator just as much. You learn a lot from them in the process”*. Studies indicate that the rewards of facilitation are numerous because they evoke a radical change in students and teachers alike both personally and organizationally (Cassimjee & Brookes, 1998:95-102). This change indicates growth as well as development. Dana and Gwele (1998:58-64) refer to personal and academic development as the extent to which nursing students perceive they have

improved in terms of knowledge, attitudes and skills. The same could be said about facilitators. Taylor (1997:39) states that it is crucial for professional education to enable the development of a person. Townsend (1994:106) states that the prerequisite for enhancing student growth and autonomy and enabling a successful experience of facilitation is for the facilitator let go of control. The facilitator has a significant role in the growth of students because according to Robson and Beary (1995:4), facilitators are viewed as developers of individuals and Donaldson and Marnik (1995:92) state that facilitators create conditions in which people can constantly grow and learn.

A study by Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138) on the implementation of a PBL curriculum in an undergraduate nursing degree course at the University of Natal shows that facilitated learners developed particularly as they were working in groups. Facilitators in the same study experienced that learners grew to become assertive and had a strong belief in their ability to make a difference. They also observed much personal growth in the area of facilitating interpersonal problem-solving and dealing with intergroup conflict. The ability of the staff to observe students grow academically and personally within a short space of time was confirmed by most of the facilitators interviewed by Gwele (1997:275-284).

### **3.3.5.3 Responsibility and decision-making**

Facilitators expressed that students were more responsible for their learning and that they no longer abdicated all the work to them. The following excerpts from focus interviews bear testimony to this notion of responsibility:

*"It is no longer the lecturer or facilitator's responsibility to see that they pass a test or exam. They take responsibility for their work, and they take responsibility for their decisions. If they are behind schedule, they decide how they can catch up. They decide if they want extra lessons*

*and divide the work between them. They solve their own problems. This is what I really enjoy about being a facilitator. The biggest responsibility is not mine alone any more”.*

Another facilitator said: *“They participate in decision-making and decide how they want their test, when they want it and how their work is presented”*. Learners are expected to accept more responsibility for their own learning performance (Bitzer & Pretorius, 1996:8). Researchers state the facilitator is responsible for students by helping them to master the learning content, understand concepts and solve problems. However the facilitator cannot accept full responsibility for students' success or failure. Frymier (1998:233-235) supports these authors by stating that to argue that teachers must be held accountable for students' learning absolves students of responsibility for their own actions. The same writer insists that teachers must not be held accountable for students learning and says that, *'learning is like living, each person has to do it himself or herself. Nobody can learn for another person, just as nobody can breathe for another person'*.

Facilitators should help as best as they can but cannot blame themselves if students do not want to learn (Academic Development Bureau, 1997:13). Boud (1988 in Taylor, 1997:7) identifies students taking responsibility for their own learning as a main characteristic of self-directed learning. The same writer suggests taking responsibility for learning to involve the following: identifying learning needs, setting goals, planning learning activities, finding resources for learning, using teachers as facilitators engaging in self-assessment and deciding when learning is complete. This statement covers just about all that the facilitator has expressed about responsibilities and decision-making. Furthermore if students are denied opportunities to participate in decision-making about their learning, they are less likely to develop skills they need in order to plan and organize for life-long learning which depends on their decisions about their learning needs and activities.

Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138) indicate that students were active in their learning, diagnosing exactly where the learning problems of individual students lay, which shows responsibility.

#### **3.3.5.4 Conflict resolution**

Students are said to be able to resolve conflict. One facilitator said: *"I enjoy facilitation because the students are very active. Whenever there is conflict the students deal with it"*. According to Peterson (1997) conflict is healthy and necessary for growth, but it can become destructive to student learning when it is personal or becomes an obstacle to task completion. Taylor (1997:67) states that students learn a great deal in groups about how to make decisions and handle conflict and this can be significant to their future practice in teams. This advantage is also reflected in the study by Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138) (see point 3.3.5.2).

#### **3.3.5.5 Skill competency of students**

Another benefit identified from interviews with facilitators is that facilitated students are more competent in their skills. One facilitator stated: *"I just look at the product, the nurse. These students definitely know how to apply skills. If you look at them in their first year and take them in the third year, you see a totally different student. Why would you throw that away?"* Katz (1995:70) describes them as confident nurses both in the classroom and the clinical setting who question, challenge and refuse to be intimidated or silenced. It is also said that they are admired and respected by professionals who were trained decades ago. This means even nurses who were trained in the traditional approach view them as competent and different from other nurses who were not facilitated. Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138) mention that students developed a much wider range of skills. Facilitators in the same study were constantly amazed at the information network the students built over one year. Fichardt and du Rand (2000:3-10)

observed that facilitated students were perceived by professional nurses in the clinical setting to be self-confident and were satisfied with their performance.

### **3.3.5.6 Management of the group process**

Facilitators mentioned that they gained and developed certain skills which they did not possess before. One facilitator said: *"I think the other thing that I have learned about as a facilitator is the management of group dynamics. It really developed you as a person as well because you have to understand group dynamics in order to be able to run this group"*. Group dynamics is often referred to as group process and refers to the interactions and interrelations among the members in a group and between the members and the facilitator (Holen, 2000:485-488). It describes the actions and relationships of members within the group, which make the group a functioning whole (Katz, 1995:57). The process refers to how the group works together. It includes how members talk to each other, how they identify and solve problems, make decisions and handle conflict. It is the facilitator's main task to help the group increase its effectiveness by improving its process (Schwarz, 1994:5). The facilitator is therefore required to have an understanding of group dynamics (Brockbank & McGill, 1998:81). This is important because when working with groups the facilitator is responsible for observing the process and pointing out to the group if there are any process issues that are impeding progress (Robson & Beary, 1995:5).

Virtanen, Kosunen, Holmberg-Marttila and Virjo (1999:270-276) conducted a study in the University of Tampere to assess the quality of tutorial sessions in the new PBL curriculum that was adopted. The management of the group process was mentioned as an important aspect. The learners in this study mentioned that they wanted a facilitator to maintain the group process. They described sessions as unsuccessful when the facilitator lacked the skill for managing the group process.

### **3.3.5.7 Learning from students**

Facilitators acknowledge that they also learned from students. As one put it: *“You are also a learner because as they learn they become experts with the content. They come with something that you have never seen. You must also be prepared to say ‘I don’t know this thing. It is new’ ”*. Crew (1995:19-20) states that facilitators should look for knowledge useful to them from learners’ contributions and make that knowledge the object of their learning. Further they must act on the belief that they can learn from learners. Majumdar (1996:43-46) supports this view by mentioning that the students bring their experiences into the classroom. Rooth (1995:5) emphasizes that facilitation signifies mutual growth of all concerned and not only a question of one person, the so-called expert. The facilitator, according to Katz (1995:70), becomes actively involved with the student in the journey of discovery.

### **3.3.5.8 Facilitators enjoy facilitating**

Facilitation is said to be enjoyable and facilitators stated that even if it was difficult for them in the beginning they preferred to facilitate rather than to lecture. The following statements bear testimony to this statement:

*“I feel facilitation is more enjoyable than the lecture method because when you facilitate you are moving together with the students”.*

*“To me it is good to facilitate a group and not lecturing. It has become easy to facilitate”.*

*“There is lots more to learn on how to manage this. I wouldn’t go back for anything, because of the richness of teaching and learning”.*

These statements indicate that facilitators enjoy facilitating more than lecturing. Rooth (1995:20-21) asserts that facilitators should enjoy what they are doing and should be filled with inspiring enthusiasm and believe in what they are doing. All facilitators mentioned that they enjoy facilitation and will not change back to lecturing. One said: ***"It was difficult in the beginning but now I know so much and I don't want to do anything else"***.

Fichardt and du Rand (2000:3-10) also found that facilitators found facilitation to be more enjoyable than traditional teaching. A study by Caplow *et al.* (1997:440-447) in the medical school of a Midwestern research university to examine the students conception of their learning in a PBL medical curriculum proved that these students also enjoyed being facilitated as compared to being taught by traditional methods

### **3.3.5.9 Relationship between facilitator and student**

Another benefit highlighted was that facilitation engenders a special relationship between facilitators and the students. An example of this benefit is found in this utterance: ***"I think as a facilitator you develop a certain relationship with the students. You want them to follow their own course but at the same time you want to prepare them for what they are going to land in"***. Katz (1995:70) states that on this journey of learning a certain desired relationship between facilitator and student is discovered. Rooth (1995:5) views this as a process of sharing and receiving which implies that the facilitator gives and shares something with the students and vice-versa. This is supported by the literature and facilitation is seen to have valuable benefits for the lecturer and is more effective as a method of transmitting information (Rose, 1992:7). A relationship of trust and caring develops between the facilitator and the student. This will be discussed under the category of the facilitator (see point 3.4.2.2).

### **3.3.5.10 Learning from other cultures**

Finally facilitators indicated that because they were dealing with students from different cultural backgrounds they learned from other cultures and this was said to be beneficial as one facilitator stated: *“The growth that has happened to me, I never knew about white culture for instance”*. It is important to know other cultures so that one can understand their way of doing things. Slope (1996:96) believes that cultural differences can cause difficulties and mentions that the first cultural obstacle to be encountered is language. If people in a group find it difficult to understand each other's language then they cannot communicate. Cassimjee and Brookes (1995:95-102) confirm these findings. They found that students come from diverse groups in society and this may hinder communication. An example is that of the use of humour. Certain cultures may not recognize humour as a socially acceptable phenomenon (Kuhrik, Kuhrik & Berry, 1997:332-334).

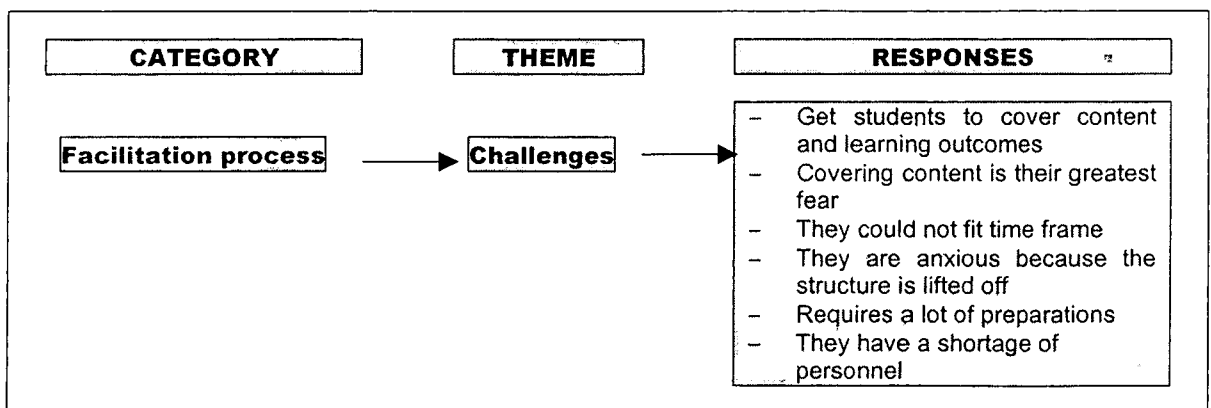
Junn (1994:130) asserts that each student brings into the classroom a wealth of unique or personal cultural knowledge that can be tapped as a rich learning resource. Other sources also state that diversity should be appreciated because people can learn from differences be they cultural, learning styles or problem solving approaches (<http://www.csnp.ohio-state.edu/glarr/glossary>). In dealing with diversity the facilitator is encouraged to acquire a sense of how learners feel about the cultural climate in the group. The facilitator as a principle should be willing and ready to learn (Academic Development Bureau, 1998:20). No study was found on this aspect.

Even though facilitators mentioned the advantages of facilitation they also indicated that it has its challenges or disadvantage which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

### 3.3.6 Challenges of the facilitation process

#### 3.3.6.1 Introduction

Challenges for this research are those factors in facilitation that are viewed as having a negative impact on facilitators. Brockbank and McGill (1998:164) state that challenges of facilitation are associated with fear. Many authors agree that facilitation is an uncommon skill among academic teachers (Katz, 1995:54). In discussing these challenges it is important to point out that some of the challenges were expressed by facilitators as fear and concerns that needed attention. These will be discussed as indicated in Figure 3.8:



**FIGURE 3.8: Challenges/fears of facilitation process**

#### 3.3.6.2 Concerns on covering the content and learning outcomes

Facilitators were uncertain of whether the students would be able cover the content and complete their learning outcomes especially at the beginning of facilitation and probably as a result of lack of experience themselves. The following excerpts refer to outcomes and content coverage:

*“Looking at the outcomes you have this anxiety, will they cover that”.*

*“I was worried because it was a new form of teaching for me and how will we be able to cover content and that was probably my greatest fear”.*

*“You can evaluate the outcome, but not that you are satisfied with the outcome. You do ask yourself did they actually learn”.*

Steinert and Snell (1999:37-42) indicate that the fear of not covering content is a common phenomenon in interactive lectures<sup>1</sup> this is because facilitators think that they will sacrifice important content when students are more involved. Katz's (1995:54) opinion is that the lack of experience as well as the lack of full understanding of what facilitation involves can prevent facilitators for committing themselves to facilitation. Brockbank and McGill (1998:161) state that teachers who have made a journey to facilitation, contrary to expectations of not covering the syllabus, have found that they got through more work when they were facilitating. In other words they cover more content than they would have done in traditional teaching. Covering content was one of the concerns in the study of Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138) It is therefore very important that facilitators understand this approach so that they are able to structure content so that students achieve the intended learning outcomes, hence cover the content.

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<sup>1</sup> Implies active involvement and participation so that students are no longer passive in the learning process

### **3.3.6.3 Time frame**

Time constraints were mentioned as a challenge by facilitators. As one said: *"The difficulty we found was when do we fit in with the time frame because it took a long time. It took a morning to go through that problem and to come with the learning goals at the end of that session"*. According to Steinert and Snell (1999:37-42) this time concern is more commonly related to the fear of not covering content. Several studies have found time to be a concern for facilitators. The time factor is not related to facilitation per se but to the PBL approach. Bitzer (1997:8-10) emphasizes that PBL consumes staff time. Uys and Cassimjee (1997) support this by stating that the PBL approach takes a great deal of time. According to O'Sullivan, Rice, Rogerson and Saunders (1996:5) learning to manage time requires commitment and that time must be spent wisely. It is the task of the facilitator to manage time effectively by paying attention to the time allocated to tasks (Rooth, 1995:10). The lack of clear goals contributes to time wasting. Steinert (1996:203-207) states that in saving time the facilitator should focus the group on the task at hand, recognize irrelevant contributions and cut off inappropriate ones.

### **3.3.6.4 Lack of structure**

One facilitator mentioned the lack of structure as another set-back: *"I think having structure was very assuring, that structure is being lifted off"*. Johnston (1996:143) explains structure as subject-limiting guide-lines. The facilitators felt as though they did not have these guide-lines which traditional teaching offers. Brockbank and McGill (1995:160) deny the understanding that facilitation does not have structure and insist that facilitation does not mean an absence of structure and that there is a hierarchical mode to provide structure where the facilitator autonomously makes decisions. Other researchers had the same perception in their studies. Fichardt and du Rand (2000:3-10) state that facilitators pointed out that there was insufficient

structure provided and that they were worried whether the students obtained adequate information. Biley and Smith (1999:1205-1212) in their study on the perceptions of students about PBL in an undergraduate program in the United Kingdom found that the students were uncertain and felt that they were functioning without a clearly delineated educational structure. There was general consensus among undergraduates that facilitated programs needed to be well structured and have clear explicit guide-lines. Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138) also found that the students were complaining about the unstructured character and said they did not know exactly how far to explore each subject. Neville (1999:393-401) states that many students enter a PBL learning situation feeling a need for the security of a clear structural plan, that is, a course outline and that they may feel 'at sea' in the somewhat structureless environment of PBL.

### **3.3.6.5 Preparation for class**

Some facilitators mentioned that preparation for class was a challenge as shown in the following excerpts:

*"I think one should have a good knowledge of the content, and also come to class well prepared so that one is able to ask relevant questions".*

*"It is time-consuming if you feel that today we will be discussing this and the students come unprepared. It becomes a stressful situation because you keep on probing and they don't come up with anything".*

***“On the part of the facilitator you have to come to class well prepared because some of the students research deeply on the subject which is going to be discussed in class. They have challenging issues they may need you to clarify. If you are not prepared for this session you are just out”.***

***“You have to come prepared for students who don’t know things and will want to bluff you. They read books they know you must have read as well”.***

***“The big thing is you cannot take your class for granted. You cannot keep old notes. You turn to keep reading and researching to keep abreast. There is a lot of preparation in facilitation. You have to prepare very well because they cover aspects in anatomy, physiology and sociology which they also bring to class”.***

From the above statements it is clear that the facilitators and the students have to come to class prepared so that they can validate their information and share their knowledge. The lack of or poor preparation as perceived by the students in a study by Virtanen *et al.* (1999:270-276) resulted in unsuccessful group sessions. The students mentioned that the poor preparation led their discussions to wander because the facilitator lacked constructive interventions (see 3.3.5.6)

According to Steinert and Snell (1999:37-42) some facilitators may be anxious that if they do not prepare for class they will not know how to answer a question posed by the students. It is important that the facilitator has the knowledge of the content to be able to guide the students. If they have the knowledge then they will spend less time preparing for class. This was confirmed by Holmes and Kaufman (1994:275-288) in their study on tutoring in PBL in Dalhousie University which indicates that facilitators felt that the

more expert they were in the content the less they needed to prepare for the tutorial because they already have the knowledge of the content.

One facilitator opposed this view by acknowledging her lack of knowledge when talking about the personality of the facilitator: ***“I accept that I am not the know it all. I am in this situation to learn and the only thing that I can do is to grow and this demands preparing and keeping abreast and that students will come up with things that you hardly know and acknowledge to them that you don’t know something. If you don’t know it, you don’t know it”***. However Diekelmann and Schulte (2000:291-293) stated that preparing for class is a taken-for-granted assumption. They mention that it assumed that the role of the teacher is to develop assignments in advance of a lecture. The teacher then suggests that students come to class prepared by reading the assignments. The same writers suggest that nursing education should be reformed to challenge these taken-for-granted assumptions of contemporary teaching and learning.

### **3.3.6.6 Shortage of personnel**

Only one group of facilitators complained about shortage of personnel which made it difficult for them to give their full attention to students because of large groups which they had to deal with. This is illustrated by in this statement: ***“Here the problem that we are having is the shortage of staff. I feel more comfortable when I know that I am able to do everything. The groups are too big for us to be comfortable with facilitation because when you are facilitating other students are not paying attention”***. Most studies agree that an ideal situation for facilitation is to use small groups. However Brockbank and McGill (1995:162) insist that facilitators who have successfully adopted facilitative methods with small groups may with confidence feel able to handle facilitation of a large group. The study by Gwele (1997:275-284) also indicate the problem of shortage of staff and this was especially related to the planning and implementing PBL. Studies have shown that the problem

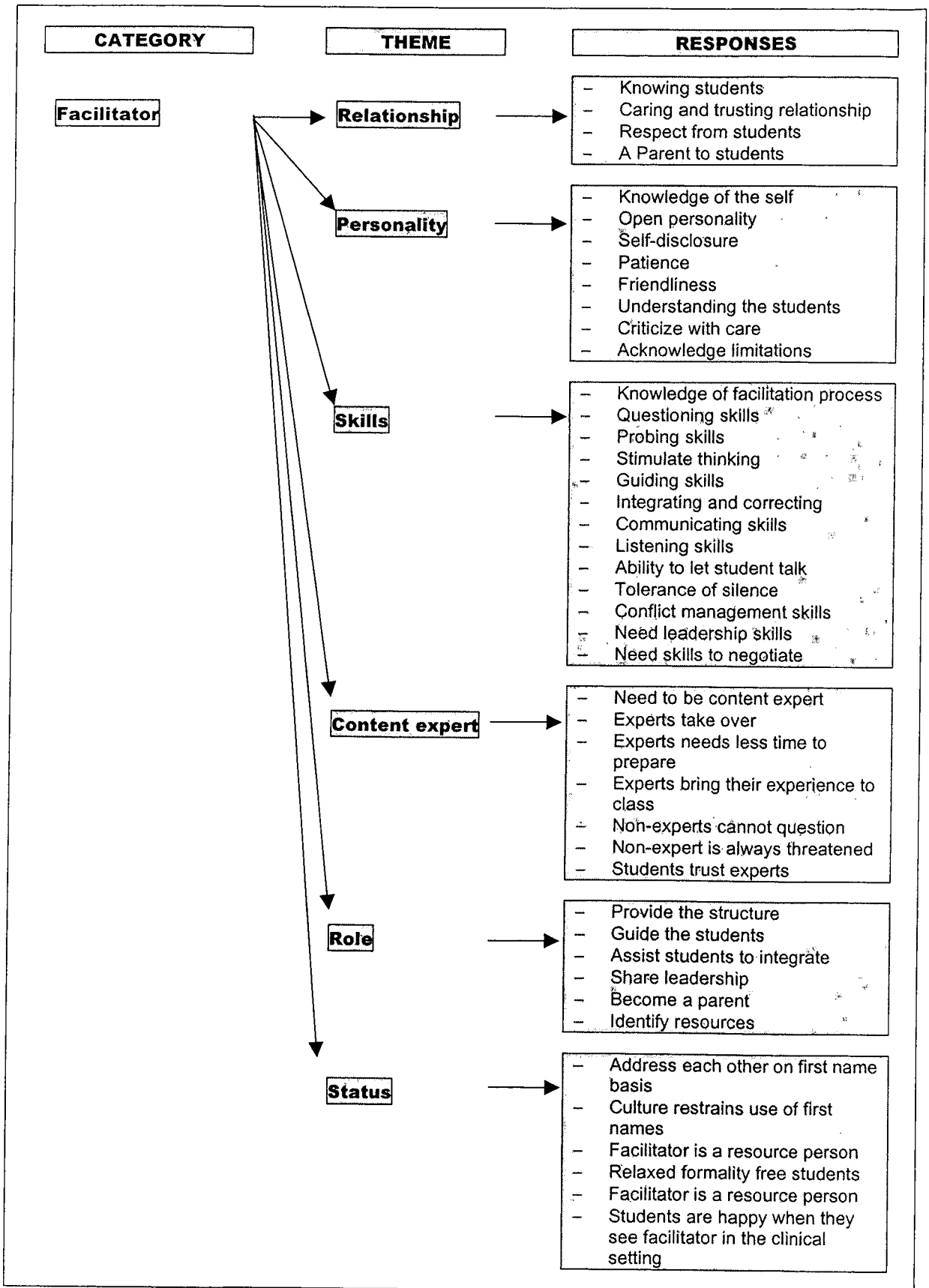
of the shortage of staff especially for small-group work can be solved by the use of cooperative learning. Cooperative learning occurs when small groups work together to maximize their own and each others learning (McNeill & Payne, 1996 in Gibson & Campell, 2000:297-300). Cooperative learning involves students working together in a group in which everyone can participate in clearly assigned collective tasks. Students are expected to carry out their task without the direct presence or supervision of a teacher (Sobral, 1998:118-121). Further it involves structuring positive interdependence into students' goal attainment while working together in small groups to maximize their own and each others' learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1990 in Zafuto, 1997:265-270). A study conducted by Sobral (1998:118-121) on enhancing the skills of the medical students for cooperative learning at the University of Brasilia proves that it is possible to obtain the benefits of small-group work in a context of staff shortage by using cooperative learning.

The next category to be discussed is facilitators as they are one of the cardinal elements in the facilitation process along with the students.

### **3.4 THE FACILITATOR**

#### **3.4.1 Introduction**

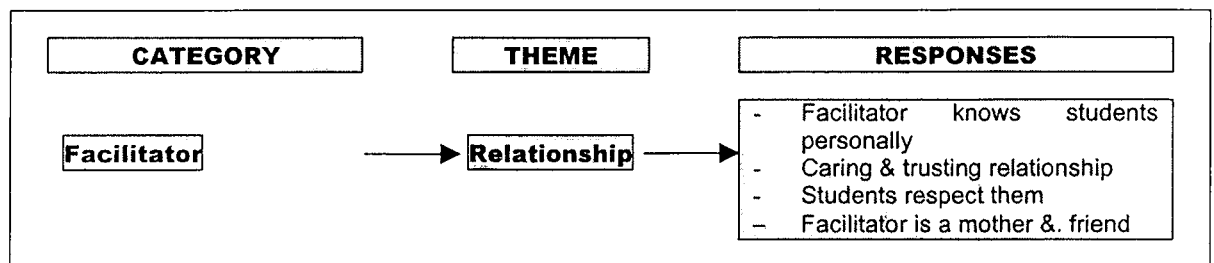
The second category to be discussed is that of the facilitator. Facilitators are an important equation in the facilitation process. According to Rooth (1995:15) they have to develop certain qualities in themselves. These qualities include the character, the skills as well as the role that a facilitator should play. They must know the tasks they are expected to master in order to accomplish their role (Pinto, Rendas & Gamboa, 2001:289-293). In this section the description of the facilitators' relationship with students, their personality, skills, expertise and status as well as role will be discussed with the support of the literature.



**FIGURE 3.9: Facilitator category**

### 3.4.2 Facilitator-student relationship

The term facilitator first came to prominence with the introduction into the West of Quality circles<sup>2</sup> in the late 1970's. It is defined as someone whose task is to make things easy for those working on the problem (Robson & Beary, 1995:3) According to Rogers (1995:92) the facilitation of significant learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner. This means that the facilitator and the student have a close relationship.



**FIGURE 3.10: Relationship of facilitators with students**

#### 3.4.2.1 Knowing the students personally

Facilitators mentioned during focus interviews that they have a relationship with the students which is different from the one they had in the traditional approach as shown in Figure 3.10. The reason for this relationship is that in facilitation the groups are small and they get to know the students personally which fosters a special bond between them as one facilitator explained: *“I think there is a lot more support for the students from facilitators. In a big group you get to know a few students but in a small group you get to know each one of them”*. It is only when the facilitators know the students that they can understand and accept them. Rooth (1995:21) states that the facilitator should be willing to accept every person in the group. Further they

<sup>2</sup> Quality circles are a mechanism for encouraging the involvement of the workforce in problem solving and improvement

should remain non-judgmental and accept all of them unconditionally. Facilitators are expected to have good interpersonal relationships. This is important in order to help the students maintain self-esteem and minimize anxieties. Good interpersonal relationships require certain personality traits, and facilitators, according to Rooth (1995:20), should know themselves. They should have a strong sense of who they are, believe in themselves, know their potentials, abilities and limitations. Furthermore they should feel comfortable and not be threatened by the group. More about personality will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

### **3.4.2.2 The caring and trusting relationship**

Facilitators described the relationship they had with their students to be a caring one as in the following excerpt: ***“Because you are a caring person it is important before you start with your facilitation that you should ask if everything is OK. If they trust you they can tell you”***. Edwards, Benner and Wrubel (2001:172-181) describe caring as an enabling condition of connection and concern. Rooth (1995:18) describes an essential quality of caring as being authentic and states that the facilitator should be sincere with students and herself because students may share issues of a private nature. This is clear from the evidence of a facilitator in this research: ***“You get to know each one of them. They come to you with their personal problems”***.

According to Majumdar (1996:43-46) trust is important to the learning activity as it allows for the staff members and the students to deal with problems that arise between them openly, directly and honestly. The facilitators must be worthy of trust and maintain confidentiality. They should be trusted so that students can depend on them when activities elicit intense emotions (Rooth, 1995:18). In other words the facilitators should keep the students' personal problems in confidence to inculcate this trusting relationship so that they may

be perceived to be authentic. Being authentic means sincerity and belief in what one is doing.

Tromp (1998:65) states that trust is an important prerequisite for effective group work. Roger (1969) in Quinn (1994:20) in his humanistic model declares that the most important factor is the relationship of trust that exists between facilitator and learner as well as acceptance of students as persons in their own right, who are worthy of respect and care. A facilitator added to this concept by stating: ***“As long as students can feel that you are treating them with respect, that you are concerned about them, that you love them and appreciate them for what they are, that you can forgive them and they can forgive you and you believe in them, you adopt a much closer relationship much quicker”***. Facilitators should love and care for their students and understand that part of the process is that students make their own mistakes (Brockbank & McGill, 1998:161).

### **3.4.2.3 Facilitators felt respect by students**

In the previous paragraph the facilitator emphasized respect when she said: ***“the students are warm and like the three of us, they have respect for us. They are friendly and there is never a lack of respect”***. Respect is *“a profound recognition and appreciation as well as regard for the value of an individual as a unique person irrespective of differences, manifesting itself in warm, unconditional positive regard”* (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2000:90-97). It is described as a generic behaviour which makes relationships become fruitful and if there is lack of respect groups will become dysfunctional (Robson & Beary, 1995:96). Other sources state that quality learning occurs when facilitators trust and respect their students (Academic Development Bureau, 1998:14). The facilitator should treat each student as an individual and respect each student for who she is because each person has unique characteristics and background. An atmosphere of trust and respect is conducive to learning. This was also reflected by Dana (1997:41-43) when

describing her experience and that of her colleagues as master's degree students at the University of Natal by stating that the learning climate was characterized by mutual support and respect and indeed was conducive to their learning.

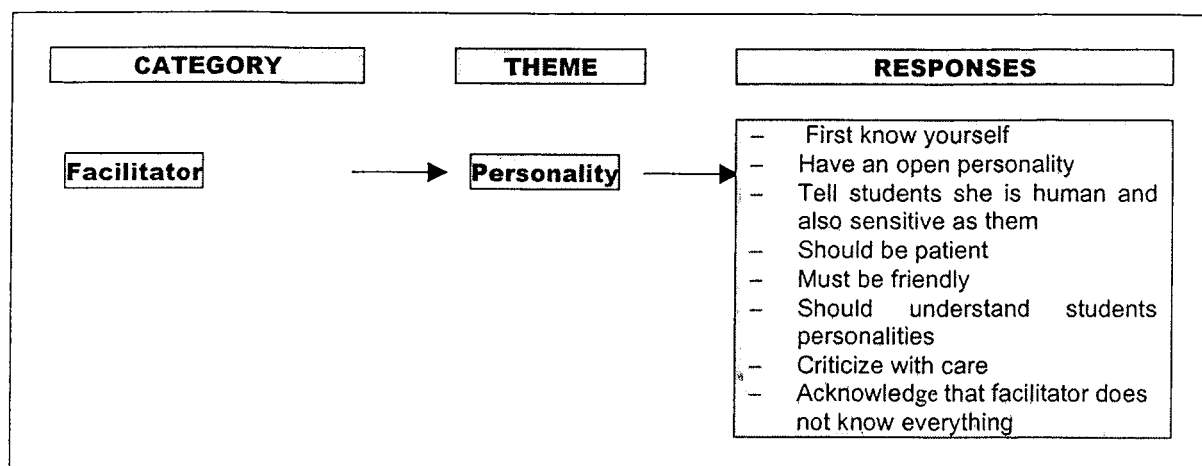
#### **3.4.2.4 Facilitator a mother and friend**

Another kind of relationship which the facilitator mentioned was that of a friend and a parent. One facilitator said *"You must be able to allow more room because the distance between the facilitator and the student has diminished. You become a mother, they come with personal things. You must be able to compromise part of your personal space"*. Wilkerson and Hundert (1991) in Mullins (1994:107) redefined the role of a facilitator as a parent, professional consultant, confidant, learner and mediator. The facilitator is more than a teacher according to this redefined role. This supports the fact that facilitators deal with personal problems of the students. They cannot only be interested in academic performance especially as personal problems can have an impact on learning. The facilitator should also understand the personal problems of the students without judging them (Rooth, 1995:210). Fichardt and du Rand (2000:4-11) emphasize yet another relationship, namely that the facilitator must always remain professional in dealing with students.

### **3.4.3 The personality of the facilitator**

#### **3.4.3.1 Introduction**

The relationships of the facilitator clearly indicate that a facilitator should have certain qualities and behave in a manner that will engender a facilitative relationship.



**FIGURE 3.11: The personality of the facilitator**

### **3.4.3.2 Self-knowledge**

A facilitator said: *"I think you first should know yourself"* expressing a quality essential for facilitators. Rooth (995:20) insists that facilitators should have a strong sense of who they are, believe in themselves, know their potentials, abilities and limitations. They should feel comfortable and not be threatened by the group. Rooth further states that facilitators who are aware of their limits can be of more use to a group than those who are not willing to acknowledge that they do not know everything.

### **3.4.3.3 Facilitator should be open**

Facilitators said the following about personality:

*"I have to tell you something. Facilitators have to be open and it is a problem because other people do not share. They keep little bits to themselves".*

*"You must have a personality which is open".*

According to Uys and Middleton (1997:1) there is a difference between self as seen by oneself and as seen by others. The different aspects of self in a visual way are known as the Johari window which has four divisions or windows. Only the first window which is relevant to the theme will be discussed. The first window, also known as the arena, is about things that people know about themselves which others also know. This is related to what facilitators identify as an open personality because everything is in the open. These authors state that an open personality breeds a feeling of comfort and confidence that in its turn leads to a greater willingness to be open in both giving and receiving feedback. Robson and Beary (1995:95) indicate that if the facilitators are genuine in their behaviour the students will also open up and this will help the facilitative process. Rees's opinion (1991:101) is that one of the facilitator's key roles is to create an atmosphere of openness and trust to get people to speak and contribute.

#### **3.4.3.4 Self-disclosure**

Facilitators found that it was important for them to tell the students that they were also human. One stated: ***"You can explain yourself by saying this is the way I am. I am going to upset you, I am really going to tease you off. The whole idea is that I am as much human as you are and I am going to challenge you and you can also challenge me. If you don't want something say it in a way that won't hurt me. I am just as sensitive as you are"***. Self-disclosure is related to knowing yourself because to be able to tell people about the self, one needs first to understand himself. Brockbank and McGill (1998:175-177) call self-disclosure a hall-mark of building trust and of expressing both positive and negative feelings openly. Talking openly about feelings helps because there will be more understanding of why people behave or respond in certain ways. By self-disclosure the facilitator can control the situation by starting off speaking about herself.

### **3.4.3.5 The ability to be patient**

Patience was declared by facilitators to be valuable in the classroom. One of them stated that ***“one needs to be patient. This is an important asset”***. Tromp (1998:136) mentions patience as an important behaviour for facilitation and viewed it as a trait and an advantage in face-to-face interactions. The same writer states that everybody's patience can be tested especially that of the facilitator because group discussions tend to be long drawn-out excersise. The author asserts that every participant should be given sufficient opportunity to express themselves and that not all people argue in the same logical manner. Furthermore facilitators need to show participants that their opinions are valued and all should willingly be given an opportunity to express their view. MacIntosh (1995:25-27) in support states that facilitators should allow time for students to develop their own decisions.

### **3.4.3.6 The facilitator must be friendly**

Facilitators indicated that they need to be friendly to the students as this is important for good relationships. One expressed the view that: ***“You need to be friendly to the students to be able to establish rapport and a good relationship”***. Crew (1995:19-20) stated that many facilitators talk of the strong bond they feel with their students and that the latter describe their facilitators as friends. Rooth (1995:12) asserts that facilitators must be friendly and humorous, and they should allow themselves to be seen as human. Furthermore, they should show warmth as well as vulnerability and laugh with the group. Johnston (1996:112) emphasizes the importance of friendliness by stating that if students are to have the opportunity to gain as much as possible from interactions with a facilitator and with one another, then a relaxed and friendly climate is necessary. Tromp believes that if people do not feel comfortable with one another, they are less likely to be willing to explore feelings, thoughts and experiences. They are also reluctant to provide support and assistance for one another.

### **3.4.3.7 Understanding the students**

In understanding the students the facilitator should be empathetic. Empathetic understanding means putting oneself in the students' shoes in order to see and understand things from their perspective (Quinn, 1994:21). Empathy is also defined as the understanding of the world from the other's point of view, feelings, experiences and behaviour (Brockbank & McGill, 1998:194-196). Empathy means understanding the students and this can be achieved by identifying with them. Understanding will propagate a feeling of sensitivity, in other words the facilitator will be sensitive to students' needs. Facilitators said this about being sensitive to students: ***"You should be sensitive because the individuality of every person comes through and some people are sensitive and others not. What I say today might offend this one"***. Facilitators need to show sensitivity to the group's needs, experiences and feelings. They should remain non-judgmental and unconditionally accept all (Rooth, 1995:21).

### **3.4.3.8 Criticize with care**

Being sensitive to the students' needs also meant giving careful and positive criticism. As one facilitator said: ***"Even the way you present your criticism has to be thought through before you say it"*** Donaldson and Mernick (1995:87) believe that facilitators should criticize learners constructively. Deweck and Bempecht (1983) in Creedy *et al.* (727-733) add to this by saying they should value contributions of students and encourage opinions without demeaning the personal integrity of students. Rooth (1995:9) states that to be effective facilitators need to develop a number of qualities, strategies and skills many of which are acquired through experience. The more facilitation is practiced the easier it becomes.

### **3.4.3.9 Acknowledging limitations in knowledge**

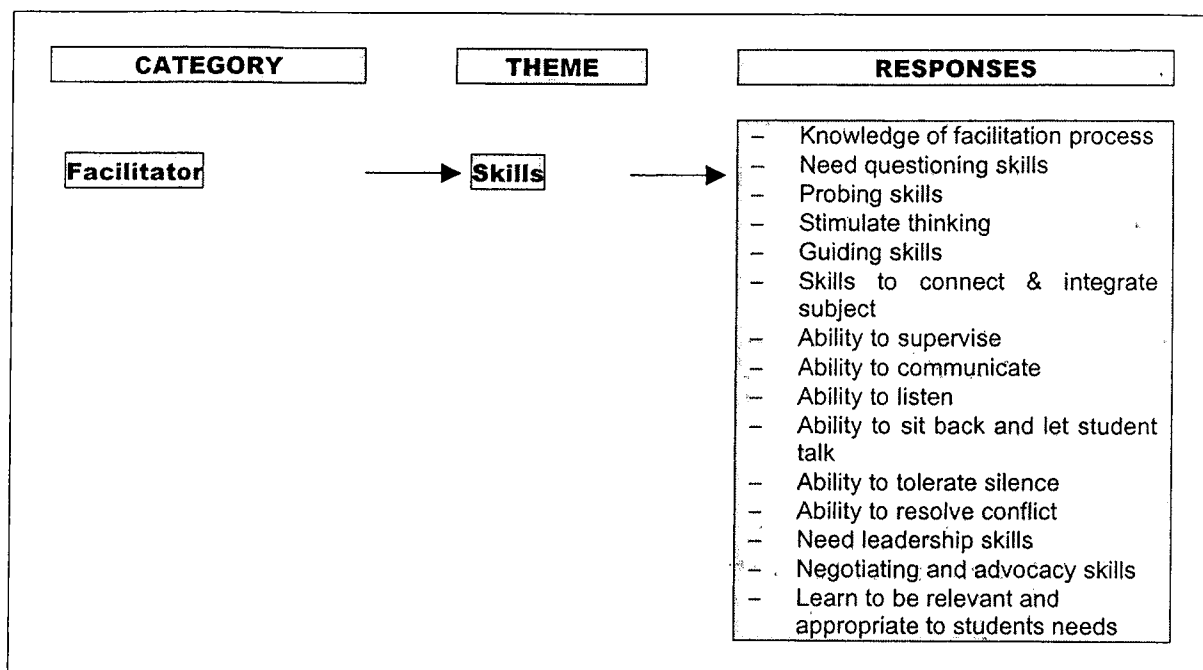
Another aspect mentioned was that facilitators should acknowledge that they do not have all the knowledge as evident in the following excerpt, *"For me it means accepting that I am not the know it all and that I am in this to learn. The only thing that I can do is to grow and this demands preparing and keeping abreast and that students will come up with things that you hardly know and acknowledging to them that you don't know. If you don't know it, you don't know it"*. This encompasses self-awareness and self-disclosure which has already been discussed.

Pintos *et al.* In their study of students' evaluation of facilitators' performance in the Faculty of Medical Science in Lisbon points out that in the affective side of learning the students revealed that they wanted positive pedagogical behaviours connected with the facilitators' personality such as enthusiasm, sense of humour, non-intimidating behaviour.

## **3.4.4 The skills of the facilitator**

### **3.4.4.1 Introduction**

Facilitators are expected to achieve a goal through certain skills for example to help the students learn. Tomlinson (1998: 87-88) says that a skill is a relatively consistent ability to achieve a particular kind of goal through action and that particular skills are identified by reference to their content, that is the goals. There are a multitude of references in the literature about the skills that the facilitator should possess. These will be discussed below.



**FIGURE 3.12: The skills required by the facilitator**

### **3.4.4.2 Knowledge of the facilitation process**

Knowledge of the facilitation process was a skill facilitators regarded as important. They indicated that it is important for them to be able to guide their students. The following excerpts bear testimony to this statement:

*“The point is that you must be knowledgeable about the process”.*

*“Group dynamics get re-established each time with the new group so you need to know the process”.*

*“There are more uncertainties in this approach I don’t think any one success is a predetermination of the next. Knowledge of the facilitation process is very important”.*

From these excerpts it is clear that the facilitation process is not static because it changes with every group. The facilitators need to change the way they facilitate all the time and therefore needs new information to adapt to this change. Donaldson and Mervick (1995:87) believe that facilitators should be knowledgeable and be able to engage in effective group process. Preston-White, Clark, Petersen and Fraser (1999:500-505) describe the group process or group dynamic as the relationship of individuals and the group as a whole. The literature supports the importance of knowledge of the facilitation process by stating that the facilitator must be directive about the learning process to ensure that the group remains on target and makes reasonable choices on learning issues. (<http://meds.queens.ca/medicare/pbl/pblhome6.htm>). The facilitator is also responsible for observing the process and pointing out to the group if there are any process issues that are impeding progress (Robson & Beary, 1995:5). This makes it imperative that the facilitator has knowledge of the facilitation process. Fichardt and du Rand (2000:3-10) also support this view by stating that the facilitator must be knowledgeable about small group management.

#### **3.4.4.3 Questioning skills**

Facilitators mentioned that they required questioning skills. One said: ***“I think questioning skills are very important because you have to guide the students. If you ask a question which does not allow the student to go deeper into the response you wanted, you cannot obtain what you need. You have to be very good at questioning”***. Hansen (1994:94) states that effective questioning contributes significantly to student learning and being able to phrase questions properly is an important ingredient in effective questioning. Tromp (1998:137) further emphasized that the facilitator should be capable of asking the right questions at the right time in a non-aggressive manner and that the facilitator must be skilled in different types of questions namely:

## **Questions**

## **Aims**

Opening-up	at getting the discussion going and keeping it going.
Thought-provoking	stimulate the thought process and participation.
Elaborating	seeks further information.
Confirmation-seeking	seeks mutual understanding and ensures that all participants keep in touch with discussion and foster understanding.
Clarity-seeking	when participants find it difficult to express opinions clearly, facilitator asks for further explanation and helps speaker and others to understand and follow. Argument.
Consensus-testing	searches for common ground. This aims to help the group to converge opinions and move towards consensus.

The types of questioning that are highlighted above are important for facilitation in order to keep the students involved and participating in group discussions. Facilitators in other studies indicated their desire for obtaining questioning skills. Kaufman and Holmes (1996:371-377) in their study on the perceptions of teachers and students on tutoring in PBL in the Medical Faculty of Dalhousie University, also pointed out that facilitators indicated that they wished to receive further training in questioning techniques. In particular

facilitators wished to improve their ability to interject higher level questions without derailing the group process.

White and Evan (1991:112) state that a different kind of questioning is needed in facilitating clinical teaching and that the questions should be structured and sequenced so that the students are led through their own paths of thinking to show how they came to a certain conclusion.

#### **3.4.4.4 Probing skills**

Probing is the questioning behaviour that elicits the highest quality responses from students (Hansen, 1994:94). This skill was mentioned by facilitators as essential as indicated in the following excerpts:

*“Sometimes when you probe some of the quiet ones actually can come up with a challenging question”.*

*“If you don’t have knowledge of the problem you cannot probe because you don’t know what to ask”.*

These statements point out the importance of probing. According to Tromp (1998:137) a facilitator should be skilled in drawing information from people in a non-threatening manner as this enhances the quality of the discussion

#### **3.4.4.5 Ability to stimulate thinking**

The ability to stimulate thinking depends on questioning skills and this was highlighted as a necessary skill by a facilitator who said: *“The purpose of facilitation is to stimulate the student to think critically and to evaluate and not just to regurgitate the information”.* Dennick (1998:598-601) state that the types of questions asked of students are of fundamental importance in promoting thinking and active learning during teaching. In addition the use

of different categories of questions, for example probing, encourages participants to see how aiming at different areas of the domains of learning can encourage students to apply their understanding to new situations and to solve problem, rather than simply factually recalling. Stimulating thinking can bring about critical thinking. The critically thinking nurse is able to retrieve defining characteristics from memory, analyze data quickly and communicate clearly (Collier, McCash & Bartram, 1996:10). To be able to develop such a nurse the facilitator should know how to stimulate thinking. Donaldson and Marnik (1995:92) view the role of the facilitator as that of a stimulator of conversation and dialogue. This skill was found in a study conducted by Pitkälä, Mäntyranta, Strandberg, *et al.* (2000:22-26) in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Helsinki on the training of medical teachers in evidence-based medicine. Critical thinking was achieved because facilitators were encouraged to steer the group by questioning in order to achieve it.

#### **3.4.4.6 Guiding skill**

One facilitator believed that the skill to guide was important. She said: ***“You have to guide the students discretely and not just leave them go off at a tangent”***. Tromp (1998:140) describes a guiding skill as discussion steering to ensure discussion is moving in the right direction, further stating that the facilitator should interject when discussion is going off tract and may air direction-setting ideas to ensure adherence to the objectives that have been set. During interviews with the students which will be discussed in the following chapter one said about direction and her expectation of the facilitator ***“I think the best facilitator when we are in a group must be just listening. If we are deviating from the topic then she must ask us about the relevance of what we are discussing so that we don’t waste time”***. Guidance seems to be very important for the students as indicated in their statements. Biley and Smith (1999:1205-1212) described the role of the facilitator as a non-interventionist guide who would only contribute if asked for help or is convinced that the group need re-direction. In other words

facilitators do not take over the discussion and revert to lecturing, they only intervene when asked to do so. Mulholland (1994:38-42) states that a major difficulty for teachers in transferring to the role of facilitator is the withholding of relevant information and knowing when to feed in new information. This is a highly developed skill and if the teacher gives information too early she soon reverts to the traditional teacher-centred approach. Several studies on facilitators' guidance have been noted. A study on an undergraduate degree course in the United Kingdom shows that some students wanted more guidance because they felt that they lacked confidence in their own abilities to achieve an acceptable depth of learning in certain subjects (Biley & Smith, 1999:1205-1212).

The level at which students want guidance differs from group to group. Senior students may not necessarily desire as much guidance as novice students. A study conducted in the Medical Faculty at the University of Sherbrooke reveals that those students wanted the facilitator to guide them to the right objectives through timely interventions but without taking over the discussions (Beaudoin, 2001:358). Holmes and Kaufman (1994:275-283) in their study on tutor transition to PBL at the University of Dalhousie found that facilitators rated a 'model' facilitator to have group facilitation skills such as intervening appropriately, and stimulating group discussion only when necessary.

#### **3.4.4.7 Making connections**

Facilitators were concerned that their students do not transfer knowledge from one subject to the other and they perceived them to be lacking in the ability to connect subjects. In explaining her role to assist students to connect the facilitator said: *"When I am in the clinical situation and I can see that they are not bringing in that skill, I need to bring a question that will make them look at that because in most cases they are only looking at the physical aspects of what is happening with the patient, they are not looking beyond that. It is your role to help them to bring in the*

*psychosocial part*". Making students connect information is a skill required of facilitators and they should encourage students to make this connection (<http://meds.queens.ca/medicare/pbl/pblhome6.htm>). It is important that students are taught to view a patient or client in totality and this can be done with the help of the facilitator. The ability of students to connect also requires that they become critical thinkers. According to King (1994:17) the hallmark of a critical thinker is an inquiring mind. King states that critical thinkers are constantly analysing new situations, searching for complexity and ambiguity, looking for and making connections among aspects of a situation. No study was found on helping students to integrate knowledge using facilitation.

#### **3.4.4.8 Communicating skills**

Another skill which facilitators regarded as important is communication. One comment was: "*I think you need to effectively communicate with the students*". Booyens (1998:281-282) describes verbal communication as involving spoken words whereas non-verbal communication make uses of body language such as gestures, postures and physical appearance. Tromp (1998:137) insists that facilitators should have strong verbal communication ability and they need to question, rephrase and summarise points made by participants because these necessitate the ability to communicate. Erasmus and van Dyk (1999:181) in addition state that facilitators should be skilled at interpreting non-verbal communication.

#### **3.4.4.9 Listening skill**

Another aspect of communication is listening skill. In the role of the facilitator this attribute is put to the ultimate test because the facilitator should listen for 90% and speak only when it is necessary in terms of managing the discussion. The easiest trap facilitators can fall into is to take up most of the available airtime by voicing their opinions on the issues under discussion (Tromp, 1998:135-136). In support of this statement a facilitator said: "*As a*

***facilitator you need to listen and let the student do more of the talking”.***

Facilitators must be capable of extracting relevant material from a student's contribution and sense a new avenue of thought which needs further explanation (Tromp, 1998:144). For example, the facilitator should be able to extract the essence of a student's contribution and confirm understanding. Lastly the facilitator should be skilled in active listening which is the ability to state in their own words what someone else has said (Erasmus & van Dyk, 1999:181). A person who is capable of reflecting the thoughts expressed by a speaker and can stress important points is a good listener according to Tromp (1998:144). Such a listener is an asset in facilitation because they should be able to help students to reflect information. The study of Beaudoin (2001:358) on the perspective of the medical students about choosing to study at the University of Sherbrooke points out that these students prefer a facilitator who is skilled in listening to students in order to help them make progress.

#### **3.4.4.10 Ability to let the students Talk**

Facilitators indicated that they need to talk less which is a different skill from what they used in traditional methods where they were expected to be talking more and students were doing more of the listening. The following excerpts support the above statement:

***“As a facilitator you don't need to dominate the discussion but let the students do more of the talking”.***

***“One needs to learn to take a back seat”.***

***“If you are a talkative person or you are a real lecturer in the traditional sense then it is difficult to back off in facilitation”.***

In teaching or lecturing the teacher does all the talking but in facilitation the facilitator lets the students do the talking. This is what Robson and Beary (1995:149) refer to as *"backing off"*, talking less and allowing students to talk more. Beaudoin (2001:358) strengthens this argument by stating that the students emphasized that they want their facilitators to refrain from giving them mini-lectures but wanted to be facilitated.

#### **3.4.4.11 Tolerance of silence**

Another important skill is the active use of silence. Brockbank and McGill (1998:172) mention that tolerance of silence is a test of the competence in the facilitator speech. Robson and Beary (1995:121) state that most people find silence acutely embarrassing and will fill the space when silence occurs. They also indicate that it is natural to find silence awkward. One facilitator said the following about silence, ***"Sometime the silence in the class kept disturbing me, I kept jumping trying to cover the content. I wanted them to say something, when in fact in a group discussion you have to let it be, there is no problem in silence as this gives them time to think"***. The literature provides strategies on how to manage silence. One way to manage our inclination to jump in and fill the silence is to try counting to ten slowly. This gives ten seconds worth of thinking time for the person with whom we are working. Facilitators can count to six or ten before intervening in silence and should also manage their body language whilst counting. They should look expectant but also be relaxed (Robson & Beary, 1995:121, Brockbank & McGill, 1998:172). The tolerance of silence was also mentioned by Dana (1997:41-43) who stated that they had to stand back and encourage the students to do things themselves. The same researcher also found that standing back sometimes meant that they had to be able to sit out long silences without giving in to offering solutions during times of a deadlock in group sessions.

#### **3.4.4.12 Conflict management skills**

The ability to resolve conflict was mentioned as an essential skill a facilitator should possess. Rooth (1995:100) says that the facilitator should ensure that there is enough space in which members can analyze their own conflict resolution style and practise different ways of solving and managing conflict. This means that the facilitator does not resolve the conflict but encourages students to deal with their own conflict. In this research facilitators found that students resolve their own conflict. As one said: *"I enjoy facilitating because the students are very active. Whenever there is conflict the students deal with it and it is no longer the lecturer's or the facilitator's responsibility"*. According to Taylor (1997:66) the sources of conflict in a group are many. This may arise from the difficulty in balancing individual needs with that of the group. Taylor further states that conflict can be allowed to emerge to generate learning but it is important that the group learns how to contain it and understand that it need not have devastating effects. Peterson (1997) believes that conflict arises from a lack of understanding and appreciation of the learning styles of others in a group. The opinion of Taylor (1997:67) is that students learn a great deal in groups about how to handle conflict and that students should learn how to negotiate to manage their conflict. Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138) observed that the students spend much time dealing with interpersonal and intergroup conflict. Facilitators should be skilled in helping the students deal with conflict.

#### **3.4.4.13 Leadership skills**

Facilitators have been leaders from their previous role as teachers. However, they also expressed that they needed to learn to be leaders in a facilitative process. One facilitator said: *"We need leadership skills in facilitation"*. Taylor (1997:78) states that it should not be supposed that the facilitator role represents a laissez-faire style of leadership. Rather there is a shared responsibility where both facilitator and students are responsible for learning.

This means that the facilitator is not the only one who takes control of learning by planning and deciding what the students should learn. The students are also responsible for their learning. Musinski (1999:23-29) concludes by saying that a facilitator is not the one who gets students to follow orders but creates a stimulating teaching and learning experience and refers to this as the highest form of leadership.

#### **3.4.4.14 Negotiation skill**

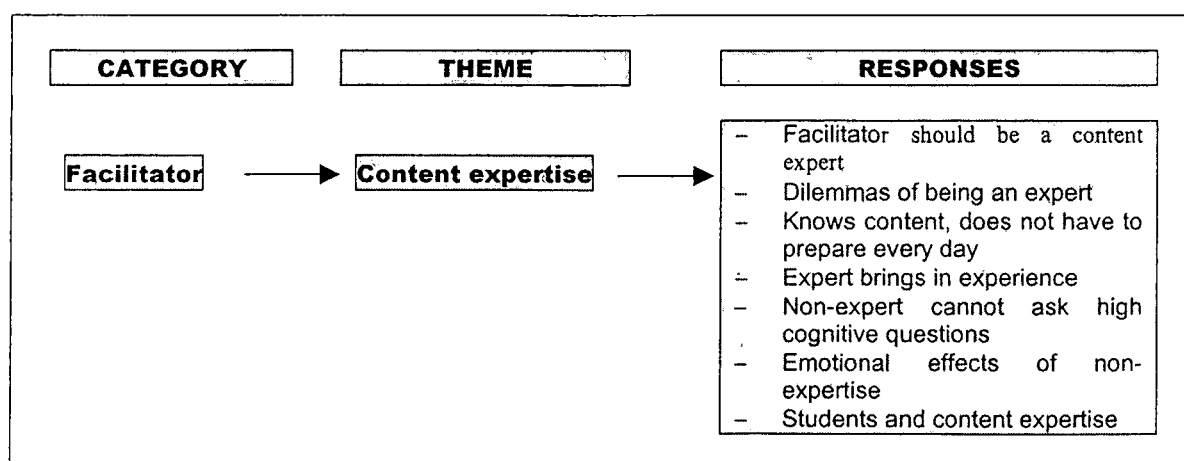
Another skill which facilitators believed to be important is negotiation. One facilitator said: ***“Another important skill that we need is to be able to negotiate with students”***. Prawat (1989) in Creedy *et al.* (1992:727-732) defines negotiation as overcoming obstacles skillfully and believes this to be a process of shared venture between educator and students. This negotiation process attempts to resolve conflicts of interest. Eddy and Schermer (1999:364-367) defines negotiation as a specialized form of communication with another person or group to achieve mutual need satisfaction. It is important that facilitators develop this skill of negotiation because in the traditional approach they do not negotiate with students but inform them what they expect of them. Adamson, Cant and Atyco (2000:198-204) indicate that negotiation skill requires a high degree of assertiveness in order to negotiate on a range of dimensions including resolving difficult relations.

Creedy, Horsfall and Hand (1992:727-732) in their study on PBL in the tertiary nursing program in Australia state that students experience obstacles in their learning. They further state that in helping students to overcome obstacles the role of the educator becomes one of a guide who negotiates meaning and probes the limits of the students' understanding.

### 3.4.5 Facilitator as an expert versus non-expert

#### 3.4.5.1 Introduction

Expertise in facilitation has been a bone of contention. Researchers have argued that expertise in subject content has benefits as well as disadvantages for both facilitators and students as will be noted in the discussions that follow. Facilitators mentioned that it is important for them to be content experts for various reasons mentioned in Figure 3.13 and this will be discussed in conjunction with the literature



**FIGURE 3.13: Facilitator's rationale for content expertise**

#### 3.4.5.2 The need to be a content expert

Wakefield (1996:34) defines expertise as a high degree of skill or knowledge in a specific domain. Neville (1999:393-401) describe a content expert as an individual who possesses more knowledge about the matter at hand. Davis *et al.* (1992) in Neville (1999:393-401) applied an extremely strict definition of what constitutes an expert and they considered only those who had an active research interest in the specific topic being covered by the students to be experts. Although there is a great deal of controversy about the role of the

expert, facilitators insist that it is imperative that they should be experts as indicated in the following excerpts:

*"I think if you facilitate a process anybody can do it. If you facilitate content then you need to be an expert of that content".*

*"You need to know the gaps and lead the students and make them find all the things they need to know. I can understand you can facilitate and that's very well, but you need that knowledge where they need to be going".*

*"I think it is a plus if you have an expert as a facilitator. It makes the facilitator more confident and to feel more secure".*

*"When you are an expert in the field and you roll up your sleeves and you work along the student. They trust you more about the information you give them. I remember having a teacher who only taught us in the class but never came near in the clinical situation. You have no confidence in what that person has the ability to do".*

The above statements are supported by many authors. Barrows (1988) in Chaput and Des Marchais (2001:252) maintains that a facilitator who is not an expert on content is incapable of guiding students towards learning objectives and judging whether the ideas they express and the facts they retain are correct or incorrect. Creedy *et al.* (1992:727-733) is of the opinion that the educator needs a specialist depth of knowledge in order to facilitate an in-depth pursuit of the discipline concepts. Taylor (1997:85) states that the norm in higher and professional education is for the teacher to be seen as the expert who delivers subject expertise but should not be an expert in facilitating

the process. A process expert is knowledgeable in driving the group process. Charlin *et al.* (1998:323-330) insist that one cannot teach clinical reasoning if one is not an expert in the field especially if that clinical expertise is very content-dependent. Brockbank and McGill (1998:155) also assert that facilitators in higher education need to be subject specialists, having a firm grasp of the content. In a study by Caplow *et al.* (1997:440-447) the students identified three roles of a facilitator which they perceived to be critical to their learning namely:

- facilitative expertise, which is the knowledge and the ability to facilitate group work;
- knowledge expertise consisting of the basic science or medical craft knowledge possessed by the facilitator;
- clinical reasoning expertise. This is the facilitator's knowledge of medical problem-solving.

In conclusion Thorton and Chapman (2000:124-132) agree with all the arguments stated above by saying that nursing is a practice-based discipline that engages students in developing not only the theoretical knowledge on which to base client care but also practical knowledge. This definitely requires expertise in guiding the students.

### **3.4.5.3 Experts take over**

Facilitators mentioned that sometimes an expert takes over the class as a facilitator said: *"When I know about the topic I tend to take over because I can see that they are going wrong. If I am not an expert, I sit back"*. Neville (1999:393-401) insists that content experts detract from students self-directed learning by teaching or lecturing them because they have a tendency to lecture leaving students less time to introduce their own ideas. They also

dominate the group. Du Rand (1996:44-45) is also of the opinion that it is a bonus if the facilitator is not an expert in subject content because one is prompt to provide answers defeating the basis of self-study. Engel 1992 in Frost 1996:1047-1053 in a study on PBL found that facilitators who are experts tended to be more directive and spoke longer. Allocating them outside their expertise can cause some anxiety. Holmes and Kaufman (1994:275-283) concur with the above authors as they insist that facilitators who are content experts find it difficult to maintain the facilitator's role. According to MacIntosh (1995:25-27) expertise can undermine strategies of the facilitation process. Despite all the controversy about content expertise all facilitators agreed that they needed to be experts to facilitate the content.

#### **3.4.5.4 Expert and preparation time**

Another advantage mentioned was that experts require less time to prepare for class because they know the content. One facilitator said: *"You have less work when you are an expert. You have less to read, less to worry because you don't have to learn new information everyday"*. This was confirmed by Holmes and Kaufman (1994:275-283) in their study on tutoring in PBL at the University of Dalhousie which indicated that facilitators felt that the more expert they were in the content the less they needed to prepare for the tutorial because they already had the knowledge of the content. Chaput and Des Marchais (2001:253) explain that at Sherbrooke, non-expert facilitators spent long hours preparing the subject matter and they envied colleagues working within their own field of expertise.

#### **3.4.5.5 Experience of an expert**

The experience of an expert is emphasized as very important by a facilitator who said: *"You are an expert in the field, you also have experiences that you bring back to the group that are not documented in text books. I think having expertise is important"*. According to Brink (1994:159)

experiences are shared within a group context making this experience available to each member and serving to deepen and broaden perceptions. . Other sources state that students enjoy facilitators who share personal experiences from clinical practice (Becker, 1999:160). It seems that students value experienced teachers especially in the clinical setting. In a study by Chabeli (1999:24-28) on the learning needs and expectations of student nurses in clinical teaching in a Gauteng hospital, these particular students expressed the need for expert, relevant, up-to-date knowledge and experience from professional nurses.

#### **3.4.5.6 Non-experts and the skill of questioning**

Facilitators mentioned that they needed to be content experts in order to ask questions. One facilitator said when he was not a subject expert he was afraid to ask questions: *"I was scared to test the depth because I was threatened, I didn't know enough. I wouldn't recognize whether they were correct or not"*. This was probably related to the fact that this facilitator did not have knowledge of the content and was expected to facilitate. Kaufman and Holmes (1998:255-256) are of the opinion that to facilitate and ask higher-level content-related questions it is essential to be an expert in that particular content.

#### **3.4.5.7 Emotional effects of being a non-expert**

Facilitators felt uneasy and uncomfortable when they facilitated outside their expertise as evidenced by the following statements:

*"Last year I facilitated psychiatry and I know nothing about psychiatry. That was one of the factors that I did not enjoy. You are never sure in your own heart whether the feedback they are giving is right. As I am not sure about the content I found it threatening"*.

***“We had experience of facilitators who were not experts in the field and that was a torture. It also made you question what it is they are telling you”.***

It is obvious from the above statements that facilitators were not comfortable in facilitating in the areas outside their expertise. Engel 1992 in Frost (1996: 1047-1053) in a study on PBL at the Brunel University College found that allocating facilitators outside their expertise can cause some anxiety and limit the extent to which they could be used as a source of learning.

### **3.4.5.8 Expert and effects on the students**

Facilitators mentioned that students are inspired and trust facilitators who are experts as related in the following excerpts:

***“What I found is that being an expert also makes students to be on their toes. I know because I was doing clinical teaching evaluation. I was going around the hospital and one student actually mentioned it in front of the whole clinical staff saying. ‘You know when X is coming because she knows everything, she has been a general nurse for some time. I have to prepare thoroughly’. It helps to improve your facilitation because that alone inspires the students”.*** From this statement it seems that students are motivated by a skilled facilitator especially in the clinical setting. Tsele and Muller (2000:32-36) conducted a study on clinical accompaniment of critical care nursing students in Gauteng private hospitals. They found that these students were comfortable with, and trusted a skilled facilitator in their clinical learning.

The studies on students facilitated by experts indicate that some had higher achievement scores in their final examination especially those in their first year of study (Schmidt in Neville, 1999:393-401). This could probably result from the rich source of information which students obtain from facilitators. Becker (1999:159) believes it is because the facilitator guides the group process and uses expert knowledge when necessary and this influences what the students will study.

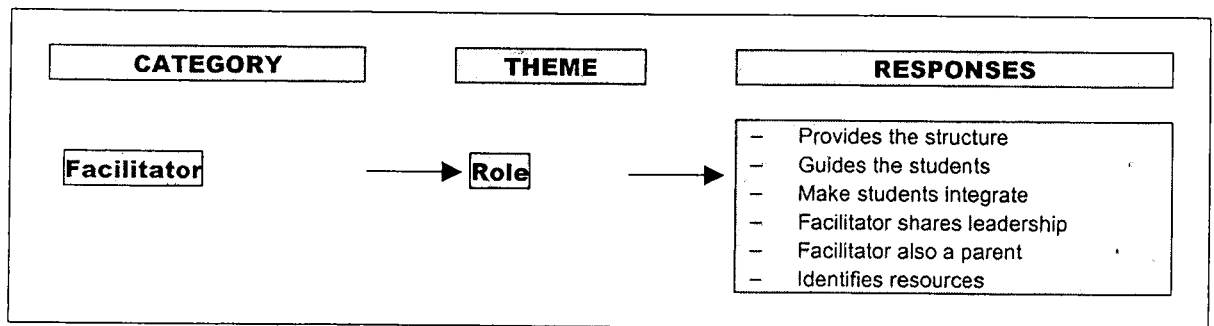
In summary there is a clear divergence of opinion in the literature as to the benefit or disruptiveness of facilitator-content-knowledge expertise on the facilitation of student learning. All facilitators in this study concur that it is imperative in nursing that the facilitator should be an expert in the content as well as the process. Sources in the literature also found that there is no question that the ideal circumstance is for the facilitator to be an expert of the facilitation process and of the subject matter (Chaput & Des Marchais, 2001:251; Frost, 1996:1047-1053).

### **3.4.6 The role of the facilitator**

#### **3.4.6.1 Introduction**

A change from a traditional approach to facilitation requires that the teacher's role change to that of a facilitator. Although they may be content experts who provide the facts they are facilitators responsible for guiding students to identify key issues (<http://meds.queens.ca.medicare/pbl/pblhome6.htm>). Changing from a teacher to a facilitator according to Uys and Cassimjee (1997:136) is a major paradigm shift which requires time and much effort from the staff and it can involve a difficult transition for teachers. Taylor (1990) in Creedy, Horsfall and Hand (1992:727-733) has shown that changing educators' belief about classroom roles is difficult, and it is particularly so in higher education according to Halpern (1994:10) who quoted the following: *"Its has been said that changing a university is a lot like moving a cemetery –*

*you don't get a lot of help from the residents*". Most teachers have been prepared through courses in which acculturation as a teacher, while it may include problem-solving, concentrates on the role of imparting information and developing curricula as an individual expert within a particular area (Alavi, 1995:116). A facilitator's role differs from that of the traditional lecturer because she does not teach but provides assistance to students to develop subject-related learning skills (Holtzhausen, 1998:33-36). These roles are discussed according to figure 3.14.



**FIGURE 3.14: The role of the facilitator**

### **3.4.6.2 Providing structure and covering curriculum**

The curriculum is a plan for providing sets of learning opportunities (Quinn, 1995:268). The structure is the vehicle through which the curriculum is learned. Facilitators believed that it is their responsibility to help students cover the curriculum by giving them structure as indicated in the following excerpts:

*"I find the way to make students cover the curriculum is part of my work".*

***“It is a definite need of students that we should give them structure, that you don’t expect them to come to the process themselves. We realize that it is extremely important to give them the process from the start including steps and context”.***

From the above excerpts it is clear that facilitators acknowledge that they must provide the students with structure. According to Bailey (1992:985-991) facilitation means the learner is given structured help in taking more control over own development and this is well supported by Brockbank and McGill (1995:160) who insist that facilitation does not mean an absence of structure. Facilitators are therefore required to provide structure for student learning but not to give detailed content (Creedy *et al.*, 1992:727-733). In addition to the provision of structure the facilitator provides the framework for learning to take place. According to du Rand (1996:44-45) the facilitator provides structure but the students take responsibility for their own learning. Biley and Smith (1999:1205-1212) point out that there is a need for well structured-guide-lines for students (see point 3.5.1.3). Charlin *et al.* (1998: 323-330) in their study on PBL at Sherbrooke Medical School describe the role of the facilitator in enhancing the process, modelling the various steps of the process and navigating the group through interactive process. The facilitator is expected to possess knowledge of the structure.

### **3.4.6.3 Guiding the students**

The facilitator role involves guiding the group and assisting students to become independent self-directed learners. This role is a cornerstone of facilitation and is crucial to students’ learning (Kaufman & Hansell, 1997:516-518). Facilitators mentioned that they only facilitate the process and the students direct their learning. As one said: ***“In our program what we are really emphasizing is that it should be student-centred and self-directed. As facilitator you should just be there to facilitate the learning process.***

*It is just that the student directs his own learning and you are only there to facilitate the whole process, guide, direct, support and advice".* Katz (1996:45) emphasizes that a facilitator is a guide to help the group to get its work done through positive interactions. The facilitator must be directive about the learning process to assure that the group stays on target and makes reasonable choices on learning issues. (<http://meds.queens.ca.medicare/pbl/pblhome6.htm>). The importance of guiding students is to confirm the correctness of the answers in the classroom and according to Bitzer and Pretorius (1996:5) should be handled by the facilitator. This means the students' answers are complemented by the subject content. The facilitator guides the group in setting realistic goals and developing strategies for achieving those goals and by encouraging individual participation (Katz, 1995:59). The study of Virtanen *et al.* (1999:270-276) (see point 3.3.5.6) shows that the students regarded guiding by the facilitator differently. They referred to the role of the facilitator as that of maintaining the group process and not guiding them towards a better understanding of things. For these students the less the facilitator intervened the better they perceived their group session to be successful.

#### **3.4.6.4 Helping students integrate**

Another role mentioned by facilitators is helping students to integrate information. As a facilitator said: *"There is breaking of borders between subjects such as anatomy, physiology, sociology and others. Students cover all those aspects together under one discussion, so you need to prepare well and help them"*. Some authors indicate that it is the responsibility of the facilitator to encourage students to make connections (<http://meds.queens.ca.medicare/pbl/pblhome6.htm>). Inability to integrate can lead to difficulties in understanding especially in connecting theory and practice. The study of Cassimjee and Brookes (1997:95-102) also indicated that the students found it difficult to understand the practical relevance of their course but this apprehension was attributed to the fact that the program they

were on, community-based learning, was different from the traditional hospital-based training courses. These students needed assistance to make their training more relevant.

#### **3.4.6.5 Leadership role**

Facilitators are viewed as developers of individuals in other organizations (Robson & Beary, 1995:4). Facilitators develop students for a leadership role by sharing this role with them. As one said: *"We share leadership and it is your responsibility to make sure that things are running smooth"*. Peterson (1997) describes a technique called role-sharing which occurs when responsibility for the operation of the team is shared. It then becomes necessary for all team members to be able to lead the team. The same writer says that shared leadership leads to shared accountability and when students overtly share the leadership or facilitator role, they are more attentive to team maintenance issues when they reassume a team member status because they can empathize with the team leader's responsibilities. The researcher could not find any studies that address this aspect.

#### **3.4.6.6 Parental role**

Facilitators also indicated that their role is that of a parent because of the age of the students. One facilitator commented: *"Even the age, these students come straight from high school. They are adolescents and still need you to take care of them. You need to be a mother to be sensitive to their problems as well because they come to you with personal problems"*. Wilkerson and Hundert (1991 in Mullins, 1994:107) redefined the role of a facilitator as a parent, confidante, professional, consultant, learner and mediator. A parental role is viewed to be important as facilitators indicated that students come to them with personal issues. Rooth (1995:18) also declares that facilitators should be sincere because students may share issues of a private nature. They must be worthy of trust and maintain

confidentiality so that students can trust them and depend on them when activities elicit intense emotions. The researcher could not find any study related to this aspect.

### **3.4.6.7 Identifying resources**

In defining one of their multiple roles a facilitator said **“you look for resources which the students will be able to use”**. Even though students are said to be self-directed with the expectation that they search for their learning resources, the facilitator remains responsible for helping them to obtain these resources. Brockbank and McGill (1998:149) state that the facilitator should endeavour to make available the widest possible range of resources for learning and regard himself as a flexible resource to be utilized by the group.

Other roles of the facilitator described in the literature are summarized as follows:

The facilitator ...

- uses techniques and activities that are conducive to actively involve members of the group.
- allows for knowledge to be created by the student group. This knowledge is negotiated, tested and reflected upon.
- allows opportunities for reflection.
- is supportive, encouraging, has empathy as well as an understanding of group process.

- always uses the group context. Should know that learning within a group is a collective activity which is democratic in intent and outcome and that the group share responsibility.
- sets limits and protects participants from psychological harm. This can be done by reinforcing the norms set by the group.
- ensures that that there is an equal power relationship among group members, no domination in the group by any member and all have an equal chance of participation (Rooth, 1995:31-32).

In addition to all the roles that have been mentioned Donaldson and Marnik (1995:87) view a facilitator as:

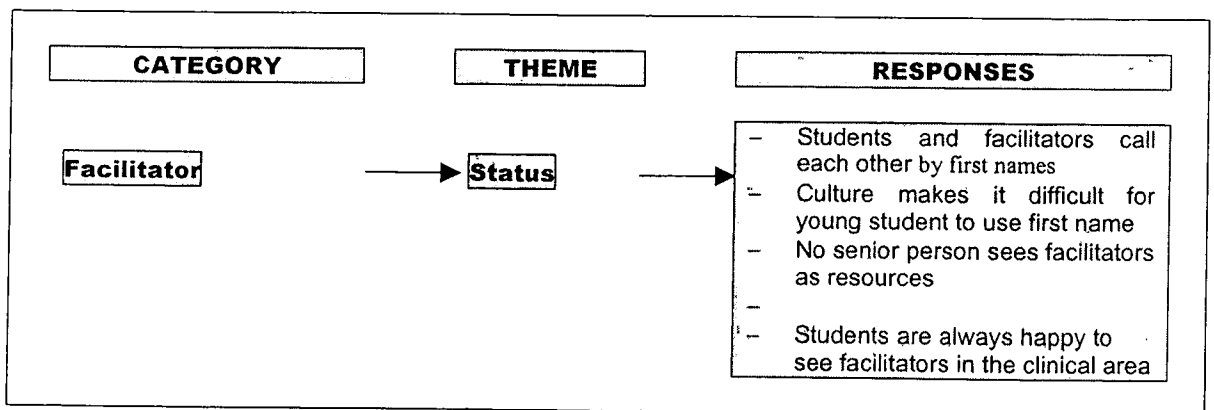
- a mirror through which others reflect on themselves
  - a helper and resource provider
  - a creator of conditions where others can constantly grow and learn.
- These authors add that facilitators should be knowledgeable about and able to engage in effective group process and constructively criticize learners.

The facilitator is also responsible for students by helping them to master the learning content, understand concepts and solve problems. However, the facilitator cannot accept full responsibility for students' success or failure. Facilitators should help as best as they can but cannot blame themselves if students do not want to learn because the cause of the difficulty in the students may lie outside the control of the facilitator (Academic Development Bureau, 1998:13).

### 3.4.7 Status of the facilitator

#### 3.4.7.1 Introduction

In this section the researcher will discuss the effects of facilitation on the status of facilitators and reference will be made to remarks of facilitators as indicated in Figure 3.15 The researcher could not find much information about the effects of facilitation on the status of facilitators. Some facilitators set up barriers between themselves and the group. They may do this by overemphasizing their status. According to Rooth (1995:23) by definition the facilitator is vulnerable and exposed, yet she cannot revert to status and power to find protection. Barriers create a sense of separation between the group and facilitator which is counterproductive to facilitation.



**FIGURE 3.15: Status of facilitators**

#### 3.4.7.2 Use of first names

Facilitators mentioned that they experienced no change in their status and it was not a problem for them when students addressed them by their first names as indicated in the following excerpts:

*"In the first year I didn't insist they call me X, I offered it to them, if they can't do it I leave it because at seventeen they need the boundaries of security. For me personally it is not a problem if a student calls me by my first name. As long as they maintain the boundaries of politeness and respect, I don't mind".*

*"Here as much as you are still a facilitator and you are the teacher the atmosphere between you and the student is much more relaxed. They call you by your first name. They have no problem in coming to see you to ask for help".*

*"I think you become more comfortable when you are a partner with the student when you call each other by names. You must be able to discuss freely and that authority is not there. The students respect you and you respect them. It is better for facilitation to occur".*

From the above excerpts it is apparent that facilitators acknowledged that first year students were young (teenagers) who still need to be supported but it was acceptable for them to be addressed on a first name basis provided students respected them. Respect is seen as a necessary ingredient to a fruitful relationship (Robson & Beary, 1995:96). According to the literature certain verbal behaviour by facilitators can promote students learning and addressing them by their first names is one of the things students appreciate (Academic Development Bureau, 1998:12). Credentials such as professor or doctor are barriers and if these are not used students develop a close relationship with the facilitator without any fear. This can create a warm and caring learning climate. Harden and Crosby (2000:334-347) state that teachers need the ability to communicate with students in an informal way and to encourage student learning by creating an atmosphere in which an open

exchange of ideas is facilitated. Dana (1997:42-43) indicates that informality, democracy and respect contribute to a climate conducive to learning.

However, students sometimes becomes disrespectful as illustrated by this example by a facilitator: *"In the first year the difficulty arises when you wanted to create a friendly atmosphere in the classroom they got quite confused especially with male students. It is very difficult for them to call you by your first name. In the second year they sometimes transgress the boundaries. The guys seem to have a problem becoming assertive. They don't know how far without being impolite"*. This is the time when ground-rules should be formulated and utilized.

### **3.4.7.3 Culture and first names**

One facilitator mentioned the discomfort of being called by her first name because of her age and culture and she said:

*"It was an issue, first of all I don't expect a 17 year-old to call me by my first name. In my culture because of age difference they will either call me mama at this stage, I will expect that they don't call me by my first name. Even for those who call me by my first name it is a problem. First and second years still don't call me by my first name"*.

*"You judge that based on the years of experience and my chronological age. Students cannot call me X in my culture from as soon as I am five years older than them they call me mama"*.

This concern addresses cultural diversity and it is important that individual cultures are respected. Robson and Beary (1995:96) state that different people respect different things. In the above scenario other race groups had no problem with being addressed on a first name basis but some cultures as stated by the facilitator forbid it and this needs to be respected. The researcher could not find any study on culture and the use of first names.

#### **3.4.7.4 Facilitator: The resource person**

Katz (1995:54-55) posits that in facilitation there is a flattening of the hierarchical structure and that there is an egalitarian relationship between the teacher and the students. Simply put this means that there is equality in terms of control in learning." *If I were to speak of senior lecturer PBL students don't know who is senior and that flattens the hierarchy a bit. It helps. The students see everybody as a resource person*". The humanistic approach to education also centres on the relationships between teachers and students. In this role the teacher becomes another learning resource for the learner (Quinn, 1995:103).

#### **3.4.7.5 Facilitator in the clinical setting**

Some facilitators mentioned that because of the informal way in which they relate to their students it is easy for the latter to trust them and they are always happy to see them particularly in the clinical setting. The following excerpt underlines this statement: *"It is very apparent when we do our clinical facilitation. Often people in the hospital say there is such a difference. When traditional tutors come their students all run and hide in the sluice-room or whatever pretending not to be there, but when we come the students come running from everywhere. They are so happy to see us and they won't let you go"*. Facilitation encourages interaction between the students and facilitator. They get to know one another in a close

relationship. According to Mhlongo (1994:199) students like someone who makes connections between their lives and the curriculum, takes time to find their strengths and cares about them and this is an ideal relationship. More about the clinical setting will be discussed in Chapter 4 under clinical experience.

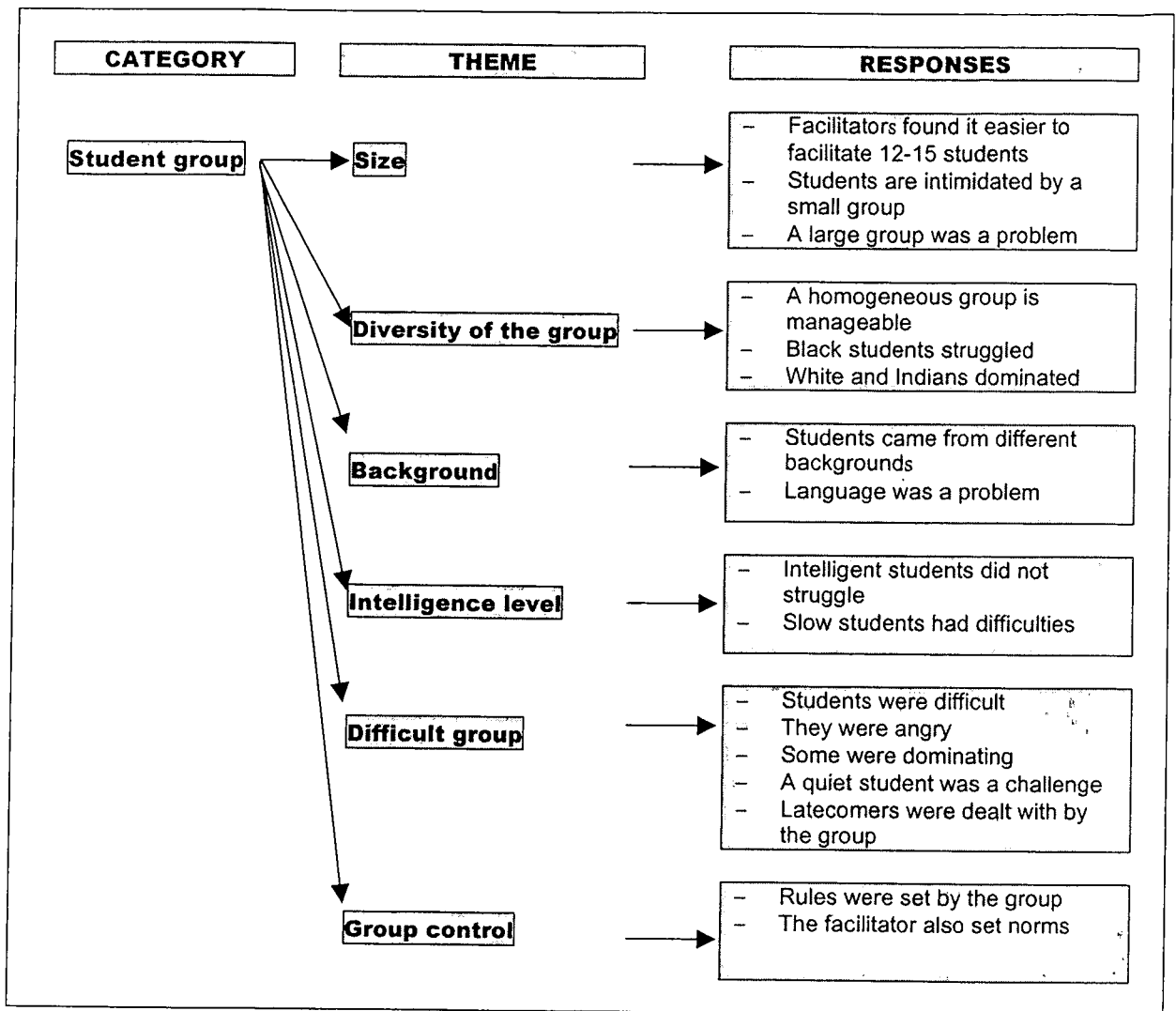
## **3.5 STUDENT GROUP**

### **3.5.1 Introduction**

The literature on facilitation indicates that this approach to learning can be used with small or large groups. According to Quinn (1995:142) the concept of a small group is not simply defined by the numbers of students involved, rather it is the purpose that defines a small group. The same author reiterates the function of an educational small group to be the following:

- **to put the student at the centre of things**
- **to allow opportunities for face-to-face interactions with other group members in order to exchange ideas and feelings**

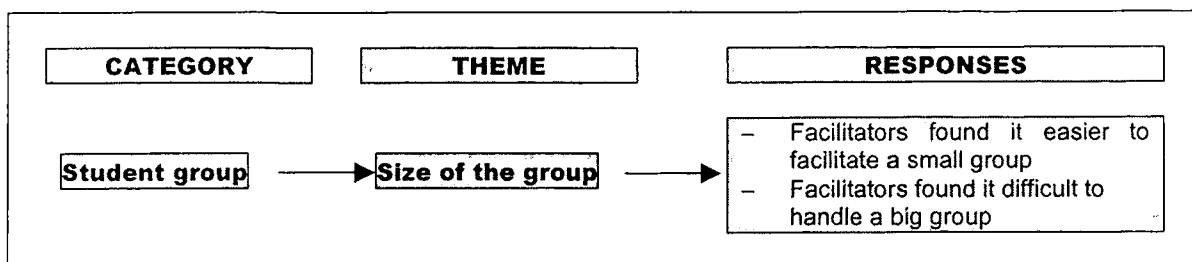
In this section the researcher will discuss the facilitators' experience with the student groups.



**FIGURE 3.16: Student group**

### 3.5.2 The size of the group

Facilitators explained that they facilitated in small groups consisting of different numbers of students. They also indicated the implications which the size of the group had on the group process and their facilitation as illustrated in Figure 3.17:



**FIGURE 3.17: The size of the group**

### **3.5.2.1 A small group**

Facilitators indicated that they found it easier to facilitate a small group of students as one said: *“For four years I found it easier to facilitate a group of 12-15 students than to facilitate a group of five to eight”*. This facilitator stated her preference of facilitating a group not too small but still within the range of a small group. Different ranges of what is perceived to be a small group are described in the literature. Steinert (1996:203-207) considers a group of twenty not to be a small group although six to 12 members are regarded as small. Charlin *et al.* (1998:323-330) found that a size ranging from four to eight students has maximum effectiveness. Katz (1995:56) believes that the ideal group should comprise no more than twelve to fifteen and no fewer than 8 to 10 students. In summary looking at the different ranges given by these authors an ideal group ranges between four and fifteen members.

According to the literature the size of the group will have an effect on the processes occurring within it, particularly with regard to the amount of face-to-face interaction with other group members (Quinn, 1995:142; Academic Development Bureau, 1998:25). According to Katz (1995:142) if a group is too small it is difficult for the facilitator to encourage enough diversity of viewpoints or ideas despite the increased potential for interaction. Another facilitator indicated that in her experience of dealing with students she observed that the latter found it easy to talk in a larger group and were

intimidated in a small group. She said: ***“Students find it easier to talk when there are more of them because there is much scope for discussion whereas they are much more intimidated in my small group I”***. In other words, in a large group students are free to express themselves but less liberated when the group is small.

There are many reason for not participating in the discussions. Katz (1995:142) sites the problem of verbally assertive members who tend to dominate the discussion leaving those who are hesitant or unsure for whatever reason to find it easier to remain quiet and passive. Leonard and Johnson (1998:213-214) discuss a reticent personality who is a person who is just reluctant to speak. Quinn (1995:146) posit that the presence of others can be either inhibiting or facilitating and named this ‘audience effects’, a term given to the effects on an individual’s performance of having other people observing. The same problem was found in the report by Epstein and Northrup (1994) in the study by Cassimjee and Brookes (1998:95-102) that students found it difficult to talk in a particular group but did not furnish the reason for this problem.

### **3.5.2.2 A large group**

One group of facilitators complained that their groups were very big and this made it difficult for them to facilitate. A spokesman remarked: ***“I think the groups are too big for us to be comfortable with facilitation because when you are facilitating there are other students not paying attention”***. This emphasizes the point made by Quinn (1995:142) states that a large group will interfere with face-to-face interactions. Quinn (1995:142) adds that the size of the group has another important bearing on education as the larger the group the less time each individual member will have available for contribution.

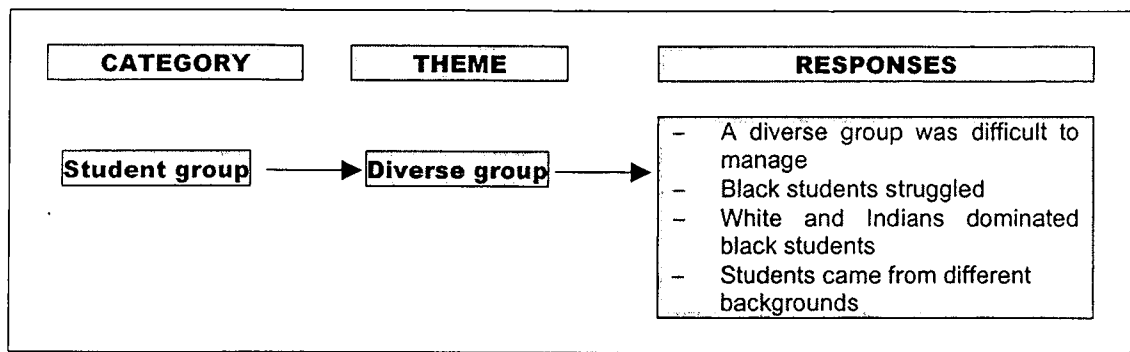
The size of the group is therefore very important. It should be big enough to allow diversity of ideas and small enough for facilitators to reach the students. However Brockbank and McGill (1995:162) found that facilitators who have successfully adopted facilitative methods with small groups may with confidence feel able to handle facilitation of a large group.

Another factor that can make large groups unsuccessful is that the more people present the more likely participants are to hold back and refrain from having their say. They could be doing this out of politeness or unwillingness to hog the limelight or they may be self-conscious under the gaze of a group or because they lack confidence in their ability to make sense or to hold people's attention (Pastoll, 1992:22). Furthermore large groups are prone to degenerate into mini-lectures and need constant supervision to keep to the point.

The problem of a large group was noted in a study of PBL in a new Canadian curriculum where facilitators mentioned that a large group affected their performance and the effectiveness of the group was lower when the group size exceeded nine students (Morales-Mann & Kaitell, 2001:13-19).

### **3.5.3 A culturally diverse group**

Diversity means differences in many things such as race, ethnicity, nationality, language. It also includes factors such as physical handicaps and academic backgrounds (Academic Development Bureau, 1998:17-18, MacDonald, 1994,97). The student population no longer consists of primarily middle class, white females but there is an increasing number of heterogeneous students in nursing (Zafuto, 1997:265-27). In this section the researcher will discuss the diversity of race as a problem encountered by facilitators as indicated in Figure 3.18.



**FIGURE 3.18: Culturally diverse group**

### **3.5.3.1 The difficulty of a diverse group**

Most of the universities visited for this research had students from different cultural backgrounds except one which had a homogeneous group of students. Facilitators mentioned that a homogeneous group was much easier to manage than a heterogeneous group as one facilitator said: *“Having a group that is perhaps more homogeneous is easier to manage than heterogeneous. The culturally diverse group is difficult you need a lot of group skills and group skills do not necessarily work when you have a very wide group context group”*. Culture can be defined as encompassing learned beliefs and behaviours that are shared by a group (Jacobs & Giarelli, 2001:5-13). In each culture people do things differently. The first cultural obstacle to be encountered is language (Slope, 1996:92). Language is a necessary communication vehicle in the classroom and if there is a misunderstanding this can make facilitation difficult. A homogeneous group, because of this sharing, may be easy to handle. Because of their background they will seem to see things along the same line. This is attributed to the concept of shared meaning which is present in all cultures (Duffy & Cunningham, undated).

In a diverse group each person brings knowledge into the classroom which needs to be reconciled with the other group members so that all can move towards a closer understanding of one another (Abrums & Leppa, 2001:270-275). This is supported by Junn (1994:130) who stated that each student brings into a classroom a wealth of unique or personal cultural knowledge that can be tapped as a rich learning resource. A diverse group impacts on the role of the facilitator because it requires a variety of teaching strategies to accomplish educational goals (Zafuto, 1997:265-270). The author adds that although it is difficult to manage a diverse group, it promotes enrichment in learning due to a wide array of information and perspective which a heterogeneous group brings to the discussion. According to Campinha-Bacote (1998:3-4) students should be supported in their attempts to use and express their cultural attributes in the classroom without feeling uncomfortable.

### **3.5.3.2 Black students were struggling**

Facilitators also mentioned that it was difficult to deal with black students who were struggling with the content. One explained: *"It was particularly hard for me as a black woman sitting and understanding the pain of these students, going through emotions of not being able to say what you want to say because they just did not understand"*. This is as a result of their educational background which will be discussed in 3.5.4.

A study by du Rand and Viljoen (1999:4-13) on the development and support program for first year black nursing students at the University of the Free State reported that these students struggled to adapt to the sub-culture of nursing, the use of a foreign language (English) as well as the use of technical medical terms and thus needed a support program to help them adjust. According to Zafuto (1997:265-270) it is therefore important that nursing education include diversity programs in the curriculum and facilitators should be developed to be more sensitive to the diverse needs of the students.

### **3.5.3.3 Domination by white and Indian groups**

Facilitators found that some students (white and Indian) who were also intelligent dominated other students of a different race. One facilitator expressed this as follows: *“We had very dominant white middle class English girls who were very angry having to do this and very vocal. It was very clear that the group was a hindrance to them and as a consequence black students who were a very diverse group of Xhosa, Zulu, Venda were clouted by the Indians and whites who were very bright, vocal and articulate. The blacks found it very difficult to participate among these dominant students”*. The reason for such behaviour could be that white students are not used to cultures other than their own. However, the facilitators did not mention how they handled this situation. A study on experiences and comfort with culturally diverse groups in an undergraduate pre-nursing program conducted by Eliason and Raheim (2000:161-165), demonstrated that white undergraduate students entering the healthcare profession have had little experience with diverse cultural groups and that many felt uncomfortable with the thought of working with diverse clients. Rees (1991:137) states that the facilitator has a responsibility of preventing domination by one group. Junn (1994:153) believes that facilitators should be sensitive in their communication skills in handling difficult diverse situations.

Some strategies that can help the facilitator in dealing with diversity are specified in the literature. These are that facilitators should ...

- recognize biases or stereotypes that they have, for example unconsciously discouraging black students from participating in discussions.

- treat each student as an individual and respect each student for who he/she is. Each person has unique characteristics and background.
- rectify any language patterns that exclude or demean any groups. They should recognize that students come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.
- acquire a sense of how students feel about the cultural climate in the group.
- value all contributions and step in if students ignore the viewpoint of others.
- encourage all students to participate in class discussion. They should prevent domination and those who monopolize group discussion.
- monitor how they interact with different students, for example high or low achievers. This behaviour can demoralize students making them feel intellectually inadequate. Observations indicate that facilitators tend to evaluate positively students who challenge viewpoints, speak out and participate actively.
- be able to engage with students who are verbally assertive (Academic Development Bureau, 1998:19-22).
- ground rules can be formulated to encourage learners to appreciate diversity because they can learn from their differences such as culture, learning styles and problem-solving approaches (<http://www.csnp.ohio-state.edu/glarr/glossary>).

### **3.5.4 The background of students**

Facilitators mentioned that students came from different socio-economic as well as educational backgrounds. These had an impact on their learning as one facilitator said: *“A lot of them come from schools that have a media centre, they are used to looking up reference material, they come from homes where they have television, computers and internet. Some come from backgrounds where learning, reading and discussions are discouraged. A lot of them come from backgrounds where they don’t have lights and water”*. The home environment has an impact on student learning. According to Jubber (1994) in Mpelwane (1998:13) there are homes which are deleterious to school education because they are materially impoverished. At these homes there are no books, magazines to stimulate reading. Adellman and Taylor (1983) in Mpelwane (1998:13) further state that being in an impoverished environment for a prolonged period results in deprivation of learning opportunities and this has a detrimental effect on children. This situation is common in homes where parents sell beer for a living on the home premises and this place is always noisy and there is no privacy.

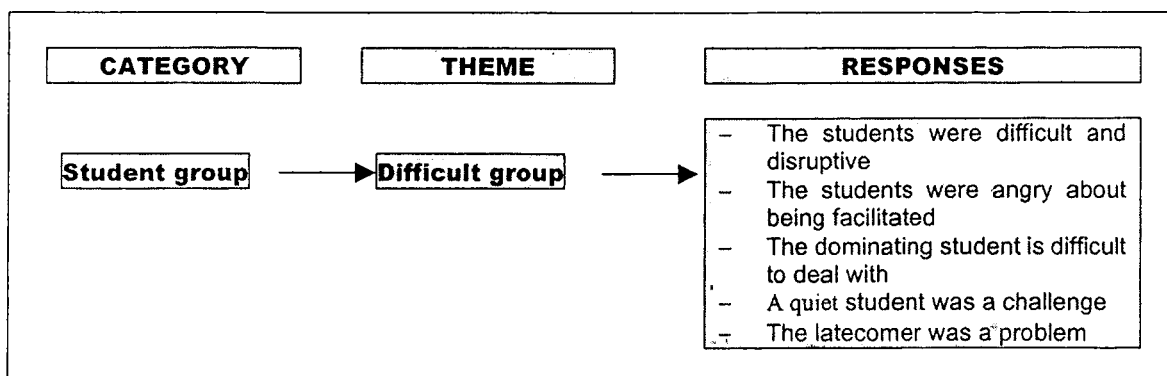
Facilitators indicated that students came from a traditional system of rote learning which made it difficult for them to cope with being facilitated and they also had to struggle with the language (English) as they were not English-speaking as indicated in the following excerpts:

*“They are taught in a rote learning system and there are no computers. We are dealing with a lot of characters”*.

*“They were also frustrated and the pace of learning and volume of theory was hard coming from rote learning and struggling with the second language that was particularly hard”*. Rote learning involves memorizing without any serious attempt to comprehend what is being learned. It is not meaningful and cannot be related to what the learner knows (Mwamwenda, 1998:218). The same problem was found in other studies. Pimparyon, Roff, Mcaleer *et al.* (2000:359-364) found in their study on student approaches to learning and their academic achievement at Thai Nursing School that students rely heavily on rote learning and memorizing to cope with course requirements. A number of researchers have found that black students, especially in their first year, experience learning difficulties due to the language problem (Nyamapfene & Letseka, 1995; Ferreira, 1995, du Rand & Viljoen, 1999). Facilitators should recognize that students come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds (Academic Development Bureau, 1998:19). A study by Cassimjee and Brookes (1998: 95-102) in the University of Natal on concerns of undergraduate students in a PBL and community-based curriculum demonstrated that students who came from diverse groups in society had a problem with interaction and communication.

### **3.5.5 Difficult students**

There was concern among facilitators about students who were difficult and sometimes disturbed the group process. The difficulties commonly found in small groups have the following features: dominating, submissive, talkative, quiet which require careful strategies to address them (Rees, 1991:135). Facilitators were concerned about problematic students. These included those who disrupted and dominated group discussions, quiet students and latecomers, and they mentioned that sometimes they did not know how to handle them. These will be discussed as set out in Figure 3.19



**FIGURE 3.19: Difficult group**

### **3.5.5.1 Difficult and Disruptive students**

Small group teaching has many benefits but also certain limitations (Steinert, 1996:203-207). Facilitators experienced difficulties at some point in their facilitation. The difficulty was caused by the group of students facilitated at that time. One facilitator explained the reasons for these difficulties as follows: *"I have two years of experience, this year is very different from last year. The big part of it has got to do with the group of students. Last year it was very difficult not only because it was new for me but also because last year's students were not co-operative. It was a difficult group of students, if I can say that"*. According to Rees (1991:138) a difficult character can be described as an obstinate person who can disrupt the group process and this individual will not see the point and will not get along with the rest of the group. The same writer says in an attempt to solve this problem, the facilitator should try to get the group to help this person see their point of view.

Unfortunately for this particular facilitator the whole group was disruptive and that caused a lot of frustrations. The same facilitator further explained the causes of the difficulty in the following excerpt: *"They just didn't want to participate, they didn't prepare for the group, if they prepared, it was poor preparation. They literally wrote everything out of their books.*

***There was no interaction, no discussion***". This characterizes the storming stage of group formation where students have personal agendas. There is the possibility of conflict arising and group learning may be hampered (Academic Development Bureau, 1997:28, Silins & Murray-Harvey, 1994:254). It is at times like this that Katz (1995:64) advises the use of a support group and that it is essential for facilitators to have the freedom to call on a colleague for help in dealing with the problem.

The lack of preparation for group sessions will not only cause difficulties for the facilitator but also hinders learning resulting in discomfort in students. There are many reasons why students do not prepare for class and laziness is one of them. Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138) found that some group members were lazy to prepare for class sessions and this was an unpleasant experience for other group members.

Some facilitators stated that they had very disruptive students who disturbed the group process: ***"We also had two very disruptive students who interrupted the whole process the whole year. I was running around in circles not knowing where to go and I am concerned about the learning pace of the others. We came together and said what do we do with this group in the future and as a facilitator I was struggling with them"***. Incidences of disruptive students were also found in other studies. Kaufman and Holmes (1996:371-377) in their study on perceptions of teacher and students on tutoring in PBL at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Dalhousie also found that some facilitators encountered difficult situations in their groups because of disruptive students who sometimes caused problems. Researchers emphasize that these behaviours can hinder group process and retard progress. The facilitator should handle the problem before it gets out of hand. Individuals should not be embarrassed when a problem is handled. If members are hurting the productivity of the group the facilitator can deal with the individual in front of the group or during a break (Rees, 1991:135).

### **3.5.5.2 Anger of students**

The facilitators mentioned that the students were angry because they were facilitated only in nursing courses whereas the other courses were still conducted by the traditional methods. This negative emotion of anger made the facilitators to perceive students as difficult when the facilitator said ***“The students were angry at the whole process because we were the only department using PBL and the rest were on traditional model, and with frustrations they needed to bounce back everything back to us so we were their punching bags. They needed to find an excuse and it was either the process or the facilitator and it was never in the open and it was creating anxieties in us”***. Facilitators did not mention how they dealt with the anger of the students. This seems to be a normal reaction of students because Conrick (1994:237-241) in his research on managing student transition in PBL at Griffith University observed that students reacted in the same way when they were first made to study in small groups. Those students displayed some degree of denial, they were angry and confused because they felt as though they were going round in circles. Clements and Spinks (1993:139) suggest the following strategies for dealing with anger:

- Staying calm and keeping self-control.
- Not to take anger personally.
- Trying to identify the source and the direction of the anger
- Working through the reasons why the persons feel as they do. Do they need information or support, are they frustrated.
- Diffuse anger by identifying and dealing with the source.

- Find out if other people are feeling the same, this helps to spread the load.
  
- Work through the consequences of anger.

### **3.5.5.3 Talkative and dominating students**

A talkative and dominating student was also a source of concern for facilitators as one said: *“You ask questions when there are difficult students because there are problematic students, how do you deal with a student who is actually high-jacking the whole discussion”*. From this excerpt it is clear that this student dominates the group by talking too much. According to Rees (1991:137), the overly talkative person comments too frequently and often frustrates and discourages others waiting for them to finish. This person may be the kind that show off or may be well-informed and eager to contribute. They will dominate the group and dampen the energy level of the group. Virtanen *et al.* (1999:270-276) in their study on assessing the quality of tutorial sessions among medical students in a PBL curriculum at the University of Tampere found that the students describe this dominance by referring to a dominating colleague as a *‘terrorist student’* who discourages others by talking too much and irritating them by his or her behaviour. The students in this particular study rated their group session to be unsuccessful because of this kind of student.

Rees (1991:137) states that sometimes the group members will correct this type of person but when they do not the facilitator must intervene to maintain group productivity by cutting across this person’s talk with a summarizing statement and directing a question to someone else.

### **3.5.5.4 A quiet student is a challenge**

Another challenge for facilitators was a quiet student. The following excerpts illuminate this problem:

***“A quiet student is a problem in facilitation”.***

***“A quiet student reflects back to you, have you achieved the goals of facilitation because here you are you have four students and two of them have never spoken a word”.***

***“When you are evaluating them, the quiet ones say you are targeting them but you are not, you just want to bring them in because they are quiet”.***

Some researchers mention several aspects about a student who is quiet and will not participate in group discussions. There are people who are quiet because of their personality. According to Leanard and Johnson, (1998:213-215) a personality quality in which a person is reluctant to speak is called reticence and the reasons for this aberration include deficient communication skills, fear and anxiety with oral communication, a preference for solitude, an inward intellectual focus and an inherited trait.

Another factor which facilitators stated to contribute to non- participation is upbringing where people are taught not to talk back to authority. In an attempt to explain this one facilitator said: ***“One student said to me, you don’t understand, you are asking me to venture to talk and discuss and argue with you. I have not been taught like that. I have been taught not to talk back”.*** According to the literature facilitators should recognize that some students were brought up to believe that challenging people who are in a position of authority is disrespectful or rude. These students may be reluctant to participate out of fear of reinforcing stereotypes about their ignorance

(Academic Development Bureau, 1998:22). This characteristic of a quiet student has been perceived as a challenge in other studies. Morales-Mann and Kaitell (2001:13-13) found a quiet student to be a challenge and suggest that facilitators can encourage them to talk by:

- Assigning each student to report on research findings. This increases participation.
- Assigning members various roles to contribute encourages participation.

The following were suggested by Rees (1991:137) for managing quiet individuals:

- Determine what is motivating the person, whether it is boredom, indifference, feelings of superiority or insecurity.
- Determine if the person comes from a culture that believes it is rude to jump and interrupt.
- Ask direct questions that you are sure the person can answer.
- Ask for his agreement or opinion on views expressed by others.

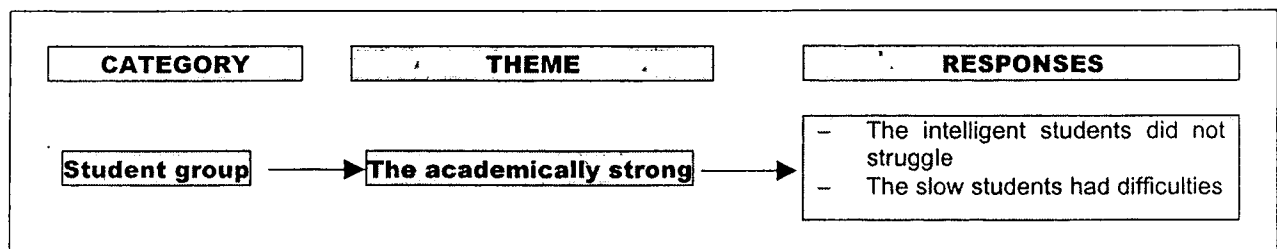
### **3.5.5.5 Late-comers**

Students that came to class late caused problems for the facilitator and the group. One facilitator phrased this problem as follows: *“One particular student was always late and was becoming a real pain. She left to go for tea and she did not come back on time. The group decided to lock her out. I want to say that as a facilitator you hand the power back to the group, because that’s what I remember doing with one of my groups”*. Rees (1991:138) suggests that the reason for being always late should be sought because it may be an important reason. It should also be pointed out why this behaviour is disruptive and the latecomer should be involved in figuring out a solution to the problem. Ground rules which will be discussed

later should be brought in when dealing with student issues. Finally Rooth (1995:20-21) asserts that the facilitator should be able to cope with a difficult group by realizing that this behaviour is a result of the group's needs and shortcomings rather than with the personality of the group. The researcher could not find any study about latecomers.

### 3.5.6 The academically strong students

The academically strong students were viewed by facilitators as intelligent students. Every student who comes to a class is unique and differs in terms of level of intelligence as individuals are born with different genetic make-ups (Morris, 1996:269). It is common to find students who are high, average and low achievers in one group and this will be discussed below.



**FIGURE 3.20: The academically strong student**

#### 3.5.6.1 The academically strong students prospered

The bright students were viewed as high achievers with certain advantages by the facilitators as indicated in the following excerpts:

*"I think the bright student is able to look through the scenario and analyze it faster than the others".*

*“Two years ago I didn’t struggle much with the content because it was easy for them to come up with goals. Maybe they were brighter students and the interaction was not much of a problem”.*

*“The bright student who does not have time to wait for someone is frustrated by a slow student”.*

Facilitators need to understand that individual students differ. According to the literature the facilitator should be cautious of how she interacts with different students as high achievers are always evaluated positively and low achievers negatively. This behaviour can demoralize students making them feel intellectually inadequate (Academic Development Bureau, 1998:21). No study was found on intelligent students and facilitation

### **3.5.6.2 Difficulties with slow students**

Facilitators experienced problems with slow students. These were perceived to be struggling with their group work and other activities as indicated in the following excerpts:

*“For a slow student who has problems in taking notes from her prescribed book and other material and to bring to in class, what they do is to re-write the text book. They also cannot explain from anything they hear in class and as a result they cannot participate”.*

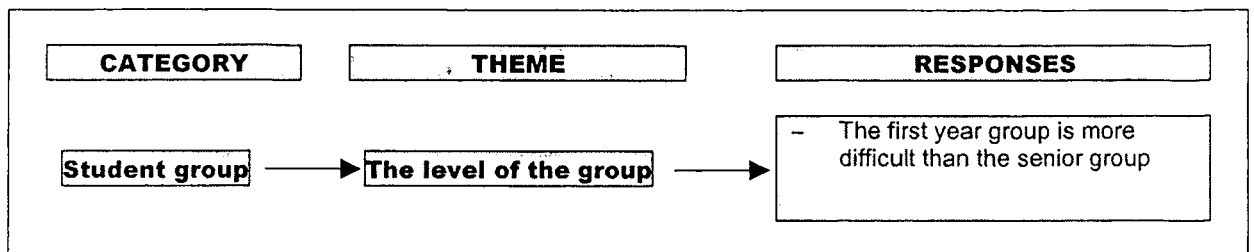
*“I think with the last two groups which is explained largely by those who are slower when they go to the library to search for journals, it takes hours to get ready for the next day whereas the bright students have no problems sitting on the internet picking up a journal”.*

Students struggle basically come from poor educational backgrounds as discussed under point 3.5.4. Because of lack of exposure in their secondary education these students struggled when they were expected to function in a group. In a study conducted by de Villiers (1996:135-139) on disadvantaged students in South Africa it was found that the students who were disadvantaged in terms of their schooling and socio-economic backgrounds were not prepared for the learning demands of tertiary education institutions. The writer explained that black education has in a certain sense created an environment where the students did not have the opportunity to develop the necessary learning and cognitive skills.

Another aspect which made these students struggle was that they were carrying other courses that they had failed from the previous year especially their first year as indicated above. One facilitator explained: *“There were a lot of repeat students who already were anxious about what is happening in that year and, also the fact that because they are repeating other courses they were not spending time studying nursing and whatever free time they had which they have to do research they were actually catching up on the other courses that they haven’t passed”*. Researchers provide evidence that students fail in their first year and build up a backlog of studies because they carry courses from their first year and this makes it difficult for them to cope with the load if the support they require is not provided (du Rand & Viljoen, 1999:4-13; Cassimjee & Brookes, 1998:95-102).

### **3.5.7 The developmental stage of the group**

Groups function differently at different times of the year and are experienced as pleasant or unpleasant depending on how they present themselves to the facilitator.



**FIGURE 3.21: The level of the group**

### **3.5.7.1 Facilitating first years versus senior students**

The following excerpts by facilitators explain experiences with the development of groups from the first year to their senior level:

*“But again with the group it depends what stage the group is at. The group itself grows over a certain period of time. If you go to my group now it is different from when they started. They grow over the period of time, they are much more vocal. Maybe in January they would have sat and kept quiet but as you grow they grow with you”.*

*“The person who is facilitating the first year group is faced with a lot of problems compared to the people who are in the fourth year because even with me when I was facilitating for the first time I was so scared I didn’t know what to do”.*

*“When I pick up the problematic students by the time they are in the third year there isn’t a problem because the process has been mastered. You find that the third years who were a problem in second year are wonderful. They are working in groups. The brighter ones are working with the slower one”.*

Facilitators experience fewer problems with students at a senior level compared with the beginning students according to the excerpts quoted above. According to the literature the level at which the group is can influence the group process, for example the first year students come from a background of dependency learning in secondary school. They may experience difficulty in adapting to tertiary education where they are expected to be independent. (Academic Development Bureau, 1998:36). A group that is used to being facilitated according to Rees (1991:85) will begin to suggest its own process and will police itself. Furthermore groups that are new to facilitation need to be reminded from time to time about how to proceed.

The students need first to know and learn about each other and acquire certain knowledge as facilitators indicated in the following excerpt: ***"It all depends on them knowing one another, getting used to one another and also on them acquiring knowledge. As they acquire knowledge in a specific area they are free to talk"***. Student group evolve through stages, namely the forming, norming, storming and performing stages which all have certain characteristics. (Academic Development Bureau, 1998:28, Silins & Murray-Harvey, 1994:254).

### ***The forming stage***

This stage commences with members interacting as a group for the first time. The group experiences a common and shared need such as inclusion, acceptance and belonging. They might also feel threatened and have feelings of rejection (Academic Development Bureau, 1997:28, Silins & Murray-Harvey, 1994:254).

This stage is recognized by the following signs:

- polite and cautious interaction;
- more silent members;
- avoidance of conflict;
- searching for direction and purpose;
- setting initial goals (Silins & Murray-Harvey, 1994:254).

### ***The storming stage***

This stage is characterized by members testing the strengths and weaknesses of others. There are issues of power, control, status, authority and stress. Discussions are rushed and there are personal agendas involved. Conflict may arise during this stage. Group learning may be hampered (Academic Development Bureau, 1997:28; Silins & Murray-Harvey, 1994:254).

This stage is recognized by :

- conflict between members and members and facilitator;
- power struggles between members and members and facilitator;
- emotional outbursts;
- criticism and expression of dissatisfaction about the process;
- withdrawal of participation of previously active members;
- questioning decisions made earlier (Silins & Murray-Harvey, 1994:254).

This stage was recognized by a facilitator who said: ***“You see there come insecurities. Second years, they are not aware that they don’t know enough, that scares them. They feel crushed or rushed or whatever”.***

## ***The norming stage***

In this stage the group norms are established. The group focuses on acceptance of group members, consideration, respect and group cohesion. The group realizes the strength of members and builds on it to solve problems (Academic Development Bureau, 1997:28, Silins & Murray-Harvey, 1994:254).

This stage is recognized by:

- development of cohesion;
- mutual support from members;
- willingness to change and consider alternatives;
- recognition of group decisions having precedence over individual needs and feelings;
- ready sharing of information (Silins & Murray-Harvey, 1994:255).

## ***The performing stage***

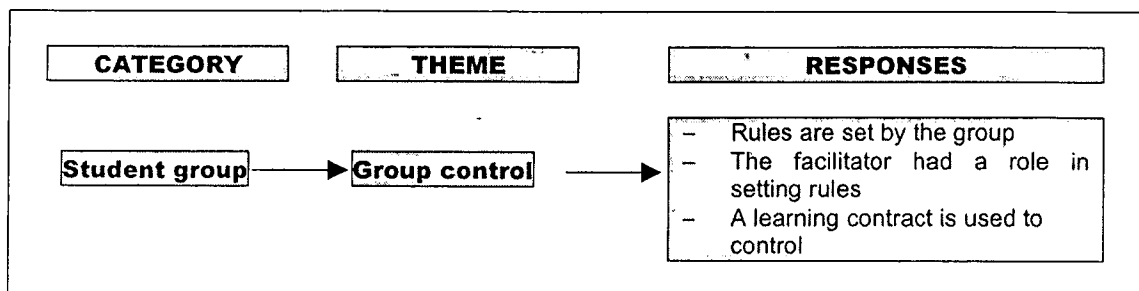
Group development is most productive in this stage. There is interdependency, dependency, high commitment, warmth and freedom. The group seems to solve problems and achieve goals. Some members start withdrawing from the group as their needs are met (Academic Development Bureau, 1997:28, Silins & Murray-Harvey, 1994:257).

Characteristic signs of this stage are:

- all members are fully involved;
- members accept differences;
- members volunteer to work;
- maintenance of warm relationships;
- promotion of creativity (Silins & Murray-Harvey, 1994:257).

### 3.5.8 Group control

The group is controlled by setting group norms. These are defined as required or expected behaviours and beliefs of group members (Quinn, 1995:144).



**FIGURE 3.22: Group control**

#### 3.5.8.1 Setting of ground rules

Facilitators mentioned that rules were set by the groups to control activities. The following excerpts are examples of what facilitators said about ground rules:

*“The other important thing which is absolutely good is ground rules. What we did, we set our ground rules in the study guide but, within a small group they still have their own ground rules. The universal ground rules that are applicable for tests, rules and regulations should be well illuminated”.*

*“The ground rules have to be talked about here for interaction to happen in the freest way. You have to have rules”.*

***“The group set their own rules, a form of control or discipline. You use the rules to discipline them. The group discipline the member that is misbehaving”.***

Hitchcock and Anderson in Peterson (1997) also recommend that ground rules be established to govern student interactions. Peterson (1997) states that rules should be elicited from the group members, with certain ground rules deemed mandatory for example, students should be punctual. Huff (1997:434-436) found that ground rules should be established to ensure that students develop trust and clear communication.

### **3.5.8.2 The role of the facilitator in setting rules**

The facilitator also has an important role in setting ground rules. Rooth (1995:13) state that this is one time when the facilitator is advised to be directive or should exert authority. They therefore said the following about their role, ***“The students can come up with the worst punishment than you can think of, that’s when you come in as a facilitator when they come with a very harsh punishment. Your facilitation skills are also put to the test”.*** Facilitators must intervene if they consider the punishment to be severe so that the student is also protected. Townsend (1994:108) narrates that students during tutorials requested that the facilitator intervene to settle a dispute and some frustration was generated when the facilitator chose not to take over. It is therefore important that the facilitator is involved in establishing ground rules.

### **3.5.8.3 The learning contract**

A contract is signed in the first year to control activities as indicated in the following excerpt:

*“In the first year they understand the concept of a contract. You try and set the contract in the first year. They really struggle to know the importance and they don’t see it as their responsibility in the beginning but they later understand and we use it to control the group activities”.*

Learning contracts are a means of reconciling the learning needs of the student and those of the interested parties such as educators (Quinn, 1995:106). They were introduced in order to increase the opportunity for students to negotiate the learning process and resources within the constraints of the syllabus content and the overall course curriculum (Talbot, 1994:107). The learning contract according to Majumdar (1996:43-46) is an agreement between the student and staff member which outlines in detail the exact course requirements and the expectations of the student and the staff member. It is comprised of five components namely:

- course expected clinical behaviour;
- student learning objectives;
- resources to be used;
- evidence of evaluation;
- the terms of evaluation.

According to Hammond and Collins (1991) in Dana (1997:41-43) a learning contract is a written agreement prepared by the learner with support from the facilitator, based on the learner’s needs. It includes details about what will be learned, stated as objectives, how it will be learned, by when, what criteria will be used to evaluate the learning and how learning will be validated. The same author relate her experiences as a student in a Masters’ program that they

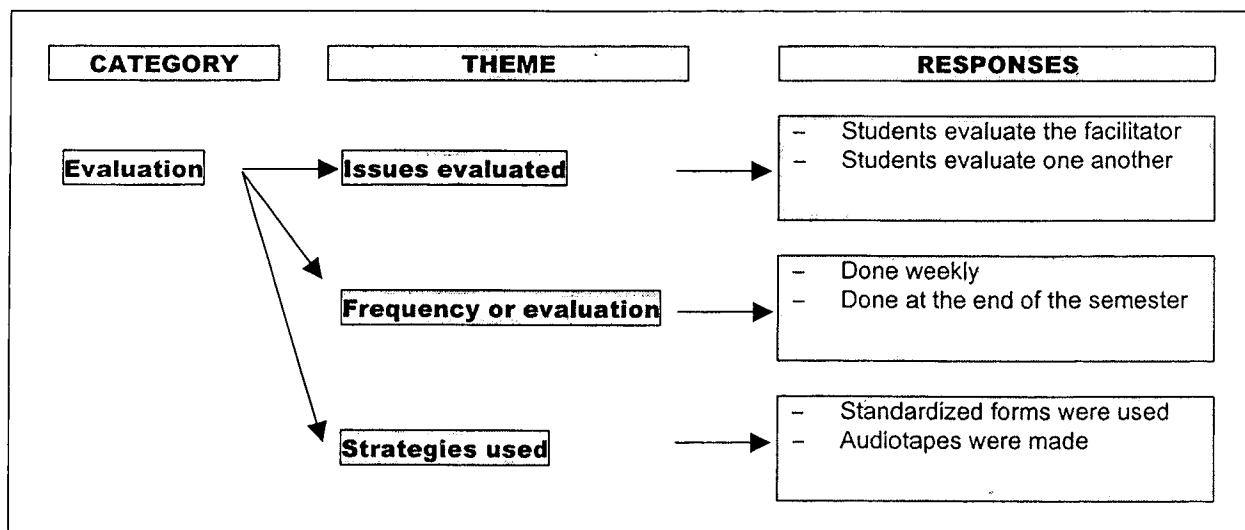
used learning contracts to ensure that as learners they had a say in the aspects of their learning.

### 3.6 EVALUATION

#### 3.6.1 Introduction

Evaluation is a vital aspect of any teaching–learning program. It plays an important role in determining what students actually do in any type of program (Charlin *et al.*, 1998:323-330). Evaluation will be discussed under the following themes:

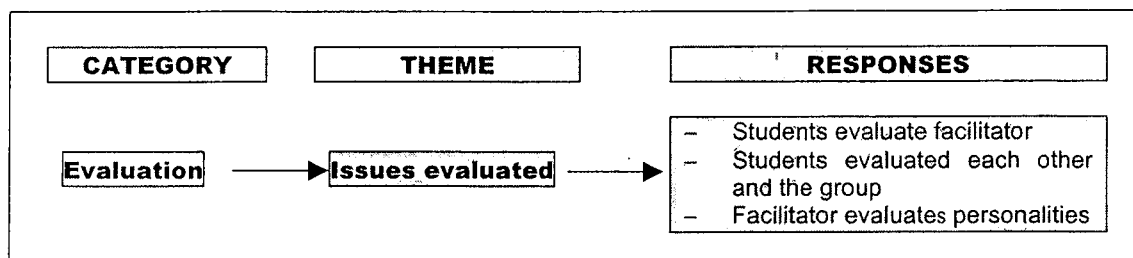
- Issues that are evaluated.
- The frequency of evaluation.
- Strategies used for evaluation as indicated in Figure 3.23.



**FIGURE 3.23: Evaluation of facilitation process**

### 3.6.2 Issues evaluated

Evaluation was done by group members. The facilitator, students and the group process were evaluated as indicated in Figure 3.24.



**FIGURE 3.24: Issues evaluated**

#### 3.6.2.1 *The students evaluate the facilitator*

Facilitators and the group process were evaluated by means of feedback from the students. Facilitators stated that the students asked to evaluate them on how they performed their roles in the group as evidenced in the following excerpts from the focus interviews:

*“A few of the students in my group told me they wanted to evaluate me as well because I am part of the group. It was very helpful because sometimes you get caught in what you are doing you don’t realise that you are really doing this or that and so it helps you grow as well”.*

*“They evaluate the facilitator. If you have done something wrong they will tell you that today you were like this and they did not like it”.*

*“At the beginning when you are not used to it, it’s a bit difficult, but if you are used to it you easily accept that one. Then you look into yourself and try to correct your mistakes. So we all grow in the process together with the students until the end of the year”.*

The students are the best people to evaluate the facilitators because they spend most time interacting with them in a group and they also have an opportunity of observing their behaviour. According to Taylor (1997:87) it is crucial for facilitators` professional development that they invite feedback about the way they have carried out their role. The same writer says that it is a central aspect of ethical practice to regularly invite feedback about their practice as facilitators. Pinto and Gamboa (2001:289-293) in their study on evaluating tutors` performance in PBL in the Faculty of Medical Sciences in Lisbon involved the students by using their feedback to evaluate the performance of the facilitators. The aim of committing the students to evaluation was to make the facilitators aware of their own pedagogical styles. Furthermore the researchers aimed at improving the facilitators` educational role. The results indicated that all facilitators considered that feedback and discussions played an essential role in the improvement of their pedagogical performance. Kaufman and Holmes (1996:371-377) made similar findings in their study on the perceptions of teachers and students on PBL tutoring at Dalhousie University. The feedback mechanism in that university was formalized and the students evaluated the performance of facilitators, for example they pointed on the weaknesses in group facilitation skills of the facilitators.

### **3.6.2.2 Peer evaluation**

Facilitators also mentioned that the students evaluated themselves and one another in a group as indicated in the following excerpts:

*“Actually they do a self-evaluation”.*

*“At the end of session they are supposed to evaluate as a group and they can usually point out the problematic student, either the one that talks too much or the one that is silent and the group together decide”.*

Holen (2000:485-488) states that the students should first reflect on their own work and their interactions in the group. Secondly, each student should reflect on the contributions of the other members, considering their efforts. The writer adds that facilitators should take care not to let only the dominant figures express their views but should also encourage others to participate.

### **3.6.2.3 Evaluation of personalities**

Evaluation of students' personalities was regarded to be important as indicated in the following quotation:

*“I think as a facilitator it is important that you evaluate your students' personalities. When you come to class you should see who is having an off day. It is important that you address those issues in the group”.*

When evaluating personalities the facilitators have an opportunity of knowing and understanding their students as discussed under point 3.4.1.1.

The students also have an opportunity to evaluate the personality of the facilitator. The study of Kaufman and Holmes (1996:371-377) indicates that the personality of the facilitator was perceived as very important in helping to establish a positive learning climate in tutorial groups.

#### **3.6.2.4 Evaluating the group process**

The group process was also evaluated by the students and facilitators stated that this helped in their development as one facilitator said: *“Evaluation helps a lot in helping the student group because they assess themselves and their peers as well assess them. They assess the progress of the group from the beginning of the year so that helps the students grow in working together as a group and as individuals”*.

According to Beaudoin (2001:355) group assessment is essential because it allows everyone to express what they feel about how the group is working. Dumais and Des Marchais. (2001:90) add that the group should analyze group dynamics, interactions and working atmosphere. These writers support their statement by explaining that in order for a group to function optimally, it must regularly invest time and energy in taking stock, in analysing what is occurring within the group and how it is progressing, identifying strengths and weaknesses.

In evaluating the group there are aspects that need special attention and Dumais and Des Marchais. summarized these as an exploratory framework for group assessment. They include contents, process and atmosphere. The aspects that are evaluated are summarized in the following paragraphs:

## **Contents**

- Objectives achieved
- Clarity of learned concepts

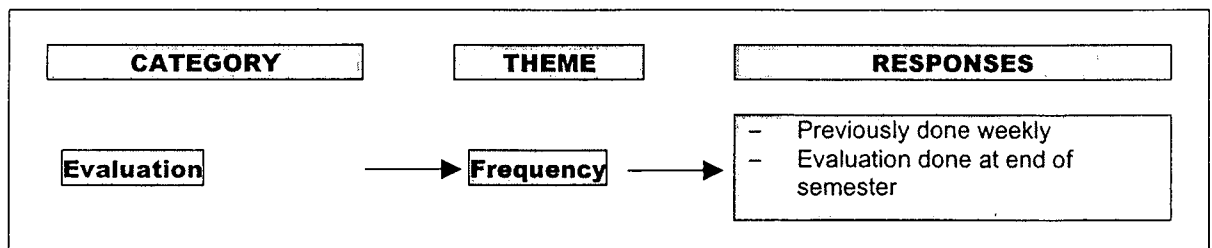
## **Process**

- Roles of students and facilitator
- Time management
- Interactions

## **Atmosphere**

- Interest and motivation
- Communication
- Collaboration (Dumais, Jacques & Marchais, 2001:90).

### **3.6.2 Frequency of evaluation**



**FIGURE 3.25: Frequency of evaluation**

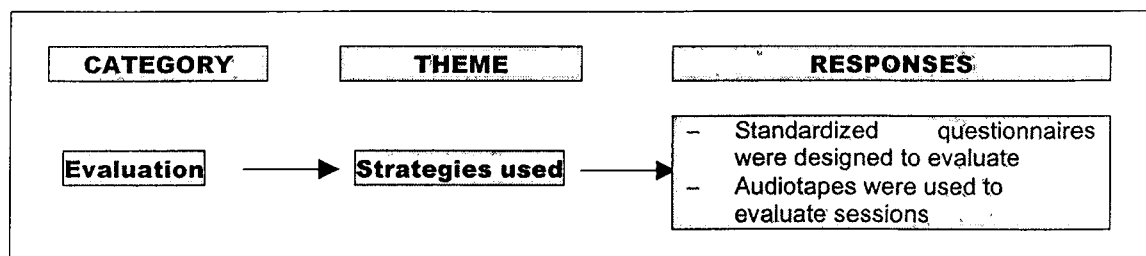
Different schools evaluated the process at different times as indicated in the following excerpts:

*“Our evaluation comes at the end of the semester. We give them a tool to assist us in improving our evaluation skills”.*

*“It differs in different years. Last year we did it every week or every now and then and it was quiet discouraging”.*

Regular evaluation from students’ feedback is crucial for course review because this can lead to improvement of teaching performance (Leckey & Neill, 2001:19-32). The students in the study of Kaufman and Holmes evaluated the facilitators after completing each unit. Holen (2000:485-488) states that groups were evaluated at the end of each session assessing the day’s work and interactions.

### 3.6.3 Methods of evaluation



**FIGURE 3.26: Strategies used for evaluation**

Some schools designed tools or instruments to evaluate facilitation. Others used videos and audiotapes. Some facilitators mentioned students as a form of evaluation as indicated in the following excerpts from focus interviews:

*“We have standardized questionnaires or instruments that we give to students. They evaluate us. We try to evaluate ourselves in the facilitation process by taking videos and giving them to experts”.*

*“What I did with the first year group was to make audiotapes and this was much better than the videotapes ... this helped the facilitators because they recognized their mistakes”.*

Thomas (1997:320-329) states that evaluation of learning may be brief consisting of teachers taking a few minutes to complete a standardized form. No study was found on the use of videos for evaluation.

### **3.7 SUMMARY**

The experiences of the facilitators regarding facilitation were discussed. Four main categories from the facilitators' data were identified and they were facilitation process, facilitator, student group and evaluation. In general the facilitators prefer facilitation as a learning method compared with the traditional lecture method. They needed to be prepared and skilled in facilitation to enable students to learn. They also needed support in changing their roles from teaching to facilitation.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### ***Data analysis of focus group interviews: Students***

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#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

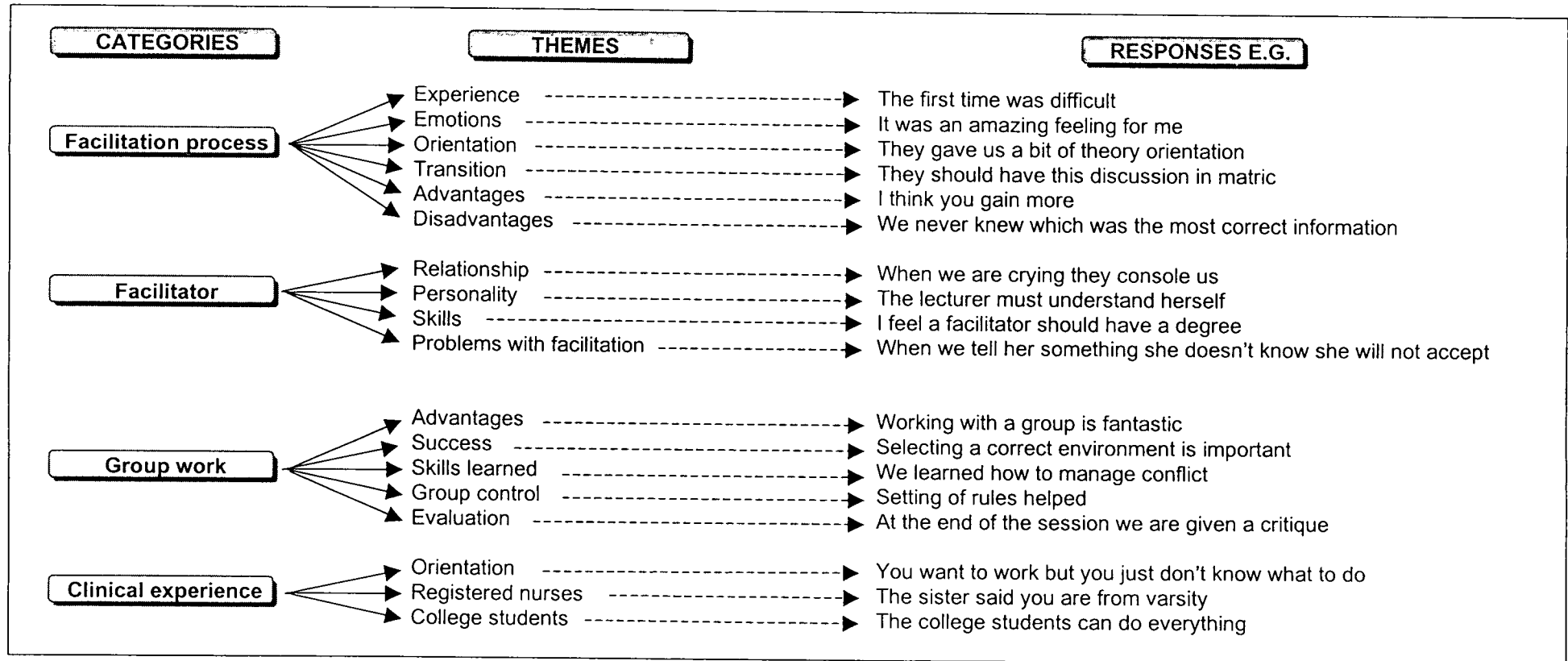
Four universities in South Africa that offer training for nursing students (Schools and Departments of nursing) were visited. These were the same as those where interviews were conducted with facilitators. Focus group interview participants were selected from the student population and a total of eight focus groups were conducted and these were registered in the first, and fourth years of the undergraduate nursing program. Focus group interviews were held with groups of students between five to 12 in number. Data analysis was done using a qualitative analysis technique by Tesch (1990) in Creswell (1994:153-154) and Giorgi (1970) as quoted by Omery (1983:49-63). According to Tesch (1990) data analysis requires that the researcher be comfortable with developing categories. The transcribed audio-taped material from the focus group interview is reduced to categories and then themes which are then interpreted by some scheme which Tesch (1990) called "decontextualisation" and "recontextualisation". This analysis process consist of "taking part" of smaller pieces whereby the final goal will be the emergence of a larger consolidated picture (Tesch, 1990:97 in Creswell, 1994:154). The main question asked to students was:

*"How did you experience facilitation as a teaching/learning method?"*

An analysis of the transcripts from the focus interviews revealed four main categories namely:

- Facilitation process,
- Facilitator
- Group work,
- Clinical experiences,
- These will be discussed in the same order as indicated in Figure 4.1.

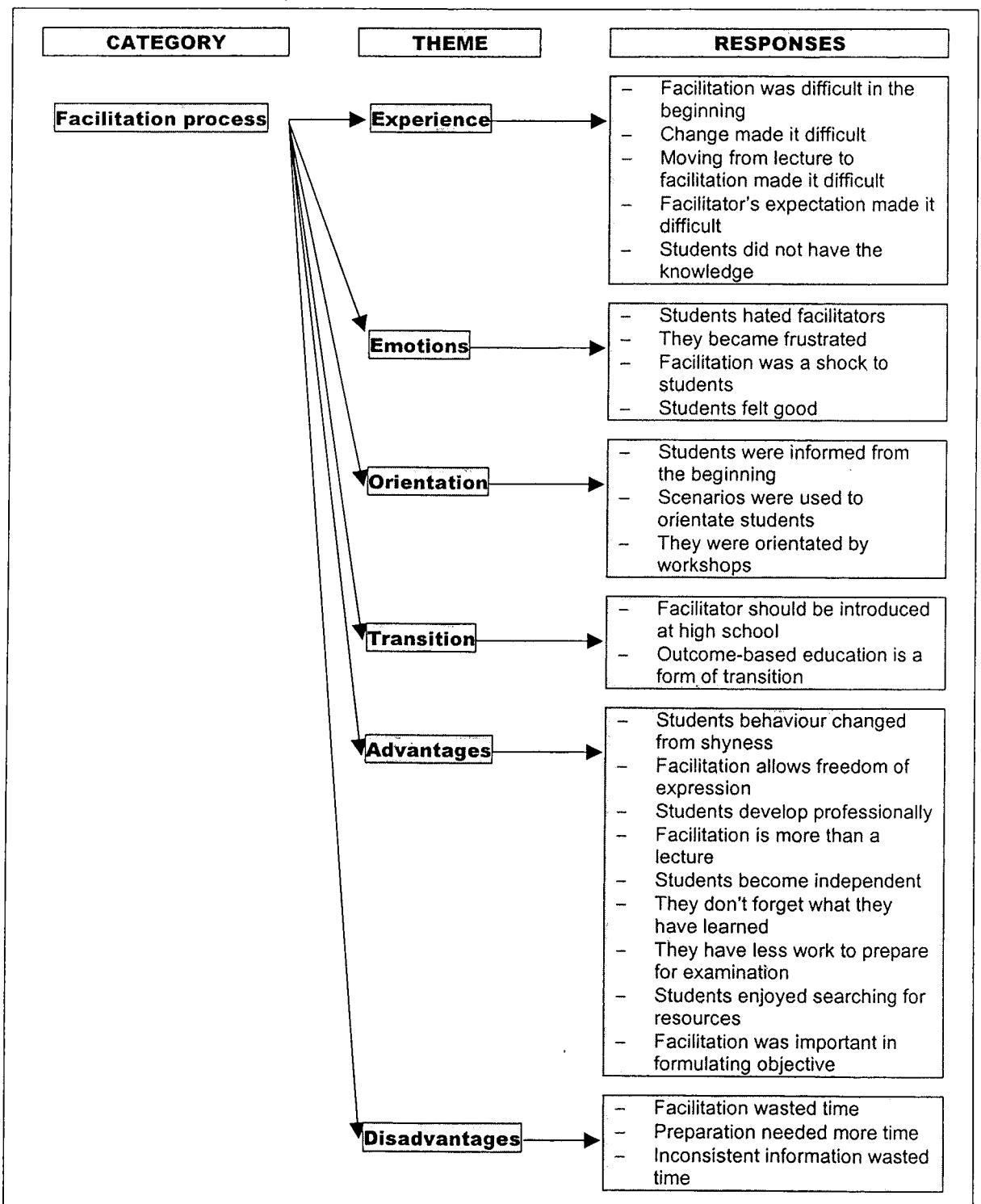
## DATA ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' RESPONSES



**FIGURE 4.1: Framework for content analysis**

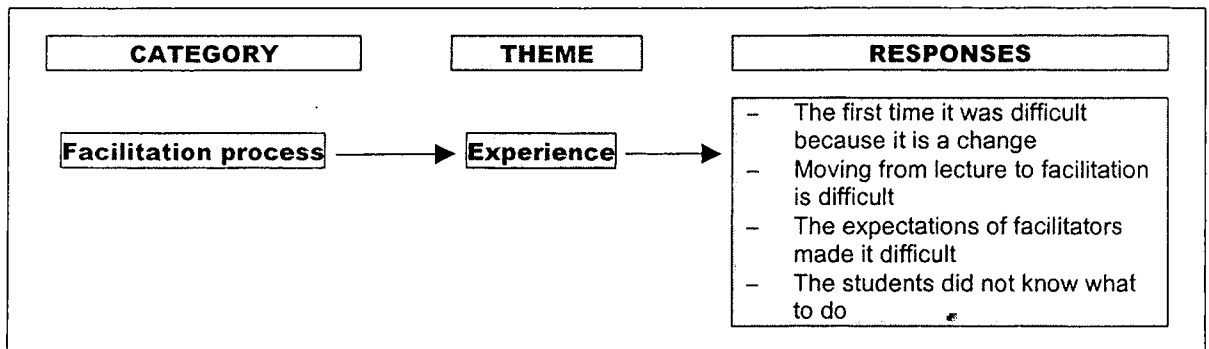
## 4.2 FACILITATION PROCESS

Six themes were identified under the category of the facilitation process. These include the students' experiences, emotions, orientation, transition, advantages and disadvantages.



**FIGURE 4.2: Facilitation process**

## 4.2.1 Students' experience of facilitation process in general



**FIGURE 4.3: Experiences of students**

## 4.2.2 Difficult in the beginning

All the students expressed that facilitation was initially difficult for them. The Concise Oxford Dictionary describes the concept difficult as something which is perplexing or confusing (1975:265) and since facilitation is used in a learning context in this research it is safe to assume that the students meant that it was cognitively difficult. Cognition is the term given to internal mental processes such as thinking, learning, problem-solving and remembering (Quinn, 1994:37; Mellish, Brink & Paton, 1998:27). The reasons indicated by the students for this difficult experience will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

#### **4.2.2.1 Change made it difficult**

The students explained that facilitation was difficult for them because it was a change as indicated in the following excerpts:

*“The first time it was difficult for me because it is a change from what we are used to”.*

*“It is not done like the way it is done at school. At school we are just basically lectured”.*

*“You are so used to having someone standing in front of you and lecturing at school and all of a sudden all that changes. It becomes a challenge”.*

Change is found in every area of life and it is bound to upset any apparent harmony in either the people or their surroundings (Jarvis, 1995:109-110). Words related to change, although different in technical meaning according to Holtzhausen (1999:17), are transformation, alteration and conversion. Generally change means doing things differently from the usual. The students were used to being lectured as indicated above and they needed to change from this method of learning to which they were accustomed to the method of facilitation. The lecture method will be discussed in the following responses. Rees (1991:43) affirms that there are basic principles for initiating change, namely that it takes time, it is a process not a decision and requires plenty of experience and practice in the new way of doing things. This means that change cannot be hurried and people must be given time to adapt.

Halpern (1994:10) agrees that change is difficult in higher education and quoted the following: ***“It has been said that changing a university is a lot like moving a cemetery – you don’t get a lot of help from the residents”***. The school setting is different from the university. Students at school are used to relying on their teachers as the source of information. For the most part they do not challenge the teacher and the information imparted to them is taken as *“gospel”* meaning something which is safely believed (Conrick, 1994:238). Facilitation means the learners are given structured help in taking control of their own development (Bailey, 1992:985-991). The students found the difference between being lectured and being facilitated difficult at first. The researcher could not find any study reflecting this experience.

#### **4.2.2.2 Moving from lecture method to facilitation**

The change discussed above is related to changing the lecture method to facilitation and this was said to be difficult as indicated in the following excerpt: ***“It is hard for the first time because moving from lecture to facilitation is not easy when you are used to listening to the lecturer, you keep quiet until the end of the lecture. When it comes to facilitation you have to respond and be a full participant in the conversation”***. This explanation by the students clearly shows the difference between the lecture method and facilitation. Wakefield (1996:99) explains that in the lecture method the teacher is active during the lesson in contrast to the students. The latter are limited to passive participation including listening and watching. Brown and Smith (1996:49) agree that with the traditional lecture method the content of the material is entirely within the control of the lecturers. They control the pace of the delivery and the nature of student activity. Katz (1995:54) further states that in facilitation there is a change in the locus of control because the students are involved in their learning. Rose (1992:7) adds that they are also involved in program planning and evaluation. This means they are involved in the management of their learning. Dumais and Des Marchais (2001:97) believe that students have a responsibility for

learning while the facilitator manages the process of learning. Furthermore students become familiar with finding information and resources.

However, the lecture method is defended as a powerful tool for delivering learning but it works well only if it is in good hands. This means if it is delivered by a person who knows what they are talking about and who has skilfully structured its content (Stunkel, 1999:424-425). The difference between the lecture and facilitation methods is huge and it is understandable if students find facilitation difficult. It also proves that teaching strategies at secondary schools are different from those at universities in that they do not promote high cognitive skills. In a study conducted by Ferreira (1995:154-158) on students' transition from school to South African universities it was observed that there is a need to change teaching strategies at secondary schools in order to promote the development of higher cognitive skills.

#### **4.2.2.3 Expectations made it difficult**

Facilitator's expectations of student performance made their experience of the facilitation process more difficult as one said: *"I must say for the first time it is really difficult and the difficulty is the expectation, they will just say you have to go and search. You don't know the information that they want"*. According to Rogers (1998:70-71) the teachers' expectation is a single reflection of what they experienced in the past and therefore have come to expect for the future and the future being the students. The same author asserts that expectations are generally value-added notions therefore high expectations are related to standards and need to be understood in a value added manner. Chalmers and Fuller (1996:15016) state that students come to class holding certain conceptions of learning and teaching. They have expectations about how they will go about learning and how the teacher will go about teaching. Similarly teachers have expectations of how students will approach their learning and any significant mismatch between teacher and

learner expectation is likely to reduce effectiveness of teaching and quality of learning.

Perhaps it is important to describe standards at this point for clarity. According to Wojtczak and Schwarz (2000:555-559) standard means different things to different people and is often used interchangeably with objectives, outcomes and goals. It refers to something set up and established by authority. The same writers state that standards are also defined as a criterion, gauge and yardstick to measure performance by which judgment or decision may be made. It is both a goal measuring what should be done and a measure of progress of how well it was done. Friedman Ben-David (2000:120-130) defines a standard as absolute if it can be stated in terms of the knowledge and skills a student must possess in order to pass the course.

These definitions of standards therefore mean that setting high standards will lead to expectations of high performance. The standards should also be relevant to the level of students' understanding because if they are too high the latter will not be able to reach them. Facilitators are expected to have high but reasonable standards if high quality student learning is to occur (Academic Development, 1998:14). The facilitator should also make reasonable choices on learning issues (<http://meds.queens.ca/medicare/pbl/pblhome.htm>). The learning issues are unanswered questions that are generated during discussions in a small group (van den Hurk, Dolmas, Wolfhagen & van der Vleuten, 1998:307-309) and this matter will be discussed later in this chapter. No study was found on facilitators' expectations of students' performance.

#### **4.2.2.4 Lack of knowledge**

The students verbalized that their knowledge was limited about what was expected of them when they were initially facilitated. One student said: *"First of all they give you a case study and you find it very abstract at first. You don't know where to go and find anything. You don't know how far details you should go into and what they are looking for. If you are lectured you are given the detail and depth of how to work"*. This excerpt expresses mainly three things: first, abstract content, second, lack of guidance and third, lack of structure. An abstract thing is not observable and may not be directly measurable, for example stress (Wesley, 1995:2; Walker & Avant, 1993:173) and in this context students found facilitation abstract and difficult for them to understand because they were not previously exposed to facilitation. Charlin *et al.* (1998:323-330) describes abstract concepts as adding new concepts and concrete examples to the network of existing concepts. The same writers urge facilitators to help students to build and develop a rich network of knowledge.

The students also experienced lack of guidance from their facilitators. Guiding means giving direction and it is one of the central roles of the facilitator to guide by refocusing the discussion when the group wanders off the topic and if necessary facilitators should be directive in leading students (Dumais & Des Marchais, 2001:87, Beaudoin, 2001:358). The third aspect mentioned to be lacking is structure. Johnson (1996:143) refers to structure as subject-limiting guidelines. Spinks and Clements (1993:29) describe the structure of the course to be the sequence of course elements and how the course develops. Shorrocks-Taylor (1998:70) explain that structure focuses on the key elements of the lesson such as objectives or outcomes. The structure will then assist the students to direct their learning. This is the very aspect that they mentioned to be lacking.

Cassimjee and Brookes (1998:95-102) in their study of concerns and fears of second year students who adopted a problem-based learning and community-based curriculum at the University of Natal found that the lack of structure was also a major concern for these students. The literature indicates that it is the responsibility of the facilitator to provide structure and detailed content for students' learning (Bailey, 1992:985-991; Creedy *et al.*, 1992:727-733; du Rand, 1996:44-45). From this discussion it is clear that the students had a knowledge deficit which the North American Nurses Diagnosis Association (NANDA) defines as verbalization of inadequate information (Mhlongo, 1994:117).

Neville (1999:393-401) states that students should be given a clear structural plan which is a course outline. Steinert (1996:203-207) believes that setting clear goals and objectives can be of assistance in student learning. Van den Hurk *et al.* (1998:307-309) in their study on student-generated learning issues in PBL at the University of Maastricht reported that beginning students think it is more important that learning issues are formulated concisely whereas students in later years only required a key word. These authors explained learning issues as unanswered questions.

It is important to mention that students indicated that in time they understood facilitation as indicated in the following excerpts:

***"It became easier later on because we got acquainted with it. When you start to know what it does entail you are able to access information".***

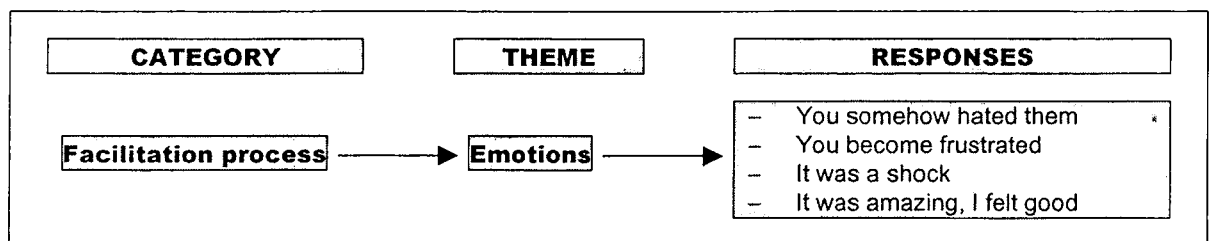
***"It is hard at first but it becomes easier with time".***

***"But as you get used to it is much easier".***

It seems when the students adapted to facilitation it became less difficult for them.

### 4.2.3 Emotional feelings

Halonen and Santrock (1997:83) define emotions as feeling or affect that involves a mixture of physiological arousal, for example heartbeat, thinking about being in love with someone or overt behaviour like smiling and grimacing. The writers classify emotions as positive or negative. Positive emotions enhance self-esteem which make people experience joy and happiness and negative ones present with anger and lower self-esteem. The students in this research expressed mostly negative emotions when they were first facilitated but positive emotions were also expressed as indicated in Figure 4.4.



**FIGURE 4.4: Emotions of students**

#### 4.2.3.1 Negative emotions

Students expressed negative emotions about being facilitated as indicated in the following excerpts:

*“Looking at the person who introduced PBL you somehow hated them”.*

*“The difficulty is you become scared and depressed”.*

From the excerpts above, there is evidence of anger and frustrations. Researchers have found that starting a degree can bring frustrations especially when student expectations about the university turn out to be entirely different from their mental picture or what they thought a subject was supposed to be (Peelo, 1994:37). Anger is described as a powerful emotion which can be perpetuated by violated expectations whereas frustration refers to any situation in which a person cannot reach a desired goal (Halonen & Santrock, 1997:89). Students may have felt that they could not learn by being facilitated as they did not understand this method. This probably resulted in hating facilitation or hating the person they perceived to have introduced facilitation as indicated in the excerpts above. In the study conducted by Conrick (1994:237-241) similar reactions and emotions were observed. It was noted that students found it difficult to work in groups and were as a result angry, confused and frustrated when they were facilitated.

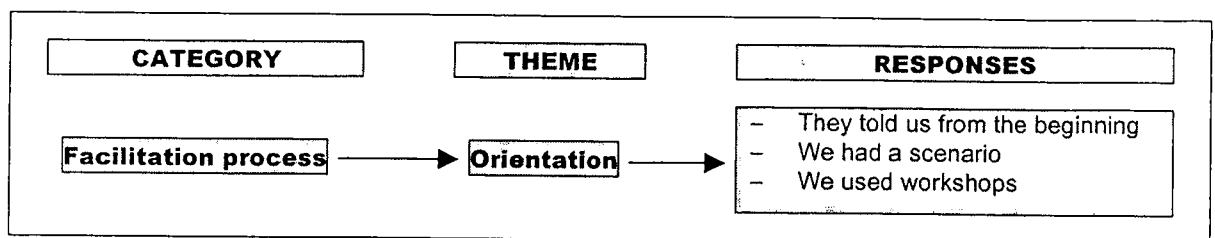
The students found facilitation a shock as one said: ***"Initially it was more of a shock than anything"***. This feeling of shock was also noted in a study in orientating students on how to learn independently conducted at Bristol University. The students in this particular study were made to understand that they had to do things for themselves but the reality of taking responsibility for their learning still shocked them. The shock was related to the expectations about the course and the responsibility associated with it (Taylor, 1997:28). The expression of negative emotions is common in self-directed studies. This will be discussed later. According to Lunyk-Child, Crooks, Ellis, Ofosu, O'Mara and Rideout (2001:116-122) it is important that students should be given opportunities to express their feelings without the fear of being judged.

### 4.2.3.2 Positive feelings

Another student felt differently about facilitation. She said: *“For me it was amazing, I had to be my own lecturer, it was just a wooo!! I felt good that I have done something”*. This student demonstrated positive feelings in contrast to other students. Kirkpatrick (1985) in Holtzhausen (1999:54) states that change, with special reference to higher educational change, causes different emotions within different individuals as some will associate it with anxiety and fear whilst others view it with hope and as a solution. The student in this case was definitely not negatively influenced by facilitation. Hers was a positive experience.

### 4.2.4 Orientation of students to the facilitation process

Most students mentioned that they were oriented at the beginning of their degree course about facilitation as a method of learning. Taylor and Burgess (1995:87) defines orientation as a process in which students are engaged, facilitated by a planned learning opportunity which prepares them to an approach new to them. Different methods of orientation were used as students indicated in Figure 4.5.



**FIGURE 4.5: Orientation of students**

#### **4.2.4.1 Information on facilitation**

The mode of learning, namely facilitation, was explained to others from the outset as a student said: *"They told us it was going to be different right from the beginning. They told us it is not going to be like lectures, they told us we had to do things on our own"*.

Another student reported: *"They sent us letters informing us that we will study in small groups"*. It is clear from the excerpts that students were informed about the method of learning they were about to use. Lack of adequate exposure to accurate information causes knowledge deficit (Mhlongo, 1994:117). If students are not given information they will not know what is expected of them. It is therefore important that they should be orientated and given information. Taylor (1997:25) describes orientation as a process in which students are facilitated with planned learning opportunities which prepare them for an approach which may be new to them and which may involve changes to established habits and expectations. Taylor continues that orientation in the initial stage of the course can be successful if students are committed to learning in this way. A study conducted at McMaster university by Lunyk-Child *et al.* (2001:116-123) to explore perceptions of staff and students of self-directed learning indicates that both staff and students identified the need for orientation to ease the transition from teacher-directed to student-centred learning

#### **4.2.4.2 Orientation by using scenarios**

According to the students, learning material was presented to them as a form of orientation referred to as scenarios as explained by a student: *"I think we were given a scenario during orientation. It was a very good crash course"*. The use of learning packages is seen as a strategy, which is useful for orientation (Alavi, 1995:122).

Cottrell (1999:7) states that some aspects of studying at a university are very different from school. For example students may be expected to learn in small groups and they should be well prepared before embarking on a course. Orientation can prove to be effective in preparing students for facilitation.

Other students indicated that they were orientated by means of a lecture and a course on group dynamics as evident in the following excerpts:

***“They gave us a bit of theory orientation and they gave us a book and we had a practice session”.***

***“I did a course where we learned about group dynamics, so that gave me the idea about group process and the role of the facilitator”.***

The researcher could not find literature on orientating students in the facilitation process. Alavi (1997:117) suggests the following would be useful in orientation:

- creation of a climate of acceptance
- sharing of experiences by both staff and students
- role-modelling of the facilitative process
- use of learning packages.

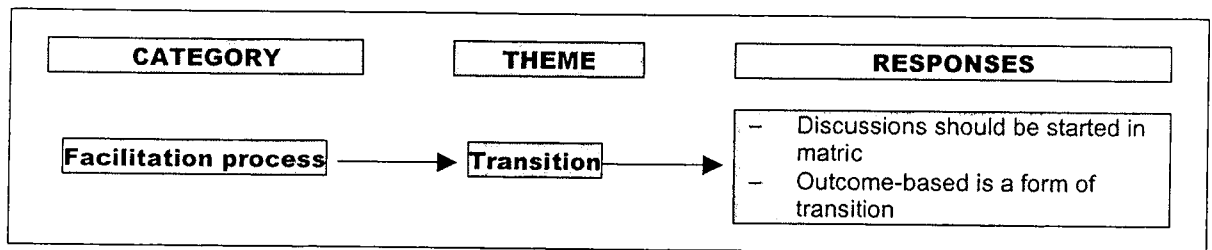
#### **4.2.4.3 Workshops**

Although facilitators indicated as recorded in Chapter 3 that workshops were not adequate for their orientation, the students mentioned that these were used for the same purpose as a student said: ***“In the first year there used to be workshops, the first few classes they told us we are no longer going to be taught like when we were in high school but the teacher becomes part of the class”.*** According to Radloff and Murphy (1992:63) workshops

function best if sessions are carefully planned and structured to encourage student development and should be focused on student expectations.

#### 4.2.5 Transition from lecturing to facilitation

Entering professional education represents a major life transition for students according to Taylor (1997:23). Nursing has increasingly become regarded as a profession in its own right with a recognized body of knowledge where nurses are making informed decisions about nursing care (Allison & Tinson, 1999:38-44). Students mentioned some aspects that could assist them with the transition process as indicated in Figure 4.6 below.



**FIGURE 4.6: Transition of students**

##### 4.2.5.1 Introduction of facilitation at secondary schools

The introduction of the facilitation process at secondary level was highlighted as important by a student who said: *"They should have this discussion in matric"*.

The transition from school to university is said to be too drastic and this is attributed to a difference in approach as schools concentrate on the acquisition of knowledge whereas universities require the application of knowledge combined with independent study (Ferreira, 1995:154-158). The introduction of facilitation at secondary level is also recommended in a study on students' transition from school to South African universities to ease the

transition and enable students to adapt to the academic environment. The researcher adds that teaching strategies at secondary schools should be changed in order to promote the development of higher cognitive skills (Ferreira, 1995:154-158).

#### **4.2.5.2 Outcome-based education**

The students also indicated that outcome-based education (OBE) introduced in secondary school is a way of transition as stated in this quotation: "***The direction taken by the department of education of introducing outcome-based education is more in line with facilitation***". OBE is a transformational curriculum adopted in South Africa from 1998 and its underlying principles are

- A dialogue between the learner and the curriculum,
- The pupils solve problems,
- The learner becomes a student accepting responsibility,
- The teacher becomes the facilitator (Classen, 1998:34-40).

Van Niekerk and Killen (2000:90-100) state that the fundamental consequence of OBE is that teachers must structure learning so that students can experience success. According to van der Vyver (1999:5-6) OBE is not a new phenomenon in the tertiary sector because the majority of professional courses more than adequately equipped most learners to meet their vocational demands, for example medical students become doctors. The white paper on higher education transformation in South Africa (1997:9) describes one of the main purposes of higher education institutions such as universities as providing the labour market with high level competencies and expertise necessary for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy.

#### **4.2.5.3 Transition methods according to the literature**

References found in the literature identified issues that were not mentioned by students during interviews that can assist students with their transition to the university. These suggested that universities should introduce an additional preparatory year to prepare students for their studies as well as the use of study manuals to facilitate transition (Ferreira, 1995:154-158). Ferreira also mentioned support programs which may take various forms, for instance an additional year of secondary school or at an independent institution, encouraging registration of fewer subjects than the norm, and the introduction of bridging courses. Cook and Leckey (1999:157-171) in their study at the University of Ulster on in-coming students to the Faculty of Health Sciences indicated that the university should be proactive in the development of a set of study skills appropriate for a tertiary environment and recommended that academics should be aware of the qualities and skills which new students bring to their university studies.

Another form of support during the transition phase is mentoring, where the student is guided, taught and influenced by a mentor who is an ideal professional and role model for a student (French, 1994:129). Mentoring is acknowledged as an essential tool in assisting and guiding newcomers upon their entry into a profession (Büchner & Hay, 1998:19-26). It may be viewed as a special relationship that develops between two persons with a mentor being there for support, not for dependency (Harden & Crosby, 2000:334-347). Mentors are expected to give emotional support and help the students adapt to the culture of learning (Abernethy, 1999:356-359). Mentoring often occurs informally, sometimes without a clear beginning or end, when two persons with a common interest simply find each other (Johnson, Williams & Jayadevappa, 1999:376-379).

Enrichment programs designed for medical students who are poorly prepared for the rigor of professional study are also mentioned in the literature. These programs focus on improving students' academic skills, and preparing them to take medical admission tests as well as preparation for admission to medical school. A student enrichment network needs to be flexible enough to accommodate students' individuality and yet be structured enough to provide program consistency (Carline, Hunt, Patterson & Garcia, 1999:360-362; Wilson & Murphy, 1999:400-402; Hardy, 1999:373-375; Thompson & Weiser, 1999:390-392).

Student nurses at the University of the Free State were given support by means of Video Supplemental Instruction (VSI). This is a lecture recorded on tape. VSI was also used as a remedial course for students with poor academic performance. The facilitator during VSI provides structure and reviews student feedback. The students take responsibility for their own learning and are encouraged to stop the video for clarity and write short notes of the study material (du Rand, 1996:44-45). Lunyk-Child *et al.* (2001:116-122) state that, regardless of the method that can or will be used in helping students to transit from the traditional approach to facilitation it is important for facilitators to remember that students progress at different rates through this transformative process and both students and facilitators need orientation and ongoing education to ease the transition.

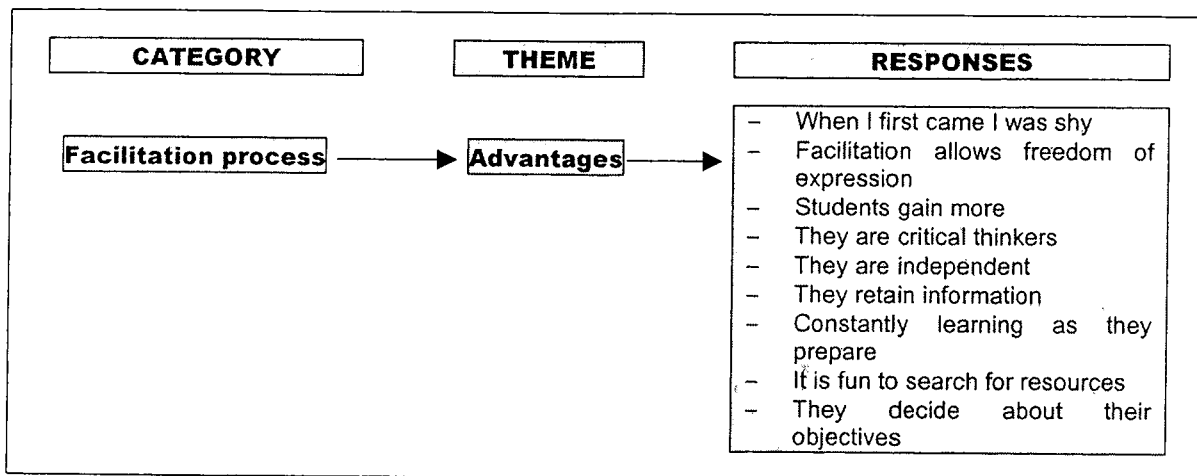
Ferreira (1995:154-158) states that it is very important to take students' transition into consideration because they have to make several adjustment to the university environment. Erikson (1968) in Taylor (1997:23) add that for some students moving into professional education is concurrent with leaving home and moving into higher education, a major transition from dependence on the family into independence and adulthood. Saw, Among, Idrus, Atan, Azali, Jaafar, Rahma and Latiff (1999:24-36) insist that this transition affects not only the student but also the family unit and this is particularly so with adult students.

Nyamapfene and Letseka (1995:159-167) in their study conducted on the problems of learning among first year students at South African universities found that some students came from disadvantaged backgrounds and they experienced difficulties in adapting to tertiary education which included failure to understand processes involved in university learning. Academically disadvantaged students, according to Fearing (1994:190), are those who are underprepared for entering the professional sequence of college work. These students are disadvantaged in terms of schooling and socioeconomic backgrounds and are not prepared for the learning demands of the tertiary education system.

Black students form the largest number of students who fail in their first year at tertiary institutions because they are a product of an inferior education system that is a legacy of the apartheid system (de Villiers, 1996:135-139, Skuy, Zolezzi, Mentis, Frijhon & Cockcroft, 1996:110-118; Olmesdahl, 1999:174-179). Educators should be concerned about students' transition as they may experience anxieties which can interfere with or block their learning (Taylor, 1997:24). Mhlongo (1994:199) supports this view by stating that too much anxiety interferes with the ability to learn.

#### **4.2.6 Advantages of facilitation**

The concept of facilitation is found in much of the literature on PBL, adult learning and student-centred learning (Boud & Griffith 1987 in Townsend, 1994:105). Even though facilitation has its advantages most of these are directly related to student-centred approaches such as PBL, simply because facilitation is their primary mode of teaching and learning. Students also mentioned that they preferred facilitation to the traditional teaching method and they cited its advantages as indicated in Figure 4.7 below.



**FIGURE 4.7: Advantages of facilitation**

#### **4.2.6.1 Overcoming shyness**

Facilitation seem to bring behavioural changes for example overcoming shyness as students indicated in the following excerpts:

*“I will make an example of myself. When I first came here I was very shy but now I am glad to announce that I overcame my shyness”.*

*“For me my four years of doing PBL, I was always quiet, shy and reserved. Majority of us we were like hardly spoke and as years went by we learnt to be more forceful, more appreciative of one another. We became very outspoken. It was not because we wanted to be like that, it was brought out in us. It is a quality I am sure all of us appreciate. We can stand up for ourselves”.*

It seems from the above excerpts that students learned to overcome their shyness and became assertive. This could be due to the fact that in facilitation students are encouraged to interact with one another on the subject under discussion. Brookfield (1986) in Taylor (1997:79) support this statement by stating that facilitation is a dialogue between students and between the students and the facilitator. Another contributing factor is that students are placed in small groups and each is forced to say something. Uys and Cassimjee (1997:1321-38) in their study on implementing a PBL curriculum at the University of Natal also discovered that their students became assertive and had a strong belief in their ability to make a difference.

Students also implied that they developed cognitively as one said: ***"Sometimes I feel like I am teaching the lecturer"***. MacIntosh (1995:25-27) states that students learn from being in a group that has classmates as facilitators and this helps them to acquire facilitation skills. They observe the facilitator role-modelling facilitative skills and have an opportunity to try them out. Students are self-directed and search for their own resources and sometimes discover things of which the facilitator has no knowledge and consequently learns from the student.

#### **4.2.6.2 Freedom of expression**

Freedom of expression is regarded as an advantage as one student verbalized: ***"It also allows you to express what you feel. It is not just the teacher who stands in front of you and teach"***. This statement expresses the confidence that students have in themselves and it is the function of the facilitator to motivate such behaviours. Biggs (1999:61) suggests that motivation is not a prerequisite of good teaching but is the product thereof. According to Taylor (1997:25) students that enter professional education are highly motivated because they have often made a considerable economic, social and intellectual investment in order to begin a professional course. In

other words these students have planned their lives before considering choosing a course.

Deweck and Bempecht (1983) in Creedy *et al.* (727-733) state that facilitators should value contributions of students and encourage them to express themselves and their opinions freely without demeaning the personal integrity of the student. Steinert (1996:203-207) declares that facilitators should listen attentively and avoid talking too much. Instead they should encourage the students to talk to each other rather than to them as this will give the students an opportunity to express themselves.

According to Schmidt and Moust (1995) in Harden and Crosby (2000:334-347) facilitators should be able to communicate with students in an informal way, without authority. In encouraging student learning they should create an atmosphere in which an open exchange of ideas is facilitated. This informality was also observed to promote good interpersonal relationships between students and facilitators in the study by Dana (1997:41-43) on the experiences of masters degree students being prepared for PBL and CBE curricula at the University of Natal. Brockbank and McGill (1998:157) state that facilitators should also remain alert to expressions indicative of deep or strong feelings and should accept both intellectual and emotional attitudes. In other words they should be sensitive to student needs. Davidoff and Lazarus (1997:171) state that strong feelings should be dealt with and not swept aside. Spinks and Clements (1993:139) mention that occasionally students may exhibit feelings of anger directed at the topic, the group, or the facilitator. The latter should work through the reasons for this anger. All these considerations about what the facilitator should do or should not do will facilitate student learning and encourage them to contribute in a facilitative process.

#### **4.2.6.3 Professional growth**

In order to promote professional growth the students stated that they expected their facilitators to ask them high level questions which characterize a highly skilled nurse and quality teaching. One student put it this way: *"On writing exams we don't expect multiple choice questions. We expect questions that will lead to critical thinking skill, your logical reasoning and understanding what you are going to write. We are not used to cramming. We have to analyze deeper"*.

Katz (1996:26-29) states that professional growth indicates that individuals should take steps to identify specific skills, knowledge and behaviour. Hager and Gonczi (1996:15-18) declare that professional growth indicates a level of competency and acquisition of skills. Competency means the possession of a series of desirable attributes including the knowledge of appropriate skills and abilities such as problem-solving, analysis, communication and attitudes of different kinds.

- Godfrey (1999:245-253) describes different kinds of competencies and these include cognitive competencies such as problem-solving, critical thinking, making informed judgments and analysing data. All of these competencies are what the student in the above excerpt justify as her need for growth.

Nurses use certain strategies when providing care which have fundamental features of the critical thinking skills, for example validating clinical data and using appropriate resources (Collier, McCash & Bartram, 1996:9). Students during interviews described themselves as having these skills. They observed that other students who were not being facilitated did not use these skills. One said: *"I found that when we went to the hospital the college students sort of don't think further than what the sister or the doctor says. They cannot decide for themselves about the nursing care or what to do when caring for the patient"*. This student implies that non-facilitated colleagues

do not question orders given by seniors or at least analyze their actions and therefore lack critical thinking skills. According to Brock and Butts (1998:5-13) there are many definitions of critical thinking and there is also a lack of agreement on the meaning of the concept. It is a reflective process that involves thinking about the patient circumstances without a single solution, and is focused on deciding what to do that reaches a successful outcome to meet the patients' needs. Halpern (1994:7) states that an inquiring mind is viewed as a hallmark of a critical thinker.

According to Collier *et al.* (1996:9) a critical thinker exhibits certain characteristics and these include the following:

- **Nursing-focused:** that is, maintaining a clear focus on the domain of nursing.
- **Knowledgeable** for they can analyze data quickly and communicate clearly.
- **Clinical experts** as they use each client encounter to add to their knowledge.
- **Open-minded** as they consider a variety of possible explanations (Collier *et al.*, 1996:9).

In concluding about professional growth, nursing is a practice-based discipline that engages the students in developing the theoretical knowledge on which to base patient care (Thornton & Chapman, 2000:124-132). Nurse educators are increasingly becoming aware of the need for students to develop critical thinking skills to apply in today's complex healthcare environment according to Sorrell, Brown, Cipriano Silva and Kohlenberg (1997:12-24) and they should also determine how to assess these critical skills. Pitkälä *et al.* (2000:22-26) in their study on evidence-based medicine in the Faculty of Medicine at Helsinki University showed that in order to achieve critical

thinking the facilitators were encouraged to steer the group by questioning the students.

Sobral (1998:118-121) states that working in small groups helps students acquire professional behaviours of respect and responsibility. One student expressed professional respect as follows: *"I wouldn't stand up and say something, we say everything within a perspective of respect. You cannot just tell the matron to go to hell or whatever, I think there is a professional manner or etiquette that you keep and you learn in class that there is a way that you present what you are saying, in a polite way where you can put your point across without offending other people. That is very important especially in the nursing profession"*. In a study on training for cooperative learning in an undergraduate medical program at the University of Brasilia, students acquired professional behaviours of respect and communication through their experience of working in small groups (Sobral, 1998:118-121).

#### **4.2.6.4 Facilitation is more than a lecture**

Students mentioned that they gained more by being facilitated as one said: *"I think you gain more than you basically do from lectures because the information that you gather at the end of the day becomes more than the requirement that one gets from a lecture"*. According to the literature facilitated students develop higher levels of comprehension especially when they engage in solving difficult real-world-context problems which increases the transferability of skills and knowledge from class work to work in general (<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/clrit/learningtree/PBL/PBLadvantages.html>). A skill can be defined as a relatively consistent ability to achieve a particular goal and being skilled means being good at something (Tomlinson, 1998:87-88). Examples of other skills are study skills, for example good revision strategies and academic skills such as managing deadlines (Cottrell, 1999:26). Facilitated students begin to manage the skills of questioning, listening to

others viewpoints and examining values (MacIntosh, 1995:25-27). The same writer further states that the skills gained in facilitation are endless and they prepare the students for life-long learning, which extends beyond the classroom. Olmesdahl (1999:174-179) indicates that if any curricular program aims at the development of a student in terms of both cognitive and personal development then it must begin with the identification of those needs which may threaten effectiveness in teaching and learning for example learning problems.

#### **4.2.6.5 Students became independent**

In the following testimonies it is evident that facilitation inculcated independence in the students:

*“The other thing it gave us independent chance, like you no longer depend on the lecturer you go out searching information for yourselves”.*

*“We don’t want to run to them like babies”.*

*“You feel like that you want to do it on your own ... if you start knocking at their door you feel you have failed”.*

The concept independent learning means being self-regulating or autonomous and does not mean role of the lectures has become redundant (Fransman, 1995:173-177). This notion of learning is linked to growth and development and the students perceived themselves to have grown. Success in searching and finding resources is perceived as development whereas failure may mean being dependent and lack of growth. The ability to identify human, material and experiential resources for accomplishing various kinds of learning objectives is described as a skill of self-directed learning

(<http://newhorizon.org/crft-knowels.html>). Independence is commonly found in student-centred approaches (Townsend, 1994:105).

For the purpose of defining independence, the concept of self-directed learning which is often used interchangeably with independent or autonomous learning according to Taylor (1997:6-7) will be discussed. Self-directed learning may be defined as a student-centred approach to learning where students are forced into an active role of learning (Becker, 1999:24). The same author explains student-centredness as a teaching and learning climate where freedom in learning is enhanced and entails good teaching and freedom in learning. Good teaching means that teachers are well prepared, helpful and committed to their work. Freedom in learning means students are allowed to choose and organize their own work according to their own preferences as lectures encourage them to develop their own academic interest.

Self-directed learning is suggested by Boud (1988) in Taylor (1997:6) to include elements of independence, dependence and interdependence. The students are dependent on the teacher for academic support as the latter still has the responsibility for providing structure for learning. Interdependence indicates the reliance of students on one another including the facilitator and the facilitative process. Self-directed learning identifies the students taking responsibility for their learning as its main characteristic (Lunyk-Child *et al.*, 2001:116-122). This notion was very evident in the focus interviews when a student said: ***“Because we are used to self-directed learning at the end of the day the responsibility lies with you”***. and the other student said: ***“the advantage is that we are independent and we are more responsible”***.

The following were suggested as taking responsibility for learning: identifying learning needs, setting goals, planning learning activities and deciding when learning is complete. The students therefore participate in decision-making about their learning and develop strategies which enable them to find and use their own resources for learning (Taylor, 1997:8). This notion is evident in what the students meant by the following statements:

***“I mean if the lecturers came and gave us everything we were never going to be independent. You will depend on the lecturer to feed you with information. We have learned if you cannot find something go and search until you find it. You never depend on a lecturer she will help you if you have tried”.***

***“The problem is we have our lecturers, we can go to ask which books we can use but we don’t go to them and let them even borrow us textbooks we want to do it first. We want to find it ourselves so that they can see that we are responsible”.***

According to Norman (1999:886-887) self-directed learners identify their weaknesses and devise strategies to overcome them. It is important that facilitators support students because it seems that the literature on self-directed learning which focuses on growth and development of the learner appears to preclude guidance by facilitators in the process of learning (Taylor, 1997:26). This students still need to be provided with some direction in reaching their learning goals.

A study conducted by Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138) (see point 4.2.2.4) also indicted that students appreciated learning independently because it taught them to be self-sufficient and to research topics on their own. Another study conducted at McMaster university on student and staff perceptions on self-directed learning revealed that they experienced self-direction as a painful

process because the students were not used to self-directing and in the beginning they did not know how to self-direct and thus struggled at first (Lunyk-Child *et al.*, 2001:116-122).

#### **4.2.6.6 Retention of information**

The students stated that because they were active in their learning, they did not forget what they learned as indicated in the excerpt below:

*“Another thing is that when someone is learning it is easy to forget even if she is a good explainer because you have been listening you get tired. But with PBL since you have been participating and you are discussing you keep information so when you go to the book you already know”.*

Retention is the encoding of an act and its consequences in the memory (Wakefield, 1996:353). According to Barry and Glanz in Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138) facilitated learning engages students in meaningful learning whereas lecturing makes most students memorize what they learn in the classroom with little use of what they have retained. Students in facilitated programs remember facts better than students in traditional programs. Townsend (1994:104) adds that students not only retain longer what they have learned but they make better use of it.

In facilitation students are also said to develop high comprehension and better development of skills that are relevant to their learning (<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/clrit/learningtree/PBL/PBLadvantages.html>). This is because facilitation is an interactive process (Townsend, 1994:10). Kolars *et al.* (1997:53-58) state that research suggests that material taught in small-group settings is recalled more readily in examinations than topics addressed in a lecture setting. The same authors state that retention of information has an advantage in preparation for examinations, because if meaningful learning has taken place

preparation is easy. This is what the researcher has experienced. Kolars, Gruppa, Trabel *et al.* (1997:53-57) in their study on comparing the effects of small-group teaching on retention at the University of Michigan also observed that medical students tended to perform better and retained material discussed in small groups better compared to those presented in the lecture format.

#### **4.2.6.7 Preparation for examinations**

Students mentioned that as they prepare for their presentations they also learn and therefore have less work to prepare for their examinations as indicated below:

*“We are actually learning at the same time while with lectures we are sitting and passively absorb the information. What you absorb you actually didn’t know because you didn’t study but only study for exams. In PBL I find I have less work at the time of exams”.*

*“I am constantly learning as I prepare. In the traditional method I come to class and most likely I will not prepare because I know that they will teach, I will copy notes and before exams I will start learning”.*

As indicated above good retention of information during facilitation has advantages in that students do not have to learn afresh every time they need to write examinations. Cotrell (1999:215) states that the prospect of examinations may be extremely stressful whether students have performed well or badly in the past. The stress can be related to the inability to show their knowledge under examination conditions. Researchers have found that facilitated students enjoy this learning method, are more self-motivated and their learning becomes more profound. Consequently there is improved

retrieval and use of information because students activate and elaborate more fully on the material presented to them in class. Increased elaboration promotes mental processing, understanding and recall (<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/clri/learningtree/PBL/PBLadvantages.html>).

#### **4.2.6.8 *Enjoyment in searching for resources***

Students mentioned that it was fun to search for resources because they obtained updated information as indicated in the quotations below:

*“I don’t think it takes that long to know that this thing is fun to search for resources because, when you come back to give feedback definitely you have used different textbooks and other information which is updated. It was interesting”.*

*“We can’t get things older than five years we go to the most recent information and we use computers and internet”.*

The nature of facilitation is that students becomes independent learners and that includes searching for material that will assist them in their learning. According to Becker (1999:24) students are expected to be active in their learning and this means they are encouraged by a facilitator to participate in their own learning in order to acquire relevant information. Bitzer and Pretorius (1996:1) emphasize the move from the lecturer as the source of information because they perceive students to be active learners who are responsible for searching for their own resources.

Brockbank and McGill (1998:149) state that the facilitators should endeavour to make available the widest possible range of resources for learning and regard themselves as a flexible resource to be utilized by the group. This means whilst facilitators are part of the group and are also in a learning process they should when necessary allow the students to tap into their knowledge to validate the truthfulness of whatever they have researched.

Several studies have shown that students enjoy searching for resources. Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138) state that students found it enjoyable to search for their own resources and this they attributed to independent learning which they did through PBL. Fichardt and Du Rand (2000:3-10) in their study conducted at the University of the Free State on facilitator's perceptions of PBL and CBE indicated that students enjoyed facilitation. Edwards, Herbert, Moyer *et al.* (1998:139-141) in their study at the University of Ottawa on preparing post-registered nurses for community-based care shows that these students reported a sense of achievement in learning how to tap new resources in the community to help the same community with solving its problems.

#### **4.2.6.9 Role of the student in formulating objectives**

Facilitation requires that students participate actively. This student-centred approach encourages students to formulate and decide which objectives they wish to learn (Becker, 1999:24). The students in this research mentioned that they were involved in the formulation of their learning objectives as indicated in the following excerpts:

***"We decide which objectives we are going to present".***

***"Facilitators formulate their own objectives which they give us then we raise our own and we check what they don't have and we add to their list"***

*“Our exposure in the community gave us the chance to go and identify things that we think are of interest and then we will call them learning issues and from that objectives will be formed”.*

*“When we go to the hospital for our first visit they usually call it look, listen and learn. You go there and look what you don’t know you write down then you come back to class with all the list of what we have learned from the hospital what you don’t understand you study”.*

*“Sometime back we were at the clinics so, when we came back we made our objectives about the things that happened in the clinics so we formulated our objectives”.*

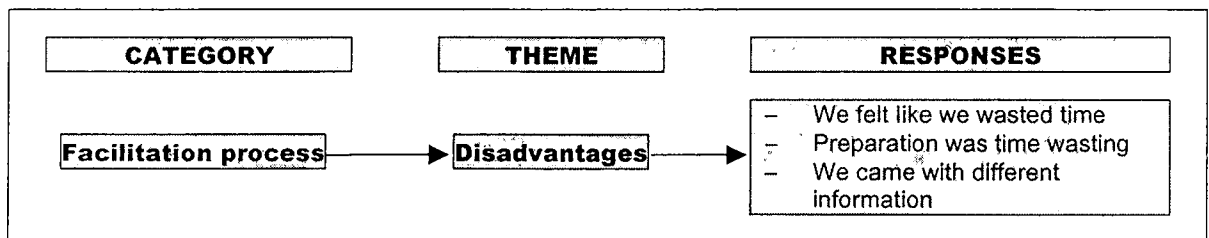
From the above excerpts students indicated that they were involved in setting their own objectives and this was regarded as an advantage and perceived by them as development. It is apparent that students identify their learning objectives both in the classroom and in the clinical setting. Dumais *et al.* (2001:87) state that formulating objectives constitutes the time for completing the list of study questions, that is to define the specific information which each student must find in order to explain the phenomena presented in the problem. These authors add that objectives are to get students involved in identifying learning needs, specifying priorities, determining what information source to use and estimating how the available time should be used.

Students also stated that they felt it was important first to identify these objectives, after which the facilitators could assist them. One student said: *“We feel the students must state the objectives. The lecturer can then come and state what was left out in the objectives”.* Dumais *et al.* (2001:87) agrees with these statement by the students by declaring that although students must discover the study objectives for themselves the

facilitator can skilfully guide them throughout the learning session. Van Den Hurk *et al.* (1998:307-309) in their investigation of the essential characteristics of student-generated learning issues at the University of Maastricht identified objectives as learning issues and confirm that students should take an active role in generating learning issues by deciding how they will study them and evaluate them.

## 4.2.7 Disadvantages of facilitation

Students mentioned that even if they preferred facilitation there were things that detracted from their enjoyment of the process. Among other things they found preparation for class present actions was demanding in terms of time as indicated in Figure 4.8.



**FIGURE 4.8: Disadvantages of facilitation process**

### 4.2.7.1 Facilitation was time-consuming

Students indicated that facilitation took much of their time as expressed in the following excerpts:

*“At first I didn’t enjoy it at all. It always felt like we were wasting too much time”.*

*“Another thing I can mention is time. When we were still new in this program we experienced that it was time-consuming. When we are in class we are doing a thing for a number of days and we start thinking if we were doing the old method we would be somehow far by now because in the traditional method we are used to be taught where when we come to class today, we do half of a chapter then tomorrow you finish the chapter”.*

Albanese and Mitchell (1993) in <http://edweb.sdsu.edu/clrit/learningtree/PBL/PBLBarriers.html> state that a 98 week lecture course requires 120 weeks using the PBL approach which equals 22% more time required. This is because PBL uses facilitation as a teaching-learning method. Structuring sessions by the facilitator is important to avoid wasting time. Johnston (1996:143) referred to structure as subject-limiting guidelines and explained that its absence tends to make students take up much of the first term establishing the precise area in which they will work. This means students will take more time trying to direct themselves on what to work on. Rooth (1995:25) states that some facilitators incorrectly believe that because there is a great deal of freedom in facilitation one should give minimal direction. This can retard progress because participants will not know what to do. When instructions are unclear, unfocused and ambiguous the group will feel uncertain and insecure and time is wasted. The author adds that valuable time is saved if the activities of learning are planned and well organized.

In a study at Griffith University on student nurses who were facilitated for the first time the same problem was found. The students felt that they were going around in circles and wasting time and did not feel like they were learning anything until they began to understand the approach (Conrick, 1994:237-241).

#### **4.2.7.2 Preparation was time-consuming**

It is also important to mention that students in this research were facilitated in a PBL approach which could also contribute to the problem of time. Taylor (1997:97) indicates that the process of problem-based learning is time-consuming compared to the time spent in a lecture because PBL methods use the facilitation process. This aspect also emerged from the focus interviews as a student said: *"It's good in class but preparing!!, Wednesday evening I am so exhausted because I have two presentations to prepare for Thursday. When you come home on Thursday you are so exhausted from the preparation"*.

Another student said: *"You arrange your work so that you prepare for Monday right up to Thursday. Having to go to the library you stand for two hours to look for an article and only get it after 3 hours. After that you still have to go over it"*

Studies indicate that preparation time almost doubles both for facilitators and students because when staff consider time per week in preparation instead of 8.6 hours per week preparing lectures they spend 20.6 hours per week in groups with students. Albanese and Mitchell (1993) in <http://edweb.sdsu.edu/clrit/learningtree/PBL/PBLBarriers.html>. Good planning can help it solve this problem as indicated in the previous session.

Townsend (1994:109) negates this notion by stating that facilitation does not really take more time than any other method. Other studies confirmed the problem of time. Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138) confirmed that PBL does take time more than traditional approach.

Steinert (1996:203-209) suggests tips that facilitators should use in solving the problem of time. These include planning ahead by:

- considering how to use groups,
- outlining the task at hand and the time available for discussions,
- developing a group agenda so that all members know what is expected of them,
- setting clear goals and objectives,
- recognizing irrelevant exchanges, and
- cutting longwinded and inappropriate contributions.

Mulholland (1994:38-42) states that the facilitator should ensure that the group is clear about what is required and must prevent side-tracking and irrelevant discussions.

#### **4.2.7.3 Inconsistencies about information**

Another factor which contributed to time wastage was the inconsistencies in the information students received in their groups which led to confusion and a waste of time as indicated in the following excerpts:

*“The confusing thing was that we would all be given a task. We would all go and look for information. We came with different feedback. We never knew which was the most correct information. This was time-consuming for us because we ultimately had to eliminate some of the things”.*

*“Students in different groups used to come with different information regarding the objectives. It was very confusing because we did not know what to study”.*

It is clear from above excerpts that the students received different information which seems to have wasted their time. It is important that students in different groups studying the same content should receive the same information for that period to avoid confusion. It is a fact that students always come into contact with one another. Some are also friends and they will share information. Others will always want to know what is happening in the other groups.

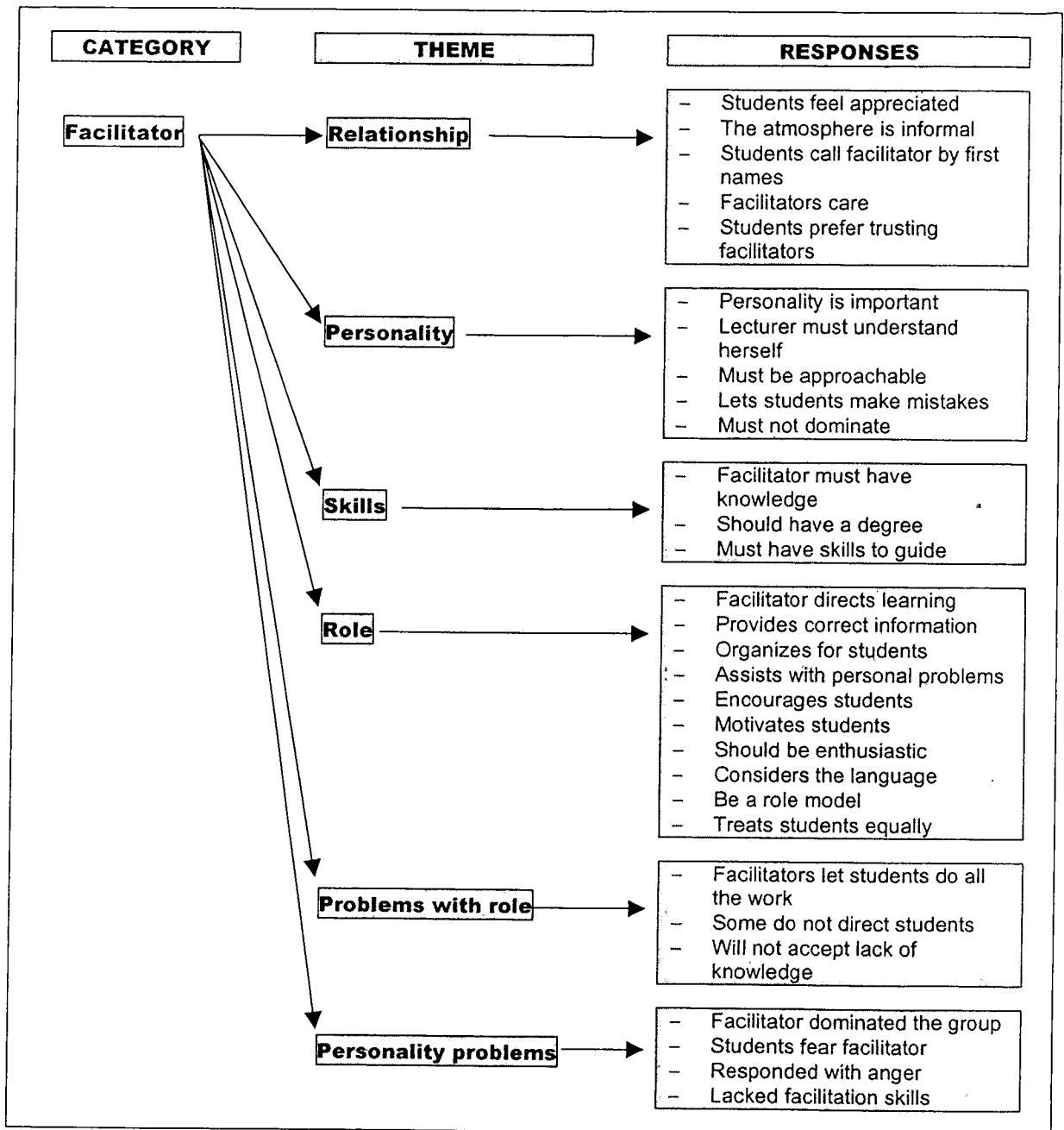
This inconsistency was also found in a study conducted by Lunyk-Child *et al.* (2001:116-122) (see point 4.2.6.5) It was found that students were frustrated by the inconsistent implementation of self-directed learning by professors and preceptors and they requested that the staff should standardize this educational approach. They also needed to be reassured that they were learning the content necessary to assist them to pass course.

#### **4.2.7.4 Conclusion**

The student's experiences of facilitation were discussed and the following were covered: emotions, preparation, transition, advantages and disadvantages. From the data obtained it is clear that the advantages of facilitation were more than the disadvantages.

### **4.3 THE FACILITATOR**

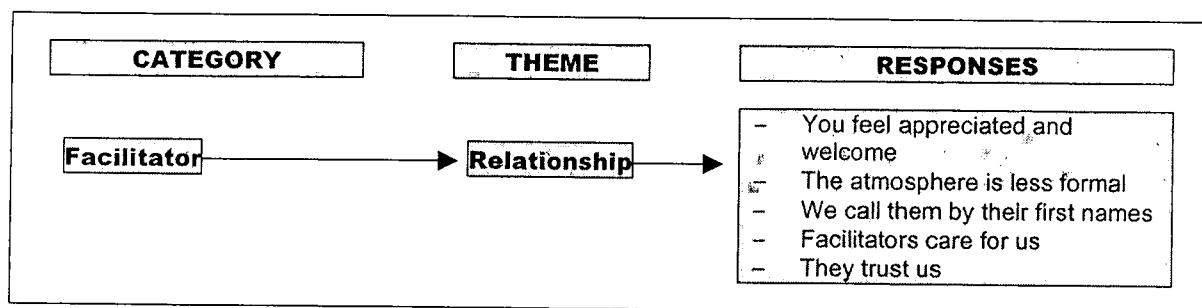
There are aspects about the facilitator that the students found important. These include relationships, personality, skills and the role that the facilitator should play in helping them to learn. Furthermore some of the students indicated that they experienced problems with certain facilitators such as difficult personalities and the lack of skills.



**FIGURE 4.9: The facilitator as experience by the students**

### 4.3.1 The relationship of the facilitator and the students

All students wanted the facilitator to be a person who is more than a teacher because of the manner in which facilitation differs from traditional teaching. In facilitation a good interpersonal relationship is important. According to Spinks and Clements (1993:48) an interpersonal relationship can have a large impact on learning and must be acknowledged. The students mentioned that their relationship with their facilitators was less formal and more caring. This made it easy for them to approach them as indicated in Figure 4.10 below.



**FIGURE 4.10: Facilitator's relation with students**

#### 4.3.1.1 Feelings of being appreciated

The students mentioned that the facilitators made them feel appreciated as indicated in the following excerpt:

*"You feel so appreciated and welcome it is unbelievable. I find that in other departments it is not so informal, you are scared to even approach them. Here it is different. You are helped".*

From the above excerpt it is clear that students viewed the learning environment as non-threatening. The learning environment refers to the environment in which the students find themselves and in which the learning process takes place (Papo, 1998:186-191). Research indicates that in making the environment non-threatening the facilitator should allow students to experiment with new behaviours such as feeling free to explore and discover through interactions. Rooth (1995:12) state that facilitators must be friendly, humorous and allow themselves to be seen as human because these behaviours are non-threatening and can assist in removing any fears that the students can bring into the classroom. No research was found on this aspect.

#### **4.3.1.2 The informal atmosphere**

Another factor mentioned by the students is that the environment of learning was informal and that it is important that some degree of formality should be brought in as indicated in the following excerpts:

*“The facilitators have to be formal obviously, there has to be a certain level but they should just break it down share it nicely”.*

*“I think you need that formality from the facilitators even though our lessons are much more unstructured because we are all doing it ourselves”.*

Traditional methods are known for their prescribed formality in terms of transmission of information which is authoritarian whereas, facilitative learning is more informal with democratic and student-defined activities. The relationship between the facilitator and the student should be non-threatening and non-intimidating to the learner (Musinski, 1999:23-29).

However, the students acknowledged that it is important that facilitators should be formal and others believed that they should not be lax with them. One said: ***"I think the facilitator should be strict like ours so that will make us all want to work. I think you need that formality"***. According to Desforges (1998:9) strictness characterizes the dynamic culture of the classroom where the teacher organizes the movement about the classroom and control the flow of events. The writer adds that in the classroom teachers work to maintain order. In facilitation order is maintained by the learners through setting ground rules (Rees, 1991:25). Dana in her study (1997:41-43) indicated that informality and democracy were conducive to learning.

#### **4.3.1.3 Use of first names**

Because the relationship is less formal students addressed facilitators by their first names according to this quotation: ***"We call our facilitators by their first names. That breaks the majority of barriers. I cannot think of the time when I used to call someone Mr or Mrs even in my first year"***. Research shows that certain verbal behaviour by facilitators that can promote students' learning is addressing students by their first names. This does promote their learning (Academic Development, 1998:12). The facilitator should meet the learner on a person to person level without entertaining the idea that he is superior and the learner is inferior. Pastoll (1992:17) states that many facilitators find it better to use first names, both those of the students and themselves and they found that *'dropping the use of surnames and title is like coming out from behind a shield'*. Dana (1997:41-43) shows that calling each other by their first names reduces the distance between the facilitator and the students and this makes a learning environment conducive to learning.

#### **4.3.1.4 A caring relationship**

Students felt that they were cared for when being facilitated which was different experience from when they were lectured. As a student said: *"In lectures nobody cares whether you attend or you don't attend, but here when you did not attend the facilitator asks, I didn't see you today"*. Caring is described as an enabling condition of connection and concern which allows one to notice what is at stake or what should be done (Benner & Wrubel, 2001:172-181). This description implies an emotional connection which makes, people sensitive to the needs of others and being available to ensure that these needs are met. Edwards (2001:167-171) states that caring is a basic way of being in the world and should be used appropriately to describe a wide range of involvements, from romantic love to parental love and friendship.

Caring can be perceived differently. In a study conducted by Beck (2001:101-109) on caring in the schools of nursing in Connecticut caring was expressed differently because the students revealed that to them caring meant that the staff shared their theoretical knowledge and clinical expertise with them. The writer adds that it is also necessary for students to experience caring in their educational environment so that they learn to care for their patients.

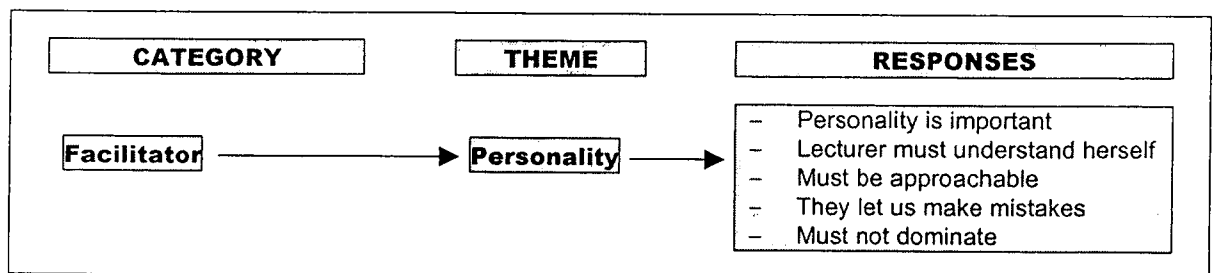
Because of this caring relationship the students indicated that facilitators identified with them and were available when they were unhappy. One student declared: *"They can identify with what we are going through, like stress, coping with work. They can help us find solutions to our problems. They give us a hand when we cry, console us and always pick up our moods"*. It seems that identifying with the students shows concern as indicated by the students.

### 4.3.1.5 Relationship of trust

Students mentioned that they prefer facilitators to trust them as one said: *"I also like that they trust us"*. According to Majumdar (1996:43-46) trust is important to the learning activity as it allows the staff to deal with problems that arise between them openly, directly and honestly. Halonen and Santrock (1997:63) state that a sense of trust requires a feeling of physical comfort and a minimal amount of fear and apprehension about the future. Research on Academic Development (1998:14-27) shows that quality learning for students occurs when facilitators trust and respect their students. Rees (1991:101) state that facilitators should create an atmosphere of trust to get students to contribute in the classroom.

### 4.3.2 Personality of the facilitator

The facilitator plays an important role in a small group according to students. They expected facilitators to have certain personality traits to enable them to function in a group as indicated in Figure 4.11:



**FIGURE 4.11: Students' perception of facilitators' personality**

#### **4.3.2.1 Personality is important**

Students indicated that personality is vital in small groups as one student said: *“Personality is important. It counts a lot because in order for you to get through to a group of people especially in the case of a very small group, there must be a sense of attachment and cohesion within the group. So if it’s someone who doesn’t have a nice personality we tend to alienate him or her from the group and then it really retards the progress of the group”*. It seems from this excerpt that students prefer a facilitator who has a personality with which they can relate. Psychologists define personality as distinctive thoughts, emotions and behaviours that characterize the way an individual adapts to the world (Halonen & Santrock, 1997:24). Other authors describe personality as the integration of all of a person’s traits, abilities as well as their temperament, attitudes, opinions, beliefs and emotional responses (Gage & Berliner 1984 in Mwamwenda, 1995:319). All these personality traits are very important especially as the facilitator is dealing with multiple and different personalities in a single group. A study at Dalhousie University on teacher and student perceptions during transition from a conventional to a PBL curriculum demonstrated that the personality of the facilitator was perceived as very important to establish a positive learning climate in learning groups (Kaufman & Holmes, 1996:371-377).

#### **4.3.2.2 Understanding the self**

The students expected facilitators first to understand their own personalities. One student put it as follows: *“The lecturer must understand herself before she can understand the student. They should also have a pleasant attitude towards the students”*. This means the facilitator should know how they respond emotionally with regard to their attitudes and temperaments. The educational implication of self-understanding is that facilitators must accept learners as persons of worth and should accept their

feelings without being defensive. When interacting with the learners they should not pretend to be what they are not (Mwamwenda, 1995:398).

According to Pastoll (1992:20-21) the kind of relationship that a teacher sets with her students will either free them or constrain them in their motivation to cooperate. For the greatest freedom a level of relationship is advocated. Leveling means functioning genuinely on principles such as:

*"I am who I am and see no point in pretending to be more"*

*"I accept these students for who they are"*

*"They have as much right to be heard as I do"*

*"My knowledge even if assumed to be greater than theirs is just as fallible"*

*"My stature is not reduced by my admitting my mistakes"*

*"I can, and would like to learn from what they say"*

(Pastoll, 1992:20-21)

#### **4.3.2.3 An approachable personality**

The students also mentioned that they found their facilitators to be approachable as indicated in the following excerpts:

*"You will find them to be very much approachable. Say for instance there is an issue you were not quiet clear with when it was discussed in the class. You really don't have any fear to contact her in her spare time. You feel comfortable to talk to her so that you are well in line with what was expected."*

*"If you have a problem and you approach them they are willing to help, they are trying their best."*

***“She must be an open person.”***

An approachable person according to the excerpts above means that the students should freely and willingly without fear be able to go to the facilitator. Tromp (1999:145) says that a successful facilitator requires specific abilities as well as a non-aggressive approach to people. According to research there is a difference between the self as seen by oneself and as seen by others. The different aspects of self in a visual way are known as the Johari window which has four divisions or windows. The researcher will briefly mention only the first window as it is relevant to the response above. The first window, also known as the arena, is about things that people know about themselves which others also know (Uys & Middleton 1997:1). This is related to what students identify as an open personality because everything is in the open. If the students know the facilitators and how they react it may be easy for them to decide on the issues they need to discuss with them.

The question of being approachable also means being available when students need the facilitator. The latter should make contact hours and contact numbers available to the students. Fichardt and Du Rand (2000:4-10) (see point 4.2.6.6) support this aspect as facilitators in their research state that they must be available to students.

#### **4.3.2.4 Facilitators let students make mistakes**

Students indicated that their facilitators allowed them to make mistakes. As one said: ***“I think our facilitator lets us make our own mistakes. They let us decide for ourselves whether we are wrong or right”***. This means that facilitators accept students and trust them come to the correct information. Rooth (1995:12) states that positive reinforcement can give students the confidence they need to experiment and make mistakes. Mwamwenda (1995:398) found that students learn more from empathetic, accepting and

trusting teachers. Empathy is conceptualized in five traits, namely human, professional state, communication process, caring and special relationship.

***Empathy as a human trait.*** In this state empathy is an innate, natural ability that cannot be learned but can be reinforced.

***Empathy as a professional state.*** It is envisioned as a learned communication skill comprised primarily as cognitive and behavioural components used to convey understanding of the clients' reality.

***Empathy as a communication process.*** An exceptional form of communication breaks empathy into a process whereby the nurse perceives the client's emotions and situations, then expresses understanding and finally the client perceives the understanding of the nurse.

***Empathy as caring.*** The understanding that the nurse has of the clients' situation and a compulsion to act because of the experience of understanding the client.

***Empathy as a special relationship*** requires a reciprocal relationship to develop over time between the nurse and the patient (Kunyk & Olson, 2001:317-325).

The facilitator can make use of any type of empathy towards the students based on the situation that requires that empathy. From the five traits of empathy discussed it is clear that it focuses on understanding a person and seeing the world through the eyes of another. The facilitators should understand the students so that they appreciate the reason for their mistakes.

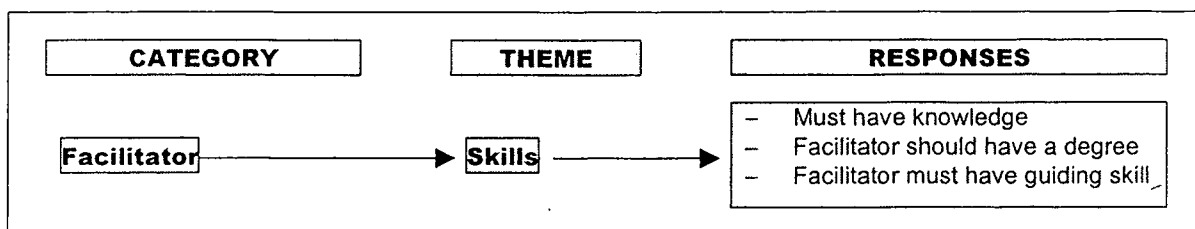
#### **4.3.2.5 Facilitator must not dominate**

It is believed by students that facilitators cannot make them do things they do not want to do and for that they needed to be assertive as one said: *"I also think being assertive. I think that's where your personality may have a lot of influence. The facilitator cannot be forceful or say things that can be misconstrued"*. Assertive behaviour involves acting in your own best interest, standing up for legitimate rights, expressing views directly and openly, being self-enhancing and making choices without hurting others (Halonen & Santrock, 1997:113; Mellish *et al.*, 1998:311). The students meant that they needed to stand on their own rights and the facilitator must not be aggressive (which is the opposite of assertiveness) and become hostile and self-enhancing at their expense. The facilitator should also be assertive so that the students may understand that certain things in their learning are important. Mellish *et al.* (1998:311) state that assertiveness is a skill which must be learned.

The development of assertive behaviour was observed in Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138) (see point 4.2.2.4). These researchers observed that the students became assertive and had a strong belief in their ability to make a difference.

#### **4.3.3 Skills of facilitators**

Students mentioned that facilitators should be educated and be skilled in facilitating as indicated in figure 4.12. They should have more than teaching skills.



**FIGURE 4.12: Skills expected of facilitators**

### 4.3.3.1 Knowledge

Facilitators are expected by students to have knowledge as one said: *"If the facilitator doesn't have knowledge the students lose confidence in that facilitator"*. Pastoll (1992:1) states that knowledge is something which has been arranged by the mind. According to Marquart, 1996 in Van Dyk, Nel and van Loedolff (2001:139) knowledge is the food of a learning organization, it is a nutrient that enables organizations to grow.

Delanty (2001:13) finds that there are different kinds of knowledge, for example there is knowledge of science called academic knowledge. This is the knowledge students meant is needed by facilitators in order to teach them. Another kind is cultural knowledge from the sociological point of view. This is traced to the work of Emile Durkheim who saw knowledge as a social construction and related to the cultural system and it is this knowledge that the society obtains in its teachings (Delanty, 2001:13). It is important that facilitators have the academic knowledge to assist the students in their growth. With the acquisition of academic knowledge the facilitators will have educational qualifications.

### **4.3.3.2 Educational qualifications**

The students indicated that it is important to them that facilitators are qualified in terms of education to enable them to facilitate. One student stated: *“About education, I feel the facilitator should first do a degree or diploma or whatever she needs to facilitate”. How can you present the work if you yourself don’t know what you are saying? I can’t go and teach doctors on how to do an operation, I must have a degree”*. According to the Government Gazette of 28 March 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998:9-12) a qualification is the formal recognition which requires that the number and range of credits should have been completed. This includes completion of an integrated assessment to ensure that the purpose of the qualification is met. According to the structure of the National Qualifications Framework (South Africa, 1995:48a) a diploma in nursing is on level 3 of further education and training. Degree qualifications which include first, higher and doctorates degree as well as higher diplomas are on levels five to eight of Higher Education and Training. Facilitators of nursing should have an opportunity to be educated in institutions of higher learning so that they can meet the needs of the students. The students expect facilitators to be qualified so that they can trust them with their ignorance. Allison and Tinson (1999:38-44) indicate that it is important that academic institutions develop a pathway which would more easily allow nurses to access a wide range of educational courses as traditional schools of nursing are moving to institutions of higher education.

Students appreciate that facilitation is a learning process both for them and facilitators and they also indicate that those who have qualifications in facilitation are better in their facilitative skills as one explained: *“I see in the facilitation as their experiences grow they tend to become proficient in what they are doing. No one is perfect in what they are doing. I don’t think anyone is born being a facilitator or has all the skills. It’s about growing and learning. The more skills they have, the more equipped they are to deal with problems. You find a marked change in someone*

*that is studying a masters and they have to facilitate in education".* In this excerpt the students experienced that a facilitator with an educational background that includes facilitation as a component to be different from others without such a background.

#### **4.3.3.3 Guiding skills**

The students expected facilitators to have the skills to guide them according to the following excerpt:

*"If the student has a problem with certain points then they should go to the facilitator for guidance. She should have the knowledge to give students guidance".*

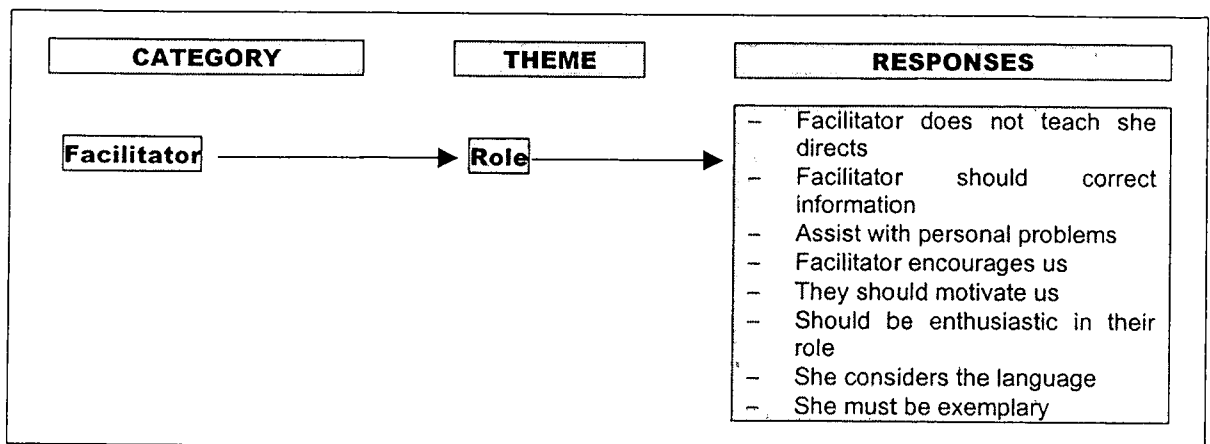
*"I think she can give us guidelines. We sometimes get stuck and I think she must intervene".*

Research shows that it is the responsibility of the facilitator to observe the learning process and point out any process issues that are impeding progress (Robson & Beary, 1995:5). The facilitator should then guide the students in their learning. They should be directive about the learning the process to assure that the group stays on target and that students do not lose focus (<http://meds.queens.ca/medicare/pbl/pblhome6.htm>). The facilitators should guide the students in the classroom, in practice and socially, especially because of the relationship they have.

Studies on guiding were discussed in Chapter 3 (see point 3.4.6.3)

### 4.3.4 The Role of the Facilitator

The literature is replete with explanations of the roles of facilitators in learning. The facilitator may operate in different roles depending on the group (Academic Development, 1998:8). These roles are academic and supportive in the classroom and in the clinical area. The students also gave their perceptions of a facilitators' role as indicated in Figure 4.13.



**FIGURE 4.13: The role of the facilitator (students' perception)**

#### 4.3.4.1 Facilitator directed learning

The role of the facilitator as seen by the students is directing and this is evident in the following excerpt, *"In the university the lecturer is the facilitator. She doesn't teach she just directs, guides and intervenes when necessary to help us to get to the information"*. Kaufman and Holmes (1998:255-261) state that the facilitator does not convey knowledge but directs learning. Other writers are of the opinion that the facilitator should leave learning to the group and only help when the group goes astray or when there is noticeable progress (Academic Development, 1998:9; Holtzhausen, 1999:45). The student has the responsibility for learning while the teacher manages the process instead of serving to provide information (Dumais *et al.*,

2001:97). Facilitators when directing, need to talk less (less telling and more listening) because if they were to give all the answers they would promote passivity on the part of the students (Academic Development, 1998:26).

The students said that they wanted a facilitator who listens rather than giving too much information. One said: ***"I think the best facilitator when we are in a group must be just listening. If we are deviating from the topic then she must ask us even about the relevance of what we are discussing so that we don't waste time. She shouldn't give too much information because if she gives us all the information we feel like then why did we research because she is giving all of it"***.

Brobank and McGill (1998:161) and Rooth (1995:25) state that the facilitator should only guide the students and help them to maintain focus. According to Holmes and Kauman (1994:275-292) interventions are necessary to stimulate discussion. Instead of talking too much the facilitator should let the group do the talking, for example by asking the students to summarize and pay attention by listening attentively. Furthermore a balance must be struck between facilitator participation and the frequency of intervention according to Beaudoin (2001:358), because if the facilitator is too quiet the students may question her subject knowledge and may develop insecurities if they have to rely on themselves. A study on an undergraduate degree course in the United Kingdom shows that some students wanted more guidance because they felt that they lacked confidence in their own abilities to achieve an acceptable depth of learning in certain subjects (Biley & Smith, 1999:1205-1212).

#### **4.3.4.2 The need for providing correct information**

The fact that the students are self-directed in their learning also means that they need to be guided in their learning and that they need to obtain correct feedback. Students expressed their needs in this regard as follows:

*“She could correct our information where it is not really sufficient”.*

*“I think the role of the facilitator is when we have a problem and difference of opinion and being caught up in the middle about how we understand information. I think it is when we need a facilitator who will come and have a straightforward answer as she is an expert’.*

These excerpts show that students expect facilitators to give them the correct information after they have explored it first themselves. According to Taylor (1997:89) it appears that literature on self-directed learning assumes that students do not need the facilitator but in essence they need some guidance. Taylor adds that it is only partially true to suggest that it is the individual student who is responsible for learning but the profession and the facilitators are also responsible for student learning by providing content. Bitzer and Pretorius (1996:5) insist that the correctness of the answers must be affirmed by the facilitator and it is the responsibility of the latter to compliment students' answers. In complimenting the student more clarity is given about the issues that are handled. This is confirmed by a student who said: *“She will encourage us if you don't know something she will clear certain things”.* However, facilitators should never feel that they have to provide all answers according to Rooth (1995:16). The students should first seek solutions and the facilitator should only correct them if they are incorrect. No study was found on this aspect.

#### **4.3.4.3 Facilitator organizes for students**

The students mentioned that facilitators arranged things for them as indicated in the following quotation:

*“She organizes people to come and give us baumanometers, stethoscopes and our badges. She makes it easier for us to know our requirements”.*

The experience and contact that facilitators have with other people put them in a position of being able to organize things for students and structure the learning environment for them. Facilitators can liaise with people outside for the benefit of the students. Marriner-Tomey (1994:34) explains a liaison role to involve a web of relationships with individuals and groups outside the school. In this role an exchange relationship is developed whereby time and talents can be offered in exchange for information and favours.

The facilitator should assist the students to meet their learning needs particularly in the practice setting. The facilitator makes things happen by participating in enabling the actions of students according to French (1994:130), hence organizing things for them. One student said: *“They also find patients for us. Maybe when we need a co-lecture she will go and organize a lecturer”.* Rooth (1995:9) espouses the view that facilitation involves creating an environment conducive to learning. If the facilitators do not organize for students then the learning environment will not be available and structure will be absent, consequently learning will not take place. The researcher could not find any study related to this responsibility of the facilitator.

#### **4.3.4.4 Assisting with personal problems**

The students mentioned that their facilitators were more than academic teachers and that they also assisted them with their personal problems as evidenced by the following quotations:

*“Even if you have personal problems it does not mean that because she is a facilitator academic-wise you’re not to talk to her. If she sees you are quiet different from your usual self she calls you aside, she talks to you. Besides the academic staff she is also a parent”.*

*“I think a lot of facilitators in this department go out of their way not only with academic problems but with students’ problem in general”.*

It seems that students experience their learning environment as non-threatening and the facilitators also seem to be friendly towards them. Friendship is a form of close relationship that involves enjoyment, acceptance, trust, respect, mutual understanding and assistance (Halonen & Santrock, 1997:228). According to Rooth (1995:12) to ensure a non-threatening environment the facilitator must be genuine, friendly, humorous and allow themselves to be seen as human. Furthermore they should show warmth as well as vulnerability and laugh with the group. Rooth adds that facilitators must be worthy of trust and maintain confidentiality because students may share issues which are of a private nature. No study was found on this aspect.

The facilitator should also show sensitivity to experiences and feelings and this student indicated that their facilitator was sensitive as she said: *“They identify with what we are going through like stress, coping with work and other things. They can help us find solutions to our problems. They give us a hand when we are crying and console us. They pick up our*

*moods*". It is therefore important that the facilitator should remain alert to expressions indicative of deep or strong feelings and should accept both intellectual and emotional attitudes, in other words she should be sensitive to students (Brockbank & McGill, 1998:157). Assisting students with personal problems may help them adapt to their profession.

#### **4.3.4.5 Encouraging role**

Another role identified by the students was that their facilitators encouraged them as they said: ***"She will encourage us if you don't understand something"***. The literature indicates what facilitators can do or use to encourage students. Facilitators should value contributions and encourage opinions without demeaning the personal integrity of the students (Dweck & Bempechet, 1983 in Creedy *et al.*, 1992:727-733). They should criticize students constructively (Donaldson & Marnick, 1995:87) so that students do not regard criticism as punishment. Facilitators are encouraged to be directive or rather to exert authority by setting guidelines for behaviour, for example encouraging acceptance of diversity, specifying that students should not verbally attack each other and equal allocation of time to speak for all (Rooth, 1995:13). The facilitator should encourage positive expression of feedback among students so that the receiver of the feedback understands the remarks as supportive (Holen, 2000:485-488). Finally respect for the needs of each member of the group should be encouraged (Rees, 1991:13). All these endeavours are important for encouraging students to learn.

#### **4.3.4.6 Motivation role**

Students expected facilitators to motivate them as one said: ***"Despite the fact that that the facilitator must be an intervener she must also excel when it comes to motivation"***. There are many ways of defining motivation. Mwamwenda (1995:259) states that motivation is a concept used as an explanation or rationale for the way a person behaves. It is a desire or an urge

that causes an individual to engage in a certain behaviour. Baron (1986) in Fox (1993:107) defines motivation as a set of processes that energize a person's behaviour and direct it towards obtaining a goal. It is important that facilitators should encourage students to develop that urge to reach their goals and in facilitation it will be the learning goal.

Taylor (1997:25) states that students entering professional education are highly motivated. They have often made a considerable economic, intellectual and emotional investment in order to begin a professional course. This means that they have invested money by paying for their education, the idea of learning was thought through before making a decision and they needed to prepare themselves emotionally to study. It is important to maximize the potential of building on such motivation and not to allow it to become undermined and demoralized by a process that can become overwhelming if not contained or managed as indicated by the same writer. In a study conducted of medical students about their perspective at the University of Sherbrook, motivation stands out as the critical component in student learning. It decreases when the workload is too great for the amount of study time available and when objectives are poorly defined as well as when students feel uncertain about what material to study (Beaudoin, 2001:357).

#### **4.3.4.7 *Enthusiastic role of the facilitator***

The students indicated that facilitators should be enthusiastic. One student believed: "***I think facilitators should show enthusiasm in the subject material***". Rooth (1995:20-21) declares that facilitators should be filled with inspiring enthusiasm and truly believe in what they are doing and they should enjoy what they are doing. Brobank and McGill (1998:157) state that facilitators should be aware of their personal stance. If facilitators are not enthusiastic about facilitation their lack of enthusiasm will leak into practice and will be communicated implicitly in their teaching methods.

#### **4.3.4.8 Language consideration**

The students stated that facilitators were considerate of the language differences particularly of the students who were not studying in their first language. One declared: ***“She also considers the language. We all come from different schools. If you don’t understand the language she makes it clear until you understand. Sometimes English can be a problem. She makes sure you understand terminology used on specific things, she is very understanding sometimes”***. Van Niekerk and Killen (2000:90-100) say that language gives individuals a communicative ability that enables them to make sense of the world.

According to Spinks and Clements (1993:56) language is a vehicle through which ideas and information are exchanged and discussed. Slope (1996:92) regards it as the first cultural obstacle because it can cause difficulties such as misunderstandings and miscommunications. Nestel (2001:212-213) support the previous writers by stating that learning in a second language has particular difficulties that are likely to be exacerbated by using words that are difficult to describe, for example feelings or emotions. In research on problems of learning among first year students at South African universities it was confirmed that black students had a problem of understanding the language of science and technology let alone English because most students come from an inferior historically disadvantaged education system with poorly prepared teachers (Nyamapfene & Letseka, 1995:159-166).

#### **4.3.4.9 The role model**

The students indicated that facilitators should be role models. As one said: ***“She must be an example and be a role model”***. Eddy and Schermer (1999:364-367) state that a role model is perceived by others to be successful, credible, interpersonally attractive, possessing status and competence. Brockbank and McGill (1998:158) add that whatever the

facilitator models will be picked up by her students and incorporated in their learning and practice because learners observe behaviours in their facilitators and can imitate them. These authors explain that a teacher who is distant, dictatorial and unable to share the difficulties and struggles of their learning process is likely to be copied by students attempting to emulate them. The importance of tutor modelling for student learning should not be underestimated.

Facilitators brought forward this role model concept in chapter 3 when they discussed preparation for class and said: ***“The big thing is you cannot take your class for granted. You cannot keep old notes. You turn to keep reading and researching more to keep abreast. There is a lot of preparation in facilitation. You have to prepare very well because they cover aspects of anatomy, physiology and sociology which they also bring to class”***. This indicates that facilitators teach by example, because if they did not prepare the students will probably emulate them and come to class unprepared. Facilitators should be able to bring out the best in students and according to Becker (1999:160) be good role models.

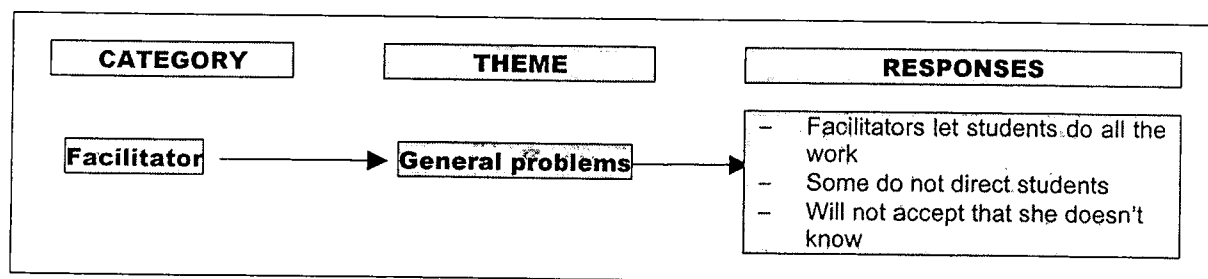
#### **4.3.4.10 Equal treatment of students**

Lastly the students mentioned that facilitators should treat them with impartiality by saying, ***“The facilitators must treat all students the same”***. This is an expectation of the students and may mean that facilitators should not favour one student over another or discriminate between them. Discrimination means to treat a person differently, usually as inferior, to make a clear distinction between that person and oneself, to differentiate and to focus on differences rather than similarities (Rooth, 1995:120). Equal treatment is important in diverse settings.

### 4.3.5 Problems with facilitators

#### ● General problems

The students spelt out some general problems with facilitators that they experienced as hindrances as indicated in Figure 4.14.



**FIGURE 4.14: Problems with facilitators**

#### 4.3.5.1 Facilitators abdicate the work

The students felt that facilitators were not working and that they gave their work to them. One student said: *“Another thing you see that the facilitators they are just resting, they are taking all the work to the students. You don’t see if the facilitator has prepared anything they dig information from you”*. This is a classical case of misunderstanding of self-directed learning (Brookfield in Uys & Cassimjee, 1997:132-138). The students were probably used to the traditional approach where the teacher is the only person responsible for controlling the teaching-learning environment. As such the facilitator can be seen as inherently lazy because of the changed roles. Brookfield (1992:13) states that learners often complain that facilitators are abdicating their educational role by placing on the learners the responsibility for making judgments about the content and direction which they as students are not equipped to do. Townsend (1994:107) emphasizes that students need to take control of their learning and become self-sufficient learners who are pro-active, challenge and question set deadlines.

Furthermore they must find resources for themselves and facilitators must let go of their authority to enhance student growth and autonomy. The researcher could not find any study on this aspect

#### **4.3.5.2 Lack of guidance**

Other students experienced that facilitators did not guide them because of the perception of their being self-directed learners. The following excerpts illustrate this feeling of the students:

*“I think it has to be explained thoroughly to some of the lecturers, because although the student works independently the lecturer has to participate by directing students. It seems other lecturers do not know that. When they come to facilitate all that they said was that, ‘I understand that you are PBL students’ and they gave us no direction”.*

*“I can say our facilitator when we don’t come up with a problem she says that this thing must be taken as a learning issue. So we go and seek other information but now in the class we are not satisfied. We go to the library but we did not understand in the class. The facilitator must intervene and not send us to the library and seek the information we did not understand in the class”.*

*“Another thing: the facilitator does not say your solution is right. She can say another student must come up with a solution but your own solution she did not say you are right. You are not sure. You can’t be motivated”*

This is also a problem related to the misconception of self-directed learning (SDL). In SDL the process of learning and teaching is learner-centred (Lunyl-Child *et al.*, 2001:116-123). A clarification of what SDL is not is made by Brookfield in Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138) who states that:

- It does not mean that the students work on their own, but that learning involves interaction with resource people.
- It does not mean that students choose totally what they want to learn. Such an approach will limit the students' development toward their own confined frameworks of thought and action.
- It does not mean that the learners decide independently what is best for them. The curriculum is structured to assist the learner to successfully achieve this ultimate goal.

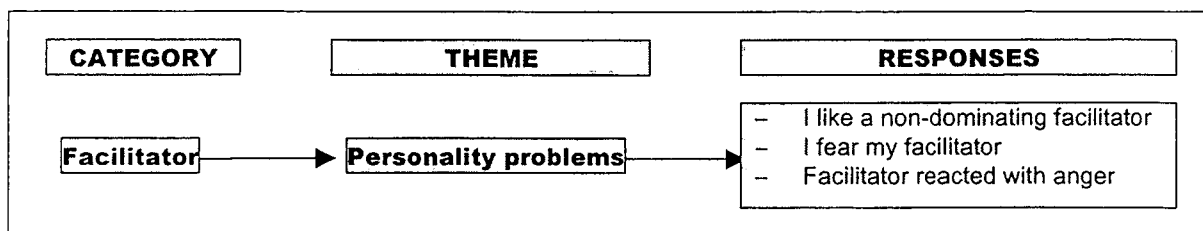
Rooth (1995:25) has observed that some facilitators incorrectly believe that because there is a great deal of freedom in facilitation one should give minimal direction, and believes that this can retard progress because participants will not know what to do. The author adds that when instructions are unclear, unfocused and ambiguous the group will feel uncertain and insecure and time is wasted. Eaton (1999:85) states that in a learning environment a certain type of experience has to be gained but learners do not know specifically what is available to extend their learning, and require a great deal of guidance. It is therefore imperative that facilitators guide the students on how to extend their learning by giving them structure. Virtanen *et al.* (1999:270-276) in their study on assessing the quality of tutorial sessions in the new PBL curriculum adopted at the University of Tampere observed that students regarded their tutorial sessions to be successful if the facilitator maintained the group focus by probing them in the right direction.

#### **4.3.5.3 Inability to accept lack of knowledge**

Students were frustrated with facilitators who would not accept that they lack knowledge in some areas. One student asserted: *“When you say something that she doesn’t know she will not accept it, she thinks it is wrong because she doesn’t know”*. This behaviour shows lack of knowledge of the self and self-understanding. According to Halonen and Santrock (1997:54) the self is the sense of who you are and what makes you different from others whereas self-understanding is the individual’s cognitive representation of their self, the substance and content of the person’s beliefs about their self. Mulholland (1994:38-42) found that in open discussions as in facilitation, gaps in knowledge become apparent and learners may ask questions to which the teacher does not know the answer. This is threatening to authoritarian teachers who are required to facilitate. Mulholland explains that it is not necessary to know everything or even pretend to have knowledge. Rooth (1995:21) mentions that it is important that facilitators become aware of their limits and be willing to acknowledge that they do not know everything. They should have a strong sense of who they are, believe in themselves, know their potentials, abilities and limitations. Brockbank and McGill (1998:161) state that facilitators must recognize that they can make mistakes and admit that they do not know everything.

#### **4.3.6 Personality problems**

Some students experienced problems with facilitators. The first problem was focused on the personality of a particular facilitator as indicated in Figure 4.15.



**FIGURE 4.15: Personality problems**

#### **4.3.6.1 A dominating facilitator**

Concerns were raised about a dominating facilitator as expressed by one student: *"I will like the best facilitator to not be so power dominant. I like somebody who is calm and yet knows what they are talking about"*. A dominating person as described is one who takes over the discussion. Dana (1997:41-43) is of the opinion that becoming a facilitator involves a lot of standing back and encouraging students to do things themselves. Standing back means that one needs to sit-out long silences without giving in to offering solutions or opinions during times of deadlock in the group. Mulholland (1994:34-42) states that knowing when to give information is a highly developed skill because if the facilitator gives information too early or too quickly the situation soon reverts to the traditional teacher-centred approach.

Virtanen *et al.* (1999:270-276) found that students experienced that a dominating facilitator tended to lecture the subject. They described this type of facilitator as holding the group process too firmly in their hands and acting like a traditional teacher. Furthermore they indicated that such facilitators talked too much about the subject if they knew more about it. A non-dominating facilitator was said to sit in the background taking part in the discussion without steering too much.

#### **4.3.6.2 Fearing the facilitator**

Some students indicated that they feared their facilitator as some said: ***“Our facilitator is a perfectionist. She makes us want to push harder. She is perfect because she is very accurate. It’s really true because people are really afraid of her. There are even those who when they find her in the laboratory they run away”.***

***“I am afraid to be assessed by her. Because she is my facilitator she expects more of us. She produces too much fear in you and at the end of the day you like fear her too much”.***

Literature on psychology describes fear as a response to a known external, definite threat (Kaplan & Sadock, 1998:63). According to the students the facilitator was a perfectionist who was feared by them and this has to do with the personality trait commonly found in people with an obsessive-compulsive personality. When discussing obsessive-compulsive personality disorder psychologists state that a person with this disorder is preoccupied with orderliness, perfectionism, mental and interpersonal control at the expense of flexibility (Pulkinen, 2000:414, Kaplan & Sadock, 1998:792). The researcher should not be misunderstood to be stating that the students who made the above statement were dealing with a facilitator with a personality disorder but the intention was to indicate different personality behaviours. Since the researcher is not a psychologist and has neither met the said facilitator she is not qualified to imply any disorder. If students are filled with fear because of a facilitator’s personality it will be difficult for them to participate in class. In previous sessions students stated that the facilitator should be friendly and warm to encourage contributions. When students spoke about their contribution in this facilitator’s group one said: ***“I think people may not be willing to offer information because it is wrong or not enough. She does expect so much of you so you might be a bit reserved”.*** A facilitator who

instills fear in students is not ideal for facilitation because, according to Klopper (1999:22) a facilitator should:

- be empathetic
- warm
- open
- have the ability to establish a motivating climate

Katz (1996:45) states that a good facilitator:

- encourages members to feel free to disagree with others
- keeps discussions focused
- makes sure everyone participates
- shares all relevant information
- encourages group development
- discourages disruptive behaviours

#### **4.3.6.3 Anger exhibited by facilitator**

Students stated that when they challenged the facilitator, the latter became angry. They said: *“When we mentioned to the other facilitators that we did not want to change our class time as she asked us, she was angry and said that she does not like us the PBL students”*. Anger is a powerful emotion and people get angry when their expectations are violated (Halonon & Satrock, 1997:85). The facilitator in the above excerpt probably expected students to abide and not challenge his or her request that they change the class time. Because of the nature of learning the students will challenge the facilitator. Du Rand (1996:44-45) states that facilitators must have a positive attitude to students and must accept their challenges. Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138) believe that this is especially so in self-direction because students would like to learn at their own pace and time . Anger as a way of behaviour is not an ideal characteristic of a facilitator because the facilitator

should be tolerant (<http://meds.queens.ca/medicare/pbl/pblhome6.htm>). According to Tromp (1998:145) the facilitator should have a non-aggressive approach to people.

#### **4.3.6.4 Lack of facilitation skills**

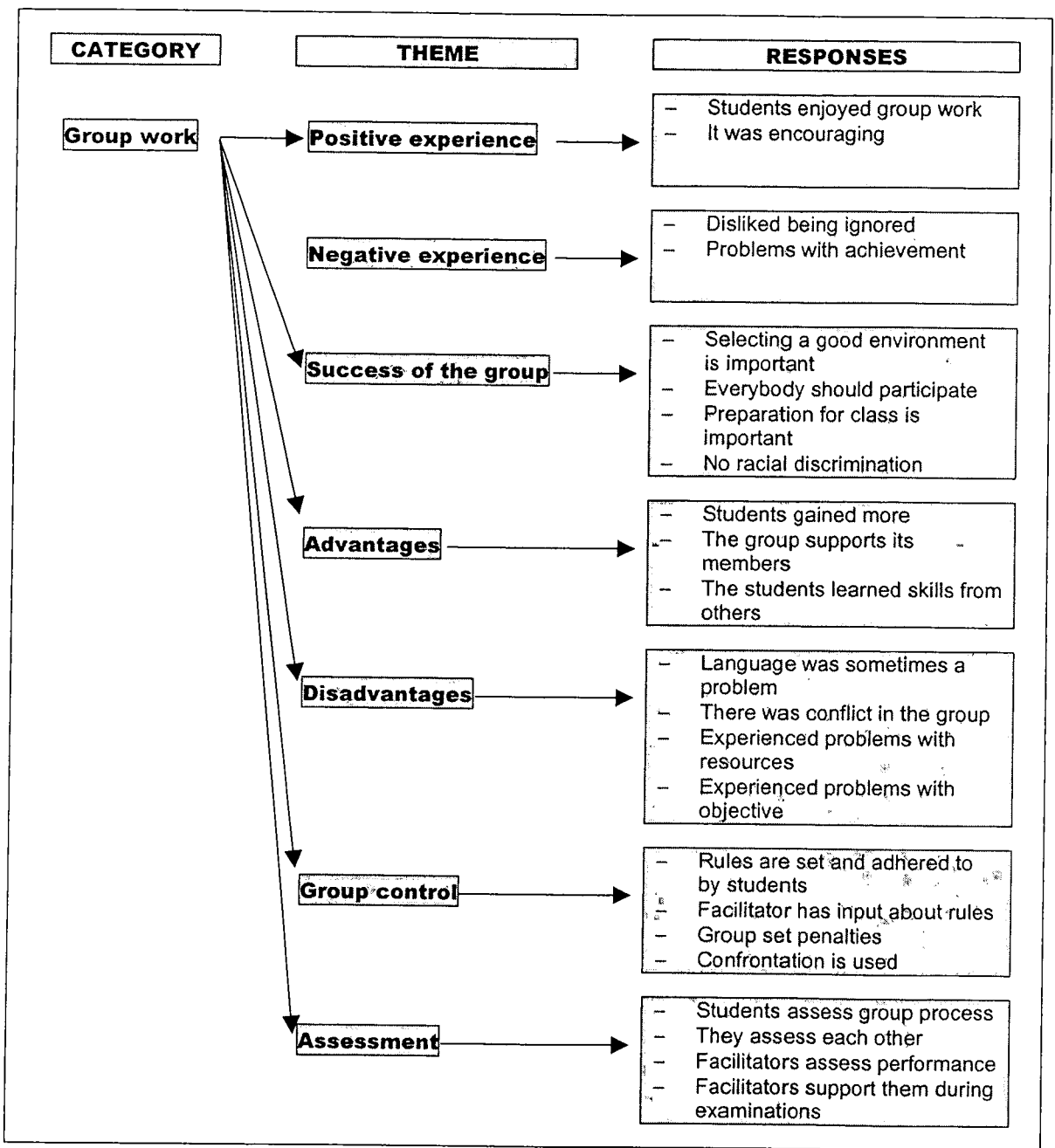
Students mentioned that they did not enjoy having facilitators who were not trained to facilitate because they behaved like traditional teachers as indicated in the following excerpt:

*“The ones who have done masters in PBL they have the skills but the ones who come from college don’t know what to do. They don’t have the time to talk and listen to the student. It is not easy for those who come from college, they are used to coming and talking, they are not patient, they think that the student is someone who is under them. They are supposed to control the student, when you say something that she doesn’t know she will not accept it, she thinks it is wrong because she doesn’t know it”.*

The lack of skills is a problem because of the roles that a facilitator is expected to fulfil. An unskilled facilitator will revert back to traditional lecturing and defeat the purpose of self-direction. A facilitator should be skilled in facilitating content as well as the process because this is important for students’ learning. The study conducted by Virtanen *et al.* (1999:270-276) indicates an opposite view because the students preferred that their facilitator should act like a traditional teacher, particularly if he knew more about the subject than they did.

#### **4.4 GROUP WORK**

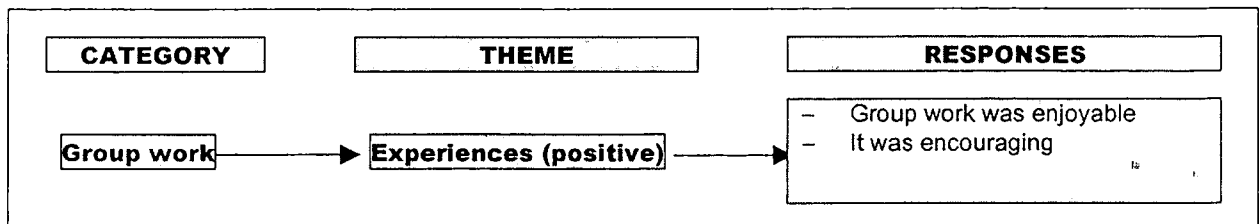
Facilitation commonly takes place in small groups. Steinert (1996:203-207) states that groups are made up of individuals who interact with one another. Gregory and Thorley (1994:20) explain that all gatherings for educational purposes, irrespective of size have elements of group interaction. Most of the student-centred approaches, for example PBL, are most often associated with small groups, usually ranging in size from four to eight students for maximum effectiveness (Charlin *et al.*, 1998:323-330). The students in this research were found to be learning in small groups ranging from five to twelve except in two institution where there were more than 20 students in a group.



**FIGURE 4.16: Student's experiences of group work**

#### 4.4.1 Positive experiences of learning in a small group

The students declared that they enjoyed and gained a great deal when they learned in small groups as indicated in Figure 4.17.



**FIGURE 4.17: Positive experiences of students in small groups**

##### 4.4.1.1 Enjoyment of learning in a small group

The students indicated that they enjoyed learning in small groups as one expressed it: *"It is a lot of fun too, even the lecturer can see if you didn't prepare"*. Attitudes that students bring into the group are important in determining whether they will enjoy the experience and have fun in their learning. According to Thomas (1997:320-329) the key attitudes that aid group functioning are positive attitudes to the group and interactions in that group. Taylor adds that important positive attitudes are to join the group without deciding in anticipation that the experience will be unpleasant. One should be committed to the group and have a feeling of responsibility to expend time and energy for the group.

The students also felt that studying together was important because they shared ideas as one said: *"Working as a group is really fantastic, they usually say in English two heads are better than one"*. This is because members engage in both convergent and divergent thinking and contribute many ideas according to Thomas (1997:320-329). Studies have shown that

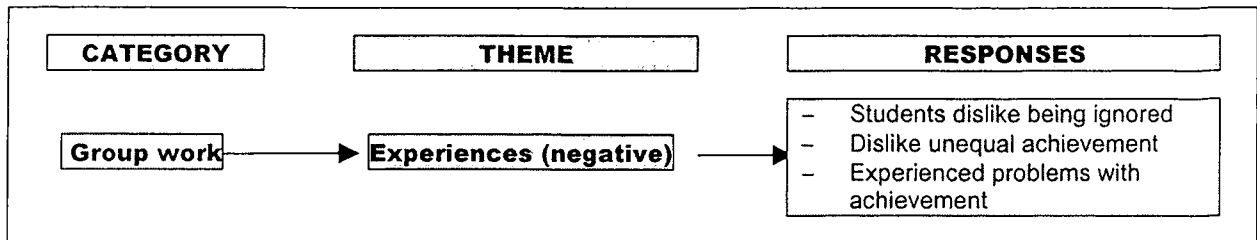
students enjoy studying in small groups. Virtanen *et al.* (1999:270-276) indicated that students rated their sessions to be successful when the group shared knowledge and that this kind of spirit prevails in sessions where each member explains something that is difficult for others to understand. Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138) have a different view. The students in their study indicated that working in a group was unpleasant because they could not finish work as some in the group were lazy. Edwards *et al.* (1998:139-141) indicate that some students were frustrated because they had little group experience and had little desire to work in groups.

#### **4.4.1.2 Encouragement from group learning**

It was felt that learning in a group is encouraging as a student said: *"It is encouraging because you have something to say. You have to seek information so that you may contribute"*. Steinert (1996:203-207) found that one of the strengths of small-group teaching is the opportunity for students to become actively involved in the process of learning and that the facilitators should promote individual involvement and active participation through effective questioning, active listening and reinforcement of individual contributions. Another aspect implicit in the excerpt above that is worth mentioning is that members encourage their peers to exert maximum effort because members can attain their personal goals only if the group is essential or important. Dolmans *et al.* (1998:22-224) add that students are encouraged to spend time on their studies because of the positive influence they receive from the group members.

#### **4.4.2 Negative experiences**

Although many positive factors about group work were found in the literature, and despite the fact that students stated that they enjoyed this kind of learning, there were some setbacks experienced by students relating to slow learners and achievement as indicate in Figure 4.18.



**FIGURE 4.18: Negative group work experience**

#### **4.4.2.1 The dislike of being ignored by others**

The lack of tolerance of group members towards slow learners was a negative student experience. As one said: *“What I don’t like with a group when a person does not understand quickly what has been discussed, is when somebody just ignores that and does not want somebody to repeat that to the person who does not understand or grasp easily”*. The facilitators indicated in Chapter 3 that they noted this behaviour that intelligent students were frustrated by slow learners. One said: *“The bright student who doesn’t have time to wait for someone is frustrated”*. The bright and slow learners may be explained in terms of those who tend to be more successful in examinations and those who tend to be less successful. According to Tribe (1994:26) some students take a passive approach to learning and are mainly concerned with surface level processing of academic knowledge and such students will find this approach disadvantageous in the university setting. Tribe adds that those who employ deep learning find it easier to tackle questions and are concerned with understanding and thinking. The author suggests that those whose cognitive styles lead them to use a deep processing approach should be given the academic opportunity to do so.

A teaching model known as cooperative learning can be utilized to ensure that high, average and low achievers are equally challenged and valued as team members. Cooperative learning involves students working in small groups helping one another to learn academic material. This method is intellectually stimulating. The advantage is that there is increased accountability of

students for their own learning as well as the learning of the group (Huff, 1997:434-436). One of the premises of cooperative learning in a small group is training for cooperation (Sobral, 1998:118-121). The results of the study conducted by Cassimjee and Brookes (1998:95-102) shows that conscientious students carried on with the work leaving out the others who did not put in effort.

#### **4.4.2.2 Problems with achievement scores**

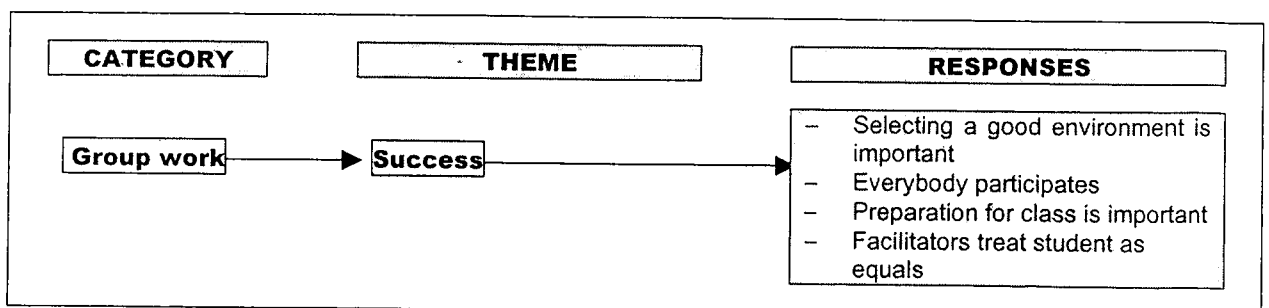
One student was not happy that they were not allocated the same mark on assessment even though they worked as a group. His comment was: ***“What I don’t like about the group is that you may be hard working but, when it comes to achievement you don’t achieve much. One may achieve 90% and the other 20% but all along we have been working as a group. What about the fact that we have been working as a team because if you analyze this word team it means together each of us must achieve”.*** Indeed small groups encourage team spirit and a ‘we are all in this together’ learning experience, according to Johnson, Johnson and Holube (1990) in Huff (1997:434-436), but the students still have individual responsibility for learning and proving competence in what they have learned. According to Gregory and Thorley (1994:181-182) higher education has traditionally assessed students’ individual competence. They suggest that the rules should be changed so that students are assessed on their ability to work cooperatively. Hassall and Lewis (1994:169) in their study on a BA (Hons) degree in accounting and management at Sheffield Hallam University had the same concern on how to allocate an individual mark for a course that is conducted on a group basis. There is a need to revise the methods of assessment particularly with students working and learning in small groups.

### 4.4.3 Success of the group

The functioning of the group depends on several factors. These are known as group dynamics, sometimes referred to as group process. Kurt Lewin was a researcher who invented the term group dynamics which looks at how groups work and how they are managed, in other words what happens in groups (Robson & Beary, 1995:4-5). Other writers define group dynamics as activities in a group and interactions and interrelations among the members of a group and between the members and the facilitator (Holen, 2000:485-488). The students and tutors of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences in the United Arab Emirates in a study on perceptions of group dynamics added another dimension when they included physical climate such as lighting, air conditioning, room size and sitting arrangements as group dynamics (Mpofu, Das, Stewart, Dunn & Schmidt, 1998:421-427). The following aspects mentioned by students which may influence the success of the group will be discussed:

- The learning environment
- Participation
- Group support
- Equal treatment

The facilitation process requires that students study in small groups. Factors that contribute to group success are mentioned in Figure 4.19.



**FIGURE 4.19: Success of group work**

#### **4.4.3.1 The learning environment**

Students felt that it is important to have an environment conducive to learning. One stated: ***“Selecting a correct environment for the group to function is also important. You have to have a desk board to prescribe what you are doing for the session”***. Papo (1998:186-191) states that learning environment refer to the environment in which the learners find themselves and in which learning process takes place. The learning environment may mean the group dynamic of physical climate mentioned by Mpofu *et al*. This includes sitting arrangements, air conditioning, and the use of aids such as a chalk board which should be provided by the facilitator. Steinert (1996:203-207) states that the facilitator must plan the physical setting ahead by choosing the right room and perhaps moving the furniture around to allow interactions. It was important for the students that the environment was arranged so that the group process could be successful. Another aspect of learning which the students did not mention is the climate the facilitator should set by helping the learners to become acquainted with each other as people (Neville, 1999:393-401). This can be done by introducing them to one another from the beginning.

#### **4.4.3.2 Participation in a group**

Students indicated that for a group to function effectively everybody must be involved and contribute in the group. The following responses support this statement:

***“Its nice to work in a small group because everybody participates more than in a big group”***.

***“Participation of everybody is very important because it can become frustrating if one or two people are always carrying the group”.***

***“The success of the group comes from the active members and the leadership”.***

According to Radoloff and Murphy (1992:27) one of the main advantages of small group learning is the encouragement of active student involvement and the facilitator should ensure and get every student to participate in class from the beginning. Active learning or participation is seen to be very important. Dumais and Des Marchais (2001:96) state the importance of active learning to be that of stimulating motivation. Usherwood and Primhak (1996:341-342) found that participation empowers students to exert some influence over what and how students learn, test and deepen their learning through discussion and debate. Beaudoin (2001:356) states that the value of small groups is placed on student cooperation and active participation.

In a study conducted at the medical school of the University of Maastricht it was found that active participation is hindered when only a few students prepare for class as this discouraged other members from participating. In this situation some students allow others to do the work for them. If the group discovers that some students are allowing others do the work, they too start to contribute less (Dolmans *et al.*, 1998:22-24). The students in this research indicated that they were forced to participate because they were evaluated negatively if they did not participate as indicated in the following excerpt: ***“Students who were unwilling to work were pressurized into working because marks on presentations and profiles were given individually and each member of the group evaluated the other members. If you didn’t do your part of the profile assigned to you other members in the group were going to give you a bad mark”.*** The fear of being assigned a poor mark motivated these students.

Dolmans *et al.* (1998:23) emphasize that motivation and interactions directly influence a group's productivity. Another factor that can hinder participation is a large class. In a study on PBL learning by Usherwood and Primhak (1996:341-342) they found that in a large group some students may just choose not to participate. Ground rules which will be discussed later should be established regarding participation and how this issue is handled so that students know from the outset what is expected of them. An example of such a rule as stated in Academic Development (1998:34) is that all members should come to class prepared. Katz (1995:60) suggests that facilitators should set a rule of making participation mandatory, because it is important that everybody participate for the success of the group.

#### **4.4.3.3 Preparation for class**

All groups of students agreed that it was important for every group member to prepare for class presentation. They believed that preparing for class was important for the reasons indicated in the excerpts below:

*"Each time we come to the group I have to prepare. Even if I am not presenting an issue I still prepare so that I can understand what the person is saying and I can contribute".*

*"You just cannot come to class without having prepared because then everything goes wrong".*

*"You definitely have to go through all mood disorders, so you are forced to read all of them, you need to know what's the problem. If I know I am presenting phobias I will read in more detail because I will be expecting any kind of questions from the lecturer and students. But if you didn't prepare it is going to be obvious if they ask questions you*

*don't know where to touch and if the group didn't prepare they are supposed to defend the presenter".*

*"Lectures must come to class prepared too. They must not say that we are PBL students and we know the work. They must be prepared so that we also can get information from them".*

Pastoll (1992:46) states that inadequate preparation is a fact of life. Even lecturers are guilty of not preparing adequately. Diekelmann and Schulte (2000:291-293) assert that preparing for class is taken for granted in nursing classrooms for both students and teachers. They state that it is assumed that the role of the teacher is to develop assignments in advance of a classroom discussion and the teacher suggests that students come prepared for class by reading the assignments. The writer believes that if teachers have planned to depend on student preparation they will be left stranded if the latter did not prepare. Pastoll adds that poor preparation by students can inhibit a discussion to the point where there is little purpose in continuing (Pastoll, 1992:46). It is therefore important that both facilitator and the students come to class prepared. Virtanen *et al.* (1999:270-276) also found that poorly prepared facilitators contribute to unsuccessful tutorial sessions.

#### **4.4.3.4 No racial discrimination**

Students declared that they were motivated by the fact that even if they were from different cultural backgrounds, facilitators did not give preferential treatment to any race. One group said: *"The other thing is they treat us equal. Like saying this is a white person and they treat that person right or better than black"*. Vaughan (1997:135-139) describes racism as a social phenomenon which uses biological differences to explain and justify birth-ascribed social inequalities. Furthermore, racial prejudice is more than just a dislike of the appearance and attitudes of another, it is a determination of one

class to keep some people and their capabilities exploitable. The same writer states that the literature has used fresh positive labels such as cultural diversity, multicultural diversity, cultural sensitivity just to slip-cover the continuing politically incorrect problem of racism.

Sommer (2001:276-278) states that it is important to address cultural diversity in nursing education because the students are assigned to care for clients of diverse cultural backgrounds during clinical experience. The author adds that benefits that can come to nursing education from fully implementing multicultural education in the curriculum are not realized in schools of nursing. Tullman (1992) in Eliason and Raheim (2000:161-165) suggest that courses and textbooks on cultural diversity are not adequate to reduce racism in nursing but propose that white nurses examine their racist attitudes.

Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-1138) (see point 4.2.2.4) mention that a racial issue came up in one group and this was thoroughly explored and resolved. The writers do not specify the nature of the racial issue and its resolution. Since the students in the present research did not mention that they experienced any form of racism the topic was not explored any further.

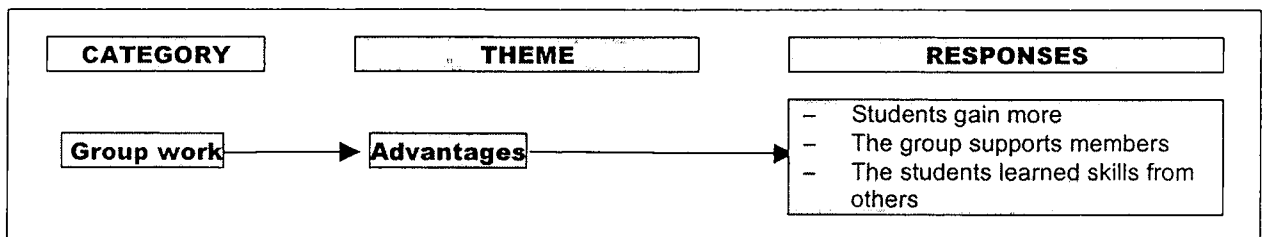
Vaugan (1997:135-139) recommended the following actions that nurse educators can take to promote diversity:

- **Eliminate stereotyping** (making decisions about someone based upon assumptions). Learning about differences in others because stereotypes hurt.
- **Learn to listen.** Often racism is born out of one group's dominance and refusal to hear the concerns of others.
- **Recognize the need for and provide role models.** Often students complain that they feel uncomfortable in approaching staff members who are not of their race with problems. Provide mentors.

- **Confront feelings of racism head-on.**
- **Educate.** Increasing awareness is a key to combating discriminatory practices.
- **Capitalize on a group's differences.** Value and welcome change. Build an environment that accommodates differences.

#### 4.4.4 Advantages of group work

Small groups are known for their benefits and the students mentioned that they gained more, members supported each other, and they learned skills from one another as indicated in Figure 4.20.



**FIGURE 4.20: Advantages of small groups**

##### 4.4.4.1 Gains of small groups

Learning and working in small groups were perceived as gaining more as one student said: *"I think you gain a lot as a group by contributing than a teacher who stands in front of you and give information and go away not even realizing whether you understand what she or he is saying"*. The literature is replete with the benefits of learning in small groups. According to Holen (2000:485-488) the group situation allows the simultaneous expression of diverse learning styles. In other words students learn from each others' styles. They may ask questions or offer explanations, and thereby test their

comprehension. The author adds that the students may clarify unclear points and draw connections between prior knowledge and the topic under consideration and that these are just a few advantages of facilitation over the standard lecture. Gregory and Thorley (1994:20-21) state that groups provide opportunities that cannot be realized in individual learning situations. These writers declare that groups provide expertise from the rest of the group not available to the solitary individual and can tackle more complex and realistic tasks than on an individual basis. Furthermore a group provides a place where subject matter can be fully engaged and promote deep learning where students understand and process that which is being learned.

#### **4.4.4.2 The support of group members**

Small groups are known to encourage cohesion because members develop team spirit that encourages the group to care about its members (Dolmans *et al.*, 1998:22-24). These writers continue that group cohesiveness is considered to directly influence a positive relationship in a group. The following statement was made by students to confirm these remarks:

***“We have learnt caring about each other even if you are not in a PBL session and if anyone misses a class we take notes for them. We are used to doing that. It is like oh!!! My family”.***

This statement indicates the caring and supportive relationship that students have with one another. Beaudoin (2001:356) emphasizes that small groups teach collaboration and prepare students for the relations they will have with colleagues in a health-care setting. When a student explained how other students from other disciplines envied the support and the relationship in her group she said: ***“It’s like me last year. I was in a group with pharmacists. They didn’t understand how come when my colleagues were not in class***

***I took notes for them. They said why you nurses always take notes for each other it is so nice, I wish I was in your group”.***

Beaudoin (2001:356) states that the value of working in small groups is the cooperation which improves personal interactions and leads to an astonishing feeling of partnership. In discussing support and cooperation a student said: ***“The most positive thing is that you are a small family. You support one another and you learn to co-operate”.***

Taylor (1997:103) believes that students can support each other emotionally, especially in a learning group. Indeed this was confirmed by a student who said. ***“The social support that you get from the group if you have a problem they will support you”.*** This means that the group is not only concerned with academic work, it also looks after the social welfare of its members.

An exploratory qualitative study of the experiences, teaching and learning of non-traditional learners conducted by Taylor (1997:146) at Bristol University showed the following about students working in groups:

- they valued relationships and interdependence in a group meaning that members needed to rely on themselves and on one another,
- they needed psychological reassurance to be supplied by students for students,
- all reported seeking support from other students,
- they found students more readily accessible and available than staff.

Students in this research found it comfortable to be supported by colleagues. As one said: ***"If you are a slow learner, it is good to be in a group because you get people of your own age to explain things"***. This confirms Taylor's finding of the preferences of students in terms of who should support them and the fact that students are more accessible than staff. Dana and Gwele (1998:58-64) confirm that students provide emotional support for one another. In study at George Mason University on creating a learning environment, the students described the support given to them by their instructor as 'offering their offices as a dwelling place for them during a stressful time in their nursing education to make a difference' (Redmond & Sorrell, 1996:21-27). These experiences clearly indicate the importance of support by students and facilitators.

#### **4.4.4.3 Skills learned**

Students stated that they learned certain skills from other students in their groups. The literature is permeated with the benefits attributed to skills that students can gain from learning in small groups (Sobral, 1998:118-121).

The students indicated that they learned some study skills from other members of the group. As one said: ***"We learned about different methods of studying"***. This is because the group situation allows simultaneous expression of diverse learning style and students often have not yet developed learning strategies that are designed for lifelong and self-directed learning. The students therefore observe the learning styles of others in the group and have a chance to attain alternative ways of acquiring knowledge (Holen, 2000:485-488).

Another skill which students said they had gained, was the interpersonal one and this is evident from the following remark: ***"Small groups are good for developing interpersonal skills because you learn to get along with someone"***. Interpersonal skills, according to Katz (1995:58), are the skills

that are at the heart of the group process and include active listening, communication and learning to give feedback. Small groups give students an opportunity to understand human relations and their personal interactions (Beaudoin, 2001:356).

Another interpersonal skill mentioned in the literature is that of conflict management (Peterson, 1997) and the students indicated that they learned to deal with conflict as one said: ***"We learned how to manage conflict"***. According to Peterson (1997) a source of conflict in a group is the difference in thinking styles between students. Thinking styles determine how a student gathers information and uses it to solve problems. Not understanding or appreciating the value of other students' thinking styles creates conflict. Taylor (1997:67) found that students learn a great deal in groups about how to make decisions and handle conflict and this can be significant to their future practice in teams. Uys and Cassimjee (1997:132-138) state that according to the lecturing staff students spent a great deal of time dealing with interpersonal and intergroup conflict and much personal growth was noted in these students.

Students also mentioned that they learned leadership skills. One said: ***"The other thing is that we are taught to be leaders, I really value that in PBL, we are taught to be leaders not followers"***. Katz (1995:59) asserts that group leadership is an important factor in group process and facilitation. The writer adds that facilitation lends itself to a democratic form of group leadership which is shared by both the students and the facilitator. Peterson (1997) calls this role-sharing and states that effective leadership skills allow students to become self-managed requiring the presence of few facilitators. The students also indicated that they developed team spirit and said: ***"The most important about group work is that it develops team spirit"***. The creation of team spirit is viewed as an advantage to the group and encourages members to help the group succeed (Dolmans et al, 1998:22-24). Students are encouraged to co-operate, share responsibility work together in

discussing issues as well as solving problems (Academic Development, 1997:9; Holtzhausen, 1999:45).

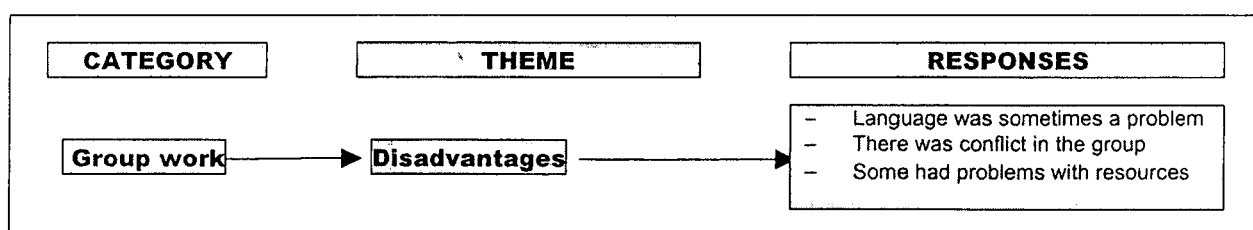
Learning from each other's culture was also mentioned as a skill by a student said: ***"I have to do some of their cultural things. I go to them and say I know nothing about this. Please help me"***. Individuals in a group are diverse and all come from different backgrounds. Huff (1997:434-436) states that the students working together in a small group create a dynamic energy which motivates members to learn from each other. Junn (1994:130) agrees that each student brings into the classroom a wealth of unique personal or cultural knowledge that can be tapped as a rich source of learning. Jacobs and Giarelli (2001:5-13) states that culture-encompassing learned beliefs and behaviours are shared by a group. Sommer (2001:276-278) found that it is important that students learn about other cultures because they are in contact with patients from diverse cultural backgrounds during their clinical learning and will care for them when they qualify. Davidhizar, Bechtel and McEwen (1999:14-17) state that nurses and healthcare administrators must address cultural diversity both in the care of clients and in interpersonal relationships among staff so that they can deliver efficient health care. Learning about culture should therefore start in the classroom whilst students are still learning.

The ability to communicate in public was identified as a skill learned by a student who said. ***"We also learned other life skills like public speaking"***. Nurses, by virtue of their profession, are expected to give health education which includes teaching clients in their workplaces and any public places and will thus need the skill to address them. Group work helps students improve social skills of communication. It prepares students for life after graduation (Woods, 1995; Huff, 1997:434-436; Gregory & Thorley, 1994:22).

Other benefits of small groups mentioned in the literature include developing qualities which require interaction with others such as cooperation (McNally, 1994:114). Small groups increase collaborative learning. This involves structuring positive interdependence into students' attainment while working together in small groups to maximize their own and each other's learning (Sobral, 1998:118-121; Zafuto, 1997:265-270).

#### 4.4.5 Disadvantages of group work

The students indicated that there were certain aspects which they did not like about learning in a group. According to Steinert (1996:203-207) small group teaching offers many advantages but also possesses certain limitations. Holen (2000:485-488) adds that the inadequacies of small-group forums are not always acknowledged. The limitations that students experienced in small groups will be discussed in terms of Figure 4.21.



**FIGURE 4.21: Disadvantages of group work**

Students mentioned that even if they preferred group facilitation there were things that spoiled their enjoyment of this process. Problems mentioned were the language used, conflict regarding group resources and objectives.

#### **4.4.5.1 Use of different languages**

In those institutions that used languages other than English students felt they were disadvantaged if group activities were performed in a language they did not understand as indicated in the following quotations:

***“In my group sometimes the Afrikaans-speaking people say the class is in Afrikaans so if they raise a point they say it in Afrikaans and I am left behind. I don’t understand Afrikaans”.***

***“Most common was language conflict. We did not understand Afrikaans and others did not understand English”.***

It is clear from these statements that there were two languages which made it difficult for the group to understand. Van Niekerk and Killen (2000:90-100) state that language gives individuals a communicative ability that enables them to make sense of the world. The underlying question is how it is possible for groups to make sense of their learning world if they do not understand each others’ language. Slope (1996:92) explains language as the first cultural obstacle encountered. As an obstacle it will be a barrier and thwart understanding.

Spinks and Clement (1993:48) when emphasizing the importance of language as a vehicle through which ideas and information are exchanged state that its use is pivotal to the image of the training course as perceived by learners. Schoem *et al.* (1993) in Sommer (2001:276-278) declare that a presentation may be ineffective if the information reflects the language and values of the dominant culture. Students of non-dominant cultures who have not been exposed to the language of the dominant culture may feel inferior, rejected out of place, bored or hostile. Another example is found in the study of Mc Inerney

(1998:53-56). The second language students appeared slow and stupid because they had to first mentally translate from English into the vernacular and then back again. They only required that their background be appreciated and understood by those whose first language was English.

#### **4.4.5.2 Conflict in the group**

Students stated that even though there were positive things about learning in a group there was conflict and this was normal. They believed that conflict originated from several factors as indicated below:

*“In every group there will always be some problems but through this knowledge of group dynamics you manage to overcome”.*

*“It is like a family. You don’t get along every day but you learn from the mistakes that you made yesterday. So when you quarrel at least you learn in future I am going to meet different people”.*

Studies show that conflict is inevitable in human interactions and that it is healthy, common and necessary for growth (Robson & Beary, 1995:54; Peterson, 1997). Groups evolve through four stages namely:

- The forming stage
- Storming stage
- Norming stage
- Conforming stage (Academic Development, 1997:28, Silins & Murray-Harvey, 1994:254)

Conflict is characteristic of the storming stage because there are power struggles between members as well as emotional outbursts. People in this stage become more confident of themselves and they start bringing out their personal agendas (Robson & Beary, 1995:54). The research did not reveal when exactly the groups experienced conflict. The students mentioned that there was an occasional lack of trust amongst them which contributed to conflict as one said: ***“Sometimes you don’t trust each other as a group the way they present information. Sometimes we gossip about each other”***. Brobank and McGill (1998:200) state that even if people fear conflict it has some benefits and building a trusting relationship is one of them. Tromp (1999:20) attributes this relationship to diversity where people appreciate each other's viewpoints in a conflict situation.

Students also mentioned that communication is important in resolving conflict. One student said: ***“Sometimes we have disagreement in the group when some don’t do their part and sometimes we disagree on how to do things but we talk about it and compromise”***. Communication is important for interaction to take place. Karuhije (1997:5-12) emphasizes that effective teaching and learning require both effective and efficient communication processes in the classroom and the clinical setting. Peterson (1997) points out that conflict can occur when students lack the skill necessary for team function and this is illustrated in this research by a student who could not handle a problematic colleague in the group: ***“Sometimes people during the session they are interrupting at the end you get frustrated and sometimes you end up shouting each other. We are friends you see sometimes somebody is busy presenting and I am busy chatting and just ignoring them then they will get cross. Sometimes you just can’t handle them”***. The lack of skills may also mean lacking the knowledge of how long one should maintain certain roles in a group because students should rotate in these roles. One student said: ***“I don’t say everything is always positive because you get group conflict. Sometimes one has retained leadership position too long other people feel you want to do everything and they are not getting enough”***. According to the literature

the small group format imposes demands on the role of both the students and the facilitator in that they have to learn certain skills which will make this format a success (Kolars *et al.*, 1997:53-57;Holen, 2000:485-488).

Another contributory factor to conflict was personality clashes and this was pointed out by one student who said: ***“In a group you tend to have personality clashes. You tend to have people who are very much dominating at the expense of others”***. Personality has been defined to represent those characteristics of the person that account for a consistent pattern of behaviour (Pervin, 1993:3). An individual may be an introvert who is more reserved or an extravert who is more outgoing and perhaps dominant (Engler, 1991:84). In discussing cooperative learning in small groups Huff (1997:434-436) supports what students said above by saying that the individual personalities of two students in a group can be so disruptive that the learning process is hampered.

The students mentioned that they set ground rules to deal with conflict. Peterson (1997) recommends that ground rules should be established to govern student interactions. These serve to prevent crises from occurring by establishing clear expectations and to establish norms of behaviour which act as references when problems occur. Ground rules will be discussed under point 4.4.6.

In preventing conflict in the group the following rules are suggested:

- involving the silent and disinterested student so that all are involved,
- controlling the bold and bright students as they may dominate the quiet ones,
- deciding on what to do with students who came to class unprepared (Academic Development, 1998:26).

### **4.4.5.3 Problems with resources**

Students mentioned that searching for resource was initially difficult and took up a great deal of time. The following quotations from focus interviews bear testimony to the above statement:

*"They will just say you have to go and search. You go to the library and you have to do all the research, somehow you use difficult books and terms that are difficult that you don't know".*

*"You spend two hours looking for an article and you only get it after 3 hours. After you still have to go over it and underline the article".*

*"Sometimes you get different information and maybe you find that you have totally different information from the whole group and you are scared to say that information until maybe the facilitator say do you know about this? Then you say I have heard about this I didn't know that it is relevant".*

*"Lecturers do not have to favour one textbook over the other. We find us having different information despite the fact that we are using prescribed books".*

It is clear from these statements that students had problems finding and using resources. Taylor (1997:8) states that in self-directed learning the students are responsible for finding resources for learning. Brockbank and McGill (1998:149) add that the facilitator should endeavour to make available the widest possible range of resources for learning and regard himself as a flexible resource to be utilized by the group. The researcher could not find

literature about the resources that students should look through or on facilitators' preferences of resources.

#### **4.4.5.4 Problems experienced with objectives**

Some students complained that there were inconsistencies among groups in setting objectives and said that they did not know what to include when studying for tests and examinations as indicated in the excerpts below:

*“Students in different groups used to come with different information regarding the objectives. One group will have six objectives for example and we will have eight”*

*“Sometimes the facilitator came to class but she did not know the learning objectives”*

*“When we wrote the test and exams some facilitators will eliminate certain objectives because they complained that we were using different information. This resulted in some information having to be eliminated. This confused us very much”.*

*“It was very confusing because we did not know what to study. We received different objectives from lecturers because we were in different groups*

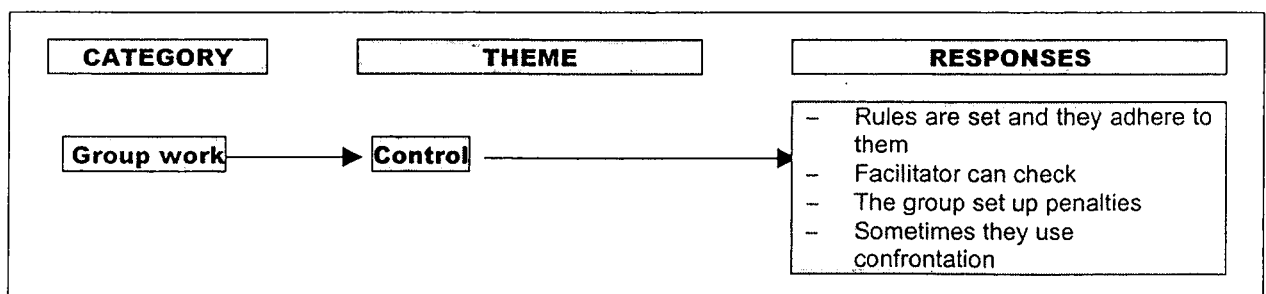
These excerpts show that there is a serious need to look into the problem of objectives. As indicated in point 4.2.6.9 objectives are formulated so that each student can explain the problem presented and to get students involved in identifying their learning needs (Dumais *et al.*, 2001:87). If students experience such confusion regarding objectives they will be unable to explain

the problems they encounter. Proper formulation of objectives can help alleviate this problem.

The study conducted by Lunyk-Child *et al.* (2001:116-121) (see point 4.2.6.5) indicates that students experienced inconsistencies in the implementation of self-directed learning because of poorly articulated learning outcomes which made students struggle with their learning. Learning outcome is the evidence that learning has occurred (Meyer, 1999:167-180). Other writers explain objectives as learning issues or learning outcomes which students take an active role in generating (van den Hurk *et al.*, 1998:307-309).

#### 4.4.6 Group control

Rules were formulated and enforced by group members themselves to control group activities. Measures were implemented if the rules were transgressed as indicated in Figure 4.22.



**FIGURE 4.22: Group control**

##### 4.4.6.1 Setting of rules

The students stated that rules were set to control group activities as one said: *"I think also setting up rules within a group helped the group process in that in the beginning rules are set by group members and we had to adhere to those rules"*. According to Peterson (1997) ground rules in small groups are established to govern student activities. They serve to prevent

crises from occurring by establishing clear expectations. Without rules groups will not be able to function because no one will take responsibility (Academic Development, 1998:34).

#### **4.4.6.2 Facilitators' input in rules**

Students declared that the facilitator has a role in controlling the group as indicated in the following excerpts:

*"For instance in our group if people are not working then the teacher has the right to say this is what should happen if only one or two people are working".*

*"If the group hasn't worked enough the facilitator has to check our notes because, the other day we didn't prepare enough and the lecturer said she is sure we didn't prepare enough and she was going to check our notes and the next week we came back all of us prepared. We didn't want our notes to be checked".*

Rooth (1995:13) states that this is one time that the facilitator is advised to be directive or should exert authority. However, even if the facilitator is authoritative the ground rules should be elicited from the group members (Peteson, 1997). According to the literature it is important to let the students develop their own ground rules because they will be more likely to accept and obey them (Academic Development, 1998:35).

Academic Development (1998:35) explains ground rules as a code of behaviour that group members should use to control interactions. A student in explaining communicative behaviour which her group had set, said: *"I think we have rules in the class because for instance if one is still talking you don't disturb them or raise up your hand you wait up until she is*

*finished, whether you are going to correct what she has said but you don't immediately whilst she is still expressing herself. You are going to correct her politely".* This excerpt explains interruptions that can occur during interactions. There are guidelines that can be developed to prevent this. An example is avoidance of sidebar conversations, meaning that people should not hold private conversations while another person is talking (<http://www.csnp.ohio-state.edu/glarr/glossary>). The facilitator should help the group establish ground rules such as not interrupting each other during discussions (Katz, 1995:60).

#### **4.4.6.3 Penalties set by the group**

Both the students and facilitators can impose penalties on those that transgress the rules. Each group decides on the type of punishment suitable for the offender as indicated in the following excerpts:

*"The group sets up penalties in the second year, you pay money or people have to do more learning issues".*

This is a rule decided by one group and if it is transgressed the offender must pay the stipulated amount of money or do the prescribed task.

#### **4.4.6.4 Confrontation of non-participants**

A strategy of confrontation was used and one student said: *"I think most problems we experienced is people not doing their job. Some of us will go to the person who is not working and confront them"*. Confrontation is a process whereby the facilitator seeks to raise consciousness in the learner about resistance and avoidance which restricts learning (Brobank & McGill, 1998:201). In this case the process of raising consciousness was performed by a learner on another learner, making them aware of whatever behaviour retards the group process. The students also mentioned that due to

favouritism they did not always confront their friends. One said: ***“Punctuality as one of the ground rules never worked and imposing punishment for those who did not do their work was never done. The reason is favouritism. If I favoured a person and that person did not prepare feedback, I will back her up and say she should be given a chance”***. A similar situation was found in a study by Mpofu *et al.* (1998:421-427), who observed that when a student did not do her homework or was repeatedly late group members did not and would not openly confront their colleague. They preferred to ignore the deviant member to maintain harmony.

Peterson (1997) states that some ground rules must be mandatory such as that students should be punctual and attend class. Items that may be included as ground rules compiled from several writers include:

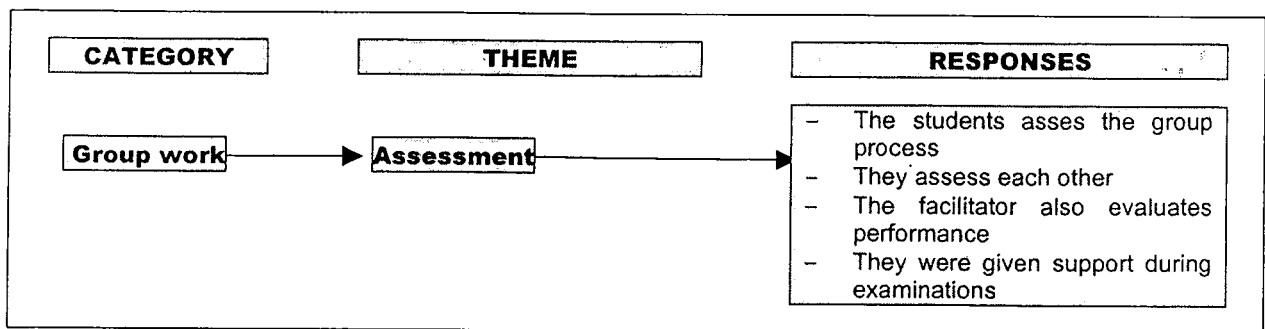
- Confidentiality
- Equal time to speak
- Listening to others when they speak
- Honesty and openness
- No attacking others
- Expressing feelings
- No dismissal of feelings
- Awareness and acceptance of diversity
- Observation of time boundaries
- Lateness and extended breaks cannot be allowed
- Absence from sessions is not allowed
- No discriminatory language allowed
- All members should come to class prepared
- Group should decide if participation is voluntary
- Group must decide on how to deal with a misbehaving student
- Group should decide the measures, to help absent students to catch up (Brobank & McGill, 1998:168; Rooth, 1995:13; Academic Development, 1998:11, 34).

#### 4.4.7 Assessment

In the outcome-based approach to education, the concept assessment is preferred to evaluation. The reason for this preference is that the purpose of evaluation is to judge and to validate (Cangelosi, 19991:1). Assessment addresses many related issues, for example to share something, to be interactive and consult with one another. The students used the word **evaluation** in place of assessment and this will be noted in their quotations.

Assessment may refer to two very different activities, first the mere gathering of information for measurement and secondly the utilization of that information for institutional and individual improvement (Austin, 1991:2). Ladyshefsky (1991:24) describes assessment as an essential and necessary component of professional competency measurement.

The students stated that they evaluated the group process as indicated in Figure 4.23 below.



**FIGURE 4.23: Assessment of the group work**

#### **4.4.7.1 Assessment of the group process**

The students indicated that they assessed the group process or group dynamics. One stated: *"You start by evaluating yourself how you prepared and then you evaluate the whole group. Lastly, you evaluate the facilitator if she was interrupting for wrong reasons or for good reasons or was talking too much than the group expected"*. The students probably had some expectations of the learning experience they had to assess. Katz (1995:57) states that periodic assessment of group process is an essential group function. The same writer posits that this is done by the group members as they assess the actions, interactions, methods and outcomes which enhance or impede the learning process. In other words they should look at what works and what does not work for the group at that point and probably change what needs to be changed. This was captured in the interview when a student said: *"At the end of a session we were given a critique to say if the facilitator was lacking or good or feel should change"*. Regular assessment obtained from student feedback is important because it can lead to the improvement of teaching performance even though the students from whom feedback has been obtained are not normally the beneficiaries of any subsequent improvement (Leckey & Neill, 2001:19-32). The importance of this feedback is to make facilitators aware of areas in their facilitation that need attention.

Group assessment is another way of getting learners involved in the assessment process (Du Toit, Khabanjane, Korf, Kotze *et al.*, 2000:59). The writers indicate that assessment questionnaires are a useful way of having groups assess their teamwork and individual contributions. The group should spend some time at the end of each session assessing the day's work and interactions (Holen, 2000:485-488).

Jacobs (1999:135-149) states that the purpose of assessment is not to prove but to improve and develop. This is illustrated by a student's statement: ***"During evaluation you will hear I didn't prepare hard for the presentation because we evaluate every time after the session and that helps in improving"***. Austin (1991:2) mentions that assessment may refer to two very different activities, firstly the mere gathering of information for measurement, secondly the utilization of that information for institutional and individual improvement.

#### **4.4.7.2 Peer assessment**

Assessing one another made students feel that they were contributing to the group. As one said: ***"The good thing is when you come back and evaluate the presentation you feel good that you have done something because we evaluate each other"***. This indicates the importance that peer assessment has on students affect. Dumais and Des Marchais (2001:88) when explaining activities in Sherbrook medical school state that peer assessment and critique provide opportunity for self-evaluation and checking understanding. The students can be motivated to speak in the presence of their peers without any fear. In peer assessment fellow learners select the criteria and carry out the assessment (Du Toit *et al.*, 2000:62-63)

Charlin *et al.* (1998:323-330) mention two noteworthy issues of assessment. The first addresses the assessment of individual learning with a need for assessment methods that are consistent with the learning and teaching method. In other words the students should demonstrate learning through a product related to the task represented by the problems. Students in this research were using PBL as a method of learning which is known to produce a critical learner. The students provided the researcher with that evidence when one said: ***"On writing exams we don't expect multiple choice questions. We expect questions that will lead to critical thinking skill, your logical reasoning and understanding what you are going to write."***

*We are not used to cramming. We have to analyze deeper*". First individual assessment is therefore very important to show competence and purely for not letting that important part of education run the risk of being neglected if it is not assessed. The second is the assessment of the quality of the group's work in its problem-solving activity. This includes the assessment of the group process as indicated.

#### **4.4.7.3 The role of the facilitator in assessment**

The students mentioned that they appreciated the supportive role which the facilitator played in their assessment, as indicated in the following excerpts:

*"I think that evaluation questionnaire is important in saying what the facilitator must consider in students. They pick up on things that are not appealing to students"*.

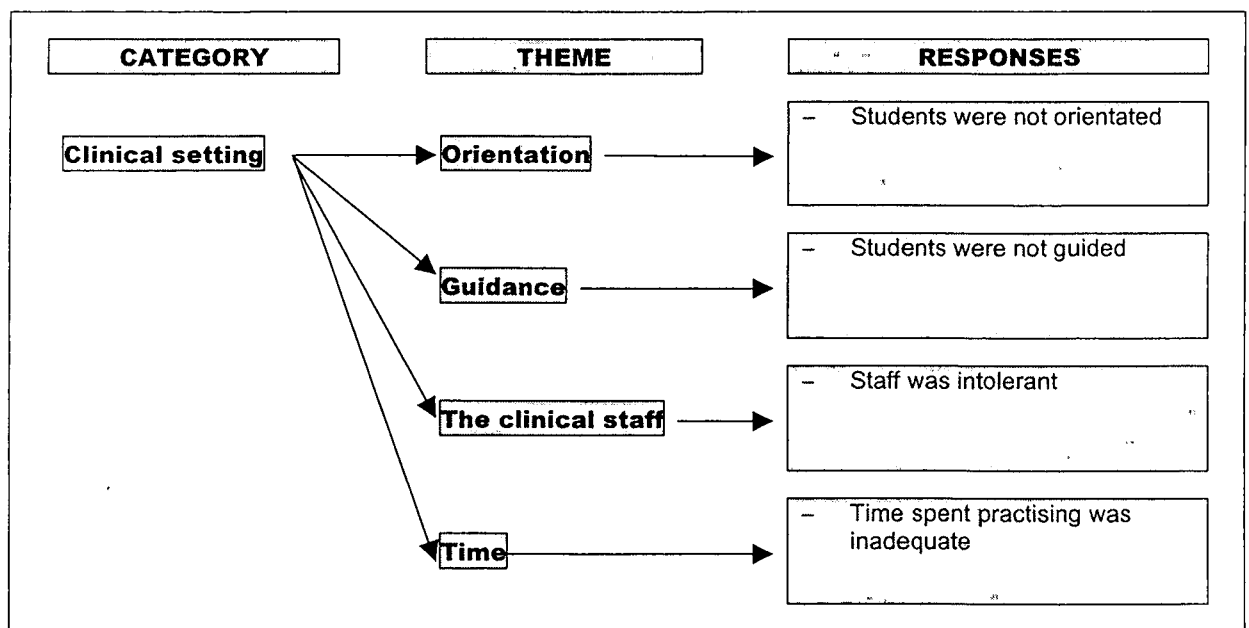
*"Before the test the facilitator sometimes gives us previous test papers. They are not selfish to give the questions. We can answer them and submit but not for marks just to see if we can do it"*.

According to Taylor (1997:87) the role of the facilitator is to provide formative feedback to individuals and to the group as a whole. The author also states that if feedback from the facilitator is set alongside the feedback of the students, the latter tend to assign more value to facilitator's feedback. This was not mentioned by the students in interviews.

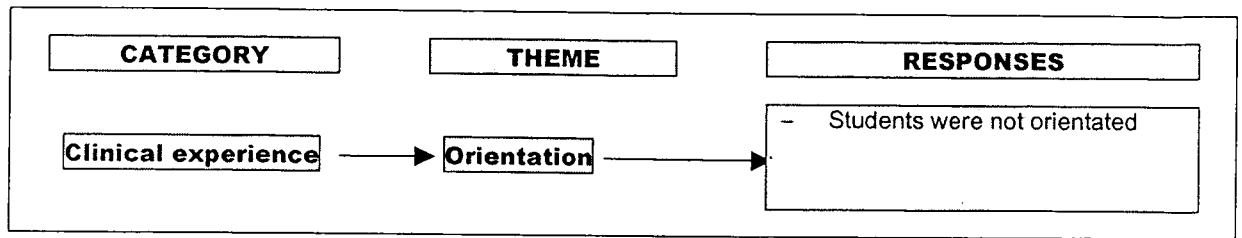
By assessing the facilitation process, the needs of the learners can be identified and planning for improvement can be done. The learners should assess each other and the facilitator as well.

## 4.5 STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE OF THE CLINICAL SETTING

Clinical practice is one of the underpinning elements of the nursing degree course. It is generally accepted in nursing education that practice experience is a vital aspect of learning and that one cannot produce a competent theoretical nurse at one time and a practical nurse at another time (Windsor, 1987:150-154; Mashaba, 1994:44). On graduation, registered nurses are expected to be competent in a diverse number of practical skills, as well as being able to demonstrate skills in leadership, assertiveness, critical thinking and teamwork. For these reasons the time spent on clinical experience must be of maximum benefit to students to help them prepare for the realities of the workplace. Students in this research were allocated to various clinical settings for their clinical learning. They experienced problems when they were first allocated to their clinical area. Others mentioned that they were not guided as indicated in Figures 4.24 and 4.25.



**FIGURE 4.24: Clinical setting as experienced by the students**



**FIGURE 4.25: Lack of orientation**

### 4.5.1 The lack of orientation

The first problem the students mentioned was that they were not sufficiently orientated to the practical setting. The consequence of not orientating students is lack of knowledge of what to do in the clinical setting. The following excerpts bears testimony to this statement:

*“They ask you to go to a big hospital you don’t even know who is the sister or matron what is the difference between the matron and the nurses. You have to go there and introduce yourself. You have just the letter. It is very stressing. My point of view is that they should orientate us into the institutions especially the first time because people vary”.*

*“You feel like you are in everybody’s way”.*

*“You want to work but you just don’t know what to do”.*

*“I don’t know about the others. When I first went to the hospital I did not have enough knowledge of what I was supposed to do. We were only showed once very quickly”.*

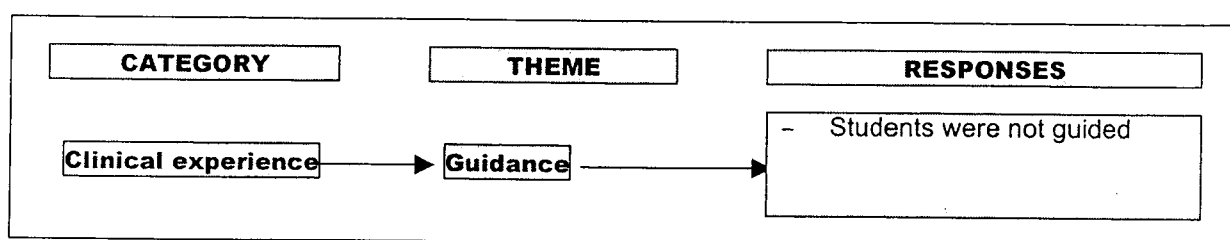
From the above excerpts it is clear that the students did not know what was expected of them or rather what to do in the clinical setting because they were inadequately prepared by their facilitators for their clinical learning. This may lead to negative emotions such as anxiety. The students exhibited such emotions as one said: ***"Sometimes you don't feel like getting up and going to that place"***. Mhlongo (1994:199) states that nursing students are often plagued by lack of self-confidence and a fear of making mistakes in the clinical area, which leads them to experience high levels of anxiety-related stress. If they are inadequately prepared the possibility of anxiety is high because they will become frustrated if they are expected to carry out nursing actions for which they are not prepared. The presence of skilled college students made them feel more inferior and a student expressed this by saying, ***"The college students are there but they can do like everything, so you really feel stupid"***. These college students were allocated to the same ward as the university students and were perceived as being able to carry out nursing actions.

Besides the emotional problems the question that needs to be asked is whether the inadequately prepared students will be able to provide quality and safe care. Chabeli (1999:24-28) states that the nursing profession has an unwritten contract with the community to provide quality nursing care as well as safe practice meaning that the nurse shall not in any way harm the patient. Mhlongo (1996:28-31) indicates that the clinical education received by a student nurse should equip her to meet the demands of the society in which she is expected to practice. Karuhije (1997:5-12) emphasizes that student nurses have a right to expect knowledgeable instruction from their teachers in both instructional worlds where nursing education occurs namely the classroom and the clinical setting. In a study conducted to understand the clinical experiences from the nursing student's point of view by Windsor (1987:150-154) at a large Midwestern public university, students reported that things that facilitated their learning in the clinical setting included their own preparation. Orientation and adequate knowledge are essential to prevent uncertainties and anxieties in students so that they can experience clinical

learning positively. Redmond and Sorrell (1996:21-27) state that it is important that facilitators spend sufficient time with students during orientation defining staff and course expectations to students and informing them about when they are available in their offices for consultations.

#### 4.5.2 The lack of guidance

Another aspect mentioned by the students is the lack of guidance as indicated in Figure 4.26.



**FIGURE 4.26: Student's perceptions of lack of guidance in the clinical setting**

The students who were orientated were not supported in the clinical setting. Other students mentioned that they did not have enough guidance in the clinical setting as indicated in the following excerpts:

*"Going to the hospital for the first time, we just got there we had orientation for a week. It was pretty clear that we are alone. No-one had to help us. It was clear that you are not going to be followed around".*

*"They left us there and tomorrow we had to go back and we knew nothing".*

*"Sometimes when we have to do the procedure that is when we feel we are not getting enough guidance".*

***“She used to demonstrate once. I am confused maybe they don’t have enough equipment”.***

In these quotations the students indicate that they were left alone, they knew nothing and they did not receive sufficient guidance. The quotations indicate the effects on the students of the lack of student guidance in the clinical setting. Students can be guided in the clinical setting by making use of support mechanisms. Support refers to activities that affirm the values of the individual, for example display of respect, trust or reduction of uncertainty and anxiety by setting clear expectations (Bower, Diehr, Morzinsk and Simson 1998:595-597). The literature offers a plethora of ways that can be used to support students. Three means of support will be discussed: preceptorship, mentoring and shadowing.

Preceptorship is a one-to-one relationship between a professional nurse and an inexperienced nursing student (Eddy & Schermer, 1999:364-367). A preceptor may be defined as the ‘person who enables learning in practice while promoting and participating in the delivery of nursing care (French, 1994:129). Preceptorship is also described as a particular teaching-learning method in which an experienced nurse provides individual guidance to a less experienced student nurse (Trevitt, Grealish and Reaby, 2001:225-228). The preceptor may make use of video and preceptorship packages which will not be discussed in this research.

Mentoring is a form of support that can be used in the clinical setting. According to French (1994:129-139) and Hardy and Crosby (2000:334-347) a mentor is an ideal professional role model and an inspiring figure to the student. The latter wants to follow in the footsteps of that mentor and is willing to be shaped by that person. Dragoo (1998:12-14) explains that there is a close committed relationship that develops between the mentor and the novice. This relationship goes beyond the usual role-modelling and teaching relationship. It grows into one that is collegial, in which the mentor possesses the skill, knowledge and accomplishment that the novice hopes to acquire.

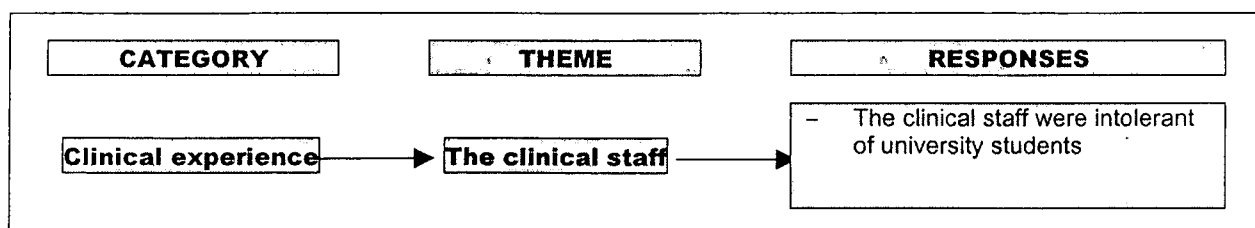
Shadowing is the partnering (one-to-one) of a nursing student with a case manager. The time is prescribed. The student sticks like a shadow to a case manager to participate in and or observe all of the case manager's activities. The latter is a registered nurse who has the responsibility for planning, implementing, coordinating and evaluating the care of clients during their total illness episode (Eddy *et al.*, 1999:364-367). The same author states that shadowing is closely akin to terms such as role model and preceptorship. The means of support mentioned above were not indicated implicitly or explicitly by the students in this study during focus interviews.

According to French (1994:128) the most valued support in the nursing practicum is that of peers. A student mentioned the support which they gave each other when she said: ***"It is good if you are a slow learner because you get people of your own age to explain things than to go to somebody who is like older and difficult"***. According to the students it seems that peer support is important both in the classroom and the practical setting. The facilitators should also support the students by whichever means available to promote learning. A student who experienced support from facilitators said: ***"I think facilitation is extended to our practical aspects. The facilitator would come to hospital every two weeks to find out how we were doing in the practical setting. If we understood something theoretically and could not do it practically they would help us but we had to isolate what the problem was. The facilitator just merely guides you. You tell her what you know and she will probably probe and stimulate your thinking"***. This kind of behaviour from the facilitator enhances positive attitudes from the student and promotes learning. Du Rand and Viljoen (1999:4-13) state that black students were given support by being allocated for two weeks in the practical setting with a practical instructor. The tutors also visited them twice a week in the wards and gave them individual attention.

Previous research indicates that students valued the support of their colleagues. Dana and Gwele (1998:58-64) conducted a study to investigate the perceptions of student nurses about the community as a clinical learning environment at the University of Natal found that peer support, especially emotional support, was valued by students. Adejumo and Ganga-Limando (2000:3-7) in their research on baccalaureate nursing education with a view to ensuring positive understanding and attitudes among the nurses leaders towards the non-traditional nursing students who were trained by the community/problem-based learning approach at the University of Natal also found that supportive supervision in a non-threatening atmosphere was conducive to learning for the students in the clinical setting.

### 4.5.3 The attitude of the staff in the ward

Students said that the clinical staff did not tolerate them as indicated below:



**FIGURE 4.27: Intolerance of the clinical staff**

In this study the students mentioned that the personnel in the ward were negative towards them. The sisters in the ward made them feel inferior because they were university students and they were not skilled to do their practical. As student stated that the ward sister said: *“The sister will say that we are from the university, yet we don’t even know what we are doing. Everything is so new and sometimes you are working with sisters and they are like since you are from varsity you should know better ..., they make you feel inferior”*. It seems that the ward sister expected the student to possess a certain degree of knowledge simply because she is a university student. They were also labelled and they felt threatened. One student said:

*"The fact that you are in varsity is a big problem. You have a label and its like oh! now you are trying to control us?".* It was obvious that the clinical staff were not aware of the learning needs of the students. If information is shared with them it may help the students.

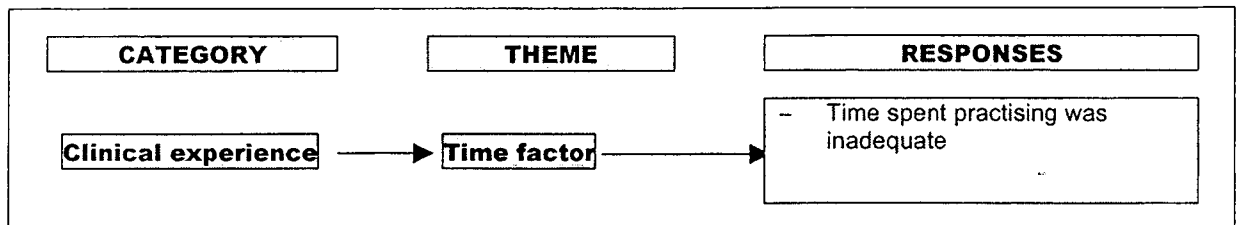
Adejumo and Ganga-Limando (2000:3-7) found that the students experienced negative attitudes in the clinical setting. The students felt that qualified nurse in the wards showed no understanding of their program which was community/problem-based learning and could not understand that they were unable to carry out certain nursing actions. As a result ward sisters made the students feel inferior. The same authors reported that the consequence of a negative attitude to students is that students ask questions of their peers, rather than risk being judged as incompetent by a non-understanding qualified staff member.

In a study conducted at the school of nursing in Brisbane about student involvement in curriculum development it was found that the students wished that clinical nursing staff would be more aware of their knowledge base, learning needs and their expectations (Thornton & Chapman, 2000:124-132). The same study showed that the development of a positive learning environment was largely dependent on interpersonal relationships. It was also found that showing positive regard for students and being friendly and approachable contributed to the quality of clinical learning experience.

The relationship of the facilitator and the student in the clinical setting is also important. Mhlongo (1994:199) states that attitudes can strain interpersonal relationships and the success of facilitative learning rests on the personal relationship which exists between the facilitator and learner. The relationship must be characterized by understanding and positive unconditional acceptance by both the facilitator and the learner.

#### 4.5.4 Time factor

The time spend in practising clinical skills was perceived as inadequate by the students as indicated in Figure 4.28.



**FIGURE 4.28: Time factor**

The students in one focus group were concerned about the amount of time they spent in the clinical setting. They felt that the time was too short for them to be adequately exposed and as a result they did not practice until just before formal examinations. The following quotation verifies what the students said:

*“I want to add to this practical we don’t have enough time because we are only allowed one day in a week for instance, we last measured blood pressure when we first went to the clinic and then just before doing the OSCE test and you have forgotten because you don’t have time for the practical”.*

It is important that students are given adequate time to practice so that they can provide safe care and be prepared for their evaluation. If the students are not given time to learn clinical skills they may find themselves liable for malpractice because the clinical learning takes place in a complex clinical practice milieu where legal and ethical aspects have to be noted (Chabeli, 1998:39-44) otherwise the student may find herself facing a disciplinary hearing. Adejumo and Ganga-Limando found that students in their research felt that the period spent in the wards should be increased. Cassimjee and

Brookes (1997:95-102) found that the students were concerned about their clinical competence because of the short time they spent in the clinical area.

#### **4.6 SUMMARY**

The experiences of the students regarding facilitation were discussed. Four main categories from the student's data were identified, namely facilitation process, facilitator, workgroups and experience of the clinical setting. The students mentioned positive as well as negative experiences in the classroom and the clinical setting. They indicated the need to have a facilitator with a sound personality and skills in facilitation. The clinical setting was experienced more negatively than the classroom setting.

## **CHAPTER 5**

# ***A model for facilitation in nursing education***

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### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous two chapters the results of focus group discussions conducted with the facilitators and the learners integrated with references to the literature were discussed. The aim of this chapter is to describe a model for facilitation in nursing education constructed according to the identified needs of facilitators and learners and confirmed by the literature. Other aspects, such as the experience of the researcher and previous research, were also taken into consideration when developing the model. The model adapted after being evaluated by experts will first be discussed, followed by a discussion of feedback regarding the tentative model which led to the adaptation of the final model.

### **5.2 RATIONALE FOR DESIGNING A MODEL FOR FACILITATION**

The literature (de Young, 1990; Musinski, 1999) is permeated with strategies and methods of teaching especially for the use of traditional methods. There is very little research on facilitation in education, much less in nursing education. Consequently nursing education does not prepare educators to become facilitators of learning. Over the years the academic system has grown in reverse order. Instead of the learners becoming the point of departure the subject and teachers constitute the starting point, while the learners take a secondary position. Learners are required to adjust to an established curriculum and most formal education still focuses on the teacher

(<http://www.learnactivity.com/andragogy.html>). However, there has been a paradigm shift from a lecture-centred approach to a learner-centred approach in the academic system as evidenced by the adoption of a transformational curriculum and outcome-based education (OBE) in South Africa with its underlying principles that focuses on the learner (Classen, 1998:34-40; van Niekerk & Killen, 2000:90-100).

In contrast to making the subject and teacher the starting point, there is a learner-centred approach (Creedy, Horsfall, & Hand, 1992:727-733; Edwards *et al.*, 1998:139-141; Charlin *et al.*, 1998:323-330). This is based on a philosophy of teaching and learning that puts the learner on centre-stage. The spotlight is on the needs, reactions and welfare of the learner and away from the teacher. Learner-centred learning seeks to improve the learning experience and its outcome by increasing motivation through allowing and encouraging the learner to make decisions about the learning process. It also aims at improving quality by valuing and acting on the learners' opinion of their learning process. This approach produces life-long learners by encouraging them to become independent, autonomous and to take responsibility for their own learning (Gregory & Thorley, 1994:186). Facilitation, which is commonly found in learner-centred approaches according to Boud and Griffith in Townsend (1995:105) fosters self-directed learning.

The model which has been constructed is intended to enable the lecturer to make the learners the focus of the learning event with the lecturer acting as a facilitator and assisting them to reach their learning goals. The reason for refocusing to a learner-centred approach is that nursing is a profession that is not based on theoretical aspects only. The practical component also plays a major part. Nursing education is education for practical activity (Stevens, 1984:178). In this profession the nurse is held accountable for the decision-making process. Facilitation of self-directed learning seems to be the practical and ideal method of fostering this responsibility.

The time has come to prepare future nurse educators for a paradigm shift from the traditional pedagogical teacher-centered role expectation to one based on the principles of adult education, in which nurse educators and the learners are in a reciprocal, supportive relationship as lifelong learners. This model is designed to give guidelines in preparing facilitators for their new role of facilitation and is grounded in the principles of adult learning. Central to this approach is personal responsibility for learning.

The researcher has endeavoured to design a model for facilitation based on adult learning theory which can be used in the learning aspects of nursing education. The model can be used in the classroom where theoretical learning takes place as well as the clinical setting where the practical aspect is facilitated.

### **5.3 THE PHASES OF MODEL DEVELOPMENT**

This model was designed in two phases, namely the reconnaissance or scouting and the empirical phases (see Figure 5.1).

#### **5.3.1 Phase 1: The reconnaissance phase**

The reconnaissance phase describes the experiences of the researcher as well as the study conducted to assess the needs and challenges of the facilitators in the school of Nursing at the University of the Free State.

##### **5.3.1.1 *The experience of the researcher***

This phase describes the experiences of the researcher with the facilitation process. The researcher has facilitated theory and practice in non-traditional approaches, namely problem-based learning and community-based education for six years. The researcher and other colleagues have educational backgrounds based on traditional methods of teaching obtained from different

institutions of higher learning and this was the basis of their employment as nurse educators in the School of Nursing. However, the researcher as well as the other nurse educators were not trained to facilitate learning.

In 1997 with the change to problem-based learning (PBL) the researcher and her colleagues had to change their teaching role to facilitation. They were expected to change their roles, adapt teaching skills and transform the manner in which they related to the learners. It was very difficult to change from lecturing to facilitation and the whole process seemed to be without structure. There was no format for facilitation and they were never certain whether they were doing the right thing. Facilitation, especially in the clinical setting, was experienced to be structureless. The uncertainty and the lack of knowledge of the facilitation process brought about emotional turmoil in facilitators.

### **5.3.1.2 Needs assessment**

In 1998 focus group interviews were conducted to identify the needs and the challenges that the researcher and her colleagues experienced during their role as facilitators at the University of the Free State. The results which were published after two years indicated that although facilitators attended several international and national conferences and workshops to prepare for and orientate themselves to their new roles as facilitators and the process of facilitation, it became evident that the role change from a lecturer to facilitator created anxieties (Fichardt & du Rand, 2000:3-10). This also indicated the need for further research. The facilitators needed additional methods such as demonstrations by an expert facilitator to assist them to adapt to facilitation. The study was conducted only at the University of the Free State and no other research on the needs of learners and facilitators was available in the literature or at other universities. A thorough assessment was necessary to identify the needs of both the learners and the facilitators with regard to facilitation. From the above experiences it became clear that there was a

need for the development of a model for facilitation, which could be used to guide prospective facilitators (see Figure 5.1)

### **5.3.2 Phase 2: Empirical**

#### **5.3.2.1 Data collection**

Data was collected in Phase 2. A pilot study was conducted with a group of facilitators and learners where facilitation as a teaching and learning method was used to test the research question. After the pilot study, focus group interviews with the facilitators and the learners were held and data was analysed with literature control.

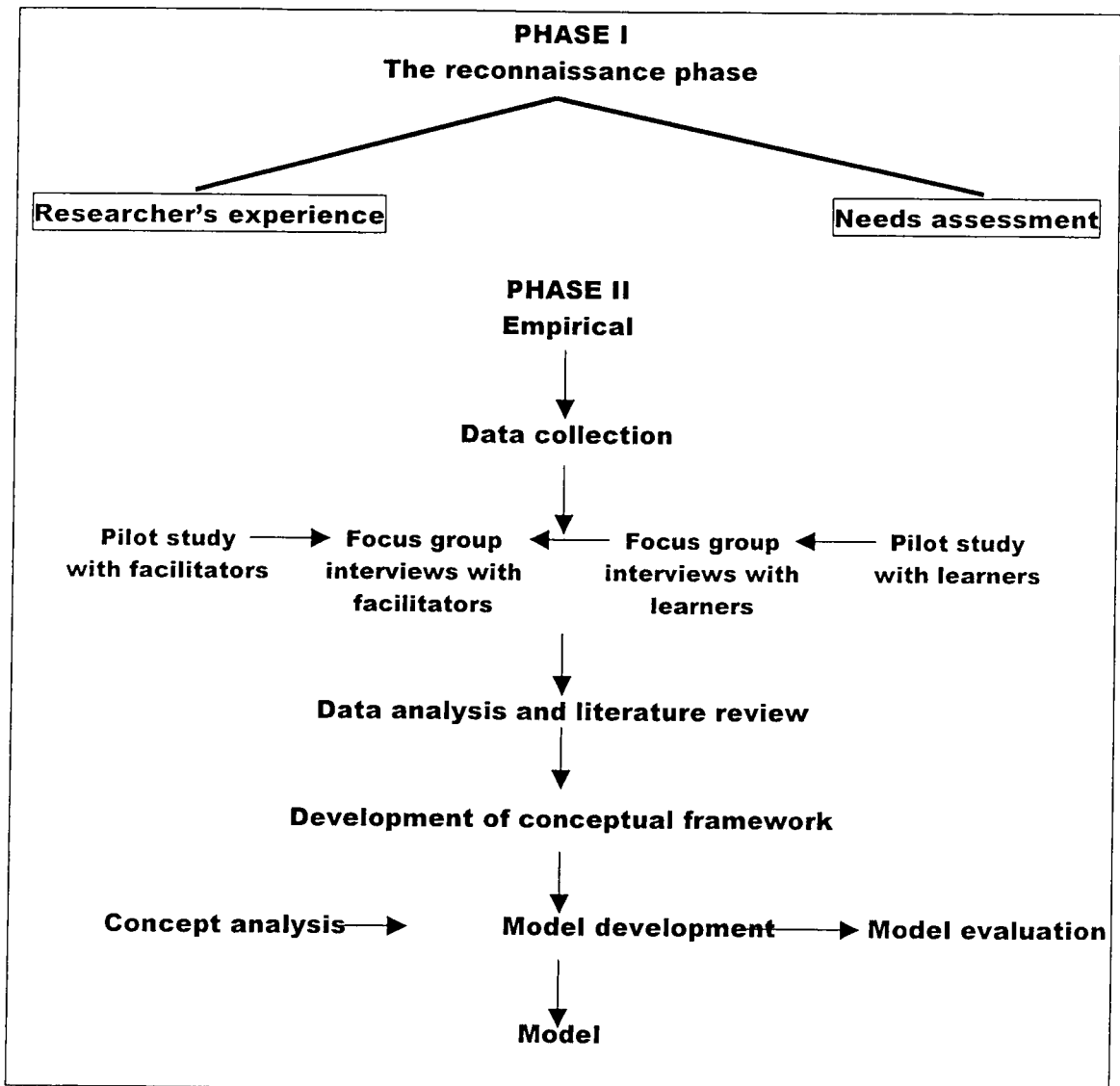
Focus group interviews were held with facilitators and learners to determine their needs with regard to facilitation. These were conducted with **five** and **seven** groups of facilitators and learners respectively.

#### **5.3.2.2 Literature review**

The literature was reviewed to verify the data obtained from focus interviews and to confirm the content of the research.

#### **5.3.2.3 Framework and model development**

The framework of the model evolved from the experiences of the researcher, the needs assessment as well as the available data supported by the literature. A model was developed from the data of the facilitators and the learners. Concepts were defined which led to the development of the model. The model was presented to evaluators for acceptance.



**FIGURE 5.1: Diagrammatic representation of the origin of the model**

## **5.4 THE PROCESS OF DESIGNING A MODEL**

The combined methods of theory generation of Chinn and Kramer (1999) and Duldt and Giffin (1985) as well as the steps of Lancaster and Lancaster (1992) for building the model were used for designing the model. These methods were discussed in Chapter 3.

According to Lancaster and Lancaster (1992:439-440) there are three steps of developing models

- Clearly describing the system which is to be analyzed
- Identifying major components of the model
- Describing the goals and actual process of the steps taken

Chinn and Kramer (1999:97) used guides to describe a model in the following sequence:

- Describing the purpose for developing the model
- Identifying the concepts
- Defining the concepts
- Explaining relationships among the concepts
- Describing the structure
- Operationalization of the model

Duldt and Giffin (1985) identified four steps for developing models and these are:

- Identifying assumptions
- Defining concepts
- Establishing relationships
- Evaluating the model

In this study the model is described by combining the steps of the aforementioned authors. Because of the combination the sequence differs but includes all the steps of model design of the authors mentioned above.

A deductive reasoning strategy was applied to develop the model.

## 5.5 THE PURPOSE OF THE MODEL

The model has four purposes:

- The main purpose is that learning must take place through the process of facilitation.
- The model should give guidelines to prepare facilitators for their new role of facilitation.
- It is also designed to enable facilitators of learning to make the learners the focus of the learning event.
- The model will assist facilitators to understand their roles in the learning process during facilitation and to understand the learners.

## 5.6 THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF THE MODEL

This model is based on the philosophy of constructivism which views knowledge as something that the learners must construct by themselves through their interaction with the environment (Chalmers & Fuller, 1996:18; Duffy & Cunningham, undated: 171; von Glaserfeld, 1995:3-16). Constructivism builds on the knowledge known by the learner (Dougiamas, 1998). There are three main fundamental principles of constructivism.

- **First** each person forms their own representation of knowledge, building on their individual experiences.
- **Secondly** people learn through active exploration and learning occurs when the learners' exploration uncovers an inconsistency between their current knowledge representation and their experience.

- **Thirdly** learning occurs within a social context and interaction between learners and their peers is a necessary part of the learning process. It is in this learning process that learners should be supported until individuals appropriate the knowledge or skill and bring it under their control. This is called scaffolding (Dalgarno, <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/adelaide96/papers/21.html>).

Constructivism is contextual in the sense that learning situations, environment, skills and tasks are relevant and represent the natural complexities of the real world (Jonassen, 1991:28-33).

The researcher supports the constructivism philosophy because learning in nursing is contextual and learners are involved in caring for real patients as they learn. They are also regarded as adults because of the responsibility of caring for well, sick and dying people which the nursing profession expects of them. Adult learners bring their experiences into the learning environment (Crew, 1995:19-20; Quinn, 1995:104; Erasmus & van Dyk, 1999:91). The learner's previous knowledge, beliefs and attitudes are considered in the construction process (Ernest, 1995:459-486). Understanding the uniqueness of adult learners is a fundamental principle of facilitation because they bring an array of personalities, learning styles, personal and professional backgrounds into the learning environment which can be a fertile opportunity of developing meaningful educational encounters (Galbraith, 1992:10-11). The strategy of instruction should promote active participation of learners, and facilitation is an active strategy for enabling learning and involvement of the learner (Townsend, 1994:112). The facilitator supports the learners in achieving their goals by providing resources and creating an environment that helps the learners to interpret their learning.

## 5.7 ASSUMPTIONS

This model is based mainly on the assumptions of the adult learning theory. Other assumptions that are relevant to this model are also included, namely those from symbolic interaction theory (Pearson, Vaughan & Fitzgerald, 1997:45) and some of which have been derived from the concepts identified.

### 5.7.1 Assumptions of adult learning

Knowles (1990:63) based his model of adult learning on the following assumptions:

- The **self-concept** of the learner includes being personally responsible for their own learning and being treated as being capable of **self-direction**
- Adults **need to know** why they must learn something.
- They have greater and more varied **experience**, which serves as a rich resource for learning.
- Adults' **readiness** relates to the things they need to know and do in real life.
- Adults have a life-centred **orientation** to learning involving problem-solving and task-centred approaches.
- Their **motivation** is largely internal such as self-esteem, quality of life and job satisfaction (Quinn, 1995:104; Norman, 1999:886-889; Erasmus & van Dyk, 1999:96).

Nursing learners have the same characteristics as the adult learner due to the demands of practice (Klopper, 1999:43) since they carry out responsibilities in their daily tasks which could mean the difference between the life and death of those put into their care. In support of this Nunnery (1997:198) states that most consumers of nursing care are adults, parents and ageing clients who require a nurse who is able to provide for their needs.

The following may be stated about nurses as adult learners:

- Adults eventually arrive at a **self-concept** whereby they see themselves as responsible for their own decisions (Babcock & Miller, 1994:95). Nurses as learners are expected to be creative in their thinking by producing mental skills which can determine relationships between patients' conditions and their causes. Nursing learners are **self-directing** as they take deliberate decisions and make choices based on their knowledge and experience in caring for patients (Klopper, 1999:45).
- In any teaching-learning encounter one needs to include the benefits of the learning because adult learners **need to know** and understand why they should learn something (Babcock & Miller, 1994:94). A good demonstration for the need to know is the issue of non-compliance of a client. Non-compliance occurs when clients do not follow their discharge or health-care teaching. The reason is that this was forced on them and they had no desire to learn (Nunnery, 1997:199).
- Facilitators in guiding learners do so keeping the principles of adult learning in mind. They bring their educational background as a source of experience as a basis of their teaching. According to MacIntosh (1995:25-27) learners use their **own experience** in the learning process and areas of interest in the development of the skills of facilitation.

- Applying and registering for a nursing degree means that the learner is **ready to learn** in the same direction. This learner volitionally chose nursing as a career.
  
- Nursing care involves solving complex problems of patients and implementing tasks in caring for patients. The adult learner's orientation to learning is problem- and task-oriented (Babcock & Miller, 1994:97; Boulton-Lewis *et al.*, 1996:89-106). Gravetti (1991, in Klopfer, 1999:49) states that the way in which facilitators do their work should make provision for the learner's **learning orientation** and adds that the facilitator can achieve this by emphasizing the value of application of the learning content to real-life situations.

In facilitation the learners focus on **motivating** their classmates by stimulating and facilitating class discussions (MacIntosh, 1995:25-27). Mwamwenda (1995:259) states that motivation is a concept used as an explanation or rationale for the way a person behaves. It is a desire or an urge that causes an individual to engage in a certain behaviour. Babcock & Miller (1994:97) state that adults are more responsive to internal drives to learn such as quality of life and job satisfaction. Boaden and Bligh (1999:25) agree that adult learners are motivated to learn by features of their own development and by the changing roles which are experienced in maturity.

### **5.7.2 Assumptions of symbolic interaction theory**

The essence of symbolic interaction is the interaction which occurs between people and their environment. Interaction theory focuses on the relationships that people form with one another in their day-to-day lives and on the way their relationships develop through a series of interactions (Pearson *et al.*, 1997:45). The reason for including the assumptions of symbolic interaction is that the nature of facilitation is interactive and this will be discussed when defining the concepts.

- Each individual builds up an elaborate store of meanings and values through interaction with others.
- The way in which individuals interact will influence those around them. (Pearson *et al.*, 1997:46).
- Interaction is based on relationships among persons (Wesley, 1995:3).
- The facilitation process is conceptualized as an interactive process between the facilitator and the learners.

### **5.7.3 Assumptions for the model**

The following assumptions are derived from conceptual definitions of the model which will be discussed below.

#### ***Facilitation***

- Facilitation entails interaction between the learners, facilitator and the learning environment (Brockbank & McGill, 1998:54).
- Facilitation is a teaching-learning process.
- The facilitation process is an interactive process between the facilitator and the learner.

#### ***Facilitator***

As interaction between individuals plays a major role in the assumptions of the symbolic interaction model, the following assumptions can be made about the facilitator in this model:

- The facilitator has multiple roles in the facilitation process.
- The facilitator is an expert in the facilitation process and the content.

- There is a special relationship that develops between the facilitator and the learners.
- Certain attributes or qualities are required such as good interpersonal relationships and self-disclosure for the facilitator to be effective.

## **Learners**

The learners plays a central role in mediating and controlling learning and the following assumptions can be made about them:

- The learners are responsible for their own learning.
- They are involved in decision-making processes.
- There is a trusting and caring relationship between the facilitator and the learners.
- Learners learn through interaction.
- They must achieve their learning goal.

## **5.8 THE CONTEXT OF THE MODEL**

The context of the model is in nursing education where theory and practical are learned through the facilitation process based on the principles of adult learning. Learning is inextricably tied to the real-life context because nurses while learning theory also learn the practical component in the clinical setting, taking care of real-life patients. The focus of learning is centred on the learners who are adults capable of self-direction. These learners are active and more involved in decisions that impacts on their learning. They actively construct their learning which is based on their experiences. The facilitator is the most important source of support and guide to the learners. This support can be in the form of scaffolding<sup>3</sup>, mentorship or being available for the learners. The role of the facilitator changes from that of a traditional teacher to that of a facilitator of student learning. The facilitator is less directive and does

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<sup>3</sup> Scaffolding is facilitated to help learners to perform just beyond the limits of their ability

not control learning but guides the learners in the right direction. The facilitator also applies the principles of adult learning in order to promote effective learning.

## **5.9 CONCEPT ANALYSIS**

Concept analysis is the most fundamental and important process forming the first step of theory development. The process undertakes to distinguish between the attributes of a concept and its irrelevant attributes (Walker & Avant, 1993:35). The object of concept analysis is to identify, clarify and examine the phenomenon presented (Chinn & Jacobs, 1987:88).

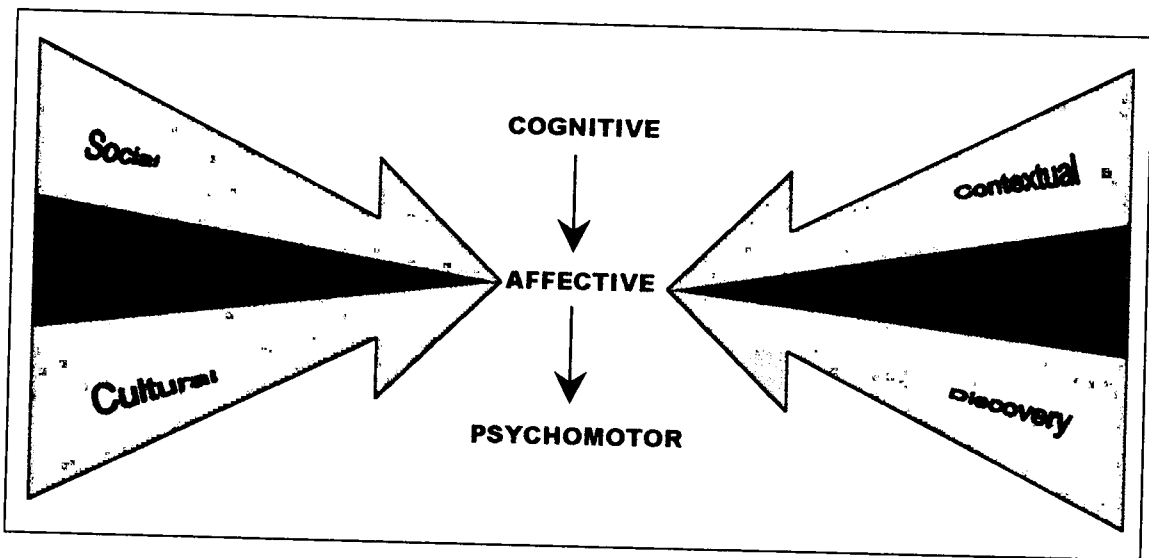
### **5.9.1 Identification of central concepts**

In the discussion of the results of the analyzed data obtained from eleven focus groups, central concepts were identified from the data. Facilitation emerged as the central concept because it was the focus of learning. It is important first to define learning to make the readers understand the purpose of facilitation.

### **5.9.2 Definition of concepts**

Copi's (1968:115-118) principles for defining concepts were applied in defining the concepts for the model. These principles were discussed in Chapter 3.

### 5.9.2.1 Learning



**FIGURE 5.2: Learning**

Learning is an active process which emphasizes learner activity rather than teacher instruction. It involves building on prior experiences which differ from learner to learner. All learners should participate in what they have to learn, different learning styles must be catered for and information must be presented within a context that gives learners the opportunity to relate it to their prior experience (<http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/adelaide96/papers/21.html>).

Learning is a process of constructing meaningful representations, making sense of one's experiential world (von Glasersfeld, 1987:3-17).

Boud *et al.* (1993:7-8) state that learning is a holistic process which involves thinking, feeling and doing. It emphasizes the process and not the product. The process includes how one arrives at a particular answer and not the retrieval of the solution (von Glasersfeld, 1987:15).

Learning is also defined as the input and mastery of a particular content, the ability to repeat, apply and discriminate the learning (Duffy & Cunningham, undated).

Learning focuses on the **process of discovery** in which the learner seeks to understand some issues and these issues that guide the discovery process must be personally relevant (Duffy & Cunningham, undated: 174).

Learning according to constructivism is **contextual** and should occur or be situated in a realistic setting.

Learning occurs within a **social** context and interaction between learners and their peers is a necessary part of the learning process (Dalgarno, <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/adelaide96/papers/21.html>). The learners share gathered information in their groups, negotiate to select relevant information while the facilitator acts as a coach, explaining when necessary (Dougiamas, 1998:7). Salomon and Perkins (1998:1-24) define the social aspect of learning as a reciprocal spiral relationship in which individuals strengthen one another through interactions over a period of time.

Learning is **culturally** constructed as learning groups allow the opportunity for learners to examine their different construction of the same event (Boud *et al.*, 1993:7-8) Culture is defined as a set of common experiences and agreement on a common set of values. It involves shared meaning the lack of which can cause communication difficulties (Duffy & Cunningham, undated; Dougiamas, 1998:7). According to constructivism language and dialogue in human culture take a central position in learning (Duffy & Cunningham, undated). Language is a cultural aspect and is the medium of learning particularly in facilitation. **Cultural** learning focuses on shared meaning which in constructivism involves seeking for compatibility and the lack of contradiction between views. The learners probe deeper to determine whether their understanding begins to diverge (Duffy & Cunningham, undated: 184).

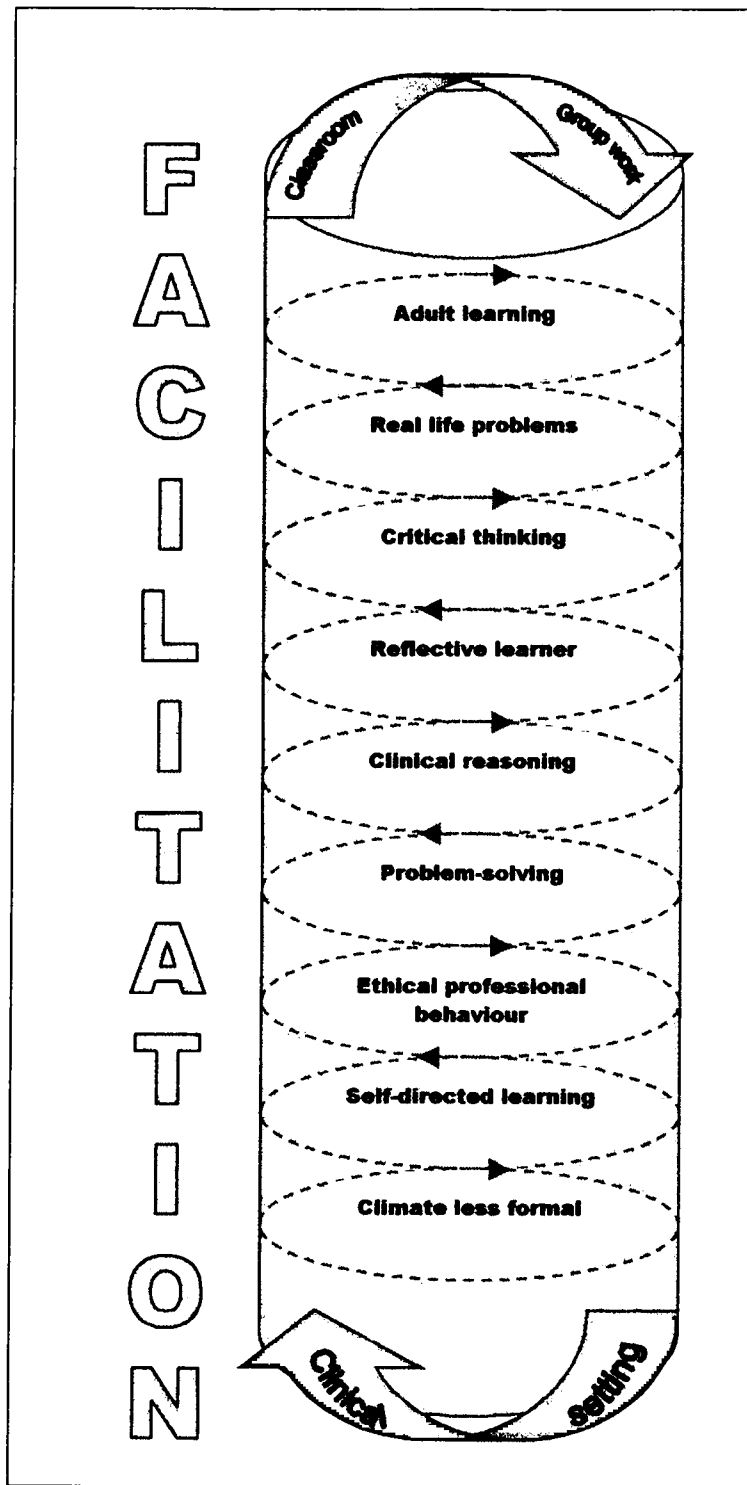
According to Brockbank and McGill (1998:33) learning builds on the ideas of personal construct, allowing the learners to create their own construct and meanings as well as recognizing that learning and knowledge are created within a social context. Learning is facilitated when the learners participate in the learning process.

Facilitative methods call for a physical arrangement where learners may relate to one another and their facilitators. All must be seated in a position where they can see one another and in reasonable proximity to each other. Seating should be arranged in a semi- or full circle.

For the requirement of the model and according to Figure 5.2, learning is an active process in which the learners construct their knowledge based on their experiences. It occurs within social and cultural interaction between the learners and the facilitator. Language as a cultural aspect can influence learning if participants do not share the same language. Both the facilitator and the learners engage in the process of discovery when they seek to understand the learning issues. The social origin of learning is the impact of an individual's appropriation of language as a mediating tool to construct meaning. If learning is to be effective the physical aspects such as seating arrangements should be considered. Learning should lead to the cognitive, affective and psychomotor development of the learner.

### **5.9.2.2 Facilitation**

Facilitation is the central concept in this study. Definitions from the literature will be discussed followed by the definition of facilitation for the model according to Figure 5.3.



**FIGURE 5.3: Facilitation**

Facilitation in nursing is a teaching-learning approach which aims at developing a graduate nurse who is self-reliant, professionals who are capable of researching and examining problems within their workplace. Learners direct their learning by taking part in decision-making. It is also defined as the methodology that the group uses to address the content of learning (<http://www.csnp.ohio-state.edu/glarrc/glossary.htm>).

Brockbank and McGill (1998:145) define facilitation as a teaching method where the teacher behaves in a different way by encouraging the learners to contribute to their learning. It is a two-way interactive process between the facilitator and the learners and among the learners themselves. Fichardt and Durand (2000:3-10) define facilitation as a continuing learning process. Rose (1992:7) emphasizes that facilitation is learner-centred, collaborative and experiential and that it assumes a measure of self-direction and advocates learner participation. Townsend (1994:112) declares that facilitation is an active strategy for enabling learning and it requires conversation and dialogue with the learners.

Salmon (1980:5) defines facilitation in higher education as a means of promoting critical reflecting learning. Holtzhausen (1998:33-37) states that facilitation entails the provision of assistance to learners to develop subject-related learning skills.

Rooth (1995:95) states that facilitation means enabling people to discover the amount of knowledge they already have, to generate their own further learning and to consider the options they have. It involves creating an environment conducive to learning. It is a process of sharing, of giving and receiving. It signifies the mutual growth of all concerned.

According to the definitions above and for the purpose of developing the model, facilitation is both a method and a strategy for learning. As a central concept identified according to Figure 5.4 the facilitation of theory occurs in the classroom within a small group format. It also occurs in the clinical setting process where individuals and groups are facilitated in real-life settings.

The clinical setting where facilitation occurs includes nursing laboratories, clinics and the community.

It is based on the principles of adult learning. It requires the involvement of both the learners and their facilitator through the process of interaction.

In nursing facilitation is based on real-life situations and it encourages life-long learning because learning is contextual. Facilitation promotes critical thinking in the learners.

The learners and the facilitator become reflective<sup>4</sup> learners. Their problem-solving ability is develop as well as their clinical reasoning skills.

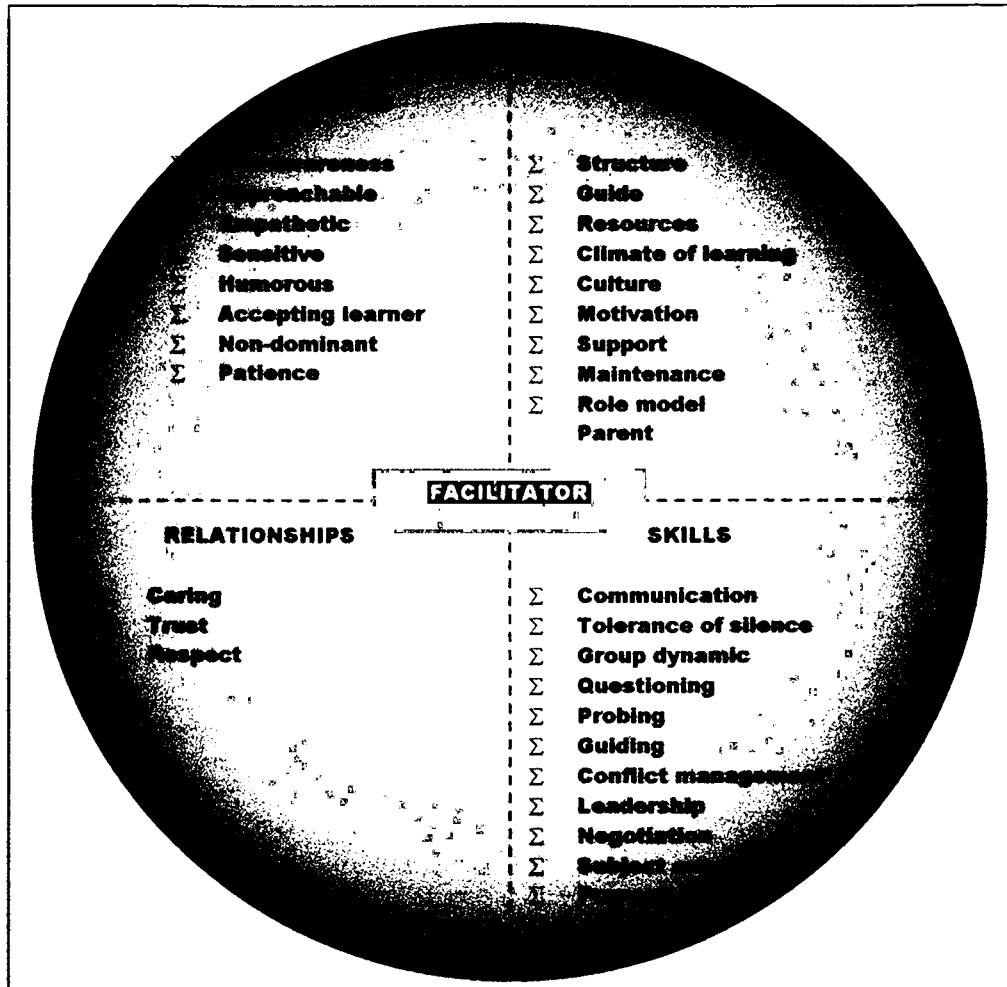
Thorough facilitation ethical professional behaviours are developed when learners interact professionally with other learners and health members.

Facilitation encourages the searching of resources to construct knowledge and promote self-directed learning.

The facilitation atmosphere of learning is relaxed; both the facilitator and students share equal responsibility for learning. The climate of learning is less formal and it is characterized by mutual respect

### **5.9.2.3 Facilitator**

The facilitator is the person responsible for helping the learners to construct knowledge and is the important person in the learning process. In the following paragraphs the facilitator will be defined.



**FIGURE 5.4: Facilitator**

Phillips (1994:217) defines a facilitator as a person who has been assigned the responsibility of guiding students towards reaching objectives.

MacGill (1986:149-154) states that a facilitator is seen as a person who is comfortable with an adult approach to learning such as that students take responsibility for their own learning.

<sup>4</sup> Reflection is an active process of exploration and discovery. It involves both feeling and thinking and takes place during or after the experience

Robson and Beary (1995:3) define the facilitator as a person whose task it is to make things easy for those working on the problem.

The facilitator guides the learners through enquiry and decision-making skills to identify what they need, questions the rationale for their judgments and challenges them and does so within a framework of an interactive group process (Katz, 1995:54).

The above definitions indicate that a facilitator is a person who enables the learners to construct their knowledge and should acquire facilitation skills to be able to perform certain roles and tasks. He or she must possess certain qualities and relate to the learners to promote a reflective dialogue for learning to be effective.

**The skills required of a facilitator are:**

- **Communication** skills such as listening and encouraging discussions, sharing all relevant information. The facilitator should listen for 90% and speak only when necessary (Tromp, 1998:135-136). The facilitator should have the ability to '*stand back*' and let the learners do the talking because facilitation is about talking less and listening more (Robson & Beary, 1995:149).
- **Tolerance of silence** by giving the learners time to think. Brockbank and McGill (1998:172) state that tolerance of silence is a test of the competence of the facilitator's speech. Robson and Beary (1995:121) mention that most people find silence embarrassing and will fill the space when silence occurs. This can be a common problem with traditional teachers who are used to doing most of the talking
- **Knowledge of group dynamics** to be able to manage the group process

- **Questioning skills** to ask the right questions to make learners contribute to their learning. There are different types of questioning including, opening-up, thought-provoking, elaborating, conformation-seeking, clarity-seeking as well as consensus-testing questions.
- **Probing skills** is the questioning behaviour that elicits the highest quality responses from learners. Probing stimulates thinking and brings about critical thinking.
- **Guiding skills** is a discussion-steering skill which ensures that the discussion is moving in the right direction (Tromp, 1998:140). The facilitator should guide if asked for help or is convinced that the group need re-direction (Biley & Smith, 1999:1205-1212).
- **Conflict-management skills.** The facilitator should ensure that there is enough space in which learners can analyze their own conflict resolution styles and practice different ways of solving and managing conflict
- **Leadership skills** because facilitation requires shared responsibility. When the facilitator creates and stimulates the experiences of the learners he or she creates the highest form of leadership (Musinski, 1999:23-29).
- **Negotiation skills.** This is a specialized form of conversational communication with another person or group to achieve mutual need satisfaction (Eddy & Schermer, 1999:364-367). Negotiation is important in facilitation because facilitators cannot impose their views on the learners. They must agree about the learning event. The clinical facilitator often needs to negotiate with the staff of the clinical setting on behalf of the learners, for example removing the learners from the clinical area for impromptu tutorials (Cooke, 1995:107).

- **Subject expertise.** There is divergence of opinion about the facilitator being a subject content expert because experts tend to be more directive and cannot maintain the facilitator's role (du Rand, 1996:44-45; Frost, 1996:1047-1053; MacIntosh, 1995:25-27). However, Taylor (1997:85) insists that educators should be subject experts but not experts in facilitating the process. Charlin *et al.* (1998:323-330) state that one cannot facilitate clinical reasoning when one is not an expert in the field especially in view of the fact that clinical reasoning is very content dependent.
- **Process expert** is an important skill for guiding learning by facilitation. Chaput and Marchais (2001: 251) state that a process expert is ideal for facilitation.

**The facilitator has multiple roles to perform and these include the following:**

- **Structure**, the facilitator must provide structure for learning (Creedy *et al.*, 1992:727-733; Bailey, 1992:985-991) and enable the learners to construct their knowledge.
- **Guiding the learners** is the cornerstone of facilitation and is crucial for learning (Kaufman & Hansell, 1997:516-518). The focus of instruction in constructivism is guiding the learners as they build on their existing knowledge (<http://www.ascilite.org.au/conference/adelaid96/papers/21.html>).
- **Identifying resources** for the learners. Brockbank and McGill (1998:149) state that facilitators should regard themselves as flexible resources to be utilized by the group and they should make resources available for the learners.

- **Create a climate conducive to learning** in the clinical setting by, for example, encouraging learners to take part in doctors and nursing rounds (Chabeli, 1999:24-28). Facilitators should create a learning climate in the classroom by encouraging mutual respect in the group.
  
- **Encourage cultural competence** by exposing learners to clients in diverse health settings, including those communities that are underserved (Baldwin, 1999:195-196). They should also encourage learners to appreciate their cultural differences and support them in their attempts to express their cultural attributes without feeling uncomfortable (Campinha-Bacote, 1998:3-4).
  
- **Motivation** of the learners by stimulating group interaction and encouraging group spirit (Dolmans *et al.*, 1998:22-24).
  
- **Support the learners in theory** by means of scaffolding and mentoring.
  
- **Support the learners in the clinical setting** by being a preceptor<sup>5</sup> (French, 1994:129). Shadowing<sup>6</sup> can also be used to support learners (Eddy *et al.*, 1999:364-367). The facilitator should arrange that learners are allocated to a registered nurse.
  
- **In maintaining small group functioning** the facilitator:
  - Encourages contributions
  - Prevents domination
  - Challenges the quiet learner
  - Helps ensure clarity
  - Builds trust between members

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<sup>5</sup> A preceptor is a person who enables learning in practice while promoting and participating in the delivery of nursing care

<sup>6</sup> Shadowing is the partnering one-to-one of a nursing learner with a registered nurse where the learner sticks as a shadow with the registered nurse to participate and observe the registered nurse's activities.

- Relieves tension and conflict
  - Should be available to individual members to diagnose difficulties that are preventing progress
  - Summarizes discussions
- **Role model.** A role model is perceived by others to be successful, credible, interpersonally attractive and possessing status and competence (Eddy & Scheimer, 1999:364-367).
  - **Parental role.** Wilkenson and Hundert (1991) in Mullins (1994:107) redefine the role of the facilitator as a parent and confidant. Rooth (1995:18) states that facilitators should be sincere because the learners may share personal issues with them.

### ***The qualities of the facilitator***

The qualities that a facilitator should possess are those that relate to personal attributes and include the following:

- **Self-awareness.** Facilitators should have insight regarding their own emotions, drives, strengths, weaknesses and needs (Strickland, 2000:112-117) because the learners may challenge them.
- **Approachable.** Tromp (1999:145) believes that a successful facilitator requires specific abilities as well as a non-aggressive approach to people. Being approachable makes it easy for learners to open up.
- **Empathy** is a generic behaviour that can promote learning. Mwamwenda (1995:398) states that students learn more from empathetic, accepting and trusting teachers.

- **Sensitivity.** The facilitator must be sensitive to the needs of the learners and acknowledge the uniqueness of each learner (Kloppers, 1999:24).
- **Humour.** The facilitator should have a sense of humour because using humour as a teaching method is likely to enhance and maintain the learners' interest, but the facilitator should be aware that certain cultures may not recognize humour as a socially acceptable phenomenon (Kuhrik *et al.*, 1997:332-334).
- **Acceptance.** Facilitators should accept the learners and let them make mistakes. Mwamwenda (1995:301) found that learners learn more from accepting and trusting teachers.
- **Friendly.** Rooth (1995:12) asserts that facilitators must be friendly and should allow themselves to be seen as human.
- **Patience.** Tromp (1998:13) states that patience is an important behaviour for facilitators because facilitation requires that every participant should be given sufficient opportunity to express themselves.

### ***Relationship of the facilitator and the learners***

The relationship between the facilitator and the learner is a much more complex interaction and process than the traditional form of teaching (Brockbank & McGill, 1998:55).

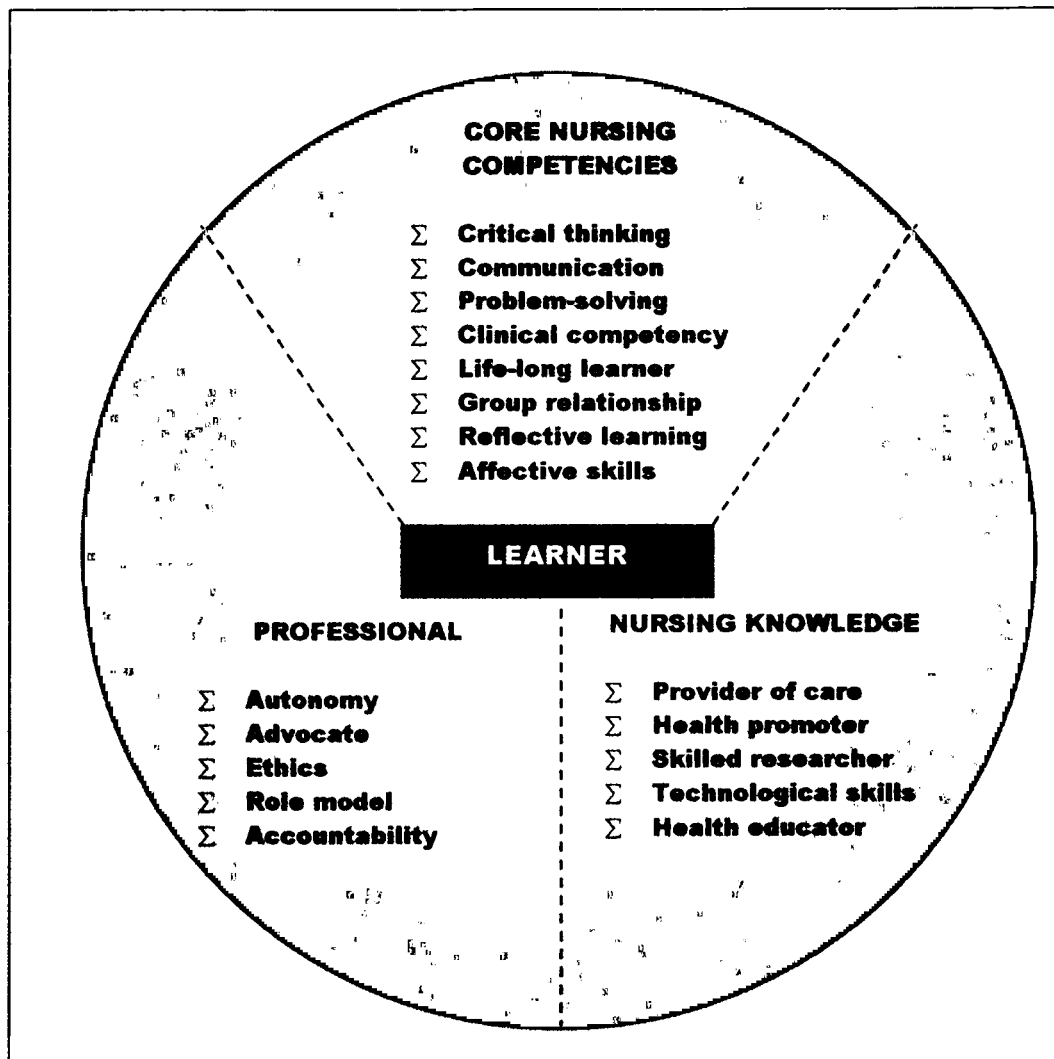
- **Caring.** Edwards, Benner and Wrubel (2001:172-181) describe caring as an enabling condition of connection and concern. Rooth (1995: 18) describes an essential quality of caring as being authentic and states that the facilitator should be sincere with students and herself because students may share issues of a private nature.

- **Trust.** Majumdar (1996:43-46) found that trust is important to the learning activity as it allows for staff members and students to deal with problems that arise between them openly, directly and honestly. Tromp (1998:65) states that trust is an important prerequisite for effective group work. Roger (1969) in Quinn (1994:20) in his humanistic model states that the most important factor is the relationship of trust that exists between facilitator and learner as well as acceptance of students as persons in their own right, and who are worthy of respect and care.
  
- **Mutual respect.** There should be mutual respect between the facilitator and the learners in facilitation. Robson & Beary (1995:96) describe respect as a generic behaviour which makes relationships become fruitful and the lack of which causes group dysfunction. Other sources declare that quality learning occurs when facilitators trust and respect their students (Academic Development, 1998:14).

#### **5.9.2.4 Learner**

The learners of nursing are regarded as adults (Klopper, 1999:2). The reason is that most consumers of nursing care are adults (Nunnery, 1997:199) and nurses are expected to be more responsible for the lives of people. Therefore for the purpose of this research a learner means an adult learner. An adult learner is someone with experience which can and should be converted into an effective learning resource (Boaden & Bligh, 1999:25).

Knowels (1980) in Klopper (1999:43) define an adult learner within a social and psychological realm. The social definition involves the individual who acts like and fulfills the role of an adult, for example being a taxpayer and a responsible citizen. The psychological definition involves the individual whose self-concept is that of an adult. The characteristic is mirrored in the way that adults regard themselves as being responsible persons.



**FIGURE 5.5: Learner**

A learner in this context is a person who is registered with the university for the purpose of obtaining a degree in the field of nursing. The learner is motivated to become self-directed and less dependent on the facilitator. In the context of this model as illustrated in Figure 5.5 the learner must acquire three main components namely nursing knowledge, nursing competencies and professional values. This occurs with the assistance of facilitation.

**Nursing knowledge:** This is the knowledge that the learner as a nurse has constructed based on personal experience. Nursing knowledge includes the following:

- Health care which is the scientific knowledge gained to care for clients
- Health promotion and disease prevention
- Skilled researcher
- Technology to assist in the diagnosis and management of disease
- Health educator to prevent disease and promote health

**Nursing competency includes aspects of the following skills:**

- **Critical thinking.** This is a reflective process that involves thinking about patient circumstances without a single solution and is focused on deciding what to do to reach a successful outcome (Brock & Butts, 1998:5-13) to meet the patients' needs. The learner makes use of cognitive abilities to solve patients' problems.
- **Communication.** Sound listening and speaking skills are applied competencies which the learning program leading to the awarding of a qualification should develop in learners according to the National Qualification Framework (NQF) (Health Science and Social Service Document Pack, 2002:27).
- **Problem-solving.** Learners should demonstrate the ability to use their knowledge to select and apply solutions to problems (Health Science and Social service Document Pack, 2002:27).
- **Clinical competency** entails psychomotor skills which the learners need to solve clinical problems.
- **Lifelong learning** is the extent to which the learner takes responsibility for his or her own learning and the extent to which the learners evaluate their learning.

- **Group relationship.** The learner should have the ability to develop a sound critical relationship and the ability to work effectively as part of the group (Health Science and Social service Document Pack, 2002:27). Team work is important in nursing.
- **Reflective learning** to be able to analyze patients' problems critically so that they can examine and explore issues of concern in their nursing care and develop different ways of dealing with such problems.
- **Affective skills** are necessary to be able to care and to understand the emotions of the people for whom they care.

**Professional values include factors such as autonomy, advocacy and ethics:**

- **Autonomy** means the ability to function independently while autonomy of learning is a capacity for lifelong learning (Health Science and Social service Document Pack, 2002:27).
- **Advocate** for clients and the nursing profession, to ensure that no harm is done to the patient.
- **Ethics** deal with the moral aspects of nursing and these should be facilitated both in the classroom and the clinical setting.
- **Role model**, the learner should be a role model for the nursing profession and represent nursing by her or his good conduct.
- **Accountability.** The learner is accountable to the patients and the nursing profession.

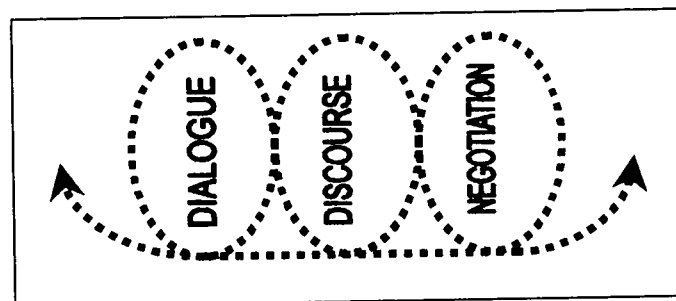
### **5.9.2.5 Interaction**

Interaction, according to Figure 5.6, is a reflexive process between the facilitator and the learner, as well as among the learners. Interaction takes place by means of dialogue, discourse and negotiation.

**Dialogue** refers to the exchange of ideas by means of reflection in order to construct new understanding and meaning (Klopper, 1999:13).

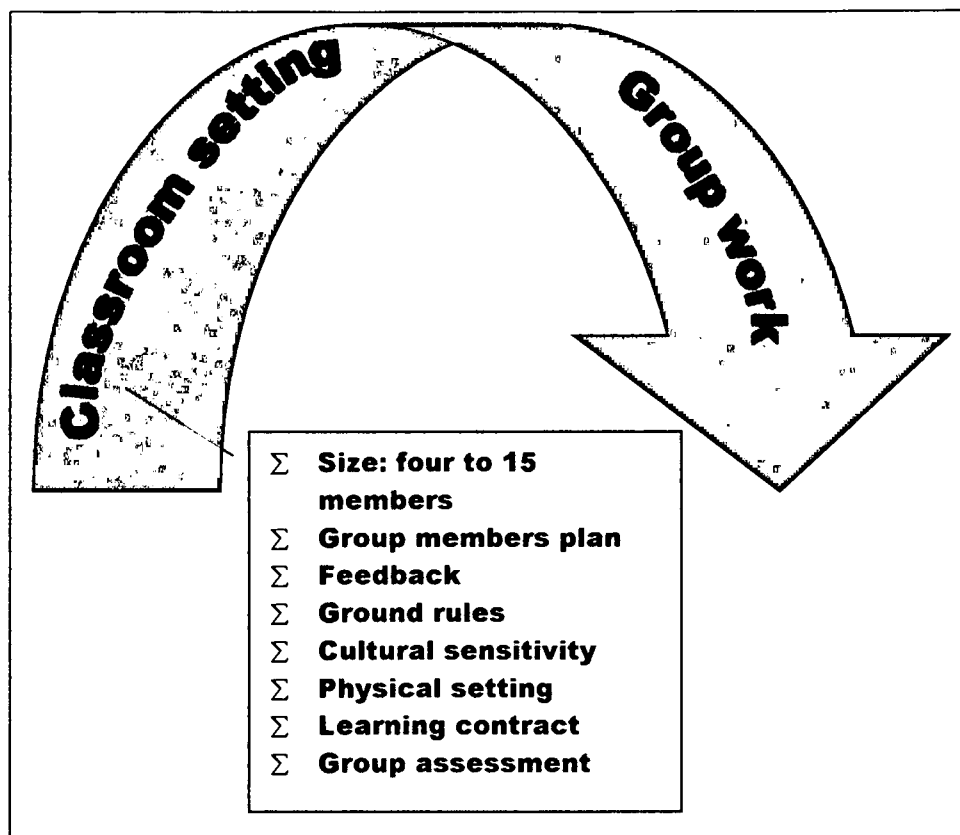
**Discourse** implies discussion, debating, language, thought and actions that are in a complex way related to social relationships within a specific context (Klopper, 1999:13).

**Negotiation** is a specialized form of communication with another person or group to achieve mutual need satisfaction (Eddy & Schermer, 1999:364-367). In facilitation the facilitator negotiates with the learners about their learning.



**FIGURE 5.6: Interaction**

### 5.9.2.6 Group work



**FIGURE 5.7: Classroom setting (group work)**

In the context of this study, groups are all gatherings for educational purposes, irrespective of the size. They provide opportunities that cannot be realized through individual learning situations. Groups provide expertise from the rest of the group not available to the solitary individual (Gregory & Thornley, 1994:20).

For the purpose of developing the model (see Figure 5.7) group work is described as involving group-processing where group skills are applied and group members plan activities together as well as reflecting on how their activities could be more effective. The size of the group should be between four and fifteen members, it should be small enough to encourage diversity of viewpoints and ideas and not too large so that it interferes with face-to-face interactions. Members receive feedback from one another to improve group

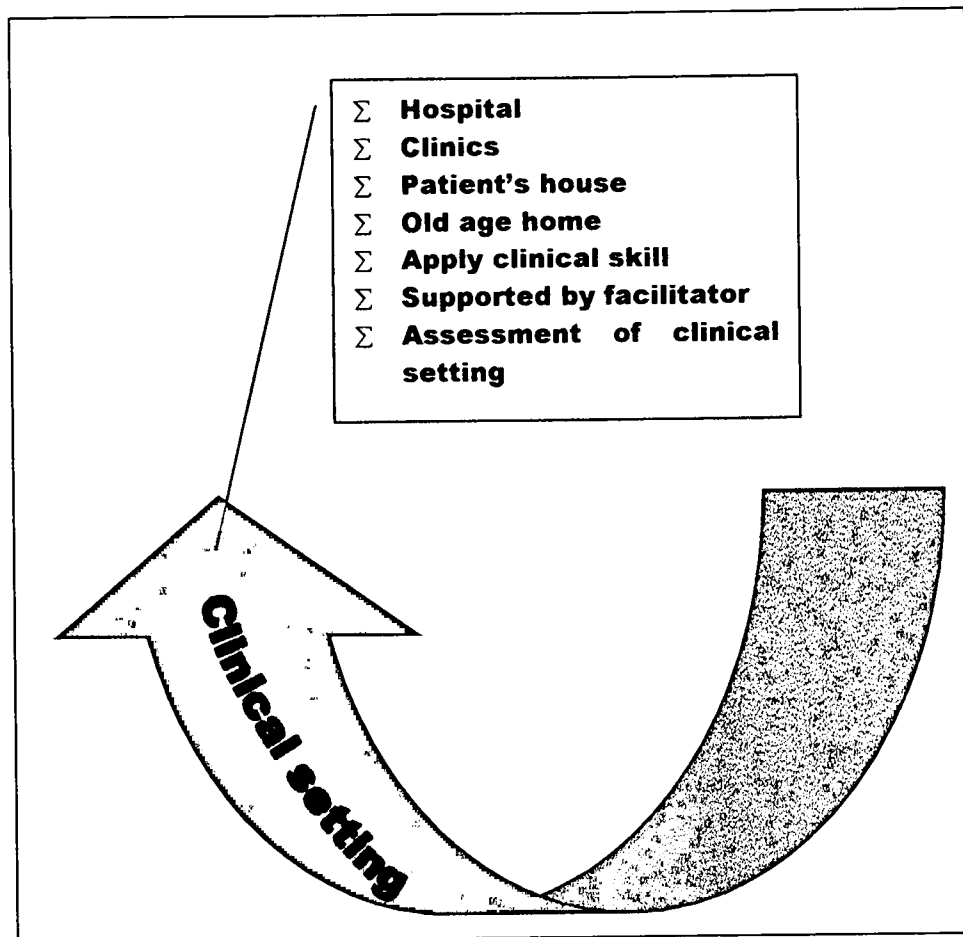
activities. They also manage the group by setting ground rules and by agreeing to commitment through a learning contract (Dana, 1997:41-43). All group activities are assessed.

### **5.9.2.7 Clinical setting**

Reilly and Oermann (1985, in Dana & Gwele, 1998:58-64) describe the clinical setting as more than just a place to apply theory to practice. To them it is where the learner learns problem-solving, decision-making and divergent thinking skills necessary for dealing with the uncertainties of clinical practice.

Mashaba (1994:44) states that the goal of nursing education is to produce a competent nurse practitioner by using two strands, namely theory and practice. The same author states that one cannot produce a competent theoretical nurse at one time and a practical nurse at another because nursing is a hands-on profession. This means that nurses must learn the theory and the practical component to be competent practitioners. The clinical setting can be in hospital or a placement in the community, for example clinics, patient's homes and old-age-homes (Quinn, 1995:184).

Chabeli (1998:39-44) defines clinical learning facilitation as a goal-directed and dynamic process in which participants who are professional nurses and nursing students interact in a clinical learning environment of genuine mutual respect, in order to learn through critical reflection within the clinical nursing education context.



**FIGURE 5.8: Clinical setting**

A clinical setting and learning in the context of developing the model as indicated in Figure 5.8 are defined as the learning environment where learners are exposed to clinical teaching and are involved in direct patient or client care under the supervision of a registered nurse. In this learning milieu they learn to apply clinical skills based on their critical skills and abilities. The clinical setting may be the hospital, clinic, patient's home or old age home. The learners require both technical and emotional support from the facilitators because the literature has consistently shown that students of nursing experience high levels of anxiety-related stress especially in the clinical setting (Adejomo & Ganga-Limando, 2000:3-7). This anxiety is stated to be from a lack of self-confidence and a fear of making mistakes in the clinical area (Mhlongo, 1994:199). The clinical setting should also be assessed by a skilled facilitator.

### **5.9.2.8 Nursing education**

Nursing education combines two disciplines, one is that of nursing and the other is education (Mashaba, 1994:4). Nursing is a caring profession which enables and supports the patient ill or well, at all stages of life, to achieve and maintain health or where this is not possible, cares for the patient so that he lives in dignity until death (South African Nursing Council, 1998:1-2). Education is a deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills as well as outcomes of that effort (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1995:7). It is the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge (Duffy & Cunningham, undated: 174). Nursing education is specifically directed at the development of the learner of nursing as an adult on a personal and professional level and should lead to the cognitive, affective and psychomotor development of the learner as well as the achievement of the prescribed program objectives (South African Nursing Council, 1998:3). Nursing education includes aspects such as curriculum processes, which are controlled by a statutory body, the South African Nursing Council (SANC). Other controlling bodies are the National Qualification Framework (NQF) authorities which set policies and one of its bodies, the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) which will not be discussed in this section.

### **5.9.2.9 Constructivism**

Constructivism is a philosophy that states that knowledge is individually constructed through human interaction where meanings are shared and negotiated (Wilson, 1997:3).

Constructivism claims that knowledge is constructed by the individual through his interaction with his environment (<http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/~elmurphy/cle.html>).

In summary, constructivism is a philosophy which believes that individuals actively construct their knowledge through interaction with other members of the group and the learning environment, and that this knowledge is based on the experiences that learners bring to the learning event.

### **5.9.2.10 Adult learning principles**

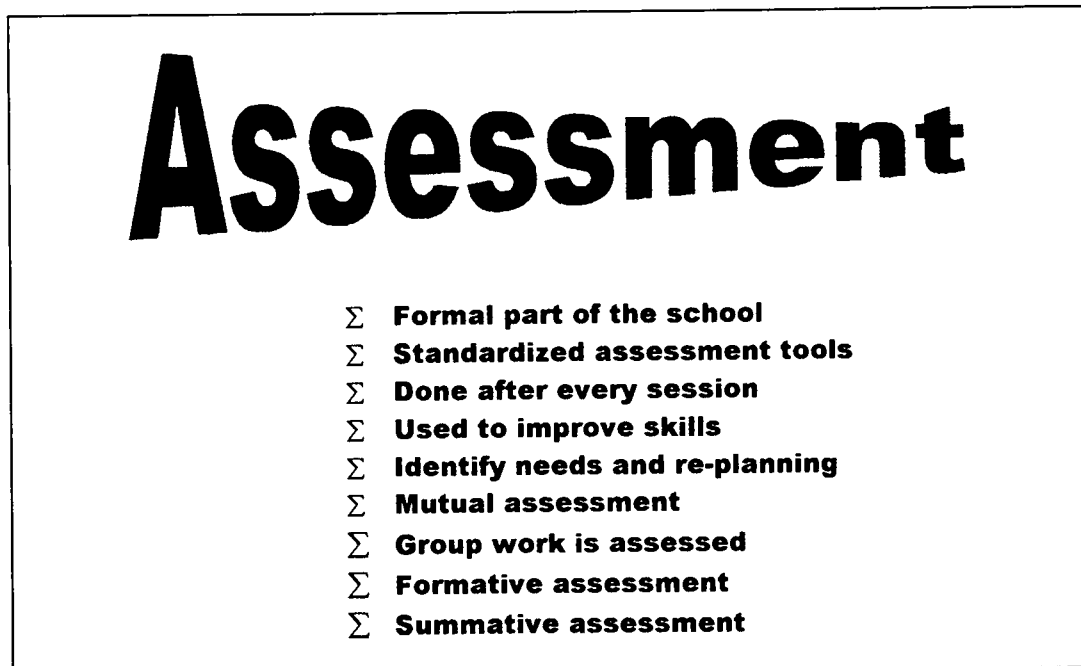
Learning for adults is characterized by the following principles:

- An adult self-concept includes being treated as being capable of self-direction.
- Adults need to recognize the purpose of learning
- They will build on their own life experience
- Adults will learn best if the learning is task-, problem- or inquiry-centred.
- Adults will learn when they are ready.
- They are motivated to learn by growth, accomplishment, curiosity and self-esteem (Majumdar, 1996:43-46).

### **5.9.2.11 Assessment**

In the outcome-based approach to education, concept assessment is preferred to evaluation. The reason for this preference is that the purpose of evaluation is to judge and to validate (Cangelosi, 1991:1). Assessment addresses many related issues, for example to share something, to be interactive and consult with each other. Ladyshevsky (1991:24) describes assessment as an essential and necessary component of professional competency measurement. The purpose of assessment is not to prove but to

improve and develop (Jacobs, 1999:135-140). There are different forms of assessment, namely formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment takes place during the process of learning and its main purpose is to provide feedback to learners on strengths and weaknesses that were identified during the learning. Summative assessment takes place when the learner is ready to be assessed at the end of a learning program (Oliver, 2002: 68).



**FIGURE 5.9: Assessment**

For the purpose of the model as indicated in Figure 5.9 it is the assessment of the process of facilitation. Assessment should be a formalized structure of schools. Different strategies should be used such as designing standardized assessment tools. Assessment should be carried out frequently, for example at the end of every session or completion of a module. By assessing the facilitation process, the needs of the learners can be identified and planning for improvement can be done. The learners can assess each other. In peer assessment fellow learners select the criteria and carry out the assessment (du Toit, Khabanjane, Korf, Kotze, Masehela, Mostert, van Tonder, 2000:59).

Group assessment is another way of getting learners involved in the assessment process (du Toit *et al.*, 2000:62-63). The same writer found that assessment questionnaires are a useful way of having groups assess their teamwork and individual contributions. The group should spend some time at the end of each session assessing the day's work and interactions (Holen, 2000:485-488). The facilitator is responsible for formative and summative assessment.

## **5.10 RELATIONSHIP STATEMENTS OF THE MODEL**

According to Breakwell, Hammond and Fife-Schaw (1998:7) theories are basically sets of relational rules. They contain many concepts and specify how concepts relate to one another (Neuman, 1997:43). Chinn and Kramer (1991:116) suggest that concepts should be given a structural form so as to clarify their relationship by means of a symbolic representation.

Based on the definitions provided in the preceding section, the following relationships are proposed:

- Facilitation takes place in the context of nursing education. The focus of nursing education is the learner, the facilitator and the process of facilitation, as well as the learning environment, which can be the classroom or the clinical setting.
- Learning takes place through the process of facilitation.
- Facilitation is based on the philosophy of constructivism and the principles of adult learning are applied.

- The principles of adult learning indicate that certain aspects of learning need to be taken into consideration when dealing with adult learners, for example facilitation requires understanding of how learners experience learning otherwise the purpose of facilitation may be defeated.
- Learning is facilitated when learners participate in the learning process.
- The main role players in learning through facilitation are the facilitator and the adult learners.
- The facilitator must have skills, certain qualities, develop a relationship with the learners and have roles to fulfil in helping the learners to develop core competencies, the nursing role and professional values.
- The facilitator interacts with the learners in facilitation through the process of dialogue, negotiation and discourse.
- The learners interact with the learning environment by being active participants in the learning process.
- In facilitation learning takes place in the classroom through group work and in the clinical setting.
- The goal of facilitated learning in nursing education is to produce a competent theoretical nurse at the same time as a practical nurse is produced because nursing is a practice-based profession; hence facilitation occurs in the classroom and the clinical setting.
- The relationship between the facilitator and the learner and between the learners is a much more complex interaction and process than in the traditional form of teaching.

- The facilitator supports the learners by means of scaffolding and mentoring.
- It is important for the process of facilitation to be assessed
- The group members assess one another as well as the facilitator, and then they all assess the facilitation process and the group dynamics
- First each learner should reflect on his or her own work and interactions with the group. Second, each learner should reflect on the contributions of other members, considering both their methods and efforts. Finally, members should share their thoughts about how the group operated as a whole.

## 5.11 MODEL FOR FACILITATION

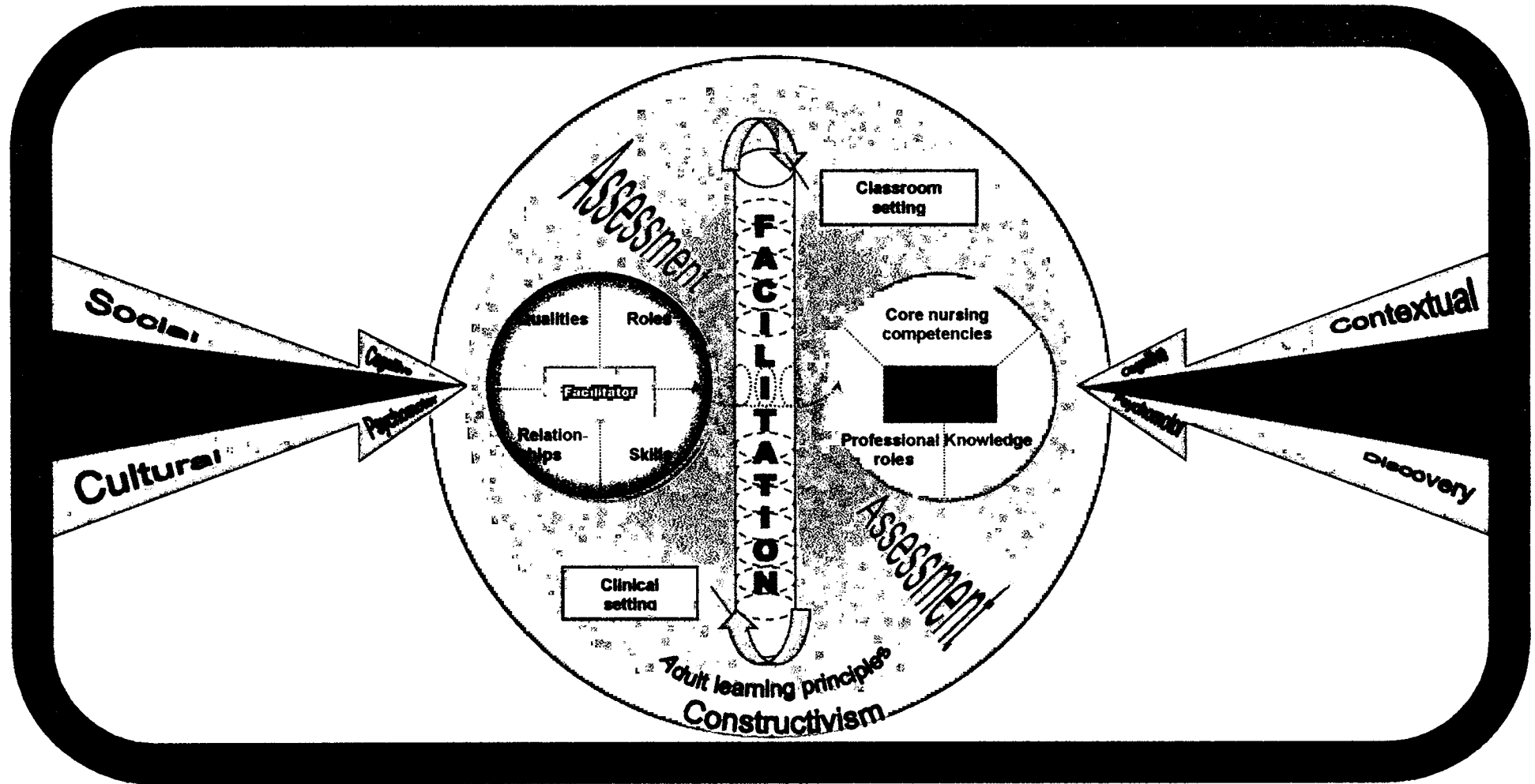


FIGURE 5.10: Model for facilitation

## 5.12 DESCRIPTION OF THE CONCEPTUALIZED MODEL

The context of learning in this model is **nursing education** which is a discipline of educating and training nurses. It provides for educating nurses in nursing science and practice. The philosophy on which learning is based is **constructivism** and it emphasizes that the learners must actively construct and take responsibility for their learning. The didactic methods of teaching in nursing education need to change to facilitation of learning and the principles of adult learning must be applied.

The objective of this model is that **learning** must take place. The two arrows indicate that learning is **social, cultural, contextual** and involves the learners in **discovering** their learning. These aspects within which learning occurs are pointed into a circle symbolizing that learning is a continuous, dynamic process and prepares individuals to become lifelong learners. Learning should also produce a learner who has acquired **cognitive, psychomotor** and **affective** skills.

**Facilitation** is a spiral process because it is a complex process involving development of the learners on different levels and competencies. In achieving these competencies the learner is assisted and supported by the facilitator. Facilitation occurs in the classroom and the clinical setting. The locus of control shifts away from the facilitator and changes the climate of learning because the responsibility of learning shifts from the facilitator to learners. The atmosphere is relaxed and less formal.

The circle depicts the **facilitator** who helps the learners to achieve their goals of learning and competencies. The facilitator must have certain qualities and skills to enable the learners to learn and achieve these competencies. In addition the facilitator should develop a relationship of trust, caring and respect for the learners.

The **learners** are mature adults who are self-directing and take responsibility for their learning. They are active in their learning and are supported by the facilitator in a relaxed learning atmosphere. They interact with the facilitator, other learners and learning content using the process of facilitation.

**Assessment** of the entire facilitation process, the facilitator, learners as well as the group work and the clinical setting is important to ensure that learning is taking place and to improve the skills of the facilitators. Assessment is placed inside the circle to indicate that it is an on-going process in facilitation. Furthermore the principles of adult learning should be taken into consideration in making assessment relevant for learners.

### **5.13 EVALUATION OF THE MODEL**

The original model as presented in Figure 5.10 was presented for evaluation to ten experts in nursing education and/or education.

Criteria were set for choosing evaluators and they were all doctorally prepared or had a master's degree (see Annexure I).

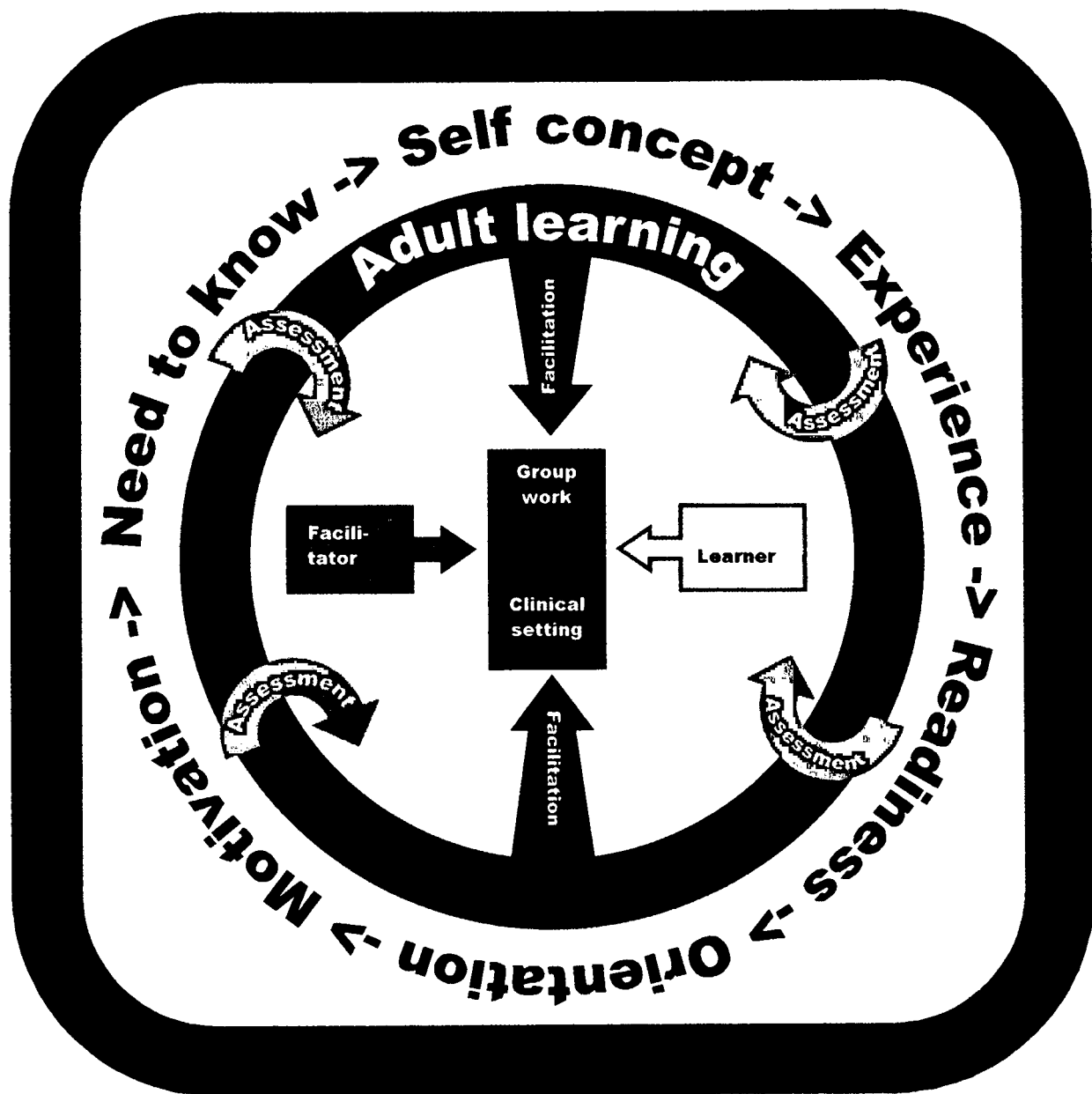
The evaluators were requested to evaluate the model using the criteria in Annexure H.

### **5.14 SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION OF THE TENTATIVE MODEL BY EXPERT EVALUATORS**

A tentative model was constructed and sent to 10 evaluators to be evaluated. Overall feedback indicates that the model was accepted but that some changes were needed to be implemented for a final model. The researcher adapted the model as valuable input was received from the evaluators. The experts evaluated the model using specific criteria (see Annexure H). Figure 5.11 is the representation of the original model submitted to the evaluators.

The researcher believes it is important to give feedback of the evaluation by the experts in order to shed light on how the model was adapted.

A summary of the evaluation will follow with the discussion of the evaluation (see Table 5.1).



**FIGURE 5.11: The tentative model**

**TABLE 5.1: Evaluation of the tentative model by experts  
(N=10) (continued)**

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
<b>1. INTERNAL STRUCTURE</b>					
This applies to the description of the model itself.					
<b>1.1 Logical<sup>7</sup> development</b>					
1.1.1 The process of model development is logical				8 (80%)	2 (20%)
1.1.2 The stages of model development are explicit		1(10%)		7(70%)	2(20%)
<b>1.2 Clarity</b>					
1.2.1 The model is easy to understand	1(10%)		1 (10%)	8 (80%)	
1.2.2 The definition of concepts is clear		2 (20%)	2 (20%)	6 (60%)	
1.2.3 The definitions indicated below are clear					
1.2.3.1 Nursing education			4 (40%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)
1.2.3.2 Adult learning			1	6 (60%)	3 (30%)
1.2.3.3 Facilitation		2 (20%)	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	
1.2.3.4 Facilitator	1 (10%)	4 (40%)		4 (40%)	1 (10%)
1.2.3.5 Learner			5 (50%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)
1.2.3.6 Group work		2 (20%)	2 (2%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)
1.2.3.7 Clinical setting			3 (30%)	7 (70%)	
1.2.3.8 Assessment			2 (20%)	7 (70%)	1 (10%)
1.2.4 The definitions are described in a way that indicate the relevancy of the model			5 (50%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)
1.2.5 The concepts are used consistently <sup>8</sup> in the description of the model		1 (10%)		9 (90%)	
<b>1.3 Level of development</b>					
1.3.1 The development of the model is based on supported statements			2 (20%)	8 (80%)	
1.3.2 The model is systematically developed		2 (20%)		8 (80%)	
1.3.3 Relationship statements are described with clearly supported arguments		1(10%)	5(50%)	4(40%)	
<b>1.4 Adequacy</b>					
1.4.1 The model is adequate to guide facilitators	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)
<b>1.5 Applicability</b>					
1.5.1 The model can be used for facilitating in clinical setting	1 (20%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	5 (50%)	

<sup>7</sup> Statements are well supported

<sup>8</sup> Refers to the use of concepts in the same way throughout

**TABLE 5.1: Evaluation of the tentative model by experts  
(N=10) (continued)**

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
1.5.2 The model can be used for facilitating theory	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	5 (50%)	
<b>2. VISUAL PRESENTATION OF THE MODEL</b>					
2.1 Interaction between concepts is clear		2 (20%)	2 (20%)	6 (60%)	
2.1.1 The relationship between the concepts is clear		1 (10%)	3 (30%)	6 (60%)	
2.1.2 Interaction between the facilitator and the learner is explicit		2 (20%)	2 (20%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)
2.1.3 The relationship between the facilitator and the learner is clear		2 (20%)	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	
2.2 It is clear that facilitation is based on the principles of adult learning	1 (10%)			8 (80%)	1 (10%)
2.3 It is clear that facilitation is implemented in the clinical setting	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)
2.4 It is clear that facilitation is implemented in group work	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)	
2.5 The facilitator					
2.5.1 The roles of the facilitator are explicitly described	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)
2.5.2 It is clear that the roles of the facilitator are multifaceted	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)
2.6 The learner					
2.6.1 It is clear that the learner is also important in facilitation		2 (20%)	1 (10%)	7 (70%)	
<b>3. EXTERNAL VALIDITY</b>					
This applies to the relationship of a model to the real world.					
<b>3.1 Reality convergence<sup>9</sup></b>					
3.1.1 This model can be used as a guideline for adult learners		3 (30%)	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)
<b>3.2 Usefulness</b>					
3.2.1 The model can be used in theory		2 (20%)	1 (10%)	7 (70%)	
3.2.2 The model can be used in practice	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	5 (50%)	2 (20%)	
<b>3.3 Significance</b>					
3.3.1 The model contributes to current nursing education		2 (20%)	1 (10%)	6 (60%)	1 (10%)
3.3.2 The model opens new direction to teaching-learning dimensions in nursing education		2 (20%)		7 (70%)	1 (10%)

<sup>9</sup> Reality expressed by the researcher closely resembles that of the evaluator

**TABLE 5.1: Evaluation of the tentative model by experts  
(N=10)**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>3.4 Discrimination</b>					
3.4.1 The model can be applied to other disciplines	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	
<b>3.5 Scope</b>					
3.5.1 The model description adequately covers important aspects of nursing education			2 (20%)	7 (70%)	1 (10%)
<b>3.6 Complexity<sup>10</sup></b>					
3.6.1 The model reflects the complexity of nursing education		1 (10%)	2 (20%)	7 (70%)	

## **1. INTERNAL STRUCTURE**

### **1.1 Logical development**

All 10 (100%) evaluators agreed that the process of developing the model was logical. Of the 10, 2 (20%) experts strongly agreed and 8 (80%) agreed on this aspect. No adaptations were done in this regard.

Nine (90%) evaluators agreed that the stages of developing the model were explicit and only one disagreed. The model was adapted according to the majority of expert's opinions.

### **1.2 Clarity**

Eight (80%) of the evaluators agreed that the model was easy to understand, 1 (10%) strongly disagreed and 1 (10%) was uncertain. Because the majority of the evaluators found the model easy to understand, the presentation remained the same.

Six (60%) of the evaluators agreed that the definition of concepts was clear, 2 (20%) disagreed and 2 (20%) were uncertain. The concepts were clearly defined to adapt the original concepts.

There were different opinions regarding the defined concepts and a brief explanation follows on each concept:

Two (20%) strongly agreed that the definition of **nursing education** was clear, 4 (40%) agreed and 4 (40%) were uncertain. In further clarifying nursing education, the disciplines of education and nursing education were described.

Nine (90%) of the evaluators agreed that **adult learning** was clearly defined, and only 1 (10%) disagreed. No adaptations were done.

<sup>10</sup> Not overly simple and considers the complexity of nursing

Five (50%) of the evaluators were uncertain about the definition of **facilitation**, 2 (20%) agreed that the concept was clear and 3 (30%) disagreed. It is clear that the concept facilitation was not well-defined. Evaluators indicated that facilitation cannot be defined without taking learning into consideration. The concept learning was defined as indicated in Figure 5.2. Other definitions of facilitators from the literature were added.

Five (50%) evaluators disagreed about the clarity of the concept **facilitator**; 5 (50%) agreed. The facilitator was further defined adding the roles, skills, relationship and qualities to make the concept clearer which was not the case in the original definition. See figure 5.4

Five (50%) evaluators were uncertain about the clarity of the definition of the **learner**, 5 (50%) agreed. Evaluators indicated that the definition of the learner did not project the kind of learner that facilitation intends to produce. Additional information such as nursing competency, nursing roles and professional development were included to indicate the end product of a facilitated learner. See figure 5.5

Two (20%) evaluators disagreed on the central position at **group work** occupied in the original model and stated that the position influenced its definition, 2 (20%) were uncertain and 6 (60%) agreed that the definition was clear. Group work was defined in the context of facilitation and its position was moved from the centre of the model.

Seven (70%) evaluators agreed that the **clinical setting** was clearly defined and 3 (30%) were uncertain. The same comment about the position of the clinical setting was made. The clinical setting was moved from the centre of the model and defined in the context of facilitation.

Eight (80%) evaluators agreed on the clarity of **assessment**. Two (20%) were uncertain. The position of assessment was moved to the centre of the model to indicate that assessment is not an activity carried out from outside but that it happens in the learning milieu.

Five (50%) evaluators were uncertain about the description of the concepts and their relevance to the model, 5 (50%) agree that the descriptions were relevant. The addition of other concepts such as learning and the clarification of the roles of the facilitator made the model more relevant.

Nine (90%) agreed that the concepts were used consistently in the model. Only 1 (10%) disagreed. No adaptations were made since the majority agreed about consistency.

### **1.3 The level of development**

Eight (80%) evaluators agreed that the model was based on supporting statements; 2 (20%) were uncertain. The majority agreed and no adaptations were made.

Eight (80%) agreed that the model was systematically developed and 2 (20%) disagreed. The researcher developed the model in terms of the literature and the authors consulted stated that they used the same aspects on model development, which were thoroughly researched. Therefore no adaptations were made.

One (10%) evaluator disagreed that relationship statements were described with clearly supporting statements, 5 (50%) were uncertain and 4 (40%) agreed that relationships were well supported. Relationship statements were re-defined and additional relationships statements were added and well supported.

## **1.4 Adequacy**

Five (50%) evaluators disagreed that the model was adequate to guide facilitators, 3 (30%) agreed and 1 (10%) was uncertain. The addition of roles, skills, qualities and relationships of the facilitator in the final model provide some guidelines that can be used by facilitators.

## **1.5 Applicability**

Five (50%) evaluators agreed that the model can be used for facilitation in the clinical setting, 3 (30%) disagreed, and 2 (20%) were uncertain. The roles of the facilitator were clarified to indicate that she/he can facilitate in the clinical setting.

Five (50%) evaluators agreed that the model could be used to facilitate theory, 3 (30%) disagreed, and 2 (20%) were uncertain. The roles of the facilitator were clarified to indicate that she/he can facilitate in the classroom setting.

## **2. VISUAL PRESENTATION OF THE MODEL**

### **2.1 Interaction between the concepts**

More than 40% of the evaluators indicated that the interactions between the concepts were not clear. The relationship statements were re-defined and the presentation of the concepts were changed to clarify the relationships.

However, 9 (90%) evaluators agreed that it was clear that facilitation is based on the principles of adult learning and the interaction was not changed

### **2.2 Facilitator**

Four (40%) evaluators disagreed that the roles of the facilitator were explicitly described, 1 (10%) was uncertain and 4(40%) agreed that the roles were explicit. The model was adapted by adding roles, skills, relationships and qualities of the facilitator to indicate describe the roles of the facilitator in the final model.

Six (60%) agreed that the roles of the facilitator are multifaceted. Three (30%) disagreed and 1 (10%) was uncertain. The model was adapted by adding roles, skills, relationships and qualities of the facilitator to clarify the multiple roles of the facilitator in the final model.

### **2.3 Learner**

Seven (70%) evaluators agreed that the learner is important in facilitation. Two (20%) disagreed and 1 (10%) was uncertain. The final model indicates the interaction between the facilitator and the learner which was not so in the original model. It also explains the kind of learner that will develop through the process of facilitation.

## **3. EXTERNAL VALIDITY**

### **3.1 Reality convergence**

Five (50%) evaluators agreed that the model can be used as a guideline for adult learners. Three (30%) disagreed and 2 (20%) were uncertain. The adaptation of the philosophy of constructivism and explanation of the roles, skills, qualities and the relationship of the facilitator and the learners renders the model applicable to adult learning.

### **3.2 Usefulness**

Seven (70%) evaluators agreed that the model can be used in theory. Two (20%) disagreed and 1 (10%) was uncertain. Adding the roles, skills, relationships and qualities to the facilitator can give guidelines on how to use the model in theory and practice. The philosophy of the model was changed from nursing education to constructivism, which is more appropriate for facilitation. Changing to constructivism made the model relevant because constructivism is based on active learning and it supports the principles of adult learning.

### **3.3 Significance**

Seven (70%) evaluators indicated that the model does contribute to current nursing education. Two (20%) disagreed and 1 (10%) was uncertain. The definition of the roles of the facilitator and the learners in facilitation and describing the interactions that occur in facilitation indicates the paradigm shift in the responsibility of learning and does indeed contribute to nursing education.

Eight (80%) evaluators agreed that the model opens a new direction to the teaching-learning dimension in nursing education. Only two (20%) disagreed and no adaptations in this regard were made.

### **3.4 Discrimination**

Three (30%) evaluators disagreed that the model can be applied to other disciplines, three (30%) were uncertain and four (40%) agreed. The context of nursing education limits the use of the model in other disciplines but the principles of learning remain the same, therefore the model can be used in other disciplines of learning

### **3.5 Scope**

Eight (80%) evaluators agreed that the model adequately covers important aspects of nursing education, 2 (20%) were uncertain and since no one disagreed the model was not adapted.

### **3.7 Complexity**

Seven (70%) evaluators agreed that the model reflects the complexity of nursing education. Two were uncertain and only 1 (10%) disagreed. The majority that agreed prove that nursing education is complex.

### ***Additional comments***

Of the ten evaluators only three (30%) were not satisfied with the philosophy of the original model which was the philosophy of nursing education. These evaluators strongly suggested that this philosophy was obsolete. They mentioned that other philosophies such as constructivism or progressivism were relevant. However, 70% of the evaluators accepted the model with the same philosophy of nursing education. The researcher found constructivism to be more relevant and thus adapted it to the model.

The evaluators also mentioned that the purpose of the model was not clear and this was also adapted.

The three evaluators stated that facilitation takes place in learning situations and indicated that learning should be defined. A definition a learning was therefore added to the final model.

The final model was presented to five evaluators who were all satisfied with the adaptations.

## **5.15 ACCEPTABILITY AND USABILITY OF THE MODEL**

Ideally a single unified model of facilitation should be agreed upon in order to bring uniformity into the classroom. This is not possible because there is no single model and the facilitation process is a dynamic one which changes depending on the area of use. However, facilitators are entitled to use different facilitation processes based on their experience, discipline and expertise.

### **5.15.1 Implications for nursing education and training**

This model provides nursing educators with aspects that must be considered in training nurse educators to become facilitators. The traditional training methods must include facilitation as a teaching-learning method.

Models are not intended as rigid structures that must at all times be adhered to (Pearson, Vaughan & Fitzgerald, 1997:70). This model may be used in the early stage of facilitation to provide structure or a framework to give learners direction. As facilitators' expertise develops the model may be used as a guideline or aide-memoiré.

Facilitation used in combination with other innovative methods such as problem-based learning and community-based learning should be implemented to prepare self-directed learners who take responsibility for their learning. Learner independence is ensured and will lead to professional and personal growth.

There is shared responsibility and this will shift the responsibility for preparation from the teachers alone. The learners will also have to prepare for their classes. Nurse educators are challenged to relinquish control and the learners are motivated to be active and take control of their learning.

### **5.15.2 Implications for research**

While a great deal of research has been conducted on adult learning in general, less has been done on adult learning in nursing. It is undeniable that nursing learners have much more responsibility for caring for lives. They are forced into becoming rapidly growing adults because of their profession even though some are chronologically young, just out of high school. There is a need to develop a different approach to educating learners of nursing. There is a need for further research in facilitation in nursing education.

### **5.15.3 Implications for nursing practice**

Nursing is practice-based as well as theory-based. Facilitation takes place in many areas of learning in nursing. Learning in the classroom cannot be separated from clinical learning. Nurses are prepared as an occupational group to stand accountable for their own decision-making and actions. If they are not prepared, then they cannot expect either clients or other colleagues working in health care to value or respect their opinion.

Facilitation is a way forward in preparing these learners to be accountable because of its self-directed nature. The facilitation process based on the principles of adult learning will assist in the integration of theory and practice.

## **5.16 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has served to confirm that the overall purpose and the objectives of the study have been met. The chapter deals with the description of the model for facilitation in nursing education and also highlights the evaluation of the model and its applicability to nursing education, practice and research. The model is designed to present a challenge to nurse educators who intend to change their teaching role to that of facilitation. It also aims at motivating practising facilitators and it is hoped that they will be open-minded, flexible and instil in their learners an inquiring mind, self-direction and motivation to learn.

# **CHAPTER 6**

## ***Recommendations, limitations and conclusion***

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### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this research it is evident that the facilitators and the learners experienced problems with facilitation because it is a different method of learning. The majority of lectures are trained in traditional methods of teaching and to them the responsibility for teaching lies on the teacher. The learners come from traditional, didactic learning backgrounds where they expect the teacher to be the one who is responsible for what they learn and how they learn. Most of the facilitators have been trained to through the traditional methods of lecturing which emphasizes that learning is controlled by the teacher who imparts knowledge to the learners. Facilitation requires that both the facilitator and the learners engage in a paradigm shift about learning responsibilities so that all concerned with the event of learning should take equal responsibility. The aim of this research was to construct a model for guiding facilitators in nursing schools. For the successful use of the model, recommendations are proposed for the role players as illustrated in the model. These recommendations discussed includes those for the facilitators, learners, research and nursing education.

## **6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FACILITATORS**

### **6.2.1 Preparation**

- Facilitators should commit themselves to a paradigm shift of relinquishing classroom control and adapt to a student-centred approach.
- All facilitators should be provided with orientation sessions and be trained to facilitate. The orientation of facilitators should be designed with strategies that mirror the processes, which students will undergo, in other words orientation session should be presented to resemble a typical learning package like the one students experience
- Facilitators should be trained to facilitate. Training should be provided for facilitators to equip them with facilitation skills.
- Training should be designed to develop the skills in the facilitators that will enable student learning as indicated in the model.
- Different strategies should be used to train them. Examples of such strategies should include exposure to supervised facilitation by an expert, visits to schools that have already adopted facilitation as a learning method.
- Co-facilitation can be used as a strategy to prepare facilitators. In this process of co-facilitation facilitators work together with each other within a teaching session.
- A more guided design is recommended; this can be in the form of a guideline or facilitator's workbook on facilitation.

- Novice facilitators should have an induction program designed for them for ensuring effective performance during the initial period until they have mastered the process of facilitation.
- Programs for further development should be available in nursing schools. These can include in-service training and mentoring.

### **6.2.2 Skills**

The facilitator should use all the skills such as questioning, probing and stimulating thinking to encourage learning. These skills need to be developed in the facilitator through training.

- The facilitators should use appropriate skills to encourage learning. These include skills such as questioning, probing stimulating thinking, tolerance of silence as indicated in the model.
- Facilitators should be skilled in managing group dynamics.
- They should endeavor to improve their skills by subjecting themselves to peer assessment and student assessment.
- Courses on diversity and its management should be part of facilitator's training. Facilitators should encourage diversity and respect of other cultures so that groups can understand differences in its members.

### **6.2.3 Qualities of the facilitator**

It is important that facilitators first do introspection about themselves. They should decide if they have facilitative personalities characterized by for example openness, warmth patience and flexibility to enable learning. Personality cannot be changed and an unpleasant person will hinder learning.

#### **6.2.4 Emotional support**

- Institutions that introduce new methods of learning should provide opportunities for catharsis where facilitators can talk about their feelings to a support person who does not have to be a member of the staff to encourage neutrality. A person who has mastered facilitation and has experienced the difficulties thereof can be asked to provide support to others.
- Mentoring as a process of supporting those who are new to facilitation should be done by colleagues who are experienced in facilitation.
- Facilitator support group should be formed for instances of dealing with difficult students. Facilitators can support each other by sharing strategies that have worked in similar situations.
- Facilitators may help each other by direct intervention; sitting in to share observations about the group process or acting as a substitute facilitator for one or two sessions.

### **6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEARNERS**

#### **6.3.1 Orientation of learners**

- The information should be sent to the students when they apply to study so that they can make informed choices prior to acceptance. They should have knowledge of the method of learning which they are going to use in their tertiary education. Knowledge of what one is dealing with help alleviate anxieties and people can prepare themselves emotionally to deal with change.

- The students should be given sufficient orientation period which will outline work pattern throughout the year.
- Students should be introduced to the different clinical settings and orientated about these settings. Student support is very important on this aspect to prevent frustrations that emanates from the clinical setting.

### **6.3.2 Empowering students**

- Students should be introduced to activities such as team building exercise.

### **6.3.3 Support for the students**

- Students should be given support in the classroom and the clinical setting to deal with the frustrations of adapting to facilitation.
- Support in the classroom can do by scaffolding and the clinical setting mentoring and preceptorship can be used.
- Off-campus contact with facilitators on social basis can be organized to provide emotional support for the students.

## **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

### ***The role of the facilitator***

- Further research is needed on the role and the function of the facilitator.

- The emotional aspects of facilitation should be given attention, especially dealing with the feeling of loss of control in the classroom.
- The facilitators should be assisted in developing a complex relationship with the learners and this can be done by first assessing their needs in this regard.

### ***Learners***

- The needs of the learners should also be assessed so that their needs for learning are met with appropriate strategies based on research findings.
- A research should be conducted to discover measures of empowering the learners in taking more responsibility for their learning.

### ***Assessment***

- A paradigm shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred requires that the methods of assessment should be changed to support the principles of self-directed learning.
- Strategies of assessment in facilitation should be identified by means of research.

## **6.5 RECOMMENDATION FOR NURSING EDUCATION**

Nursing education should revise the method of learning and shift from traditional methods of learning to self-directed learning. The reasons for the revision are that the students mentioned that facilitation had many advantages for them and these included that

- they are responsible for their learning
  - they have developed professionally and personally
  - facilitation has made them independent learners.
- 
- Nursing education should make it mandatory that the skills required of the nursing student be built in the nursing curriculum. The development and support should be contained within that curriculum.
  
  - The education and training of nurse educators should be based on student-centred approaches.

## **6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The researcher could not find sufficient literature on facilitation particularly in nursing education. Most of the respondents, students in particular, used facilitation and problem-based learning interchangeably. This is because all the respondents were using problem-based learning as a learning method. They attributed all their problems to PBL.

The lack of funds to travel to other universities made it impossible to do focus interviews as scheduled. For example the third focus interview was conducted eight months after the first group interviews.

It was not always possible for the researcher to organize venues for conducting interviews because of the distance that needed to be traveled. Participating universities were between 400 to 650 km away from each other. The researcher had to depend on finding a reliable facilitator in each university to organize venues. In one instance the venue was poorly selected the environment was very noisy because there was building contractors working in the adjacent buildings. This made it very difficult to communicate with the students. Fortunately the researchers had a high quality tape recorder to capture the interviews.

The final model was presented to only five evaluators because of the following reasons:

- Evaluators who were involved in the first evaluation were unable to evaluate the model for the second time due to their work demands.
- Financial and time constraints on the part of the researcher.

However the model was evaluated for the second time by these five evaluators who all reached consensus and agreed that they were satisfied with the development of the model.

Contextualizing the model in nursing education may seem to be limiting the model to this discipline. The principles of learning are the same and the researcher believes that these can be applied to any learning situation.

## **6.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has served to confirm that the overall purpose of the study has been met. It brings the study to its logical conclusion. In this chapter the recommendations are proposed. The important aspects of training and supporting the facilitators are mentioned. Recommendations for students, further research and education are highlighted. Limitations of the study are dealt with.

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<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/crit/learningtree/PBL/PBLadvantages.html>

<http://imej.wfu.edu/articles/2001/1/03/ondex.asp>

<http://meds.queens.ca/medicare/pbl/pblhome6.htm>

<http://newhorizon.org/crft-knowels.html>

<http://www.csnp.ohio-state.edu/glarrc/glossary.htm>

<http://www.learnactivity.com/andragogy.html>

<http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/~elmurphy/cle.html>

<http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/adelaide96/papers/21.html>

# ***ANNEXURE A***

***Focus group interview:***

***Facilitators***

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# **FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH FACILITATORS**

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**Key:**

**M = Moderator**

**F = Facilitator**

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**M:** What were your experiences in facilitation, is there anybody who will like to start?

**F:** If I were to start for me it was a challenge which necessitated a total mind shift from content to problem solving and it needed a person to be prepared to learn everyday".

**M:** Yes

**F:** I mean challenging in another way and in another sense. In the old traditional method you had this comfort zone around you. You were not required to be involved in such an extent that you are involved now. You are a member of a group and you are equal to the group. I think that takes much more out of the facilitator. You have to be more wide-awake definitely.

**F:** In the beginning it was difficult because you are a teacher, you want to teach and talk, but after 4-6 months it becomes better to be a facilitator and let the group talk and only talk when it is necessary.

**F:** I can say if you are a talkative person or you are a real lecturer in the traditional sense then it is difficult to back-off.

**F:** I can say facilitation experience in the beginning is very difficult. I felt very nervous. In the first year we were like in the front battle line and it wasn't easy and we thought this thing was not going to work out.... Really it wasn't very progressive and there were feelings of impotence, frustrations and feelings of what I read in the book is not played out here. Feelings of you are the problem here". I am a good teacher and this people are making me feel I wasn't worth my salary

**F:** For me personally, I came from traditional program of teaching and facilitation was something new and also there was no structure on how to facilitate. I think having structure was very assuring, that structure is being lifted off. You are much more responsible for guiding students. You are much more anxious about that.

**M:** How is facilitation different from traditional teaching?

**F:** In facilitation the students are always aware of what we are doing unlike the old lecture method where we are used to come in and tell them what to do

**F:** When I came I was very afraid of this word facilitation because I was never trained like that. I had fears of having to come and facilitate which I was not trained at myself

**F:** We went into PBL without preparing ourselves on how to facilitate because we have been taught on how to lecture and prepare lessons and suddenly we got into PBL and we had to discover inside that you need a different kind skill of questioning.

**F:** We basically learned from trial and error and it is on the literature which never showed you the hands on facilitation. There is no guidance besides reading books it doesn't tell you practically what you are supposed to be doing, even watching a group didn't help you that much

**M:** Did you all have to learn to facilitate by trial and error?

**F:** When we started we saw some videos and listen to what people said but there was no actual teaching. It was mostly going to the readings and finding out what the reading say and watching those videos.

**F:** We had an orientation period where we were given orientation on how to facilitate then we watched videos, we had somebody demonstrating how facilitation is done. We were given an opportunity to facilitate under supervision.

**F:** I have been overseas to MacMaster, MacAuther and Brisban every single one of them, it does not really help

**F:** I read a lot about facilitation but knowing is not doing it correctly. It was by trial and error and trying to implement what you read. Reflecting with the group what you did right or wrong. Actually the students did a lot of my training by evaluating me ... I also attended international sessions on facilitation.

**F:** It was a different experience for me because I covered facilitation in my education. I had theoretical background on education course that I was doing on facilitation.

**F:** The big part of it has got to do with a group of students. Last year it was very difficult not only because it was new for me but because students were not cooperative. It was a difficult group of students. They just didn't want to participate, they didn't prepare for the group, if they prepared it was poor preparation. They literary wrote everything out from their books. There was no interaction and no discussion"

**M:** Tell me more about the groups

**F:** You are never sure what is going to come up in a group. Each group is different from the other.

**F:** We had two very disruptive students who interrupted the whole process the whole year. I was running around in circles not knowing where to go and I am concerned about the learning pace of the others. We came together and said what do we do with this group in the future and as a facilitator I was struggling with thin

**F:** Our students were angry at the whole process because we were the only department using PBL and the rest were on traditional model, and with frustrations they needed to bounce back everything back to us so we were their punching bags. They needed to find an excuse and it was either the process or the facilitator and it was never in the open and it was creating anxieties on us

**M:** How are things now?

**F:** There are more uncertainties in this approach and I don't think anyone's success is a pre-determination of the next.

**F:** You mean our experiences?

**F:** We were given an opportunity to do facilitation under supervision, then we had a facilitator coming into our class now and then to observe how we were doing our facilitation. She was just criticizing constructively commenting on how we were doing it.

**M:** Yes

**F:** It was difficult in the beginning but now I know so much and I don't want to do anything else.

**F:** I like to say that facilitation is an adventure and transformation, you just grow and you learn a lot. The experience is negative and positive but it is an adventure you enjoy it and it pays seeing the students developing and growing.

**F:** There is a lot more to learn on how to manage this I wouldn't go back to anything because of the richness of teaching.

**M:** What were your challenges?

**F:** The first challenge in facilitation is getting the students to meet the objectives of a particular course.

**F:** I think the groups are too big for us to be comfortable with facilitation because when you are facilitating there are other students not paying attention

**F:** Some of the challenges are of such kind of how do I get students learn what they are supposed to learn. You ask questions when there are difficult students because there are problematic students. How do you deal with a student who is actually "high jacking" the whole discussion how do you deal with a student that does not respond to what you ask them to do? How do you deal with a student who does not participate in the group activities?

**F:** There is a lot of preparation for facilitation and this breaking of borders between subjects anatomy, physiology, sociology and other subjects is quiet challenging. You have to prepare very well because they cover all those aspects.

**F:** Sometimes you can have a problematic student who can be aggressive and show you off because of their own inadequacy in the group. There were instances of severe personality clashes in that case students must be split up.

**F:** We have to talk about group norms here for interaction to happen in the freest way you have to have rules. The group set their own rules a form of control or discipline. You use the rules to discipline them. The group discipline the member that is misbehaving.

**M:** Mmm!

**F:** I want to say that as a facilitator you hand the power back to the group because that's what I remember doing with one of my group. One particular student was always late and was always late and was becoming a real pain so we said what do we do not what do I do?, .The group decided to lock her out. Her bag was

in the classroom she left to go to tea and she did not come back on time. The class took a decision to lock her out of the session. They can come up with the worst punishment than you can, that's when you come in as a facilitator when they come with a very harsh punishment. Your facilitation skills are also put to test.

**M:** Were there other challenges?

**F:** We had very dominant white middle class English girls who were very angry having to do this and very vocal .It was very clear the group to them was a hindrance and as a consequence black students were a very diverse group of Xhosas, Zulu, Venda, were clouded by the Indians and Whites who were very bright vocal and articulate. They found it very difficult as one said to me ***“by the time I had to think of what to say you have moved on to something else”*** Ja the group is difficult you need a lot of group skills and a group skills do not necessarily work when you have a very wide group context.

**F:** It was particularly hard for me as a black women sitting and understanding the pain of theses black students, going through emotions of not being able to say what you want to say. Feelings of inadequacy. They were also frustrated and the pace of learning and volume of theory was hard coming from rote learning and still struggling with the second language.

**F:** You find that the quiet once are more of a challenge in the group. If they are not coming up you don't know what they are thinking. A quiet student reflects back on you, have you achieved the goals of facilitation because here you are you have four and two of them have never spoken a word. When you are

evaluating they say you are targeting them because they are quite

**F:** Students don't learn at any depth, the staff they bring back is superficial, they use 1976 books. They don't transfer knowledge.

**F:** You are always anxious about the new group, although with your skills you manage but when you face a new group, you may have a problem. You don't know their personalities. You don't know whether they are going to accept what you are going to tell them.

**F:** You find someone who is so vocal and occupying space all the time. You need to bring him back and you sometimes struggle with that and to get the student to react to that and have a say those days were quite difficult.

**M:** What did you fear the most?

**F:** Looking at the outcomes you have this anxieties, will they cover that.

**F:** The difficulty we found when do we fit in with the time frame because it took a long time, it took a morning to go through that problem at to come with the learning goals at the end of that session.

**F:** I was worried was that it was a new form of teaching for me and how will we be able to cover content and that was probably my greatest fear.

**F:** Sometimes you have fears when you come to class the students are grumpy sometimes you are also grumpy then you fear that something will go wrong

**F:** The person who is facilitating the first year group is faced with a lot of problems compared to the people who are in the fourth year because even with me I was facilitating for the first time I was so scared I didn't what to do.

**F:** When I pick up the problematic students by the time they are in the third year there isn't a problem because the process have been mastered. You find that the third years who were a problem in second year are wonderful. They are working in groups, the brighter ones are working with the slower one.

**M:** Are there any positive aspects of facilitation?

**F:** It put a lecturer in a position of growing to the aspect of flexibility based on how they challenge you. You tend to flex to an agreement. It is not a matter of coming with a preconceived answer because it depends on their critical thinking and your critical thinking and reaching an agreement. So it brings about flexibility"

**F:** I think facilitation develops a facilitator as a person as well as what previously was said the students are also developed they aren't just passive people anymore it develops the facilitator just as much. You learn a lot from them in the process."

- F:** I think the other thing that I have learned about as a facilitator is the management of group dynamics, it really developed you as a person as well because you have to understand group dynamics in order to be able to run this group."
- F:** I enjoy facilitator because the students are very active whenever there is conflict the students deal with it and it is not anymore the lecturers` responsibility to see that they pass a test or exam. They take responsibility for their work, and they take responsibility for their decisions. If they are behind schedule, they decide how they can catch up. They want extra lesson and divide work between them. They solve their own problems. This is what I really enjoy about facilitator the biggest responsibility is not mine alone anymore. They participate in decision making and how they want their test, when they want it and how their work is presented.
- F:** There are lots more to learn on how to manage this. I wouldn't go back to anything, because of the richness of teaching and learning.
- F:** The growth that has happened to me I never knew about white culture for instance.
- F:** The students were able to express their own identity, they can give their opinion without feeling inferior. They feel respected they are part of what is happening. In the lecture room they are not passive. I find this interaction as an exciting thin.

- F:** I think as a facilitator you develop a certain relationship with the students. It becomes stressful for you. You want them to follow their own course but at the same time you want to prepare them for what they are going to land in.
- F:** Because you are a caring person it is important before you start with your facilitation you should ask if everything is OK if they trust you they can tell you.
- F:** You should show respect and sensitive because the individuality of every person comes through and so some people are sensitive and others are not, what I can say today might offend this one, even the way you present your criticism it has to be thought through before you say it
- F:** The point is that there are a list of core characteristics that says the facilitator must be knowledgeable, they must be competitive they must be able to listen. You want to guide students, you look for resources that they will be able to use. The facilitators supervises, ask questions where you are supposed to ask, stimulate thinking where you are supposed to stimulate thinking.
- F:** If I see that they are missing out to make them integrate is my role to make them see that. When I am in the clinical situation and I can see that they are not bringing in that skill, I need to bring a question that will make them look at that because in most cases they are not looking beyond that. It is your role to help them.
- F:** A lot of them come from schools that have media center, they are used to looking up references material, the come from homes where they have televisions, computers and internet.

Some come from backgrounds where learning, reading and discussions are discouraged. A lot of them come from backgrounds where they don't have lights and water. They are taught in a rote learning system and there are no computers. We are dealing with a lot of characters.

**F:** I think that's part of the facilitators skill to help them bring subject knowledge from other subjects

**M:** Are there any special skills required?

**F:** I think questioning skills are very important because you have to guide the students. If you ask the questions which doesn't allow the student to go deeper in what you wanted them to respond on. You have to be very good in questioning

**F:** One need communication and leadership skills"

**F:** Conflict resolving skills

**F:** The ability to ask questions to probe to let the students do more of the talking. As the facilitator you don't need to dominate the discussion but let the students do more of the talking. You have to come to class prepared to guide the students to the right direction

**F:** You need to know the gaps and lead the students and make them find all the things they need to know. I can understand you can facilitate and that's very well, but you need that knowledge where they need to be going.

**F:** You need to be an expert in the field, you also has experiences that you bring back to the group that are not documented in text books. I think having expertise is important.

**F:** I think it is a plus if you have an expert as a facilitator. It makes the facilitator more confident and to feel more secure. You have less work when you are an expert. You have less to read, less to worry because you don't have to learn new information everyday

**F:** Any thing you want to add?

**F:** You must have a personality which is open. You must be a bit of a helper, friendly, cooperative, you must understand the students and have a personal relation with them.

**F:** Here as much as you are still a facilitator and you are the teacher the atmosphere between you and the student is much more relaxed they call you by your first name. The have no problem in coming to see you to ask for help

**F:** It is very apparent when we do our clinical facilitation. Often people in the hospital say there is such a difference when traditional tutors comes their students all run and hide in the sluice room or whatever pretending not to be there, but when we you come the students come running from every where. They are so happy to see us and they wont let you go.

**M:** Oh!!

**F:** I think you become more comfortable when you are a partner with the student when you call each other by names. You must be able to discuss freely and that authority is not there. The

students respect you and you respect them. It is better for facilitation to occur.

**F:** It was an issue for me, first of all I don't expect a 17 year old to call me by my first name. In my culture because of age difference they will either call me mama at this stage, I will expect that they don't call me by my first name. Even for those who call me by my first name it is a problem. You judge that based on the years of experience and the chronological age students cannot call me X in my culture from as soon as I am five older than them they call me mama.

**F:** First and second years still don't call me by my first name. In the first year I didn't insist they call me X, I offer it to them, if they cant do it I leave it because at seventeen they need the boundaries of security. For me personally it was not a problem if a student calls me by my first name but still maintains the boundaries of politeness and respect, I didn't mind.

**M:** Anything that you want to tell me

**F:** Oh! Yes, at the end of session they are supposed to evaluate as a group and they can usually point out with the problematic student either the one that talks too much or the one that is silent and the group together decide. A few of my students in my group told me they want to evaluate me as well because I am part of the group. It is very helpful because sometimes you get caught in what you are doing you don't realize what you really doing this or that and so it helps you grow as well.

**F:** I think as a facilitator it is important that you evaluate your student's personalities when you come to class you should see

who is having an off day. It is important that you address those issues in the group."

**M:** . What do they evaluate?

**F:** Actually they do a self-evaluation, they evaluate the facilitator if you have done something wrong they will tell you that today you were like this and they did not like it. You have to be honest with yourself. If you did not stick to the rules you have to apologize.

**M:** How does it feel like to be evaluated?

**F:** At the beginning when you are not used to it, it's a bit difficult, but if you are used to it you easily accept that one then you look into yourself and try to correct your mistakes. So we all grow in the process together with the students until the end of the year.

**F:** I must say in the last year it helped us to plan because for example the structure that was lacking in the community we changed that and I think with very good results.

**M:** Do you still have something to say?

**F:** I think we have covered a lot of ground; all that I can say is that I enjoy facilitation and I will not change to anything.

**F:** Absolutely we can only improve on it.

**M:** Well if you have nothing else to say I will like to thank you all.

# ***ANNEXURE B***

***Focus group interview:***

**Students**

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# ***FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS***

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## **Key**

**M** = **Moderator**

**S** = **Student**

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**M:** Since the purpose of the focus interviews has been explained, I will start with the question. How did you experience facilitation as a learning method?

**S:** The first time it was difficult to me because it is a change from what we are used to, but as you get used to it is much easier. It became easier later on because we get acquainted with it. Initially it was more of a shock than anything. But when you start to know what it does entail you are able to access information.

**M:** Why ?

**S:** I must say for the first time it is really difficult and the difficulty is the expectation, they will just say you have to go and search. You don't know the information that they want. At first I didn't enjoy it at all. It always felt like we were wasting too much time.

**M:** Any other reason from another person?

**S:** It is hard for the first time because from moving from lecture to facilitation is not easy when you are used to listening to the lecturer, you keep quiet until the end of the lecture. When it

comes to facilitation you have you have to respond and be a full participant in the conversation. It is hard at first but it becomes easier with time. They should have this discussions in matric. The direction taken by the department of education of introducing outcome-based education is more in line.

**M:** Were you aware that you were not going to be lectured?

**S:** They told us it was going to be different right from the beginning. They told us it is not going to be like lectures, you have to do things on your own. They gave us a bit of theory orientation and they gave us a book and we had a practice session. I think we were given a scenario during orientation. It was a very good crash course.

**S:** In the first year there used to be workshops, the first few classes they told us we are no longer going to teach like when we were in high school but the teacher becomes part of the class.

**M:** Is it still difficult?

**S:** No it was only in the beginning, we have gained so much. I will make an example of myself when I first came here I was very shy but now I am glad to announce that I overcame my shyness. For me my four years of doing PBL, I was always quiet and shy, reserved. Majority of us we were like hardly spoke as years went by we learnt to be more forceful, more appreciative of one another, we became very outspoken. It was not because we wanted to be like that, it was brought out in us . It is a quality I am sure all of us appreciate. We can stand up for ourselves.

**S:** Sometimes I feel like I am teaching the lecturer. It also allows you to express what you feel. It is not just the teacher who stands in front of you and teach. I think you gain more than you basically do from lectures because the information that you gather at the end of the day becomes more than the requirement that one get from a lecture.

**M:** Any other gains?

**S:** The advantage with it is that we are independent and we are more responsible. The other thing it gave us independent chance, like you no longer depend on the lecturer you go out searching information for ourselves. The problem is we have our lecturers, we can go to ask which books we can use but we don't go to them and let them even borrow us text books we want to do it first. You say I want to find it for myself so that they can see I am responsible. I mean if the lecturers came and gave us everything we were never going to be independent. You will depend on the lecturer to feed you with information. We have learned if you cannot find something go and search until you find it. You never depend on a lecturer she will help you if you have tried. We don't want to run to them like babies. You feel like that you want to do it on your own ... if you start knocking at the door you feel you have failed.

**M:** Ooh!

**S:** Another thing is that when someone is learning it is easy to forget even if she is a good explainer because you have been listening you get tired. But with PBL since you have been participating and you are discussing you keep information so when you go to the book you already know

- S:** We are actually learning at the same time while with lectures we are sitting and passively absorb the information. What you absorb you actually didn't know because you didn't study but only for exams In PBL I find I have less work at the time of exams. I am constantly learning as I prepare. In the traditional method I come to and most likely I will not prepare because I know that they will teach, I will copy notes and before exams I will start learning.
- S:** On writing exams we don't expect multiple choice questions. We expect questions that will lead to critical thinking skill, your logical reasoning and understanding what you are going to write. We are not used to cramming. We have to analyze deeper"
- S:** I found that when we went to the hospital the nursing students on training they sort of don't think further than what the sister or the doctor say
- M:** It seems you have a positive experience with facilitation, any negative aspects?
- S:** Ooh, ja they are many. Its good in class but preparing!! Wednesday evening I am so exhausted because I have two presentations to prepare for Thursday. When you come home on Thursday you are so exhausted from the preparation. You arrange your work such that you prepare for Monday right up to Thursday. Having to go to the library you stand for two hours to look for an article and only get it after 3 hours. After you still have to go over it.

**S:** The confusing thing was that we will all be given a task. We will all go and look for information. We came with different feedback. We never knew which was the most correct information. This was time consuming for us because we ultimately had to eliminate some of the things

**S:** Students in different groups used to come with different information regarding the objectives. One group will have six objectives for example and we will have eight. Sometimes the facilitator came to class but she does not know the learning objectives. When we wrote the test and exams some facilitators will eliminate certain objectives because they complained that we were using different information. This resulted in some information having to be eliminated. This confused us very much. It was very confusing because we did not know what to study. We received different objectives from lecturers because we were in different groups.

**S:** When we are in class we are doing a thing for a number of days and we start thinking if we were the old method, we would somehow be far because in the traditional method we are used to be taught today and tomorrow you finish the chapter.

**M:** If I understand you correctly, facilitation is time wasting, you are uncertain about the objectives and your feedback?

**S:** Yes

**S:** Another thing you see that the facilitators they are just resting, they are taking all the work to the students. You don't see if the facilitator has prepared anything they dig information from you.

**S:** I think it has to be explained thoroughly to some of the lecturers, because although the student works independently the lecturer has to participate by directing students. It seems other lecturers do not know that. When they come to facilitate all that they said was that, (*I understand that you are PBL students*) and gave no direction to us. When you say something that she doesn't know she will not accept it, she think it is wrong because she doesn't know.

**M:** You were not guided?

**S:** I can say our facilitator when we don't come up with a problem she says that this thing must be taken as a learning issue. So we go and seek another information but now in the class we are not satisfied. We go to the library but we did not understand in the class. The facilitator must intervene not for us to go to the library and seek the information we did not understand in the class. Another thing the facilitator does not say your solution is right. She can say another student must come up with a solution but your own solution she did not say you are right. You are not sure. You can't be motivated.

**S:** Our facilitator is a perfectionist she makes us want to push harder. She produce too much fear into you and at the end of the day you like fear her too much. I think people may not be willing to offer information because it is wrong or not enough she does expect so much of you so you might be a bit reserved.

**S:** The ones who have done masters in PBL they have the personality but the ones who come from the college don't know what to do. They don't have the time to talk and listen to the student. It is not easy for those who come from college. They

are used to coming and talking, they are not patient. They think that a student is someone who is under them, they are supposed to control the student

**M:** What kind of a personality do you want your facilitator to have?

**S:** Personality counts a lot because in order for you to get through a group of people especially in the case of a very small group there must be a sense of attachment and cohesion within a group. So if it's someone who doesn't have a nice personality we turn to alienate him or her from the group and then it really retards the progress of the group.

**S:** The lecturer must understand herself before she can understand the student. They should also have a pleasant attitude towards the students. She must be an open person and approachable.

**S:** She must be an example and treat all students the same

**S:** I think our facilitator let us make our mistakes

**S:** I will like the best facilitator to be not so power dominant. I like somebody who is calm and yet knows what they are talking about.

**S:** I also like that they trust us and that they can identify with what we are going through, like stress, coping with work. They can help us find solutions to our problems. They give us a hand when we cry, console us and always pick up our moods.

**S:** I think the best facilitator when we are in a group must be just listening. If we are deviating from the topic then she must ask us even about the relevance of what we are discussing so that we don't waste time. She shouldn't give too much information because if we have information we feel like then why did we research because she is giving all of it.

**M:** So, you also want to have a skilled facilitator?

**S:** Yes, about education, I feel the facilitator should first do a degree or diploma or whatever she needs to facilitate. How can you present the work if you yourself don't know what you are saying. I can't go and teach doctors on how to do an operation, I must have a degree. Despite the fact that that the facilitator must be an intervener she must also excel when it comes to motivation. I think she can give us guidelines we sometimes get stuck and I think she must intervene.

**M:** Any other experience that you can tell me about?

**S:** Working as a group is really fantastic, they usually say in English two heads are better than one. It is a lot of fun too, even the lecturer can see if you didn't prepare. It is encouraging because you have to have something to say. You have to seek information so that you may contribute. I think you gain a lot as a group by contributing than a teacher who stands in front of you and give and go away not even realizing whether you understand what she or he is saying. You also learned to accept one another the language and other things.

**S:** Selecting a correct environment for the group to function is also important. You have to have a desk board to prescribe what you are doing for the session

**S:** The social support that you get from the group if you have a problem they will support you. We have learnt caring about each other even if you are not in a PBL (problem-based learning) session and if they miss class we take notes for all of us we are used to do that it is like oh!!! My family.

**S:** The success of the group comes from the active members and the leadership. Participation of everybody is very important because it can become frustrating if one or two people are always carrying the group. Its nice to work in a small group because everybody participate than in a big group.

**M:** Mm!

**S:** What I don't like about the group is that you may be hard working but when it comes to achievement you don't achieve much. One may achieve 90% and the other 20% but all along they have been working as a group. What about the fact that we have been working as a team because, if you analyze this word team it means together each of us must achieve.

**M:** It seems like there are more positive things about the group

**S:** Yes we learned about different methods of studying. We learned how to manage conflict.

**S:** Small groups are good for developing interpersonal skills because you learn to get along with someone. The most important it develops team spirit and enable you to accept criticism.

**S:** We also learned other life skills like public speaking.

**S:** I think also setting up rules within a group helped the group process in that in the beginning rules are set by group members and we had to adhere to those rules.

**M:** What kind of rules ?

**S:** Rules on punctuality and preparation for class. Punctuality as one of the ground rules never worked and imposing punishment for those who did not do their work. The reason is on favoritism. If I favored a person and that person did not prepare feedback, I will back her up and say she should be given a chance.

**S:** The group sets up penalties in the second year, you pay money or people have to do more learning issues.

**S:** We do evaluate the sessions

**M:** How?

**S:** You start by evaluating yourself how you prepared and then you evaluate the whole group lastly, you evaluate the facilitator if she was interrupting for wrong reasons or for good reasons or was talking too much than the group expected. During evaluation you will hear I didn't prepare hard for the presentation because we evaluate every time after the session.

- S:** The good thing is when you come back and evaluate the presentation you feel good that you have done something.
- M:** What was your worst experience?
- S:** Going to the hospital for the first time , we just got there we had orientation for a week , it was pretty clear that we are alone. No-one had to help us it was clear that you are not going to be followed around. They left us there and tomorrow we had to go back and we knew nothing”.
- S:** They ask you to go to a big hospital you don't even know who is the sister or matron what is the difference between the matron. You have to go there and introduce yourself. You have just the letter it is very stressing. My point of view is that they should orientate us into the institutions especially the first time because people vary.
- S:** The sisters will say you are from the university, you don't even know what you are doing. Everything is so new and sometimes you are working with sisters and they are like since you are from varsity you should know better ... , they make you feel inferior. You feel like you are on everybody's way. You want to work but you just don't know what to do. The college students are there but they can do like everything, so you really feel stupid.
- M:** It seems like you had problems in the clinical setting.
- S:** Yes we feel that they should orientate us thoroughly and give us enough time to practice out skills.
- M:** Anything that you will like to add?

**S:** No

**M:** Thank you for your participation and good luck with your studies.

**S:** Thank you!

# ***ANNEXURE C***

## ***Request for permission to conduct research***

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2000-10-05

The Head of Department  
The Faculty of Community and Development Disciplines

Dear professor

### **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

I am a Ph.D student at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein (UFS), presently engaged in a research project entitled "*Development of a model for facilitation in nursing education*" under the supervision of Dr. Paula du Rand in the School of Nursing (UFS).

The objective of this study is to develop a model for facilitators (lecturers) who are teaching and using non-traditional methods which are student centered. Natal is one of the nursing schools presently implementing a non-traditional method, the problem-based learning.

To complete this research project, the researcher needs to conduct focus group interviews with students and facilitators to ascertain their needs with regard to facilitation. I undertake to safeguard the anonymity of your institution by omitting use of names. Confidentiality will be assured by erasure of audiotape material. The transcribed material will only be shared by experts who will evaluate the model.

2/...



## **ANNEXURE D**

### ***Letter granting permission to conduct the research***

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7<sup>th</sup> March, 2000

Ms. E. Mokgele  
Faculty of Health Science  
School of Nursing  
The University of the Orange Free State  
P.O. Box 339  
BLOEMFONTEIN  
9300

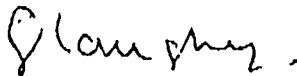
Dear Ms. Mokgele,

re: Permission to interview students and lecturers for PhD studies:

The lecturers in the Department of Nursing Education are quite willing to be interviewed by you and hope we can be of help. Would you make appointments to interview them at a time deemed mutually convenient.

The co-ordinators of the various years in the undergraduate course will approach the students with the suggestion that they participate in your research. More information could be given to them by you prior to soliciting their formal consent.

Yours sincerely,



Gayle Langley.  
Senior Lecturer.

Fax: (051) 448-0108

# ***ANNEXURE E***

***Request for consent to  
conduct focus interviews  
with facilitators/students***

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2000-11-05

The Faculty of Community and Development Disciplines  
School of Nursing

Dear Facilitator/Student

**REQUEST FOR CONSENT AND YOUR PARTICIPATION TO  
CONDUCT RESEARCH**

I am a Ph.D student at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein (UFS), presently engaged in a research project entitled "*Development of a model for facilitation in nursing education*" under the supervision of Dr. Paula du Rand in the School of Nursing (UFS).

The objective of this study is to develop a model for facilitators (lecturers) who are teaching and using non-traditional methods which are student centered. Natal is one of the nursing schools presently implementing a non-traditional method, the problem-based learning.

To complete this research project, the researcher needs to conduct focus group interviews with students and facilitators to ascertain their needs with regard to facilitation. I undertake to safeguard the anonymity of your institution by omitting use of names. Confidentiality will be assured by erasure of audiotape material. The transcribed material will only be shared by experts who will evaluate the model.

2/...

You are requested to participate in the focus group interviews and to give your informed consent and you reserve the right to cancel participation at any stage of the proceedings. It is understood that you are under no obligation to give your consent.

The following contact person will be made available to you if you further need to express your views about the focus group interviews

Dr. Paula du Rand  
Tel: (051) 401-2407 (W)  
Fax (051) 448-0108 (W)

Mrs. Sebi Lekalakala-Mokgele  
Tel: (051) 401-2527 (W)  
(051) 444-3935 (H)  
Cell: 082 9580 573  
E-mail: gnvkem@med.uovs.ac.za

Thank you

Signed at.....this.....day  
of .....2000

---

**PARTICIPANT**

**(Mrs.) E.S. Lekalakala-  
Mokgele  
RESEARCHER**

**Dr. P.P. du Rand  
PROMOTER**

# ***ANNEXURE F***

***Covering letter for co-coder***

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# ***PROTOCOL FOR CO-CODER***

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Dear Colleague

Kindly analyze the enclosed data from the transcribed audio-taped material of the focus group discussion sessions with specific references to of Tesch (1990) in Cresswell (1994:153-155) method:

1. Read through all of the transcriptions carefully to get a sense of the whole. Jot down some ideas as they come to mind.
2. Pick one interview, the most interesting, the shortest or the one on top of the pile. Go through it, asking, "What is it about?". Do not think about the meaning. Write thoughts in the margin.
3. Having completed this task for several informants, make a list of all concepts. Cluster together similar concepts. From these concepts cluster concepts into columns that may be arranged as major concepts, unique concepts and left over concepts.
4. Take this list and go back to the data. Abbreviate the topics as codes and write the codes next to the appropriate segment of the text. Try out the preliminary organizing scheme to see whether new categories and codes emerge.
5. Find the most descriptive wording for the concepts and turn them into categories. Reduce the total list of categories by grouping concepts that relate to each other. Draw lines between categories to show interrelationships.
6. Make a final decision on the abbreviation of each category and alphabetize these codes.
7. Assemble the data material belonging to each category in one place and perform a preliminary analysis.
8. If necessary, recode the existing data.

Thank you

Your colleague

.....  
**Sebi Lekalakala-Mokgele**  
**Ph.D. NURSING STUDENT**

# **ANNEXURE G**

## ***Covering letter for evaluators***

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Dear evaluator

## **EVALUATION OF A MODEL FOR FACILITATION IN NURSING EDUCATION**

With reference to our telephonic discussion on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2002 I am making a follow up to request that you be an evaluator of the model that I have designed. As I have explained that that I am a Ph.D. student of the University of the Free State and the field of the study research is nursing education.. The request is based on the fact that you have been identified as an expert in the design of the educational models or nursing education.

The title is: **A model for facilitation in Nursing education** and the **objective** thereof are listed below:

- To identify the needs of the facilitators in the different schools of nursing.
- To identify the needs of the students with regard to facilitation.
- To construct a model for facilitation according to the determined needs.

As I explained to you I am a PhD student at the University of the Free State. My field of study is nursing education and the title of my research is model for facilitation in Nursing Education. The experiences of the facilitators and the learners with regard to facilitation were assessed.

Focus interviews were conducted with both the facilitators and the learners. The summary of the results is as follows:

The experiences on **facilitators** indicated that:

- Nursing education programs does not prepare nurse educators to facilitate but only prepares them to lecture
- Facilitators are expected to facilitate without preparation
- Facilitators lacked the expertise in facilitating the process
- Changing roles from lecturing to facilitation was frustrating.

The experiences of the **learners** yielded the following:

- There is a need for orientation of the learners into the facilitation process
- Learners needed to be assisted in their transition from lecturing to being facilitated.
- Facilitators with expertise in both the process and the content of their learning are a necessity.
- Learners expected facilitators to possess certain attributes such as empathy, caring and trusting.
- Learners needed to have a special relationship with their facilitators.

A model for facilitation based on the researcher's experience, identified needs of the facilitators and the learners as well as literature review was designed to be used as a guideline for newly appointed and practicing facilitators. The model can also be utilized by facilitators who need to improve their facilitation skills in the classroom and the clinical setting.

It will be appreciated if you could return your comments to me by the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2002 by fax, e-mail or using the addressed envelop enclosed. I appreciate your willingness to evaluate this model even though you have a busy schedule, your inputs are valuable to the development thereof.

**PS: The model is also sent to you by post.**

My fax number is (051) 401-2407 for attention E. Mokgele.

E-mail address is Gnvkem@med.ouvs.ac.za

Thank you

Kind regards

.....  
**Eucebious Mokgele**

# ***ANNEXURE H***

## ***Criteria for evaluation***

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# **CRITERIA FOR MODEL EVALUATION**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1. INTERNAL STRUCTURE</b>					
This applies to the description of the model itself.					
<b>1.1 Logical<sup>1</sup> development</b>					
1.1.1 The process of model development is logical					
1.1.2 The stages of model development are explicit					
<b>1.2 Clarity</b>					
1.2.1 The model is easy to understand					
1.2.2 The definition of concepts is clear					
1.2.3 The definitions indicated below are clear					
1.2.3.1 Nursing education					
1.2.3.2 Adult learning					
1.2.3.3 Facilitation					
1.2.3.4 Facilitator					
1.2.3.5 Learner					
1.2.3.6 Group work					
1.2.3.7 Clinical setting					
1.2.3.8 Assessment					
1.2.4 The definitions are described in a way that indicate the relevancy of the model					
1.2.5 The concepts are used consistently <sup>2</sup> in the description of the model					
<b>1.3 Level of development</b>					
1.3.1 The development of the model is based on supported statements					
1.3.2 The model is systematically developed					
1.3.3 Relationship statements are described with clearly supported arguments					
<b>1.4 Adequacy</b>					
1.4.1 The model is adequate to guide facilitators					

<sup>1</sup> Statements are well supported

<sup>2</sup> Refers to the use of concepts in the same way throughout

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>1.5 Applicability</b>					
1.5.1 The model can be used for facilitating in clinical setting					
1.5.2 The model can be used for facilitating theory					
<b>2. VISUAL PRESENTATION OF THE MODEL</b>					
2.1 Interaction between concepts is clear					
2.1.1 The relationship between the concepts is clear					
2.1.2 Interaction between the facilitator and the learner is explicit					
2.1.3 The relationship between the facilitator and the learner is clear					
2.2 It is clear that facilitation is based on the principles of adult learning					
2.3 It is clear that facilitation is implemented in the clinical setting					
2.4 It is clear that facilitation is implemented in group work					
2.5 The facilitator					
2.5.1 The roles of the facilitator are explicitly described					
2.5.2 It is clear that the roles of the facilitator are multifaceted					
2.6 The learner					
2.6.1 It is clear that the learner is also important in facilitation					
<b>3. EXTERNAL VALIDITY</b>					
This applies to the relationship of a model to the real world.					
<b>3.1 Reality convergence<sup>3</sup></b>					
3.1.1 This model can be used as a guideline for adult learners					
<b>3.2 Usefulness</b>					
3.2.1 The model can be used in theory					
3.2.2 The model can be used in practice					
<b>3.3 Significance</b>					
3.3.1 The model contributes to current nursing education					
3.3.2 The model opens new direction to teaching-learning dimensions in nursing education					
<b>3.4 Discrimination</b>					
3.4.1 The model can be applied to other disciplines					

<sup>3</sup> Reality expressed by the researcher closely resembles that of the evaluator

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>3.5 Scope</b>					
3.5.1 The model description adequately covers important aspects of nursing education					
<b>3.6 Complexity<sup>4</sup></b>					
3.6.1 The model reflects the complexity of nursing education					

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<sup>4</sup> Not overly simple and considers the complexity of nursing

# **ANNEXURE I**

## ***Educational requirements of evaluators***

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Ph.D degree in education/nursing education

and/or

Master's degree in education/nursing education

and/or

Experience in model development