OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF ROLE-EMERGING PLACEMENTS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

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Declaration of Authorship

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate and material already submitted for a degree.

Signed:

Date:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter presents the rationale for the research topic, the context of the study, the setting in which it took place and why the research was of interest to me. It defines the terms used and presents the start of my reflexive account which runs throughout the thesis. It also outlines the chapter structure of the thesis.

1.1 Overview of the study

Practice placements are an integral and essential part of an occupational therapy students' education. This is highlighted by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists which specifies that occupational therapy students must complete a minimum of 1000 hours in practice as part of their education (Hocking and Ness 2002). This is also reflected in the College of Occupational Therapists Pre-Registration Standards for Education (2008) and evident in occupational therapy undergraduate degree programmes where practice placements make up one third of the course and are a pre-requisite to registration with the Health Professions Council (2007, 2009). The importance and requirement of placement experience is also reinforced in other professional standards, codes of practice, benchmarking statements and government documents (English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting 2001, Quality Assurance Agency 2007, College of Occupational Therapists 2005, College of Occupational Therapists 2009). The term 'practice placement' is that currently used by the College of Occupational Therapists (2008), although over recent years terms such as 'fieldwork education' and 'clinical placement' have been used.

Practice placements are periods of time (usually between two and 12 weeks) that occupational therapy students spend in a variety of practice-based settings, for example with older people, in-patient, community, mental health and physical disability services. There they are given the opportunity to integrate theory and practice and develop practical skills and professionalism that it is suggested they cannot learn through theory and textbooks alone (Alsop and Ryan 1996, Tompson and Ryan 1996a, Huddleston 1999a, Waters 2001, Evenson 2009). Indeed, Cohn and Crist (1995, p105) state that practice placements are the "essential bridge between academic and service delivery settings".

In the United Kingdom, placements have traditionally taken place in established health or local authority settings. However, concern is raised in the literature that such settings may not

adequately prepare students to work in the more diverse settings in which occupational therapists are increasingly working (Bossers et al 1997, Kornblau 2001, Adamson 2005, Fortune et al 2006).

Changes in health and social care, with an increasing emphasis on health promotion, illness prevention, well-being and community practice (Hocking and Ness 2005, Department of Health 2004a, Department of Health 2006, Department of Health 2010a, Department of Health 2010b), mean that occupational therapy students must develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to work in these key areas in order to remain viable as future professionals (Mulholland and Derdall 2004). In recognition of this, guidance from the College of Occupational Therapists (2006, 2009a) suggests that placement tutors should examine ways of providing work-based learning opportunities in new and diverse settings, including the use of role-emerging placements (for a definition see section 1.2). This is supported by the Health Professions Council (2009).

A range of literature concerns the use and effectiveness of traditional placements within health care professions, with research exploring aspects such as models of placement, supervision, preparation for practice, professional socialisation and the qualities of a good educator. These aspects are discussed in the following chapter. Whilst literature on role-emerging placements is not as extensive, it reveals that these placements have been part of the practice education of occupational therapy students in countries such as Canada and America for some time (Backman 1994, Bossers et al 1997, Overton et al 2009). Here in the United Kingdom, literature has started to reflect this (Hook and Kenney 2007, Thew et al 2008, Fieldhouse and Fedden 2009, Thew et al 2011). However, different opinions regarding the rationale behind the development of such placements and their value and effectiveness exist (Fisher and Savin-Baden 2002a, Fisher and Savin-Baden 2002b, Cooper and Raine 2009, Overton et al 2009).

Critical appraisal reveals a number of discursive papers where authors have expressed their opinions regarding the need for, effectiveness or limitations of such placements (Sullivan and Finlayson 2000, Banks and Head 2004, Fortune et al 2006, Swedlove 2006, Cooper and Raine 2009). Although reasonable arguments appear to be presented, these papers are not supported by evidence. Benefits of role-emerging placements are reported by authors without

any direct contribution from the students (Westmorland and Jung 1997, Bilics et al 2002, Banks and Head 2004), leaving the reader with questions about bias.

Where studies have been carried out, various methods have been used to evaluate the effectiveness of role-emerging placements, predominantly questionnaires, rating scales, verbal reports, focus groups, nominal group technique and placement de-briefing sessions (Fleming et al 1996, Friedland et al 2001, Kopp Miller and Ishler 2001, James and Prigg 2004, Wood 2005, Gilbert Hunt 2006, Hook and Kenney 2007, Thew et al 2008, Fieldhouse and Fedden 2009, Rodger et al 2009). This may reflect the requirement of placement tutors to evaluate placement modules quickly in readiness for annual course reports. Whilst such studies provide a useful overview of issues associated with such placements, they allow limited opportunity for in-depth exploration of students' personal experiences. Although studies have included qualitative methods of data collection such as interviews (Bossers et al 1997, Fleming et al 2001, Soloman and Jung 2006, Fieldhouse and Fedden 2009) it is not always clear whether a particular methodological approach has been adopted and interviews have appeared at times to be very structured. This is likely to lead to a bias in the findings where data may be collected that reflects the researchers own agenda rather than allowing students' unique experiences and meanings to be revealed.

Although there has been a recent increase in the number of short reports written by students (Gibson and Quinn 2007, Matthews et al 2009, Riches 2009, Alecock 2010, Fitzsimmons and Allcoat 2010, Kearsley 2010, Douglas 2011, Eldridge and Harding 2011, Gregory et al 2011, Ullah and Klaentschi 2011) these tend to focus on the interventions carried out or how they promoted occupational therapy rather than revealing data that allows a deeper understanding of the personal meanings that they ascribed to such a placement experience to emerge. Furthermore, as such articles appear to have been published to try and promote role-emerging placements they often favour the positive aspects of the placement, making it difficult to gain an understanding of any potential limitations or associated risks. Few studies adopt a phenomenological approach and where this is the case papers tend to focus on specific aspects of the placement, such as inter-professional learning (Adams et al 2006, Soloman and Jung 2006) or activities carried out (Totten and Pratt 2001). This paucity of phenomenological studies, which it is believed presents an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of students' experience, led to the decision to use interpretative phenomenological analysis for this study.

No literature was identified that considers the influence of such placements on practice once qualified. This, together with the paucity of studies on role-emerging placements, are limitations that have been acknowledged by other authors who have made calls for further research into such placements (Bossers et al 1997, Wood 2005, Thew et al 2008, Overton et al 2009).

The overall aim of this study was therefore to gain a deeper understanding of occupational therapy students' experiences of role-emerging placements and the influence that such placements had on their practice and development once qualified. In carrying out the study it was anticipated that knowledge would be created about the meaning that such placements have for students both after the placement and later as a practitioner. It was anticipated that this would in turn enable consideration of the use and value of such placements within the modern day curriculum in preparing students for practice.

The study was located within an interpretivist paradigm and adopted a constructionist epistemology and critical realist ontology. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith et al 2009), underpinned by hermeneutic phenomenology, provided the methodological framework that guided data collection and analysis processes. The aim of IPA is to understand and make sense of a person's lived experience of particular phenomena. As such it was an appropriate approach for a study which sought to understand students' experiences of their placement. Detailed discussion of the use of IPA can be found in chapter 3.

Five occupational therapy students from a university in the South of England were interviewed about their experiences of their role-emerging placement. They were then re-interviewed once they had qualified and been practising for a minimum of six months to enable them to reflect on how they felt the placement had influenced them in practice. The data were transcribed and analysed following IPA guidelines. Whilst it is acknowledged that each student's experience and perception of their placement will have been unique to them, common themes were identified. These themes, along with a number of sub-themes and concepts, are presented and discussed in this thesis, particularly in relation to how they contribute to existing literature and the implications for practice. New insights into the way in which students come to understand the true nature of occupational therapy and understanding of self as occupational therapist came to light. Challenges in sustaining the

professional identity developed on the role-emerging placements in practice, due to the nature of current occupational therapy practices in traditional services, is also highlighted.

The findings add to the current knowledge about students' experiences of role-emerging placements and appear to provide new insights into the influence of such placements on professional practice. A reader should be able to assess the findings for their trustworthiness and transferability to other settings. It is hoped that the findings have resonance with other practice placements tutors and students and can be used to inform future practice education within occupational therapy.

1.2 Definition of terms

'Role-emerging placements' are defined by the College of Occupational Therapists (2006, p1) as those "which occur at a site where there is not an established occupational therapist role". Students in these placements are supervised on a daily basis by an employee within that setting (not an occupational therapist) and supported by an off-site occupational therapist (either a clinician or a tutor from the student's higher education institution). Examples of role-emerging settings include homeless shelters, refugee camps, voluntary organisations, residential homes and health promotion departments. Whilst experience as a placement tutor suggests that role-emerging placements usually take place outside of traditional NHS or Local Authority settings, it is possible that emerging areas of practice will also occur within these services, for example promoting occupational therapy in a community forensic service, working with occupational health departments to provide employee support. As such, the term role-emerging should not be confined to placements outside of traditional NHS or local Authority settings.

A term that is often used interchangeably with 'role-emerging' is 'non traditional'. However the terms are different and require separate definitions. Wood (2005, p375) defines non-traditional placements as those which "occur under the supervision of an occupational therapist where the setting is outside of the National Health Service (NHS) or Local Authority Services". The difference is clear in that, although the setting may be a new area of practice, an occupational therapist is on-site and therefore present throughout the student's placement.

With the current drive to develop role-emerging placements and the need to understand students' experiences of such placements, this piece of research focused on students who had experienced 'role-emerging' and not 'non-traditional' placements.

1.3 Rationale for the study

Following publication of the College of Occupational Therapists' (2006) guidance document and a review of the literature it became apparent that role-emerging placements are increasingly being used for British occupational therapy students. However, whilst some literature would suggest that such placements offer students the opportunity to develop specific skills and competencies needed for current and future practice this is not a general consensus and conflicting opinion concerning the relevance of these placements prevails. On the one hand, authors suggest that students are able to develop a deeper sense of professional identity and skills that they would not necessarily gain in traditional placements (Bossers et al 1997, Thew et al 2008, Fieldhouse and Fedden 2009, Overton et al 2009) and on the other, authors argue that professional identity cannot be developed in settings where there is not an occupational therapy role-model and that students should be doing traditional placements to consolidate their basic skills ready for practice (Fisher and Savin-Baden 2002b, Wood 2005, Kirke et al 2007).

Whilst literature on role-emerging placements is increasing it tends to focus on recommendations for how to set them up, the rationale behind their development, examples of their use in practice, supervision structures, role of educators and opinions of educators and placement tutors about their effectiveness. Whilst some papers have included students' views and experiences, only a small number of papers seek to understand students' experiences in any detail (Heuber and Trysenaar 1996, Bossers et al 1997, Totten and Pratt 2001, Fieldhouse and Fedden 2009). Furthermore, most literature emanates from Canada, Australia and the USA and, as such, needs to be considered within the context of health and social care practices abroad which may be different to the placement opportunities and experiences of students here in Britain. In recent years there have been an increasing number of British studies reported in the literature, although as highlighted in the following chapter there is variation in the quality of these studies (Hook and Kenney 2007, Jepson et al 2007, Fieldhouse and Fedden 2009, Thew et al 2008).

This research has been undertaken at a time when health and social care contexts are rapidly changing within the United Kingdom. Government drives towards well-being, health promotion, reducing inequalities, sustainability, active ageing, integrated services, primary and community care (Department of Health 2004a, Department of Health 2004b, Department of Health 2008a, Department of Health 2010a, Department of Health 2010b, Department of Health 2010c) mean an increasing move for occupational therapists away from medically orientated institutions towards community based, co-ordinated, independent and voluntary services that focus on health promotion, well-being and function (Friedland et al 2001, Withers and Shann 2008, Molineux and Baptiste 2011).

These trends are congruent with occupational therapy philosophy. Occupational therapy was founded on the belief that humans have an intrinsic need to be engaged in meaningful occupations and activities and considers the absence of occupation as disruptive to health (Wilcock 2006). Occupation is the means through which humans meet their needs, develop their sense of self and contribute to society (Creek 2003, Wilcock 2006). This is reflected in a definition provided by Creek (2003, p32) who suggests that occupation is a "synthesis of doing, being and becoming that is central to the everyday life of every person". Occupational therapists recognize the need for occupational balance in areas of self-care, productivity and leisure and value occupation's role in providing mental and physical stimulation, structure, organization and meaning in an individual's life. Therapists not only focus on improving occupational performance but also address issues of deprivation, occupational engagement and social and environmental restrictions where these are seen to impact on a person's well-being, growth and development (Creek 2003, Watson and Fourie 2004, Whiteford and Wright-St Clair 2005, Wilcock 2006).

Occupational therapy purports to value individuals as unique beings who have the right to a satisfying and meaningful quality of life regardless of the presence of disease or disability (Creek 2003, Wilcock 2006). Each person is respected for his / her individual experiences and needs, set within their particular personal, social and environmental context (Creek 2003, Kielhofner 2006, Wilcock 2006, Polatajko et al 2007). Occupational therapists value the client as a whole person, taking into account physical, psychological, cognitive, social, spiritual, cultural and environmental needs. They value an individual's skills and abilities for their role in maintaining and improving health and well-being and the potential of all

individuals to grow, change and adapt in response to changing needs (Creek 2003, Kielhofner 2006, Wilcock 2006).

In light of this philosophy it is clear that occupational therapists have a role to play in helping to achieving the Government's agenda of healthy and productive communities, promoting their role in new and diverse settings. Perhaps more significantly, current trends in practice would appear to provide occupational therapists with the opportunity to re-visit their philosophical roots and move away from the mechanistic paradigm that has dominated the profession in recent decades (Molineux and Baptiste 2011) and return to an occupation focused approach to health and well-being that is more congruent with the original core constructs, viewpoints, values and beliefs of the profession (Keilhofner 2006, Wilcock 2006, Molineux and Baptiste 2011). It is often with these aims in mind that role-emerging placements are being developed (Gilbert-Hunt 2006, Bossers et al 2007, Edwards and Thew 2011, Molineux and Baptiste 2011, Turner 2011).

Baptiste (2005, p179) however recognises that such changes in practice result in "broader and grander expectations of us as practitioners than in the past". It would therefore appear that academic programmes need to provide more expansive opportunities for learning and development that reflect the skills and competencies required of future graduates and to be more flexible in their approach to learning. Fortune et al (2006), for example, suggest that the rapid changes in health care require the profession to reconsider the competencies needed by graduates. This is a view also asserted by Kornblau (2001, p19) who argues that academic programmes and placements must remain dynamic and alert to changes in practice and societal needs otherwise the profession will be "left behind in the dust".

Such opportunities for the development of both the profession and practice education are reflected in the World Federation of Occupational Therapists Standards for Education (Hocking and Ness 2002) and British Curriculum Guidance documents (College of Occupational Therapists 2008, College of Occupational Therapists 2009). These advocate that educational programmes adopt a societal perspective of health that enables health and social care services to develop beyond those focused on diagnosis, illness, treatment and cure to services designed with an occupational perspective in mind, promoting health and well-being and illness prevention for individuals and the general population. They also state that educational programmes must be relevant for the context in which practice is occurring,

ensuring graduates are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to meet the occupational needs of the local population and to promote occupational therapy in new areas of practice. This academic requirement now appears to meet the request made by Whiteford and Wilcock (2001) a decade ago for occupational therapy curricula to reflect the philosophical roots of the profession.

In order to ensure that student education remains current and meaningful and that graduates are prepared for the contemporary demands and trends of practice, placement tutors from within the United Kingdom have highlighted the need for innovative curriculum and placement design (Hocking and Ness 2005, Hook and Kenney 2007, Thew et al 2008, Cooper and Raine 2009). Whilst it has been suggested that role-emerging placements may offer one such useful 'innovation' (Jung et al 2005, Bossers et al 2007, Thew et al 2008, Fieldhouse and Fedden 2009, Thew et al 2011), the need to evaluate and gain a deeper understanding of the effect of these placements is apparent. This will enhance the evidence-base underpinning the use of role-emerging placements in practice and enable their development in such a way that reflects the best learning opportunities for students.

Through gaining a deeper understanding of students' experiences it was anticipated that the findings of this study would provide an opportunity to consider whether role-emerging placements enable students to better prepare themselves to become the therapists of tomorrow. Without this understanding there is a danger that placements will be provided that do not meet the needs of the students or fully prepare the next generation of therapists for practice.

1.4 Why this research was relevant to me

As a practice placement tutor for occupational therapy students, I am responsible for organising, monitoring and evaluating the placements. When I started work in this role I spent a significant amount of time reading professional guidance, government directives and literature pertaining to placement provision, as well as revisiting my professional philosophy and core skills ready for work as an academic. This reinforced for me not only the importance of practice placements but also the role that occupational therapists could have in maintaining and developing healthy communities through promoting their role in new and diverse settings. It was clear to me that students need to experience placements that reflect current health and social care services and prepare them for new and innovative practice areas but I

was uncertain whether the 'new' placements being developed internationally, and advocated by the professional body, were helping students achieve this aim. I was excited by the occasional use of role-emerging placements in the university and the positive experiences being reported back by students but aware that these had not been formally evaluated by the university and that research relating to these placements in general was limited, particularly in the UK.

As placement tutor I needed to understand the meaning that these placements had for students in order to have the confidence to use them within the curriculum. I also wanted to identify whether there were ways in which students felt such placements could be implemented more effectively in order to help with the development of such placements in the future. This decision was confirmed by Bonello (2001, p96) who reminded me of my responsibilities as placement tutor, stating "key players (in clinical education) must employ and evaluate creative alternatives so as to identify the best models that will provide meaningful experiences in current and future healthcare services". As an academic, there was also a deeper theoretical need to understand how learning takes place in practice, in particular how placements influence the development of professional identity. Furthermore, as an occupational therapist, the way in which students learn through 'doing' in terms of their placement experiences is an occupational matter and one of importance to me.

1.5 Setting

This research was undertaken at a university in the South of England in which I work as one of the practice placement tutors. The University runs two pre-registration courses for occupational therapists; a two year full time accelerated Masters Programme for approximately 40 students and a four year part-time BSc programme for 20 students. Practice placements are an integral part of both programmes. Students are required to complete five placements (of between 2 and 8 weeks) over the duration of the course, a total of 32 weeks.

Role-emerging placements have been an option for students on both courses for the last placement in their final year of study. At the time of the commencement of the study students were responsible for identifying and organising the placement independently, following agreement with their personal tutor. Placements have to take place in the South of England to enable support and supervision to be provided more directly by the university where necessary. Following informal positive feedback from students, these placements have

increasingly been advocated by the course team in the general belief that they provide a valuable learning experience for students. The number of students undertaking such placements has slowly increased each year and at the time of this study the course team were considering making role-emerging placements compulsory for future students. However, the team were aware that the literature presented mixed opinion concerning their effectiveness and have therefore been supportive of this research.

Further discussion of the setting, sample group and ethical considerations for this study is given in the methodology chapter.

1.6 Reflexive account

The study was located within an interpretivist paradigm. This focuses on the way in which individuals make sense of and attribute meaning to their experiences, constructing meaning as they engage with, and interpret, the world around them (Crotty 2005). Interpretivism recognises and embraces the role that I had as the researcher in the development and outcomes of this research. This meant that I needed to carry out the research with due attention being given to the influence that I was having on all stages of the research process. In order to allow the reader to reach their own conclusions about the trustworthiness of this research it is important to share some of these influences, for example how my background, education, working history, prior assumptions and understandings may have influenced my thinking about the literature, my approach to data collection and analysis and the sense that I made of the findings. This involved a process of both reflecting on each stage of the research journey as well as adopting a more reflexive attitude, undertaking a "more explicit evaluation of the self" (Shaw 2010, p234). Discussion of the importance of reflection and reflexivity is provided in the methodology chapter. Both my reflections and reflexivity are interwoven throughout the thesis but start here with consideration of how I came to be interested in this topic.

My interest in emerging roles started during my undergraduate education when I was required to write an opinion piece that related to any area of occupational therapy practice. My chosen topic focused on my belief at the time that occupational therapists were not always using their core skills and philosophy (for example, the use of meaningful occupation to improve health and well-being) to guide their work with clients with post traumatic stress disorder, choosing instead talking therapies, perhaps in an attempt to be seen as more credible

by other professionals. I went on to publish this paper, wanting to remind occupational therapists of their philosophy, core skills and the importance of promoting the profession (Clarke 1999). Without fully recognising it at the time, I believe this paper revealed an early interest in occupational science and belief in occupational therapists promoting their role in less traditional areas of practice.

I graduated as an occupational therapist in 1998 and worked predominantly in forensic mental health. During this time I was employed in positions that did not have the words 'occupational therapist' in the title. This was not a deliberate decision on my part but resulted from applications for posts that I believed were occupational therapy in disguise! It was clear to me that my early roles as rehabilitation specialist and rehabilitation co-ordinator required me to use my core skills and an occupational perspective of health and I certainly felt that I had a strong professional identity and was practising as an occupational therapist, even without the title. It was working in these posts as a lone occupational therapist that continued to spark my interest in role-emerging areas of practice and has influenced the way that I perceive such experiences as offering unique developmental opportunities for both students and graduates.

In 2007 I started work in an academic post and took on the role of placement tutor. Coming into this position from a background of non traditional occupational therapy roles, I was keen to take up the College of Occupational Therapists' (2006) challenge to develop new work-based learning opportunities for students and was encouraged by the informal positive feedback that students provided about their placements. I was aware however, in my eagerness to develop these placements, that limited research had been carried out concerning their use, particularly in this country. It was this realisation that led me to start this study. The doctorate has allowed me to try and capture some of the informal feedback that students had previously provided about their placements, explore in more detail these experiences and understand the meaning that the placements hold for them.

I have been mindful throughout this process that I have a specific interest in this topic due to my previous work experiences. This background, along with my beliefs about the value of these placements for both students and the profession, will have influenced the way that I have interpreted the data. Although it is acknowledged that in adopting an interpretivist stance I will always be a part of the world I am studying and that the knowledge presented in

this thesis is a co-construction between the participants and myself (Conroy 2003, Finlay 2006a), I have made every effort through reflexive journals, supervision and an inductive approach to data analysis to present findings that are grounded in participants' experiences and not guided by my own assumptions and beliefs. This process has meant keeping an open mind, being receptive to learning new information and to finding data that I was not expecting or that contradicted my own beliefs.

1.7 Chapter summary and Introduction to structure of the thesis

This chapter has provided an overview of the study and a rationale for why research was needed to understand students' experiences of role-emerging placements and the influence, if any, that these placements have on graduates' professional development and practice. Consideration was given to the role of practice placements in occupational therapy education and the importance of ensuring that they reflect current and future trends in practice, preparing graduates for practice in a changing health and social care climate. Literature pertaining to role-emerging placements was briefly discussed, highlighting contrasting opinions regarding the value and effectiveness of such placements and a paucity of studies that seek to understand student and graduates' experiences in any depth. Definitions of terms were provided and the research design, setting and sample group were introduced. The notion of reflexivity, and the importance of this for the study, was discussed. The chapter concluded with the start of the reflexive account which runs throughout the thesis.

The following chapters guide the reader through the research process, including background to the study, a review of literature, methodology, methods, ethical considerations, findings, discussion and conclusion.

Chapter 2 provides further detail about the background to the study. A critique of existing literature regarding traditional and role-emerging placements is provided. The study is explored in relation to the current health and social care context in which it has been carried out and the research priorities of the profession. Research questions and aims are presented, showing how they evolved from the background.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology and methods. Detailed consideration is given to philosophical issues such as the ontological (critical realist) and epistemological (constructionist) stance of the researcher. Rationale for the use of interpretative

phenomenological analysis is provided, including consideration of the approach within the interpretivist paradigm and in relation to other qualitative methodologies. Theoretical perspectives underpinning IPA are discussed along with limitations of the approach. Details are provided of the research population, sample size and actual procedure, ethical considerations, methods of data collection and analysis. Consideration is given to the efforts made to enhance the quality of the study.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study. Five emergent themes, each with their own sub-themes and concepts are discussed in full. The five themes presented are: Not your run of the mill placement, Thrown in, Finding a way forward, Awareness of change and Reality of Practice.

Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the possible reasons for the findings and compares and contrasts these with the existing literature. This chapter follows the path of the students through their placement experiences into professional practice, focusing on emergent stages: Venturing forth; Ontological discomfort; Trepidation to transformation; Becoming an occupational therapist; Being in the real world.

Chapter 6 provides an overall conclusion, including the contribution that this study has made to knowledge. Deep insights are provided into the way in which role-emerging placements act as a catalyst for students to develop their own understandings of self as occupational therapists and for the enhancement of their belief in the profession. These insights give a clear indication that such placements are of key importance in facilitating the ontological development of occupational therapy students.

This appears to be the first study to explore the influence of role-emerging placements on graduates' professional development and practice. It provides new insights into the way in which such placements help to ease the transition from student to practitioner, enhancing their independence and confidence in practice. However, it also highlights the difficulty that graduates working in the NHS experience where practices appear to be incongruent with the professional identity and vision of occupational therapy developed on placement. Implications for practice and a strategy for dissemination are presented. Recommendations are made for further research. The following chapter now gives detailed consideration to the background of this study.

Chapter 2: Background to the study

This chapter provides a critical review of literature relevant to this study. It highlights the current state of knowledge with regards to occupational therapy placements, particularly in relation to role-emerging placements and highlights gaps in literature which have influenced the development of the study. It provides further rationale for why this research was necessary in order to add to current understanding of the use of role-emerging placements within occupational therapy education in the United Kingdom.

2.1 Data Sources

Whilst here in the United Kingdom the term 'practice placement' is currently advocated (College of Occupational Therapists 2006), other historical terms such as 'fieldwork', 'clinical education' and 'work-based learning' continue to appear in the literature, particularly that emanating from Canada, the United States and Australia. Likewise, literature pertaining to types of placement adopt a variety of terms such as 'traditional', 'alternative', 'emerging', 'non-traditional', 'a-typical', 'expanded', 'independent community placement', 'service-learning' and 'project placements'. All these terms were used as search criteria.

Literature was identified through searches of electronic databases Medline, CiNAHL, PsychINFO and the British Education Index. Manual searches of textbooks, websites, journal indexes and cited authors identified further references. Personal correspondence with international placement tutors also provided literature for review. Searches of allied health profession journals identified literature on the use of role-emerging placements outside occupational therapy. The search was restricted to articles in the English language. No limits were placed on research designs or type of literature. Papers were screened, mainly through their abstracts, for their relevance to this study and were appraised using McMaster appraisal tools (Letts et al 2007, Law et al 1998).

To gain a wider perspective of practice education in the context of current health and social care practices, UK government and health websites were also searched. Finally, professional research and development strategies were reviewed to ensure the study was congruent with professional research priorities. The following sections explore relevant literature, grouped into themes that reflect the subject matter. The review starts with an overview of the use of placements and current trends within occupational therapy education.

The following sections explore occupational therapy placements in the context of education and current practice and presents literature relating to adult learning theories, the influence of placements on professional socialisation, preparation for practice, future practice preference, student attitudes and behaviour, roles and skills of educators and models of placement provision. There follows a section dedicated to role-emerging placements, including the rationale for their use and perceived benefits and limitations. Priorities for occupational therapy research are considered before the chapter concludes with the research questions, aims of the study and a continuation of the reflexive account.

2.2 Overview

Although literature relating to occupational therapy placements is diverse in content, the value and importance of placements has "never been denied" (Bonello 2001, p93). General consensus is evident that practice placements are central to a student's learning and crucial in helping them integrate theory and practice and develop practical skills and professionalism that cannot be learnt from textbooks alone (Alsop and Ryan 1996, Huddleston 1999a, Waters 2001, Casares 2003, Rodger 2008). It would appear that placements allow a student to place learning in context which, it is argued, helps them attribute personal meaning to theory and develop a greater sense of understanding (Cope et al 2000, Lave and Wenger 2003). In addition, through client interaction students appear to develop core practical skills, techniques and personal attributes needed to be competent therapists (Missiuna et al 1992, Casares 2003, Toal-Sullivan 2006, Evenson 2009). Cohn and Crist (1995, p105) state that practice placements are the "essential bridge between academic and service delivery settings".

Despite international recognition of the importance of placements, two main concerns emerge from the literature. Firstly, it is suggested that a 'placement crisis' places the future of the profession at risk (Craik and Turner 2005, Healy 2005, Sadlo and Craik 2005, Kirke et al 2007). This 'crisis' is perceived to be caused by decreasing numbers of educators willing to provide placements due to pressure of work loads, stress, staff shortages and removal of payment to educators (Fisher and Savin-Baden 2002a, Healy 2005, Kirke et al 2007). This problem appears to have been exacerbated by past Government's initiatives to expand the occupational therapy workforce (Department of Health 2000a, Department of Health 2000b) which, until recently, resulted in an increase in the number of occupational therapy education places and demand for placements (Healy 2005). However, whilst these may be legitimate concerns, the literature is anecdotal and offers little, if any, research evidence that the

'placement crisis', if it exists, has affected the quality of student placements or learning outcomes.

Nevertheless, calls have been made for a change in placement culture and new models of working, for example therapists having to 'opt out' of taking students as opposed to 'opting in', educators taking two or more students and the use of role-emerging placements (Huddleston 1999b, Waters 2001, Craik and Turner 2005, Healy 2005, Sadlo and Craik 2005, College of Occupational Therapists 2006). The College of Occupational Therapists 'Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct' (2010) also makes explicit the expectation that practice placement education is part of every therapist's professional responsibilities.

When the 'placement crisis' was identified in the 1990s, Backman (1994, p8) argued that it was a "myth". She instead advocated that it was the responsibility of placement tutors to explore new models of working and expand placement opportunities, suggesting that placements could "occur anywhere where the roles and functions of an occupational therapist can be developed and integrated". Whilst this opinion was not empirically supported, it would appear particularly relevant for occupational therapy education today where there appears to be a re-focusing by the profession on its philosophy and promotion of the links between occupation and health (Wilcock 2006, Molineux and Baptiste 2011). It could be suggested that placements in less traditional settings offer students the opportunity to promote the profession outside of traditional services at the same time as developing the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to work in more innovative settings in the future.

This is closely linked to the second concern raised in the literature; that of ensuring placements enable students to develop the competencies needed to adapt to the changing health and social care climate and prepare them for practice in more diverse settings. For the past 25 years authors have continually highlighted the responsibility of educational establishments to ensure that students are prepared for the demands of practice and identify placements as an important part of the curriculum in achieving this aim (Cohn and Crist 1995, Hummell and Koelmeyer 1999, Mulholland and Derdall 2004). However, Alsop and Donald (1996, p502) suggest that practice education is not fulfilling its purpose, stating that "the way it is provided is out of date. The needs of students who will be practicing in new and developing models of health care delivery must be addressed in different ways". Whilst this view was expressed over 15 years ago the same concern continues to reveal itself in more

recent literature (Baum 2000, Prigg and Mackenzie 2002, Thomas et al 2004, Fortune et al 2006, Gilbert Hunt 2006, Thew et al 2011). This is perhaps reflective of the continual changes in practice and the on-going need to ensure that practice education remains current and a positive and effective learning experience in terms of preparing students for practice.

2.3 Occupational therapy placements in the context of education and current trends in practice

Historically in the United Kingdom, occupational therapy placements have occurred in NHS and Local Authority settings. They have tended to be illness focused, technically driven, institution based and undertaken within an apprenticeship model with the therapist viewed as the expert (Missiuna et al 1992, Higgs and Titchen 2001). Until more recently, academic programmes appeared to adopt more of a reductionist approach, requiring students to have a set number of placements in physical and mental health settings (Opachich 1995, Mackersy et al 2003). This approach appears to lack recognition of the diversity of the profession and opportunities available for occupational therapists to work with a wide range of people from birth to death, with or without illness or disability.

The broader view of health that emerges from Government priorities and directives (Department of Health 2004a, Department of Health 2004b, Department of Health 2006, Department of Health 2010a, Department of Health 2010b, Department of Health 2010c), professional standards and curriculum guidance (Hocking and Ness 2002, College of Occupational Therapists 2006, College of Occupational Therapists 2008, College of Occupational Therapists 2009, Health Professions Council 2009) provides support for occupational therapists to take up opportunities in emerging areas of practice and to broaden their employment opportunities (Isaacs and Gordon 2001, Kornblau 2001, Scriven and Atwal 2004, Wilcock 2006, Turner 2011). Thomas (2008), for example, suggests a role for future therapists in helping individuals, groups and communities deal with the impact on health and well-being of global factors such as the ageing population, global warming, recession, pandemics and natural disasters.

Other authors similarly suggest that occupational therapists could be ambassadors for developments in health care where the refocusing on occupation that is taking place within the profession coincides with a health and social care system that has as its central concern

the health of the population (Withers and Shann 2008, Molineux and Baptiste 2011). Wilcock (2006) argues that all services, whether primary, secondary or tertiary, need to be aware of the role of occupational therapy in improving the health and well-being of individuals, communities and the general population. This is a view supported by Sakellariou and Pollard (2012, p2) who, in their commentary on the social responsibility of occupational therapy education, call for future practitioners to adopt a "political practice of occupational therapy" that seeks to address the political, environmental and social factors that prevent occupational justice. Whilst such literature has a positive aim in seeking to encourage occupational therapists to think about their practices more broadly and to consider the contribution that the profession could make to the wider community, it is predominantly opinion based. Although robust studies such as the Well Elderly Study (Clarke et al 1997, Jackson et al 1998) have demonstrated how an occupational perspective can be used effectively outside of traditional services to maximise health and well-being, there appears to remain a paucity of evidence in the UK to suggest that therapists are utilising such an approach in new areas of practice. However, the increasing number of anecdotal reports from therapists working in less traditional services suggests that emerging practice are becoming more prevalent (Kearsley 2010, Bryant 2011, Holdback 2011, Marsh 2011, Trentham and Cockburn 2011).

To encourage this, Pattison (2006, p167) believes that therapists need to be innovative and entrepreneurial and move away from traditional boundaries which "fence us in and limit our practice". Issacs and Gordon (2001) and Kornblau (2001) suggest that such opportunities are endless and only restricted by therapists who are unable to promote the value of the profession to others. Likewise, in the recent occupational therapy Casson Memorial Lecture, Turner (2011, p320) urges therapists to "let go of personal securities and take a leap of faith into employment in new pastures" in order to help meet the occupational needs of those outside traditional services. Turner (2011) suggests that having the courage to reflect on current practice and to change ways of working accordingly will enable the profession, and the therapists themselves, to mature. However, whilst these would appear to be important points, much of this literature is also opinion based or transcripts of presentations given at occupational therapy conferences, rather than being evidence-based.

To ensure that graduates have the skills and confidence to take up emerging opportunities it is argued that educational programmes and placement experiences must change (Baum 2000, Godfrey 2000, Isaacs and Gordon, 2001, Baptiste 2005, Fortune et al 2006, Sakellariou and

Pollard 2012). Mackersy et al (2003) for example argue that old beliefs about needing a balance of mental health and physical placements and grounding in 'basic' placements (that is, those in traditional in-patient settings) may no longer be applicable. Similarly, Thomas et al (2004) suggest that more diverse learning opportunities are required to help students develop a broader vision of the profession than that associated with services in which the majority of traditional placements occur. Without exposure to this broader social health perspective during their education, Gilbert Hunt (2006) expresses concern that graduates will lack the confidence to be at the forefront of changes within health and social care. Similarly, Sakellariou and Pollard (2012) suggest that, for the sustainability of the profession, occupational therapy students need exposure to learning experiences that enable them to develop a critical understanding of their profession and their role within society. Whilst these contentions are opinion based, research studies that have explored students' preparedness for practice, satisfaction with their education and role-emerging placement experiences support such views (Bossers et al 1997, Hummell and Koelmeyer 1999, Prigg and Mackenzie 2002, Hodgetts et al 2007).

Calls are therefore made for students to graduate with the skills and competencies required to be viable future practitioners (Barnitt and Salmond 2000, Mulholland and Derdall 2004, Baptiste 2005, Soloman and Baptiste 2005, Gilbert Hunt 2006). Whilst the traditional apprenticeship model may offer students the opportunity to develop necessary clinical skills and integrate theory and practice, they may not be the best way to develop additional skills seen as important for current and future practice such as autonomy, advocacy, management, leadership, negotiation, economic and pragmatic reasoning, health promotion, social and political awareness, self directed learning and marketing (Adamson et al 2001, Isaccs and Gordon 2001, Coulthard 2002, Mackersy et al 2003, Mulholland and Derdall 2004, Baptiste 2005, Soloman and Baptiste 2005, Fortune et al 2006, Mackey 2007, Rodger et al 2007a, Rodger et al 2007b, Sakellariou and Pollard 2012).

Guidance from the College of Occupational Therapists (2006) recommends that placement tutors look at ways of providing new work-based learning opportunities that prepare students for future practice. The main purpose of this document is to offer practical guidance to higher education institutions regarding the establishment of role-emerging placements, advice for students undertaking such placements and information for organisations about the benefits of such placements. Whilst this is a useful document it is unclear whether the guidance has been

published to help alleviate the 'placement crisis' or whether it is based on the belief that such placements help students develop the necessary skills and competencies for future practice. Whilst research studies are cited in support of its recommendations the document does not reflect the mixed opinions that are in fact evident in these studies concerning the value and effectiveness of such placements.

The College of Occupational Therapists' (2006) guidance was produced following a survey of 27 British placement tutors (Wood 2005). This study used a questionnaire to explore the extent to which non-traditional and role-emerging placements were being used in practice and the issues associated with such placements. Twenty-four tutors responded and findings revealed that the majority of higher education institutions (21/24) offer emerging placements and believe that they should be developed further, despite a key theme emerging that there is a paucity of evidence regarding the effectiveness and value of these placements compared with traditional placements. Quantative data revealed that placements occurred in both non-traditional and role-emerging settings and that these were predominantly in mental health. However, whilst the data was organised into the client group (older people, paediatrics), diagnosis (mental health, substance abuse) or type of setting (vocational rehabilitation, education, private practice), no specific placement examples were provided. This would have enhanced the study by providing more contextual information, allowing the reader to assess whether tutors were defining these placements in a similar way and to gain a deeper understanding of the types of placements being experienced by students.

Qualitative data indicated that tutors felt such placements offered opportunities for the development of professional identity, autonomy and independence for practice although it was suggested that they may not be suitable for all students and that their effectiveness depends on the personality and academic strength of the student (Wood 2005). Concern was also raised that such placements are simply being set up to deal with the shortage of traditional placements. However, the qualitative section of the article is predominantly a list of bullet points with no indication of how many times a particular response was given and few direct quotes are provided from respondents. This makes it difficult to determine any consensus of opinion regarding strengths or limitations of such placements and restricts deeper exploration of the issues identified. Despite the paucity of research on role-emerging placements and concerns raised in Wood's (2005) study, the College of Occupational Therapists (2006) appear committed to developing more diverse placements.

Literature is increasingly highlighting the need for students to become self-directed, critical, adaptable and reflective practitioners (Barnitt and Salmond 2000, Barr 2005, Fortune et al 2006, Department of Health 2008b). In meeting these aims, it is necessary to consider the way in which occupational therapy placements have been influenced by adult learning theories.

2.3.1 Adult learning theories and placements

Placements are considered to be the interface between the classroom and the realities of practice, providing an opportunity for students to acquire and place theoretical knowledge in context (Cohn and Crist 1995, Alsop and Ryan 1996, Tompson and Ryan 1996a). However, I would argue that the notion of acquisition and transference of knowledge that is implicit in this assumption is too simplistic and that placements present students with a much wider stimulus for learning and opportunity for personal and professional growth and development. Jarvis (2010, p78) suggests that as students enter a new practice setting they are having, for the first time, "a primary experience of practice" that presents them with an array of opportunities for new learning and development. It is this notion of experiential learning that is now explored. Consideration is then given to the way in which behaviourist, cognitive, humanistic, sociocultural and lifeworld learning theories have influenced practice education.

Dewey (1938) was the first educational theorist to give centrality to personal experience (cited in Jarvis 2010, Merriam et al 2007) and much of the adult learning literature builds on his ideas as shown in the work of authors such as Kolb (1984), Schon (1987), Knowles et al (2005), Boud et al (2008) and Mezirow et al (2009). From this perspective, learning is considered to be an intrinsic need, core to our being as humans, which results from everyday experiences, although it is recognised that without reflection not all experiences are educative (Kolb 1984, Jarvis 2010, Merriam et al 2007, Mezirow et al 2009).

Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning is one that has become increasingly popular in higher education (Jarvis 2010) and has relevance to practice education. Here, learning is viewed as a four-stage cycle where learners are actively engaged in a 'concrete experience', observe and reflect on their experiences from various perspectives during a stage of 'reflective observation', formulate their ideas and integrate their observations and reflections into theories during 'abstract conceptualisation' and finally test out their theories and ideas

through 'active experimentation' (Kolb 1984, Evans et al 2010). Such a cycle of learning can be applied to students on placement as they engage in hands-on activities, reflect on their experiences both individually and with their educators and start to generate ideas and concepts that they are then able to test out and refine. It is suggested that using such a cycle helps educators to assess where students may be blocked in their leaning and create experiences that can move students forward in their development (Cross et al 2006).

Jarvis (2010) however suggests that Kolb's theory of learning does not convey the complexity of the adult learning process and, drawing on the experiences and reflections of his own adult learners, Jarvis constructed a learning theory that takes as its central focus the notion of disjuncture. This is defined as the gap between a person's perception of an experience (based on their previous experiences) and the actual reality of the encounter and suggests that where these two start to significantly separate then questioning begins and conscious learning starts to take place (Jarvis 2010). Learning is thought to have occurred when an individual is able to resolve the disjuncture (which can occur cognitively, emotionally and / or practically) by giving new meaning to experiences or generating new understandings, knowledge and skills. As a result, the learner becomes changed or transformed by their experience (Merriam et al 2007, Jarvis 2010).

Links have been made to phenomenology where the focus of concern is on the experiences of everyday life and the sense that individuals make of these experiences (van Manen 2007, Jarvis 2010). However, social learning theorists would argue that learning is more than phenomenal, emphasizing the social context in which learning takes place (Lave and Wenger 2003, Wenger 2006). This phenomenological perspective is discussed in more detail shortly when consideration is given to conceptualising learning as a process of becoming.

Whilst most definitions of learning include some reference to change in an individual, how such changes occur appears a matter of debate. A wide variety of learning theories exist, taking behaviourist, humanist, cognitive and social learning perspectives (Merriam et al 2007, Jarvis 2010). More recently authors have argued that a lifeworld perspective on learning should be adopted in helping to understand learning, and in particular professional development, as a process of becoming (Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009b, Hagar and Hodkinson 2011, Scanlon 2011, Vu and Dall'Alba 2011). Whilst it is not possible to cover all

the various learning theories in detail in this thesis, it is useful to consider some of the key concepts that appear to have influenced thinking in relation to practice education.

Merriam et al (2007) and Jarvis (2010) provide useful summaries of behaviourist theorists whose underlying assumptions are that observable behaviour rather than internal thought should be the focus of study. From this perspective learning is seen through a change in behaviour, the locus of control over learning lies with the environment that shapes behaviour, proximity of events encourages connections to be formed and reinforcement encourages repeat behaviour (Merriam et al 2007, Jarvis 2010). Imitation, in particular, is considered important in enabling individuals to learn how to behave and carry out accepted practices within cultural groups (Jarvis 2010). Such principles appear evident in adult education where behaviourist techniques such as feedback, modelling and practising of activities are used to enhance a student's development on placement (Tompson and Ryan 1996a, Tompson and Ryan 1996b). However, such theories appear limited in the extent to which they acknowledge the individual agency of the learner or social context of learning. Behaviourist theorists view the learner as separate from their world and consider knowledge to be something that can be learnt and applied as required. This would appear to lead to a risk that students simply learn how to 'do' or perform occupational therapy without gaining a rich understanding of their practice. This understanding, Dall'Alba and Sandberg (2010) suggest, is the difference between learning through practice (as evident in behaviourist approaches) and learning about practice.

It is possible that the current emphasis given to knowledge, skills and competency frameworks places increasing demand on practice educators to adopt behaviourist approaches in order to reinforce and assess students' knowledge, skills and behaviours on placements. Indeed many placement assessment/evaluation forms appear to encourage this approach, consisting of tick boxes and pass / fail criteria that seek quantifiable outcomes of learning. It is likely that this will encourage students to develop professional identities and ways of enacting practice that reflect those of their educators and are not of their own making. I suggest that placements should not simply be concerned with the acquisition of particular skills, behaviours or actions and that a more holistic approach to learning is required that allows for the development of an authentic professional identity. Authors argue that such an identity, or 'professional-way-of-being', combined with knowledge, skills, actions and personal and professional attributes, leads to more competent skilful practice (Duke 2004,

Murphy and Calway 2007, Barnett 2007, Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009b, Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2010).

A cognitive approach to learning, advocated by Mezirow et al (2009), highlights the importance of critical reflection in transformative learning. Here, learning is viewed as a process of meaning making, suggesting that through reflection and self-exploration learners may come to fundamentally change their points of view (immediate beliefs, feelings, attitudes and judgements) and habits of mind (broader perspectives, assumptions and world views) that influence the way they interpret and make sense of their experiences (Merriam et al 2007, Mezirow et al 2009, Jarvis 2010). Individual constructions of reality are transformed by reflecting on experiences and elaborating existing, or learning new, frames of reference and strategies for living (Jarvis 2010).

Such transformative learning is considered emancipatory in allowing learners to develop as autonomous thinkers. Rather than simply enacting the beliefs, values and world views of others, which leads to reproduction of the status quo, it is suggested that students come to develop their own understandings and ways of thinking (Merriam et al 2007, Mezirow et al 2009, Jarvis 2010). This has similarities to the work of Billett (2010) who makes the distinction between mastery (the superficial acceptance of knowledge and the ability to achieve standards required for public performance) and appropriation (active engagement in what is being learnt and a desire to integrate this as part of their being) of knowledge. Appropriation is also a key idea of developmental psychologist Vygotsky (1978) in which the ability to take a piece of knowledge and internalise this into a way of 'knowing how' allows an individual to use this in their own unique way and prevents them from being so reliant on the ways of others.

In relation to placements, Webb et al (2009) suggest that appropriation is the highest level of identity formation as students come to construct their own ideas about practice and to test out their knowledge and understandings in practice. Links can be made here to literature on the development of practice knowledge where distinction is made between propositional knowledge that arises from learning facts or theories in the classroom ('knowing that') and the more tacit non-propositional knowledge generated by students as a result of practical, professional and life experience (knowing how) (Gustavsson 2004, Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2006). The integration of these types of knowledge are reflected in Schon's (1987, p25)

notion of "knowing-in-action" where the importance of learning by doing is highlighted in order to give students experiences that allow them to understand what professional practice means. Here, the relevance for students on placement would appear to be the extent to which they are able to move away from learning simply how to carry out or 'do' occupational therapy for the purposes of passing their assessment, or uncritically replicating theories learnt on campus, towards activities that allow them to gain a richer understanding of what it means to 'be' an occupational therapist and to develop an embodied sense of professional self.

Critique of cognitive learning theories include their focus on the individual and the fact that they centre on cognition at the expense of physical, practical and emotional aspects of learning (Merriam et al 2007, Hodkinson et al 2008, Jarvis 2010). Hodkinson et al (2008) also highlight that cognitive approaches tend to decontextualise learning and ignore the social context in which learning takes place. Cognitive approaches view the individual as occupying a context rather than being an inter-related part of it, running the risk that learners are unable to transfer the knowledge they have created from one context to another. Nevertheless, as will be discussed shortly, cognitive influences such as reflective practice remain an important concept in student development and practice education literature (Andrews 2000, Stockhausen 2005, Zimmerman 2007, Owen and Stupans 2009).

A cognitive constructivist approach that seeks to address the issue of decontextualised learning is problem-based learning (PBL). Here, students work together in small groups, under the guidance of a facilitator, to explore real-life cases and scenarios with the aim of activating, exploring and building on previous knowledge. This, it is suggested, facilitates cognitive changes in learners that are transferable across practice contexts (Scaffa and Wooster 2004, Schmidt et al 2011). The PBL process involves students being presented with a case, or 'problem', and through discussion and problem analysis they identify what they already know and the gaps in their knowledge. Students generate questions that they feel will help them further their understandings and knowledge base in relation to the case. Students each take a particular question and engage in self-directed learning to seek out and make sense of the required knowledge. This is then shared with the rest of the group with the aim of working together to create an end product, for example an assessment or treatment plan (Tavakol and Reicherter 2003, Schmidt et al 2011). Research suggests that students' reasoning, problem-solving and self-directed learning skills, developed through this process, prepare them for placements and life-long learning in professional practice (Hammel et al

1998, Tavakol and Reicherter 2003, Lindstrom-Hazel and West-Frasier 2004, Sadlo 2004, Scaffa and Wooster 2004, Schmidt et al 2011).

First developed in the mid 1960's for medical education, PBL is increasingly being used within occupational therapy education in the UK and internationally, with literature advocating benefits such as increased clinical reasoning, problem solving, critical thinking, team working and communication skills (Sadlo 1994, Hammel et al 1998, Lindstrom-Hazel and West-Frasier 2004, Scaffa and Wooster 2004, Davys and Pope 2006, Halliwell 2008). However, in contrast to the field of medicine, studies into the effectiveness of PBL within occupational therapy are small in number. Evaluations are also made more difficult by the variation in the way that PBL is applied by different institutions, for example PBL being used for a particular module compared to a fully integrated PBL curriculum (Lindstrom-Hazel and West-Frasier 2004).

Davys and Pope (2006) highlight positive and negative effects of using PBL within an occupational therapy programme at one British university. This is not a research paper but the authors state that the effects discussed in the paper are a reflection of student module evaluations, statements made by students in tutorial session and staff comments. Ethically, it is not clear whether students and staff were aware that such evaluations and discussions would be used for this paper. Positive effects identified were a deeper and more holistic level of learning, enhanced clinical reasoning and interpersonal skills. Negative effects included student anxiety about setting their own learning outcomes, group dynamics and gaps in knowledge in relation to anatomy and physiology. This has similarities to the findings of an earlier American study by Hammel et al (1998) where the perspectives of 154 students were gathered using focus groups over 2 years. Benefits of PBL included enhanced clinical reasoning, information management, interpersonal and team-working skills. Concerns were raised about access to resources, coping with the ambiguity of knowledge and conflict between tutor and student expectations.

Scaffe and Wooster (2004) carried out a quasi-experimental pre-post test study of 48 occupational therapy students to explore the effect of PBL on clinical reasoning skills following a 5 week 30 hour intensive PBL course. They concluded that PBL had a statistically significant effect on students' clinical reasoning skills. This conclusion was based on improvements made in 11 of the 26 items that made up the Self-Assessment of Clinical

Reflection and Reasoning tool that was used to measure this effect. Areas of improvement included using theories to understand treatment techniques, seeking alternative viewpoints, contrasting information about client's problems and proposed solutions. No consideration, however, was given to the lack of statistical difference in the other 15 items, including aspects of clinical reasoning that would appear particularly important such as questioning why they do things in practice and clearly identifying the occupational problems prior to planning intervention. In contrast to this study, McCarran and D'Amico (2002) found no significant difference in the clinical reasoning of 22 occupational therapy students that had completed either a traditional teaching and learning or PBL approach for a specific module. However, data was collected using a non-standardised tool which may have affected the validity and reliability of the findings. Whilst such studies highlight the variations of opinion regarding the effectiveness of PBL, general reviews of literature indicate that it is increasingly becoming the preferred model of teaching and learning within medial and allied health education and that the benefits outweigh the limitations (Tavakol and Reicherter 2003, Schmidt et al 2011).

Through its use of real cases, it is an approach that contextualises learning, helps students to link theory to practice and facilitates critical thinking and self-directed learning. It would appear that there are links here to Mezirow et al's (2009) transformative learning through the facilitation of autonomous thinking and changes in students' habits of mind and ways of thinking. Whilst there appears to be a paucity of research that explores the use of PBL on placements, it would appear to be an approach that could prove particularly useful for role-emerging placements: assisting students in their self-directed learning, helping them to identify their learning needs and facilitating development of clinical reasoning, problem solving and autonomous working skills in the absence of an on-site professional educator.

PBL appears to be influenced by humanistic theories of learning, evident in its use of self-directed learning, recognition of the motivation of the learner and focus on self-development. Humanist approaches to learning consider learning from the perspective of the human potential for growth (Merriam et al 2007), recognising the intrinsic motivation of learners and the free will and responsibility of individuals to become what they are capable of becoming. Such ideas can be seen in the work of Maslow (1987) whose hierarchy of needs moved from physiological needs, through stages of safety, love, belonging and self-esteem to self-actualisation. Similarly, the writings of Carl Rogers have been influential in advancing

humanist perspectives of adult education, in particular the emphasis placed on self-development, direction and maturity as the goal of education (Merriam et al 2007).

The influence of humanistic theories can be seen in Knowles et al's (2005) learner-centred model of androgogy (adult learning) which rests on the principles that adults have an intrinsic motivation or readiness to learn when activities are meaningful and directly related to their life tasks or when they perceive a need to know something. This model asserts that adults have a self-concept of being capable of taking responsibility for their own decisions and that they learn more effectively from task-centred or problem-based approaches (Knowles et al 2005, Cross et al 2006, Biggerstaff and Thompson 2008). Furthermore, as adults, learners come to a new learning experience with previous experiences which are recognised as a resource for applying and making sense of new learning (Knowles et al 2005). This view is supported by Boud et al (2008) who suggest that learning is always related to past experience and without this connection new experiences exist as abstractions and have no meaning.

Billett (2010, p72) suggests that it is this personal and cultural history, or personal "ontogenies" (the values, beliefs and ways of knowing based on past experiences) that influence an individual's engagement in workplace activities and learning. This view is also advocated by Boud et al (2008) who highlight in particular the way that previous educative experiences, which have resulted in positive or negative effects, have the potential to stimulate or suppress new learning and as such cannot be ignored. Similarly, other authors suggest that personal histories and learning dispositions form the basis of the learner's frames of reference, identity and way of being (Claxton and Carr 2004, Barnett 2007, Hodkinson et al 2008, Webb et al 2009, Jarvis 2010). Here, links can be made to the philosophical writings of Heidegger (1973/ 1927) who argues that our experiences and engagement with the world are always interpreted based on 'fore-conceptions' or 'historicality' (for example, previous experiences, values, understandings and background) and that some events, interactions and experiences therefore have more meaning and purpose to us than others (Finlay 1999, Smith et al 2009). In relation to placements, recognition of students' personal histories, learning styles and previous placement experiences has relevance in understanding their placement choices, approaches to learning and ways of being on placement. Such awareness might help educators to be more mindful of students' needs and lead to a more collaborative relationship.

The focus of learning from a humanistic perspective is therefore on students' self-development as opposed to the narrower view of skill, behaviour or cognitive development offered by the behaviourist and cognitive theories. The process of learning would appear to be more important than the content, providing a more holistic perspective and allowing the student to direct and take responsibility for their own learning and development. With these principles in mind, the focus for the educator is on facilitation rather than 'teaching'. Whilst humanistic learning theories offer a way of understanding the personal growth of a learner, Jarvis (2010) suggests they are not comprehensive as they rather ignore the socio-cultural context. Similarly, authors argue that Knowles's androgogical model is not a theory of learning but more of an educational ideology (Jarvis 2010). Nevertheless, it is evident that humanist principles have influenced approaches to practice education through the use for example of self-directed and problem-based learning, reflective practice and learning contracts (Whitcombe 2001, Bossers et al 2007, Halliwell 2008).

Socio-cultural perspectives of learning seek to understand the relationship between individuals and social practices through which learning occurs and knowledge is constructed (Billett 2001, Billett 2002, Merriam et al 2007, Jarvis 2010). Whilst more purist constructivist theories view learning as a mental process and give central concern to the way in which individuals actively construct meaning from an interaction between their experiences and ideas, social constructivist perspectives view learning as a social process, highlighting the interconnectedness of the individual and socio-cultural context of learning in the development and appropriation of knowledge, meaning and ways of being (Billett 2000, Lave and Wenger 2003, Billett and Somerville 2004, Merriam et al 2007).

Social learning theories advocate that individuals are social beings and that learning is experiential and situated. Such theories are underpinned by the assumptions that learning occurs as a result of engagement in communities of practice and that through active participation changes in an individual's capacities takes place, a sense of belonging is developed, meanings are created and identities are constructed (Cope et al 2000, Lave and Wenger 2003, Billett and Somerville 2004, Billett 2006, Wenger 2006, Boud et al 2008, Dall'Alba 2009b). This transformative potential however does not appear to be one sided as authors suggest that participation in social communities not only shapes the experiences and identities of the learner but also the community itself as practices are changed as a result of

the integration and contribution of new members of the community (Lave and Wenger 2003, Wenger 2006, Hodkinson et al 2008).

Such perspectives appear relevant to student placements where learning can be viewed as a result of engaging in and contributing to occupational therapy or multi-disciplinary communities of practice, offering transformative potential for both the student and the team. Students have the opportunity to participate in real practice contexts that reflect the complex environments and practices in which they will be required to work and through their participation in authentic professional activities, observation of and engagement with others, learn how to be a professional.

Billett (2002) suggests that it is through engagement in new activities that possibilities for new learning occur as the individual extends his/ her ways of knowing beyond that previously encountered. Recognising that this may result in a period of "disequilibrium and confusion" (Billett 2002, p462) he calls for adequate support and guidance to be available for those faced with such challenges. This would appear to link to Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). This is considered to be the distance between tasks that a learner can achieve through independent problem-solving (due to their cognitive developmental level) and those that present an additional challenge or responsibility that are difficult to do without help but could be achieved with support or guidance (their level of potential cognitive development) (Green 2005, Webb et al 2009, Jarvis 2010).

Webb et al (2009) suggest that the key to Vygotsky's ideas was the notion that the more senior partner in a learning relationship structures or "scaffolds" the learning of the junior partner in order to move them towards the upper limit of the ZPD. Seeing that a student, for example, has been unsuccessful in trying to accomplish a task beyond their capabilities, the more experienced educator is able to fill in the missing gaps and assist them in achieving their goal. As they become more proficient, the support (scaffolding) can be reduced and the educator can withdraw. This could be likened to the "cognitive apprenticeship" described by Cope et al (2000, p851) where experienced practitioners direct the learner's attention to the cognitive features of an activity and through strategies such as reflection, coaching and exploration help the students develop their competencies. Whilst Vygotsky's theory was originally applied to childhood psychology it has been applied to adult learning and clinical

placements and would appear relevant to students' professional development which, it is argued, is often dependent on interaction with and supported by others (Webb et al 2009).

Whilst much of the literature on social learning and communities of practice is a result of research carried out with employees, the notions would appear relevant to students on placement where it could be argued that the challenges students are exposed to and the trust and support afforded by educators and team members are important factors in determining the developmental outcome for the student. Indeed, this is expressed in placement literature where the importance of an effective relationship between student and educator and the influence of team-working on a learner's self-concept and development are highlighted (Cope et al 2000, Clouder 2003, Mulholland et al 2006, Kirke et al 2007, Levett-Jones and Lathlean 2007, Levett-Jones and Lathlean 2008). However, there appears to remain an implicit assumption that students learn from experienced practitioners and, in their emphasis of the social context and integration of the novice into communities of practice, social learning theories fail to account for the individual agency of the learner (Dall'Alba 2009b, Hagar and Hodkinson 2011). Research suggests that learning from a more experienced professional is not always necessary and that peer learning can also increase students' awareness, confidence and development (Fleming et al 1996, Martin and Edwards 1998, Mason 1999, Bilics et al 2002, Baldry Currens and Bithell 2003, James and Prigg 2004, Martin et al 2004, Thew et al 2008, Roger et al 2009). Furthermore, studies suggest that students on role-emerging placements value the autonomy away from an on-site educator and their individual agency in being able to direct their own learning and this is a key feature in their development (Bossers et al 2007, Fieldhouse and Fedden 2009). Whilst the relationship between context, student, educator and team is perhaps better understood in traditional placements, less is known about their impact on students' development on role-emerging placements.

Authors suggest that learning theories to date are insufficient in their ability to consider both the social context and individual agency of the learner and call for learning to be conceptualised as a process of 'becoming' (Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009b, Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2010, Hagar and Hodkinson 2011, Vu and Dall'Alba 2011). From a phenomenological perspective, individuals are always in a process of becoming and, as such, learning could be considered to be the "transformation of our experiences of living" (Jarvis 2010, p38) so that they affect our ways of being. Here, Jarvis (2010) highlights the

ontological dimension of learning where an individual continually changes the way they perceive themselves as they learn through their interactions with their learning culture.

This is a view advocated by authors who have adopted a phenomenological perspective to explore the learning experiences of students as they pass through their educational programmes (Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009b, Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2010, Hagar and Hodkinson 2011). Using Heidegger's philosophical notion of Being-in-the-word they argue that learning is possible through a students' entwinement with the world and that it is this entwinement that helps them form an authentic professional way of being as they come to question and challenge existing knowledge, assumptions, practices (or ways of knowing and acting). In this way, they suggest that students' knowing is able to extend beyond what they know theoretically, and can do practically, to who they are becoming as professionals (Barnett 1996, Barnett 2007, Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009b, Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2010, Vu and Dall'Alba 2011). It is this integration of what students know with who they are and how they act that is considered crucial to the art of skilful practice (Barnett 2007, Dall'Alba and Barnacle 2007, Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009b, Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2010). As Hagar and Hodkinson (2011) suggest, such a view addresses potential limitations of other learning theories in incorporating both the social, participatory nature of learning and the individual agency of the learner.

One of the key ideas presented here is Heidegger's (1973/ 1927) notion of authenticity wherein humans are considered to have both authentic and inauthentic ways of being (Conroy 2003, Barnett 2007, Dall'Alba 2009a, Vu and Dall'Alba 2011). As a result of Being-in-the-world, humans "fall in with the crowd" (Vu and Dall'Alba 2011, p98) carrying out routine practices and activities of everyday life which consequently form a way of being. Where these are adopted passively or uncritically it is argued that an inauthentic way of being is developed. Barnett (1996, 2007) suggests that this inauthenticity may be exacerbated by the way in which the external demands placed on students lead them to simply try and meet other's agendas, for example learning skills taught to them by educators and acquiring knowledge and competencies deemed important by tutors and practitioners. Barnett (1996, p73) therefore suggests that "it is hardly surprising if students feel that their becoming is not of their own making". For Barnett (1996) there are two worlds of a student: external and internal. The external world of the student involves responding to the demands mentioned earlier and is seen in terms of meeting and demonstrating competencies with the aim of

gaining a degree or award. In contrast, the internal world of the student is concerned with meaning, self, individuality, understandings, values and becoming. Humanistic, self-directed, transformative, lifeworld theories of adult learning are those that appear to be more sensitive to this inner world and should be encouraged in modern curricula (Barnett 1996). Whilst Barnett (1996, 2007) offers a useful philosophical way of thinking about student development and his experience as a Professor of Higher Education provides him with credibility, his writings do not appear to be based on research.

The aim of higher education is therefore considered to be the encouragement of an authentic way of being, taking responsibility for one's own thoughts, ideas, practices and ways of being. This is a notion that appears highly relevant to students' learning on placement where they need to be able to question and challenge both their own and others' knowledge, ideas, assumptions and practices in order to develop a professional identity that is of their own making. Perhaps of particular relevance is Vu and Dall'Alba's (2011, p100) suggestion that "only in having an authentic mode of being can we make a difference to our future". Here it could be suggested that student occupational therapists need to develop such authenticity in order to shape their future practice in a way that is congruent with their own becoming as therapists.

Whilst these ideas appear relevant to this study it is important to note that much of this literature is discursive and from the same authors (Barnett 2007, Dall'Alba and Barnacle 2007, Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009b, Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2010, Vu and Dall'Alba 2011). In addition, the studies on which Dall'Alba developed her ideas were carried out in the 1990s with Swedish medical students and as such may not be reflective of British occupational therapy students' experiences. With the aim of exploring the development of professional skills, Dall'Alba (2004) asked medical students to write down statements about their understanding of medical practice at the beginning and end of a five year medical programme. This programme was taught using traditional methods such as lectures, laboratory work, practical classes and observation of practice. The focus of such education was on the acquisition of knowledge and skills needed to be a doctor. The statements given by the students were in response to questions that asked them to give an example of a situation that they felt was central to their work as a doctor and an example of a situation that they felt would be difficult to deal with. Findings revealed that there was little change in the variation of understandings of medical practice between the start and end of the course,

leading Dall'Alba (2004) to question the adequacy of education that focuses on knowledge and skill development as the basis for professional practice. However, a limitation of this study is that of the 103 students that responded to the questions at the start of the course only 66 remained at the end of the course, of which only 38 wrote a further response. Findings also have limited transferability to occupational therapy students where findings may not reflect the understanding of those students whose education has been more self-directed, for example those engaging in a PBL curriculum (Hammel et al 1998, Sadlo 1994, Davys and Pope 2006). Dall'Alba (2004, p691) calls for further research which "examines the means by which curricula promote or obstruct particular ways of understanding professional practice". It is hoped that this current study will offer some insights into the way in which role-emerging placements facilitate or restrict occupational therapy students' understandings of practice.

2.3.2 Professional socialisation and identity development

Placements within the health care professions are considered an important influence on the professional socialisation of students, including the development of their professional identity (Tryssennar 1999, McKenna et al 2001, Adams et al 2006, Davis 2006, Tompson and Ryan 1996b, Davis 2008, Evenson 2009, Webb et al 2009). However, this remains an under-researched area of inquiry for health profession students (Clouder 2003, Davis 2008).

Shapero Sabari (1985, p96) defines professional socialisation as "the process by which individuals acquire and internalise the values, norms, roles and skills that enable them to function as members of their cultural group". More recent authors concur with this view, suggesting that this process allows professionals to develop a concept of what it means to be a professional and to differentiate themselves from each other (Adams et al 2006, Mackey 2007). Following in-depth interviews with occupational therapy students, Davis (2006) suggests that the development of identity starts in the classroom and is reinforced through practice and experience. This view is supported by Evenson (2009) who proposes that it is the interplay between the student, the profession and the placement environment that allows not only competencies to develop but also strength of professional identity.

Such views appear to reflect socio-cultural perspectives of learning that suggest knowledge is co-constructed as a result of participatory interactions in social practice. Here, Lave and Wenger's (2003) notion that professional identity is defined and shaped by membership in

communities of practice and the groups in which we participate appears particularly relevant. Wenger (2006, p149) highlights the interconnectedness of identity and practice in his reference to "identity as negotiated experience" where it is suggested that individuals define who they are by the ways they experience themselves through participation and the way they believe they are viewed by others. This is similar to the way in which Blair (1998, p53) suggests that roles are "intrinsically bound up with identity" and that the settings in which occupational therapists work may influence the manner in which they construct their roles and the way in which they understand and present themselves.

Turner (2011) who, when discussing the difficulties that occupational therapists have had over the years with their professional identity, suggests that this is likely linked to therapists' perceptions of self and the beliefs they hold about how the profession is viewed by others. Drawing on discussions with new students, final year students and practice educators, Turner (2011) suggests that students and practice educators have a clear understanding of the aims of occupational therapy but that a tension exists between their perceptions of occupational therapy and the realities of practice. It is suggested that this tension results from the struggle that therapists are currently experiencing in multi-professional teams to find and assert their unique identity, a lack of congruence between practice and their professional beliefs, a lack of passion and ability to promote the profession, and a perceived lack of understanding and respect of the profession by other health professionals (Turner 2011). However, Turner (2011, p315) acknowledges that the "straw-poll" she took with the students and educators is not research-based and as such her ideas are open to debate.

Despite the lack of empirical evidence to support Turner's (2011) thinking, the link to Wenger's (2006) work appears evident in the way that the occupational therapists reported negative interactions and experiences of other health professionals, together with a lack of confidence regarding their unique contribution, appears to be leading to a poor sense of professional self. It is, Turner (2011, p319) suggests, crucial that education and practice instil in new graduates a "cast–iron professional identity, passion and vision for our profession" in order to prepare for future practice. It is argued that without this the profession may stagnate; its future shaped and determined by others. This supports Creek's (2003) view that occupational therapists need to be given sufficient autonomy to define their priorities for practice and be able to develop an internal schema of their professional role. Role-emerging placements appear to provide such opportunities for autonomy and are highlighted by Turner

(2011) as a possible means of giving students insight and experiences into alternative ways of working. This appears to be in the hope that graduates will have the courage to expand their role outside of traditional practices (that may be constraining opportunities to carry out practices congruent with their professional philosophy) and seek employment in pastures new (Turner 2011).

However, in a study that explored new graduates' experiences of starting work, Robertson and Griffiths (2009) identified that the lack of a professional role model / supervisor impaired their confidence and image of self as an occupational therapist. They suggest that being able to watch other therapists in action is an important part of professional identity development and question how this can be achieved in the absence of such role models. Similarly, therapy managers in a study conducted by Fisher and Savin-Baden (2002b) argue that it is difficult enough for students to develop their professional identity in established occupational therapy settings and that it is not appropriate to put students into new settings where even experienced therapists have difficulty establishing their role and identity. Although this may be a legitimate concern, the majority of participants in this study were therapists and managers working in traditional services. Forty one managers from health and social services responded to a survey and 17 focus groups took place with various grades of occupational therapist from health and social services. Only four independent practitioners responded to the survey and no focus groups took place with therapists working in independent settings. Interviews took place with eight managers and senior therapists and, although it was not always clearly stated whether they were based within traditional or non-traditional services, it would appear that three of these were independent practitioners. As such, the perspectives of those working in non-traditional and role-emerging areas of practice were under-represented. The argument, however, presented by Fisher and Savin-Baden (2002b) has implications for the use of role-emerging placements and is one that it will be considered in the current study.

Much of the literature appears to support the view that the supervisor or mentor is an important influence in a student's professional identity, learning and development (Billett 2000, Cope et al 2000, McKenna et al 2001, Adams et al 2006, Davis 2006). This is highlighted for example by Tompson and Ryan (1996a, 1996b) who, in their ethnographic study with occupational therapy students, identified that during early placements, therapists were found to be strong role models for the type of professional that students wanted to become. Educators acted as the 'safety net', supporting students who may have had

difficulties, as well as the 'mirror', providing feedback and aiding reflective practice and professional development. However, as placements progressed, such support and modelling were less important as students became more confident in their role and identity. Here, Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development appears relevant as educators structured learning experiences that helped the students to achieve a successful outcome, reducing the level of support as they became more competent and confident in their thinking and practice. These findings may have implications for the timing of role-emerging placements as they suggest that such placements, where the student does not have an on-site professional educator, should be later in a student's education when their professional identity has already started to be established and students are able to work more independently.

Whilst literature pertaining to the role of the supervisor would appear to sit comfortably with socio-cultural perspectives of learning, such an emphasis on role-modelling and socialisation by others appears to give too little recognition to the role of the individual and their personal agency in the learning process. Merriam et al (2007, p186) suggest that views that assert the control of the educator in the experiential learning process may in fact be "viewed as oppressive". Tompson and Ryan (1996a) and Robertson and Griffiths (2009) suggest that more needs to be known about the effects of placements on professional identity with no on-site therapist.

As part of the dynamic interplay between student and placement environment, Shapero Sabari's (1985) discussion paper suggests that clients also play a significant role in the socialisation of students, a view supported by Tryssenaar's (1999) more empirical study of the 'lived experience' of one recently qualified practitioner. Tryssenaar found that clients were a continual inspirational theme in the therapist's narrative and were identified as the people from whom she learnt the most, both about the occupational therapy process and herself. Tryssenaar (1999, p110) suggests that the therapist "grounds herself in client-centred practice" in order to help her to 'become' an occupational therapist. This finding does not appear to be unique to occupational therapy students as highlighted by Stockhausen (2005) who found that nursing students similarly valued their encounters with clients in helping them to understand their role and develop a sense of self as nurse. Watson (2008) and Margallo (2008) have more recently reinforced this notion, suggesting that a therapist's identity is strongly influenced by their client interactions and associated clinical reasoning

process. However, further research is required to explore these contentions as Tryssenaar's (1999) study focuses on only one newly qualified therapist and other papers generally emerge from nursing literature or are opinion based.

Identity does not appear to be a fixed concept, with authors increasingly using the phrase 'becoming a professional' to reflect the way in which individual learners, through participation and (re)construction of their own identity, embody their own learning experiences and develop as individuals. This is considered an on-going process for which there is no end point (Barnett 2007, Hodkinson et al 2008, Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009b, Vu and Dall'Alba 2011), a notion reflected in Wenger's (2003) description of identity development as a trajectory of becoming.

Such views suggest that professional identity is influenced by an individual's image of self as a professional and the beliefs they hold about practice. Watson (2008) contends that as students move through their education they start to construct images of who they are, what they can do and what they can become. Finn et al (2010), however, identified that medical students struggle with the question 'Who am I?' and grapple with their identity as they seek to integrate their experiences, roles and statuses into a coherent perception of self. Adams et al (2006) suggest that students need to encounter critical experiences that lead to a deep understanding of what it means to be a professional, thus generating the construction of a strong professional identity. This is also advocated by Mackey (2008) who, drawing on the ideas of Michel Foucault, argues that occupational therapists need to free themselves from the constraints of customary rules, routines and myths and become more reflexive and active in the construction of their own identity and type of therapist they want to be. However, whilst such papers suggest that consideration is starting to be given to the ontological dimension of identity development, Dall'Alba (2009c) suggests that there remains a paucity of educational research that focuses on students' becoming as professionals.

Concern that professional identity is at risk due to occupational therapists practising within a medical model and moving away from their core philosophy has been highlighted by various authors who also suggest that this issue could be redressed by ensuring that educational programmes are underpinned by an occupation-centred approach (Ikiugu and Rosso 2003, Hocking and Ness 2005, Kielhofner 2006, Watson 2008). This view was expressed by Pierce a decade ago (2001, p250) when advocating for the use of "occupation-based practice sites

where therapy is based on a theoretical understanding of occupation" in order to promote a return to occupation-based practice. With a wider perspective of health now reflected in Occupational Therapy Standards of Education and Curriculum Guidance (Hocking and Ness 2002, College of Occupational Therapists 2008, College of Occupational Therapists 2009) it is possible that role-emerging placements may offer the opportunity for students to develop the more occupation-focused practice advocated by Pierce, encouraging a deeper understanding of their core philosophy and gaining the confidence to promote a more occupation-focused approach within the profession (Bossers et al 2007, Edwards and Thew 2011).

Such an approach may help occupational therapists develop a professional identity that is perhaps more in keeping with their core values and philosophy. Turner (2011) suggests that therapists today are increasingly frustrated at the lack of opportunity to practice in accordance with their professional philosophy; an issue she suggests has been caused by the dominance of science and the subsequent focus on rationalistic thinking within the profession. This appears to be in contrast to the more romantic ideals espoused in the 19th and early 20th century which focused on self-help and health through doing and creativity (Hocking 2008, Creek 2009, Turner 2011). Turner (2011) suggests that it is the seeming need for occupational therapists to seek acceptance from the scientific community that has led to a move away from a focus on doing and occupation towards remediation of impairment that has resulted in the identity crisis often expressed today. Whilst Turner's (2011) paper is opinion based, her ideas appear to be supported by Hocking (2008) who carried out a history of ideas review of occupational therapy literature between 1938-1963, highlighting the way in which competing romantic and rational philosophies have influenced practice over time and led to difficulties with identity development.

Turner's (2011) views are also asserted by Creek (2009) who highlights the on-going difficulty encountered throughout her working life of occupational therapists being unable to articulate what they do. Creek (2009) attributes this to the complexity of putting into language what occupational therapists do and the conflict between the profession's pragmatic philosophy (gaining an understanding of the client and their needs in the context of their real life context) and western structuralist understandings of health (focusing on underlying structures rather than individual difference). This structuralist approach would appear evident today in practices such as standardised assessment, outcome measures and fitting clients into

models of practice that perhaps do not fully reflect clients' individual needs. Creek (2009) further suggests that therapists have adopted the language of other more dominant professions for fear of becoming marginalised and raises concern that this simply makes it harder for those outside the profession to understand the unique contribution of the profession and leads to the risk that therapists themselves start to think in a way that is incongruent with their professional values and beliefs. However, with the emergence of occupational science, authors suggest that occupational therapists can develop a language and evidence base for their own philosophy and that this, coupled with a current refocusing on occupation and an increase in emerging areas of practice may strengthen professional identity and confidence (Whiteford et al 2000, Hocking and Ness 2005, Wilcock 2006, Turner 2011).

Critical reflection is a recurring theme in relation to the development of professional identity; enhancing students' self-awareness, critical thinking, clinical reasoning and understandings of practice (Andrews 2000, Stockhausen 2005, Zimmerman 2007, Owen and Stupans 2009). Various models and guidance on reflective practice appear in the literature (Kolb 1984, Schon 1987, Brookfield 1998, Bradbury-Jones et al 2009) and whilst it is not the aim of this review to discuss these in detail, they have in common a focus on enhancing an individual's self-awareness, providing opportunity for reflection both in and on their practice in order that they can learn from their experiences, make their own choices and create their own professional identity and way of being (Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2006, Boud et al 2008, Vu and Dall'Alba 2008, Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009b, Mezirow et al 2009).

Critical reflection would appear to be particularly important for students where it could be argued that as a social process, students' learning will often be determined by what others want and as such conformity is likely to be a natural outcome (Jarvis 2010). Whilst a degree of conformity may be necessary to be able to function within a community of practice, this can not be done uncritically if a student is to be an active agent in their own learning process and develop their own understandings and ways of being. Critical reflection therefore provides an opportunity for students to become "conscious of realities other than the one into which they have been socialised" (Jarvis 2010, p99).

This emphasis on reflection appears to coincide with an increasing move away from a view of learning as the passing of knowledge from expert to novice and an emphasis on skill and knowledge development towards the integration of knowledge, praxis and being (Dall'Alba

2004, Barnett 2007, Dall'Alba and Barnacle 2007, Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009b, Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2010). Following studies of law and medical students' understandings of and ways of enacting practice, calls have been made for professional education to be re-conceptualised as a process of developing a professional way of being, arguing that this is central to a student's professional identity and the way in which professional practice is enacted (Dall'Alba 2004, Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009b, Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2010).

This is a similar notion to that of self-authorship advocated by Baxter Magolda (2008) who highlights concern raised by college graduates that they lacked the capacity to take responsibility and make decisions due to college experiences that had not facilitated an embodied understanding of who they were and what they believed in. Such findings lend additional support to the calls made for higher education to focus on the integration of epistemology (the skills, knowledge and competencies expected of a student) and ontology (who the students are becoming) in order to help graduates develop a stronger professional identity and thus prepare them more effectively for professional practice (Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2006, Barnett 2007, Dall'Alba and Barnacle 2007, Vu and Dall'Alba 2008, Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2010, Vu and Dall'Alba 2011). To date, it is argued that learning may be compromised by the current emphasis on the development of practical knowledge and skills in preparation for carrying out practice (Barnett 2007, Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2010, Vu and Dall'Alba 2011). This may be at the expense of a student's ontological development which, it is argued, is often downplayed (Boud et al 2008, Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009b, Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2010).

Authors such as Thomson (2001) and Dall'Alba (2009a) suggest that for Heidegger this "ontological turn" in education is a theme present throughout his seminal work *Being and Time,* where the purpose of education is the "transformation of self" (Dall'Alba 2009a, p37). For occupational therapy students such notions would appear relevant where transformation of self and the development of a strong professional understanding and identity are likely to be of importance in being able to confidently make the transition from student to therapist.

2.3.3 Transition and preparation for future practice

Whilst various definitions of the word 'transition' exist, consensus seems to emerge of a period of time where movement is made from one state, situation or place to another,

bringing about significant change in an individual's life. Transitions appear to be closely linked to identity where individuals come to re-define their sense of self as adjustment is made to a life event (Holland 1999, Meleis et al 2000, Sutton and Griffin 2000, Kralik et al 2006, Evenson 2009, Seah et al 2011). In their review of transition literature, Kralik et al (2006) conclude that successful transition is thought to have occurred when an individual is able to make sense of a life event and re-orientate themselves to master new ways of living and being. This is a view also asserted by Meleis et al (2000) who suggest in their theory of transition that feeling connected to others, developing confidence in self, ability to cope, mastery of skills and behaviours needed to take on new roles and responsibilities and re-orientation of identity are important indicators that successful transition has occurred. Whilst these notions appear applicable to students or new graduates it is important to acknowledge that this is a nursing theory and as such has not been tested for its relevance to educational transitions.

Building on Schlossberg et al's (1995) theory of transition, Goodman et al (2006) suggest that transition involves stages of 'moving in', 'moving through' and 'moving out' and that there are four factors that impact on an individual's ability to make a successful transition through these stages. These are known as the 4S's; situation (trigger, timing, duration, control, previous experience), self (how transition is perceived, personal attributes, demographics and psychological resources), support (family, friends, colleagues) and strategies (coping strategies to assist with adaptation). Such factors would again appear to be relevant to graduates as they take on their new roles as professionals and may present a useful framework for considering ways in which students can be supported through higher education into practice.

Evenson (2009, p255) suggests that the transition from occupational therapy student to practitioner "is an obvious and yet often underestimated life change" which involves an intense period of adjustment practically, emotionally and cognitively as therapists take on new roles and responsibilities. Sutton and Griffin (2000) however identify a paucity of research concerning transition from student to occupational therapist. This is an issue that does not appear to have been widely addressed in the last decade and where studies have been carried out mixed opinion continues to exist concerning the extent to which placements ease the transitional period and prepare graduates for the reality of practice (Atkinson and Steward

1997, Hummell and Koelmeyer 1999, Spalding 2000, Tryssenaar and Perkins 2001, Strong et al 2003, Toal-Sulivan 2006, Hodgetts et al 2007).

In their study of the transition of six Canadian occupational and physiotherapy students over their first year of practice, Tryssenaar and Perkins (2001) identified themes such as initial expectations and excitement at becoming a therapist, periods of self-doubt about their competence and shock at the reality of practice. Education was highlighted positively and negatively, both preparing students for practice but also lacking in terms of perceived gaps in their knowledge and skill base. Placements were often cited as being where much of the students' learning had come from. It is worth noting, however, that Tryssenaar and Perkins's (2001) data were collected through reflective journals that students shared with the authors who were also their academic tutors. The authors interacted with students, asking questions, sharing ideas and challenging viewpoints which may have influenced the type of data generated and biased the development of themes.

Hummell and Koelymer (1999) carried out a survey of 74 occupational therapists, 6 months after graduation, to explore their perceptions of the factors that facilitated or hindered their transition. Positive feelings were enhanced by support and supervision in the workplace, having the relevant knowledge and skills as a result of previous placement experiences, being able to work autonomously and good team working. In contrast, transition was made more difficult by aspects such as a weak professional identity, lack of relevant placement experience, staff conflict and adjusting to the demands of the workplace. Overall, the majority of graduates found the transition process stressful, a conclusion also drawn by Rugg (1996, 2002) who, when exploring the factors that influenced graduates' decisions to remain in practice, identified a link between therapists' expectations of practice and their occupational stress levels. Similar inflated expectations regarding the work environment and job content, for example team working, supervision, recognition, feedback, autonomy and opportunities for development, are also identified by Sutton and Griffin (2000). Literature therefore indicates that transition is eased and job satisfaction enhanced when there is consistency between graduates' expectations and the reality of practice, good teamwork and opportunities for learning and development (Sutton and Griffin 2000, Billett 2002, Rugg 2002). However, the majority of these studies are now a decade old and may not reflect the experiences of therapists today.

Whilst the age of these studies may raise questions about their current validity, a more recent study by Seah et al (2011) highlights similar themes where occupational therapy graduates experienced feelings of shock, uncertainty and vulnerability at being new, and underwent a period of adjustment as they took on increasing workplace demands and shifted their identity from student to therapist. However, these anxieties were balanced by increasing feelings of satisfaction and confidence as a result of autonomous working, fulfilling goals with clients and making a difference to those they worked with. They also drew on knowledge and skills developed on previous placements. Graduates' experiences of transition were also influenced by organisational context, finding it harder to adjust if the team were in a period of change and easier if there was good team support and supervision. In settings where their expectations and philosophies of practice matched those of the team, graduates were more satisfied with their work. However, this is an Australian study which may make transferability of findings to the British practice context problematic.

In relation to preparation for practice, Barnitt and Salmond (2000) carried out a survey of 135 supervisors and 80 employers of occupational therapy and physiotherapy graduates and found that employers were generally satisfied with the quality of the graduates, although concern was raised about a lack of preparation for practice in some specialist fields such as community practice, a finding similar to an earlier study by Lysack et al (1995). A difference in opinion, however, was noted regarding the types of skills that supervisors and employers demand from new graduates, with employers wanting more global skills such as autonomy, reflection, evidence-based practice and problem-solving and supervisors requiring more practical skills such as report-writing and treatment approaches (Barnitt and Salmond 2000). Recommendations include more provision of community placements and further consideration of the skills needed for competent practice. However, this study was conducted over a decade ago when community practice was emerging as a new area of practice and since this time community placements have become an integral part of practice education. As such, some of the recommendations are likely to have been addressed. The findings do however highlight the complexity of preparing graduates for practice where the demands placed on them appear to be ever increasing.

In a more recent Canadian phenomenological study Toal-Sulivan (2006) found a perceived gap between what graduates learn in theory and what is required in practice. Whilst participants identified placements as being useful in developing skills such as communication

and assessment they lacked confidence in knowing what to do with clients in practice. Similar findings were identified by Atkinson and Steward (1997) and Hodgetts et al (2007) where graduates, despite reporting that placement experience was the best part of their education, felt unprepared for practice. However, there are limitations with these studies, for example Hodgetts et al's (2007) findings were a result of focus groups that asked graduates about aspects of their role that they found problematic. It is likely that this would have led to a bias of responses towards a perceived lack of preparation whereas if questions had been asked that related to aspects of their role that they were confident in more positive or balanced findings may have been presented.

Adamson et al (1998) found that students had confidence in their clinical role but felt unprepared for aspects of practice such as communicating with other professionals, workplace management and marketing. It is possible, however, that the concerns raised in this study are now being addressed where educational courses in the United Kingdom, in line with current demands for more inter-disciplinary working, now place a greater emphasis on developing students' awareness of team working than in the past (Department of Health 2000c, Department of Health 2001a, Department of Health 2001b, Barr 2005, Davys and Pope 2006, CAIPE 2007). In addition, the problem-based learning approach frequently used within occupational therapy education in the United Kingdom may address the concerns raised through providing a way of learning that requires students to work in teams, problem solve, identify and promote their professional role (Sadlo 1994, Davys and Pope 2006, Halliwell 2008).

No research papers were identified that explored graduates' perceptions of preparation for practice following role-emerging placements. This is a gap in literature that this study seeks to address.

2.3.4 Influence of placements on future practice preference

Placements have been found to influence future practice preferences with students tending to choose jobs in practice settings in which they had positive placement experiences (Christie et al 1985a, Atkinson and Steward 1997, McKenna et al 2001, Crowe and Mackenzie 2002, Rodger et al 2007a). The majority of students in these studies chose jobs based on their NHS and Local authority placement experiences, perhaps due to a lack of role-emerging experience. No studies were found that explored practitioners' choice of role outside of

traditional settings, although anecdotal articles are emerging that would suggest occupational therapists are increasingly employed in emerging roles (Kearsley 2010, Bryant 2011, Holdback 2011, Marsh 2011, Trentham and Cockburn 2011).

Perhaps an important finding highlighted by Crowe and MacKenzie (2002) is that students are unlikely to develop a preference to work in an area in which they have had no placement experience and more likely to work in areas of which they have had most placement experience. Findings resulted from a survey of 50 final year students from two occupational therapy schools in Australia. Half of the students wanted to work in physical dysfunction which was the area most frequently experienced on placement. Mental health was not chosen by any student, perhaps reflecting the high number of students (36/50) that had not experienced a mental health placement. No students appeared to have done an emerging role placement and such settings were not listed in the practice preferences of any student. Primary influences also included enjoyment / interest in the client group (24/50 responses) and positive feedback from placement (18/50). This supports Boud et al's notion (2008) that there is an inseparable link between learning and experience in that what we are drawn to or avoid is based on our previous experiences.

Whilst Crowe and Mackenzie's (2002) study did not explore the actual employment settings of graduates, findings have implications for the future development of the profession where current trends in practice present opportunities for therapists in new and diverse settings (Molineux and Baptiste 2011). If students have not been given placement experiences that allow them to develop their skills and confidence outside of traditional settings then therapists may be reluctant to grasp such opportunities once qualified. Rodger et al (2009) however, in a small survey of Australian students found that students who had undertaken a role-emerging placement in a mental health setting were highly interested in working in mental health in future; a finding they suggest may help to increase the workforce in this area of practice. However, both these studies were carried out in Australia and as such may not reflect the placement experiences or practice preferences of British students. Further research is clearly necessary in this area to follow graduates career choices having completed both traditional and role-emerging placements.

2.3.5 Attitudes and behaviour

Placement experiences have been identified as important in developing students' professional attitudes and behaviours (Gilbert and Strong 2000, McKenna et al 2001). Through measuring students' attitudes before and after a mental health placement, Beltran et al (2007) found a more positive attitude towards clients with mental illness after placement. However, the study was based on secondary analysis of data that had been collected as part of placement evaluation back in the early 1990s and so was not originally intended to be used for research. This raises issues of consent of participants for their evaluations later being used for research. Other limitations include the age of the data and possible response bias of students, for example those with more positive attitudes may have been more comfortable to feedback to tutors.

Similar findings are presented by Gilbert and Strong (2000) who asked 74 students in the third year of their study to complete a standardised questionnaire measuring attitudes towards people with mental illness before and after a 12 week placement. Pre-placement scores were compared with those of the general population. Results found that students had more positive attitudes than the general population and that these attitudes became more positive following the placement. However, scores from the general population were collected in 1981 so the authors were not comparing attitudes from the same time within society; it is likely that societal attitudes were more positive in 2000 than in the 1980s. Also, students' attitudes were measured in the third year of study when they would have already been influenced by their education and as such were likely to be more positive than if the attitudes had been measured at the start of their education. Findings are therefore potentially biased in favour of positive results.

Following an evaluation of role-emerging placements, Bossers et al (1997) suggest that students come to view clients more holistically in community settings rather than focusing on diagnosis. Other authors similarly report a shift in students' assumptions and prejudices as a result of such placements (Fleming et al 1996, Totten and Pratt 2001, Fitzsimmons and Allcoat 2010). These papers are discussed in more detail later but suggest that role-emerging placements may present students with the opportunity for more reflective practice and development of self-awareness.

2.3.6 Role and skills of the educator and team support

Whilst the model of supervision on a role-emerging placement differs from a traditional setting, students are supervised on a weekly basis by a professional educator. As such it is considered relevant to briefly review the literature pertaining to the role and skills of the educator.

In an early study, Christie et al (1985b) explored student and therapist perceptions of what makes a good educator. Questionnaires required respondents (127 students and 188 educators) to consider the roles, responsibilities and characteristics of effective and ineffective educators. The main difference identified was the attitude with which they carried out their role. Effective educators were seen as supportive, honest, flexible, constructive, enthusiastic and available. In contrast, ineffective educators were perceived as controlling, disorganised and insensitive. These findings are supported by later studies (Crowe and Mackenzie 2002, Mulholland et al 2006, Kirke et al 2007) that suggest effective educators are those who create a positive learning environment, facilitate active learning and are a good role model. However, Kirke et al (2007) sought only the educators' views and as such may be biased in favour of how they may like to present themselves rather than how they actually are in practice. Similar bias is evident in Mulholland et al's (2006) study where data were generated from nomination forms for awards in excellence for practice educators. Here it is likely that that the nomination form itself will have required students to focus on positive attributes at the expense of more negative ones and that only students who had a positive experience are likely to have taken part.

Nevertheless, findings of these studies suggest that it is the personal attributes of the educator as opposed to the professional qualification that has the most significance for students. This may have implications for the supervision of students undertaking role-emerging placements where the qualities of their on-site supervisor may be more important than having an on-site occupational therapist. However, as the aforementioned studies involved students' perceptions of an on-site professional supervisor this view is difficult to substantiate and requires further exploration.

Whilst the skills of the educator are clearly important, the impact of the wider team and structure of the placement require consideration. Research suggests that the way in which a learning environment is constructed has an impact on learning outcomes; either prohibiting,

affording, inviting or potentiating opportunities for a students' development (Billett 2001, Billett 2002, Claxton and Carr 2004, Duncan et al 2008). Whilst much of this research has been carried out with children in the classroom or with employees in the workplace, the concepts would appear relevant to this study where it would appear likely that the way in which placements are designed will influence the extent to which students are able to actively engage in learning activities and further their development. Role-emerging placements are designed in a very different way to traditional placements due to the absence of an existing occupational therapy service, team or on-site professional supervisor. As such, it would appear necessary for research to consider the way in which this structure impacts on the students learning and development.

The concept of belonging, highlighted in literature, appears particularly pertinent (Levett-Jones et al 2007). Belonging is viewed as a fundamental need that impacts on a person's emotions, behaviours, cognitive abilities, health and well-being (Levett-Jones et al 2009). Maslow (1987) highlights the intrinsic human need for belonging, placing it third in his hierarchy of needs. Various definitions of belonging have been suggested and whilst there is lacking a general consensus, a sense of personal involvement, integration and connectedness are emergent themes. Whilst Cope et al (2000) did not use the word belonging, their focus on students' incorporation and acceptance into a community of practice has similarities. Similarly, literature emanating from nursing research identifies the importance of being accepted on nursing students' self-esteem and confidence (Nolan 1998, Levett-Jones et al 2009). Here, links can once again be made to socio-cultural theories of learning (Lave and Wenger 2003, Wenger 2006). Whilst passing reference may be made to students 'fitting in' on placement, there appears in the literature an absence of in-depth consideration of the concept of 'belonging' for occupational therapy students on placement.

2.3.7 Models of placement provision

One way of meeting the demand for student placements has been through the use of alternative models of placement provision, with literature suggesting approaches such as increasing the educator-student ratio and inter-professional learning (Martin and Edwards 1998, Kopp Miller and Ishler 2001, Baldry Currens and Bithell 2003, Martin et al 2004, MacKenzie et al 2007). Whilst only a small number of these studies include reference to peer learning on role-emerging placements (Fleming et al 1996, Bilics et al 2002, James and Prigg 2004, Soloman and Jung 2006, Thew et al 2008), literature suggest that students value the

opportunity to work collaboratively with other students and that the opportunities for peer support and learning increase confidence and reduce feelings of isolation (Fleming et al 1996, Martin and Edwards 1998, Mason 1999, Bilics et al 2002, Baldry Currens and Bithell 2003, James and Prigg 2004, Martin et al 2004, Soloman and Baptiste 2005, Soloman and Jung 2006, Roger et al 2009, Thew et al 2008).

Bonnello (2001) and Cross et al (2006) suggest that peer learning should increasingly be used as it reflects adult learning theories and current trends in education towards the use of self-directed, problem based learning which possibly traditional or apprenticeship models do not. However, in relation to role-emerging placements, no research was identified that compares the experiences of students that have carried out placements alone or with a peer. Such research would provide an understanding of the potential benefits and limitations of each approach.

With an increasing drive to enhance inter-professional learning in higher education (Department of Health 2000c, Department of Health 2001a, Department of Health 2001b, Barr 2005, CAIPE 2007), placements would appear to present an opportunity for students from various disciplines to learn with and from each other in preparation for more collaborative working as future practitioners (Adams et al 2006, Soloman and Jung 2006, Mackenzie et al 2007). Few articles were identified that had explored inter-professional learning in role-emerging placements (Kopp Miller and Ishler 2001, Soloman and Jung 2006, Mackenzie et al 2007) and as such this is clearly an area for future development and research.

Whilst peer learning literature is clearly relevant to occupational therapy placements, it has not been reviewed extensively here as the role-emerging placements in this study were carried out individually.

2.4 Role-emerging placements

The role-emerging literature will be discussed in relation to three main themes; rationale for their use, benefits and limitations of such placements.

2.4.1 Rationale for the development for role-emerging placements.

As highlighted previously, a definite trend is occurring in health and social care practice that provides occupational therapists with unique opportunities to expand their practice and make

a significant contribution to the health and well-being of the population (Godfrey 2000, Bilics et al 2002, Wilcock 2006, Molineux and Baptiste 2011). Rodger et al (2007a, p96) state that preparing students for diverse areas of practice ensures the profession remains "relevant and dynamic".

Similar recommendations are made by nursing and allied health professions such as Physiotherapy and Speech and Language therapy. Aware of the growing diversity in practice, these professions acknowledge that placements in less traditional areas of practice are required to ensure students gain experience of the settings in which they are likely to work upon graduation (ENB 2001, Chartered Society of Physiotherapy 2005, McAllister 2005, Lekkas et al 2007). However, there is a lack of literature that explores the use of role-emerging placements with other allied health profession or nursing students. In their systematic literature review of models of physiotherapy clinical education, Lekkas et al (2007) briefly acknowledge role-emerging placements but cite papers from international sources within occupational therapy.

Whilst literature is increasing within occupational therapy, mixed opinion is evident as to the rationale for the use of role-emerging placements. Some authors view them as a solution to the 'placement crisis' (Healy 2005, Sadlo and Craik 2005), others argue that they offer students the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge needed to work in more diverse settings (Renwick et al 1994, Prigg and Mackenzie 2002, Jung et al 2005, Swedlove 2006, Rodger et al 2007a, Rodger et al 2007b, Thew et al 2008, Edwards and Thew 2011). This, it is suggested, may help to address the shortage of newly qualified posts in the NHS (Cameron and Morley 2007). Others contend that they offer benefits to the student, profession and client that are not available from traditional placements (Backman 1994, Froats et al 1994, Heubner and Tryssenaar 1996, Bossers et al 1997, Friedland et al 2001, Totten and Pratt 2001, Cooper and Raine 2009). A passionate argument for the use of role-emerging placement comes from Jung et al (2005, p48) who state that such placements enable students to "see past the boundaries of the past and present and gain flight by acting on possibilities".

A review completed by Bossers et al (1997) highlights that role-emerging placements have existed within occupational therapy education from the early 1970s. However, much of the literature reviewed is descriptive or professional opinion regarding the necessity and value of these placements. In addition, the majority of literature cited emanates from Canada and

America where role-emerging placements have been established for much longer than in Britain. Huddleston (1999b) provides a summary of literature concerning the advantages and disadvantages of role-emerging placement but this is based on only three references from the mid 90s. A more recent review carried out by Overton et al (2009) identifies similar themes to Bossers et al (1997) and Huddleston (1999b) but includes more British literature as practice placement tutors increasingly report how role-emerging placements are being utilised within British Universities (Wood 2005, Hook and Kenney 2007, Thew et al 2008, Cooper and Raine 2009, Fieldhouse and Fedden 2009). However, whilst the reviews give a good overview and summary of existing literature they are descriptive in nature, providing minimal critical appraisal of the studies cited.

2.4.2 Benefits of role-emerging placements

In a study that is frequently cited by British authors and appears to have influenced the development of role-emerging placements, Bossers et al (1997) explored the perceptions of eleven Canadian occupational therapy students who had undertaken role-emerging placements. Minimal information is presented about the method of data analysis but three main learning outcomes are reported: seeing the client as a person, personal and professional growth and role elaboration. Firstly, Bossers et al (2007) suggest that students viewed clients more holistically in community settings and that this enabled a shift in attitudes and thinking to occur. They valued the community focus of the placement and felt that this was more of a 'fit' with occupational therapy practice and philosophy. These were findings that had resonance with those identified by other authors where students were often forced to address their own values and prejudices as they encountered different types of people with different needs, increased their awareness of cultural and socio-political issues and reportedly moved away from traditional, medically orientated ways of thinking towards a focus on health and quality of life (Renwick et al 1994, Rydeen et al 1995, Fleming et al 1996).

Bossers et al (1997) highlight the sense of empowerment, professional and personal growth and development experienced by students as a result of their autonomous working. Such development is also reported by other authors who cite increased confidence in multidisciplinary team working, resource and time management, use of supervision, communication skills, understanding their professional role and evidence based practice (Alsop and Donald 1996, Huddleston 1999b, Gilbert Hunt 2006, Edwards and Thew 2011). Indeed, literature suggests that such placements may be the most significant learning

experience that a student has in preparing them for practice (Alsop and Donald 1996) and that they provide students with opportunities for the development of skills and competencies not available from traditional placements (Fleming et al 1996), although specific examples are not provided.

Prigg and Mackenzie (2002) and James and Prigg (2004) evaluated the use of 'project placements' for Australian students through the use of attitudinal scales, surveys, focus groups and the nominal group technique. Students reported being more independent than on traditional placements, developing collaborative working, time management, presentation and task analysis skills. They experienced an increased sense of self confidence and personal growth and felt able to offer something valuable to the placement service. They felt like occupational therapists as they were listened to, respected and valued by the team and valued the self-directed nature of the placement and the skills this equipped them with for life-long learning. However, Prigg and Mackenzie's (2002) evaluation took place over one year and the final sample group consisted of 26 second years, 6 third years and 9 supervisors. The results therefore need to be considered in light of a possible bias towards data collected from the second years and that different results may have been identified had more students and supervisors participated. Results may also have been biased towards more favourable outcomes as the students who did not participate may not have wanted to due to more negative experiences.

These findings are however similar to those identified by other authors where students appreciated the opportunity to refine their thinking, develop their focus on occupation and wellness, increase their communication, report writing and analysis skills and make a valued contribution to a community service (Renwick et al 1994, Rydeen et al 1995, Westmorland and Jung 1997, Banks and Head 2004, Mulholland and Derdall 2005, Jepson et al 2007, Rodger et al 2009). Whilst personal and professional development is often reported to be an advantage of such placements, in-depth exploration of the meaning of this development for the students themselves is largely missing from the literature.

Bossers et al (2007) conclude that role-emerging placements provide positive experiences for students and the wider community, raising awareness of what occupational therapy is and what it has to offer. This is a view also expressed by Gilbert Hunt (2006) who found that organisations expressed high levels of satisfaction with students and valued having their

occupational needs addressed. They indicated that their knowledge of occupational therapy increased and in a number of cases the placements led to occupational therapy posts being created. Gilbert Hunt (2006, p85) suggests that such placements may give students "a competitive edge upon graduation", although no evidence is provided to support this assumption.

Short reports and reflections have been provided by Canadian students about their personal experiences of role-emerging placements (Finkleman 1998, Kimber 1998, Robertson 1998, Stanley 2001). Similar articles have increasingly been published in 'Occupational Therapy News' by British students (Gibson and Quinn 2007, Doherty and Stevenson 2009, Jamieson 2009, Riches 2009, Williams 2009, Chandler 2010, Fitzsimmons and Allcoat 2010, Garrity 2010, Douglas 2011, Eldridge and Harding 2011, Ullah and Klaentschi 2011). Although not formal evaluations, these articles provide descriptions of placement settings, occupational projects carried out and students' feelings about the placements. Role-emerging placements have been perceived as a rewarding experience for those concerned. Common themes include students valuing the opportunity to work independently, expanding their knowledge of occupational therapy and health, increasing awareness of collaborative working and improving organisational, communication and critical reflection skills. Students also suggest that the placements enable them to learn about themselves, increasing their self awareness. Placements are perceived to have enhanced services in which they take place, through provision of occupational needs assessments and recommendations for practice. Concerns about role-emerging placements are rarely raised in the articles but this may reflect the focus of the articles which appears to be to highlight the benefits of such placements.

Whilst literature suggests that role-emerging placements should be further developed, the majority of studies emanate from abroad. As such, transferability of findings to placements and students in the United Kingdom may be problematic where practice settings and experiences are likely to be different to those abroad. More recent British studies are however emerging in the literature. Thew et al (2008, p349), for example, evaluated a role-emerging placement model used with all second year occupational therapy masters students at one UK University. Seventeen students completed an anonymous questionnaire and ten attended a subsequent focus group. Further details of the evaluation process or analysis of data are not provided and therefore the trustworthiness of the evaluation is difficult to ascertain. However, Thew et al (2008) report that the majority of students perceived role-emerging placements to

be a positive experience, helping them consolidate their knowledge and skills and improve their confidence for future practice. Other themes included students having significant opportunities for using occupation, development of clinical reasoning and reflective practice skills, promotion of the occupational therapy role and increased awareness of the importance of interpersonal skills.

A UK project aimed at developing and evaluating a supervision protocol for role-emerging placements was carried out by Jepson et al (2007). Whilst the authors advocate various benefits of role-emerging placements, the findings need to be treated with caution as there were a number of weaknesses with this project. Firstly the project stated that the protocol was designed for allied health professionals but only two occupational therapy students who had undertaken a role-emerging placement, three academic tutors and two on-site educators were used as participants, making generalisations to other professions difficult. The authors identified action research as the methodological design but this was not reflected in the report which presented information on how interviews and thematic analysis were used to find out what the participants felt about the benefits of such placements. Minimal information was presented about interviews or data analysis and all interview data were combined for the purposes of the report, making it difficult to differentiate between student, tutor and educator experiences. Despite these limitations, the authors made some useful recommendations for placement tutors, namely that there is a need for clear communication between all parties, tutors need to familiarise themselves with the setting, clarity of expectations and learning outcomes is required at the start and a need to ensure that placement sites provide the opportunity for students to meet their learning outcomes. Similar to other studies, benefits of the placement were identified as reinforcing core skills, developing a greater understanding of the value of occupational therapy, promoting the role of the profession outside of traditional settings, working independently and creatively and making a valuable contribution to the placement setting.

To explore the kinds of learning experiences that students undergo in role-emerging placements and whether learning outcomes can be supported by such placements, Fieldhouse and Fedden (2009) carried out a qualitative study with two occupational therapy students. The article only focused on the part of the study that explored learning experiences and minimal information was provided about data analysis so themes identified by the authors are difficult to assess for trustworthiness. In addition, the authors were both the researchers and

the students' supervisors which increased the likelihood of researcher bias. However, the authors suggest that six 'dimensions of learning' took place; greater awareness of therapeutic use of self, understanding of oneself as an occupational being, developing skills in assessment and observation, becoming an enabler of occupation, recognising the importance of client centred goal setting and linking theory with practice. Fieldhouse and Fedden (2009) argue that such learning could not have taken place on a traditional placement as it was the process of having to find and make sense of the occupational therapy role within the role-emerging setting that facilitated this learning.

Totten and Pratt (2001) provide a descriptive account of one student's experience of a role-emerging placement in a Scottish homeless shelter. The student described how she helped to successfully re-establish the centre's newsletter and how this promoted a sense of achievement and pride amongst group members. Whilst the majority of the paper discusses the value of the activity to the clients, the student also reflects on what the placement meant for her stating that it required a strong sense of professional identity and an ability to adapt her knowledge and skills in this non-traditional setting. She felt that personal qualities such as her commitment to the placement enhanced the placement and prevented her from feeling overwhelmed. This paper was one of only a few that has reported the experience of the student from their perspective in any depth. However, this was not a research article and focused mainly of the activities that the student carried out, presenting minimal information about the thoughts, feelings or meaning that she ascribed to the placement. As such there is an identified need to carry out further studies that enable a more detailed understanding of the influence of such placements on students' professional development.

2.4.4 Limitations of role-emerging placements

Although Wood (2005) found a general consensus amongst British placement tutors that emerging placements should be developed, concern was raised that students could be wasting time when they should be learning the basics so that they have the skills to be "up and running as a basic grade as soon as possible" (Wood 2005, p377). Casares (2003) found similar disagreement between placement coordinators who felt that such placements were positive and posed no threat and educators who tended to believe the opposite or were undecided. However it is not stated in the paper what reasons were given or what types of questions were asked in the survey used. The finding that placement coordinators were more positive than educators about the use of such placements raises questions about whether, as

academics, they have more time to think about the future of the profession and can see the value of such placements or whether such placements are simply seen as positive in helping them secure the required number of placements.

Kirke et al (2007) highlighted concern from educators that role-emerging placements may be using up placement hours and potentially compromising clinical experiences. They suggested that such placements may also disadvantage weaker students who need more time to consolidate traditional skills. This view is held by other authors (Huddleston 1999b, Sullivan and Finlayson 2000, Fisher and Savin-Baden 2002b, Wood 2005) who suggest that not all students would be able to cope with role-emerging placements, although no evidence is offered for this conclusion. Sullivan and Finlayson (2000) consider it unethical to place a student who is unable to meet the demands of a role-emerging placement, and therefore recommend the use of a careful selection process to place students in such a placement. Such a selection process is also reported by Fleming et al (1996) who require students to submit applications for such placements. Students are then rated by staff as to their potential suitability for a role-emerging placement, for example their ability to adopt a leader role and be a team player, their creativity, problem solving and communication skills, their self-confidence and ability to manage stress. However, other authors argue that role-emerging placements offer significant opportunities for students' professional development in these areas and should be a compulsory element of their education (Hook and Kenney 2007, Thew et al 2008).

Whilst Fisher and Savin-Baden (2002b, p279) found that amongst occupational therapy educators and managers there was some recognition of the potential value of role-emerging placements in developing qualities such as "initiative, creativity, problem solving, independence and autonomy in learning" they generally found little support for such placements. Such conflicting opinions may reflect the participants in the study, many of whom were unfamiliar with role-emerging placements and as such had no direct experience on which to base their opinions. They concluded that further research is needed to investigate these types of placement (Fisher and Savin-Baden 2002b), a recommendation also made by other authors (Fleming et al 1996, Bossers et al 1997, Casares 2003, Kirke et al 2007, Overton et al 2009).

A particular concern raised by Fisher and Savin-Baden (2002b, p278) was identity development and the belief that "OT philosophy and competence is hard enough to learn from experienced OT's, I do not think it can be learnt from others". This was also raised by Tompson and Ryan (1996a) who suggest that, in a profession which has difficulty with its identity, placements where there are no occupational therapists will limit a student's opportunity to observe therapists in practice and encourage them to look to other professionals as their model for future practice. This issue of professional identity has implications for practice education where there is a need to ensure that placements provide sufficient opportunity for the development and understanding of identity, particularly at a time when an increasing focus on generic and inter-professional working requires graduates to understand and have confidence in the profession and self as therapists (Turner 2011). However, the views expressed in these studies are often in contrast to those of other authors who suggest that one of the benefits of role-emerging placements is the development of students' professional identity (Bossers et al 1997, Prigg and Mackenzie 2002, Mulholland and Derdall 2005, Fieldhouse and Fedden 2009, Thew et al 2011).

Thew et al (2008) highlighted additional difficulties with role-emerging placements, including a lack of communication between on-site and off-site supervisors, staff attitudes towards occupational therapy, difficulties with access to support from part time supervisors and different expectations of students and university staff. Such challenges have also been reported by other placement tutors (Jung et al 2005, Hook and Kenney 2007, Cooper and Raine 2009, Edwards and Thew 2011, Thomas and Roger 2011). Similar issues were also identified by Wilcock et al (2009) from the perspective of off-site occupational therapy educators, a perspective that is largely missing in the literature. Following their experiences as placement tutors, useful recommendations have, however, been provided to help address some of these issues. These include site visits by placement tutors to ensure appropriate placement opportunities are available, identification of on-site and professional supervisors, setting out clear roles, responsibilities and expectations for all parties involved, pre-placement preparation of students and supervisors, developing students' awareness of the relevance of skills gained in non-traditional placements, induction days for a period of time prior to the full time placement and having a full time academic tutor for role-emerging placements (Fisher and Savin-Baden 2002b, James and Prigg 2004, Mulholland and Derdall 2005, Thew et al 2008, Edwards and Thew 2011, Thomas and Rodger 2011).

In their phenomenological study that explored the 'lived experience' of a Canadian student on six week role-emerging placement at a homeless shelter, Heubner and Tryssenaar (1996) found that the student had a persistent struggle with the meaning of her role in the setting and the need to establish her professional identity, although it was through engagement with clients and team members that an understanding was developed. Analysis of the student's reflective journal revealed two main themes, namely the importance of rapport building and meaningful occupation. However, these themes appear to be more reflective of the core values of occupational therapy rather than providing a more detailed understanding of the influence of the placement on the student's development. Therefore, whilst this was the only phenomenological study identified, it lacked clarity as to whether the aim was to understand the meaning of the placement for the student or whether the journal entries were used to support the need for occupational therapy with this client group.

Concerns raised by students in a study by Prigg and Mackenzie's (2002) include a lack of clear expectations, limited time with supervisor and short length of placement. Second year students expressed concern about a lack of client contact but appeared more anxious about this than third year students. James and Prigg (2004) also highlighted a lack of client contact as an area of student concern. Similarly, whilst the students in Bosser et al's (1997) study viewed role expansion positively in preparing them for diverse practice once qualified, some uncertainty was expressed about whether the roles undertaken were occupational therapy (Bossers et al 1997). It could however be argued that this is not unique to students on role-emerging placements as therapists working in more traditional settings also experience this uncertainty as a result of increasingly generic roles being required of them. It is also possible that these findings reflect the student's level of education where experienced students may be more confident in developing and applying their core skills whilst novice students may still be focused on developing knowledge and skills of specific conditions and interventions. Such findings may have implications for the timing of role-emerging placements.

Friedland et al (2001) evaluated role-emerging placements for Canadian students through the use of students' reflective journals, pre and post placement questionnaires and debriefing sessions. Interviews and questionnaires were also carried out with supervisors. A number of themes emerged, although in discussion it was unclear to what extent a consensus of opinion was reached. Mixed opinion emerged regarding whether students should be screened for characteristics such as independence and confidence with some students feeling that this

would help them be more effective on placement whilst others felt such skills could be developed on placement, a suggestion also made by Bossers et al (1997). High levels of support were suggested as being required by students and those that felt well supported were more confident throughout the placement. Whilst the majority of the themes presented were concerns raised by the students, personal and professional growth was identified as a positive aspect of the placement although this was not explored in any detail and no specific areas of growth were identified. Friedland et al (2001) made recommendations for improving the placement experience, for example raising students' awareness of their role in health promotion prior to placements, maintaining high levels of support, preparing supervisors, helping students to develop their professional identity and marketing skills. Such recommendations are similar to those made by other authors (Westmorland and Jung 1997, Jung et al 2005, Mulholland and Derdall 2005, Thew et al 2008, Edwards and Thew et al 2011).

Four years after this initial study was carried out Friedland et al (2001) carried out a review and identified that their recommendations had been implemented and that placement sites were increasing. However, an unresolved issue was that students continued to lack an appreciation of the importance of health promotion and of the role of occupational therapy in role-emerging settings. Students also appeared to value the development of clinical skills in traditional medically dominated settings over those acquired in community placements. Such findings have implications for the use of role-emerging placements if students do not perceive them to be an effective use of placement hours. There may be serious implications for the future of the profession if students do not recognise the role for occupational therapists outside of traditional practice settings and the contribution that the profession could make in maintaining the health and well-being of the general population (Wilcock 2006).

2.5 Research and quality assurance priorities within Occupational Therapy

Research priorities within occupational therapy were reviewed to ensure that the proposed study was in line with the priorities of the profession. The College of Occupational Therapists research and development strategy (2001, p9) identified one of the top five priority topics as "service delivery and organisation concerned with occupational therapy services in a wider health and social care context and to support service innovation". In a review of this strategy,

White and Creek (2007) highlight the continuing need for research to be carried out to explore innovative ways of working and the ways in which occupational therapists can promote their role in new areas of practice. This would appear to apply not only to practitioners but also to academics who are increasingly looking at more innovative educational opportunities for students (College of Occupational Therapists 2006).

The 'Building the Evidence for Occupational Therapy Strategy' document (College of Occupational Therapists, 2007, p12) reinforces that "research endeavours need to be responsive to new and emerging areas of practice". In addition, the research priorities of the university in which I am based include a focus on students' experiences of pedagogic approaches. The proposed study is congruent with these priorities through its focus on exploring the experiences of students of role-emerging placements as an innovative way of providing clinical education and preparing students for practice.

In relation to assuring the quality of practice placements, the College of Occupational Therapists Standards of Education (2008) highlight how practice curricula must be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it is consistent with contemporary practice. Whilst not a primary aim of the study, it is anticipated that the findings will enable consideration of current placement provision for students at the University in which I am based.

2.6 Research Questions

It is clear that literature pertaining to role-emerging placements has steadily increased in recent years, particularly here in Britain. However the review highlights that whilst studies have included views of students about their placements, these have tended to be collected as part of placement evaluations or are brief student reports. Mixed approaches to data collection have been used and limitations of studies are evident. Phenomenological studies that would provide deeper insights and understandings of students' experiences are few in number. Furthermore, there is a significant gap in knowledge concerning the influence of role-emerging placements on a student's development and practice once qualified.

In light of this, two research questions were identified:
- What are occupational therapy students' experiences of role-emerging placements?
- In what ways (if any) do role-emerging placements influence the professional development and practice of occupational therapy graduates?

2.7 Study Aims

The following aims allowed the research questions to be operationalised:

- To develop an understanding of how students experience and ascribe meaning to occupational therapy placements in role-emerging settings.
- To understand the uniqueness, commonalities and divergences of student experiences of role-emerging placements.
- To consider in what ways (if any) role-emerging placements influence an occupational therapist's professional practice and development.
- To consider possible implications for practice, education and future research, based on the findings.

In furtherance of these aims, it was anticipated that an understanding of how role-emerging placements are experienced by students and the influence that they have on future practice would enable consideration by the profession of how such placements may or may not assist in the preparation of students for practice. It was considered that the findings of the study would enable higher education institutions as well as students and practitioners to reflect on how role-emerging placements could be used to meet the needs of students and the future profession. It was also anticipated that findings would inform curriculum design and content to ensure that issues highlighted by participants were addressed, evaluated and critically discussed within education programmes.

2.8 Reflexive account

As an academic interested in promoting the philosophy of occupational therapy I was immediately drawn to the role-emerging concept. I was excited by the recommendation from the professional body to develop new and innovative placements and keen to explore the rationale for this guidance and implement the recommendations. However, I was disappointed to discover that the guidance was based on a paucity of research and unsubstantiated opinion which left me with a lack of confidence to support their implementation without further consideration. I therefore welcomed the opportunity this study presented to explore the literature and understand the impact of these placements in more detail.

Having had positive experiences of working in role emerging settings I was aware of the bias I held in relation to the value I attributed to such opportunities. In particular, I was mindful that as I started to explore the literature I was searching for studies that supported my positive views and had to redress this balance in further reviews, searching not only for conflicting opinion but also becoming more critical of the papers I had originally selected. This is a process that has enhanced my critical appraisal skills.

I found it interesting to read of the various ways in which role-emerging placements were being implemented but was struck by the mixed opinions of educators and tutors about the value of these placements, particularly opinions that were often not based on experience. I became frustrated by placement evaluations that had taken place (with their use of brief placement questionnaires and de-brief sessions) and the lack of studies that explored student or graduates' experiences of such placements in any depth. I believe that it is the students' voices that placement tutors need to hear if placement experiences are to be designed with their needs in mind. However, my initial enthusiasm was re-ignited when anecdotal reports from students started to highlight the developmental opportunities they were experiencing. These reinforced my desire to explore their experiences in more depth so that their voice could be reflected alongside those of educators, managers and academics, although I was now more mindful of the need to ensure that students had the opportunity to present both positive and negative experiences. Reflecting on my feelings about the literature I became aware of the way in which my own ontology and epistemology (as discussed in the following chapter) were in fact influencing the type of literature I was drawn to and the type of study that I wanted to design.

When I started this research, literature in Britain was minimal and it was clear that there was a need for further inquiry. However, whilst carrying out the research a number of papers emerged from other placement tutors who also started to explore this research topic. As a doctoral student this initially gave cause for concern that my research question was being explored by others and that I would not be able to offer a new perspective by the time my dissertation was complete and findings published. However, whilst these papers include students' views they do not explore these in the depth that I believe is required to gain a rich understanding of the meaning that such placements hold for students in their transition to becoming occupational therapists. In addition, there remains a lack of research that considers

the influence of such placements on practice once qualified, a vital area of exploration. The following chapter discusses the methodology used to answer the research questions.

2.9 Chapter summary

This part of the thesis has provided a critical review of literature relating to occupational therapy practice education, adult learning theories, Government and professional policy and trends in health and social care practice. Whilst placements have long been accepted as an important part of occupational therapy education, concern is increasingly been raised that placement opportunities may not be adequately preparing graduates for practice in current and future climates. In order to ensure that graduates remain viable as future practitioners, authors argue that practice education needs to become more innovative, with role-emerging placements being suggested as one such useful innovation. Appraisal of the role-emerging placement literature highlighted mixed rationale for their use in occupational therapy curricula and contrasting opinion regarding their perceived benefits and limitations. Gaps in literature and limitations of existing studies were identified that led to the formulation of the research questions and aims presented. The chapter concluded with a continuation of the reflexive account. The following chapter presents the research methodology.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter presents the rationale for using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as the methodology for this study. To enhance transparency, the research design is described in detail including information about participants and how they were recruited, how ethical issues were addressed, data collection and analysis procedures and strategies employed to ensure rigour throughout the research process. Consideration is given to the epistemological and ontological positions underpinning the research and how these relate to the research questions, aims and choice of methodology. A review of the theoretical origins of IPA is provided as well as a critical evaluation of the approach. The chapter concludes with a reflexive account of the methodological journey.

Methodology is the research design or strategy that influences the choice and use of data collection methods (Clough and Nutbrown 2002, Crotty 2005). It stems from the aims of the study, includes consideration of philosophical positions and theoretical frameworks and provides a rationale for why particular methods have been chosen to answer the research questions. To identify the most appropriate approach, Finlay (2006a, p9) suggests that researchers engage in a process of 'mapping methodology': ensuring congruence between research questions and aims, researcher's epistemology, ontology, theoretical framework and chosen methods of data collection and analysis.

The research questions and aims clearly required an approach that would enable an understanding of the students' lived experiences of their role-emerging placements and how they made sense of these experiences. Such aims would best be met through talking and listening to the students rather than through objective measuring, hypothesis testing or observation. This required consideration of qualitative methodologies and philosophical positions.

3.1 Philosophical considerations

3.1.1 Interpretivist paradigm

Paradigms are "world views that signal distinctive ontological, epistemological and methodological positions" (Sandelowski 2000, p247), or perhaps can more simply be described as the values and beliefs about the world that guide the research process. Paradigms

can be likened to the lenses through which the whole research process is viewed and examples include positivism, interpretivism, and critical inquiry (Crotty 2005). This study is located within an interpretivist paradigm. An overview of the principles underpinning this perspective is now presented along with consideration of the way in which my professional background has influenced my position as an interpretivist researcher.

Interpretivism is concerned with the way in which people make sense of and attribute meaning to their everyday experiences, taking into consideration the world in which they are located (Crotty 2005). Interpretivists uphold the belief that meanings are constructed by humans as they engage with each other and the world around them and that through these interactions they make sense of their life experiences. These meanings are constructed, negotiated and contextual (influenced for example by the cultural, social, ethnic, age, gender characteristics of individuals and the world in which they find themselves) and, as such, interpretivists argue that "reality is fluid and constituted in and of the moment it is lived" (Shaw 2010, p234).

This interpretivist perspective is based on a constructionist epistemology which "is the view that all knowledge is contingent on human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty 2005, p42). It assumes an inter-relationship between the 'social actor' and the world and that through this dynamic interplay social reality is created (Berger and Luckman 1967). As such it is argued that knowledge is a result of human perception and social experience which is both context and person bound and not 'out there' waiting to be discovered (Denzin and Lincoln 1998, Crotty 2005). My epistemology and ontology are discussed further in the following sections.

I believe my interpretivist position has been strongly influenced by my education as an occupational therapist. Occupational therapy is underpinned by a belief that individuals create meaning in their lives through what they do (Wilcock 2006). The person and their occupational engagement are embedded within a socio-cultural context and as such it is argued that humans and their environment need to be studied as a whole (Kielhofner 2006, Wilcock 2006). Yerxa (1992, p80) highlighted how, in 1922, Adolph Meyer, one of the first philosophers of occupational therapy, emphasized the role of life experience, arguing that it is

only possible to understand the human mind through its interaction with everyday life and that subjective experience is "data worthy of study".

This view appears to have influenced current trends in occupational therapy research where interpretivist approaches to inquiry are increasingly being used to provide data which is based on personal experiences, context bound and with a sense of 'realness' in terms of representing the complexities of human experience. This trend is in contrast to some founders of the profession who adopted a more positivist approach to ways of knowing, suggesting that occupational therapy should develop scientific foundations for practice in the same way that medicine did in the early 20th century (Yerxa 1992). This positivist paradigm is based on a realist ontology and foundational epistemology that there is a reality 'out there' independent of our consciousness that will eventually be 'discovered' and provide the building blocks upon which knowledge can be structured (Crotty 2005).

Yerxa (1992) suggested that the early founders of occupational therapy may have considered it necessary for the emerging profession to adopt this positivist paradigm in order to develop an alliance with medicine as the dominant ideology of the time. Today however we see the continuing influence of the positivist paradigm through practices such as diagnostic testing, standardized assessment, outcome measurement and an evidence based hierarchy of knowledge which places randomized controlled trials at the top as the 'gold standard' to which scientific enquiry should aspire (Hyde 2004, Blair and Robertson 2005, Nicholls 2009). I would however argue that this hierarchy principally supports positivist research traditions and makes little allowance for that which focuses on individual lived realities and experiences which cannot be measured, manipulated or quantified.

Whilst acknowledging the need for evidence-based practice, the positivist paradigm causes problems for me as an occupational therapist where my practice is underpinned by values such as uniqueness and autonomy of individuals and where clinical decision-making and intervention are seen as collaborative interactions between the client and therapist. It would appear that a positivist epistemology is limited in developing the profession's knowledge base where the focus of inquiry concerns the individual in interaction with their environment (Duncan and Nicol 2004, Wilcock 2006, Creek 2009). I argue that positivism ignores aspects of human experience such as personal meanings which are crucial to understanding humans as occupational beings and do not believe that individuals can be reduced to component parts

or viewed as context free. As such, the positivist paradigm is considered incongruent with much of the philosophy underpinning my occupational therapy practice and personal values as a researcher.

In relation to this study I therefore assert an interpretivist view that meanings are created by students whilst they are engaging with and interpreting their 'placement world' and further understood and constructed through engagement in the research process; talking and making sense of that experience with the researcher and co-constructing knowledge about the placement phenomena. However whilst these meanings may serve to create a 'reality' for that student, it is acknowledged that they are fluid, contextualised and influenced by me as the researcher. As such, whilst I believe that I can gain some understanding of their placement experience, no one student's meaning or 'reality' has authority over another. Furthermore, whilst interpretative phenomenological analysis was considered an approach that would enable a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences to emerge it was acknowledged that the themes presented in this thesis would be one possible interpretation and that "no single interpretation will ever exhaust the possibility of yet another complementary or even potentially richer or deeper description" (van Manen, 2007, p31). Through consideration of the concepts underpinning interpretivism and contrasting paradigms, it was apparent that it was the one most congruent with the research aims. I will now explore my epistemological and ontological positions in more detail.

3.1.2 Epistemological position

Epistemology concerns the nature and production of knowledge (Crotty 2005, Finlay 2006a). It is concerned with issues such as how we come to know and what constitutes knowledge and evidence. Various epistemological stances can be adopted depending on the researcher's beliefs about how knowledge is generated and what constitutes legitimate knowledge. These include objectivism (things exist and have inherent meaning independent of our consciousness of them and that it is possible to discover the objective truth), constructionism (the relationship between object and observer results in meaning and knowledge being constructed rather than discovered) and subjectivism (meaning is imposed on an object by the observer and not a result of any dynamic inter-play) (Crotty 2005). As previously identified, life experience has led to my epistemological position as a constructionist.

This constructionist view argues that meaning is not inherent in objects, waiting to be discovered, but constructed through a dynamic interplay between a person and the objects in the world with which they are interacting. Links can clearly be seen here with the phenomenological writings of Heidegger who proposed that "consciousness is not separate from the world of human existence" (Dowling 2007, p133) and that 'Being-in-the-world' requires interdependence between the person and world in which they live (Crotty 2005). As such, a 'contextualist' view also prevails which acknowledges the influence that the social context has on the way individuals ascribe meaning to and make sense of an experience (Braun and Clarke 2006, Larkin et al 2006).

In relation to this study, I consider that it is not possible to gain an understanding of role-emerging placements in isolation from the students that are experiencing them. As they engage in the placement the students reflect on, interpret and make sense of their experiences. Such interpretations take place and are highly influenced by their past experiences and understandings as well as the context of the placement (both within the setting and the wider context of the university and professional expectations) and their future goals and aspirations. As I engage in dialogue with each student, I too will bring my own pre-existing understandings, assumptions and experiences which influence and shape the way that I interpret the student's experience. The knowledge that is therefore created is an interpretation and co-construction of an understanding of their experience and not a representation of the reality of either participant or researcher in isolation (Koch 1999, van Manen 2007). The knowledge created is therefore fluid and contextual but nevertheless insightful.

3.1.3 Ontological position

Ontology concerns a person's perception of the nature of reality and their existence (being) in the world. Various ontological stances exist including realism (there is a real world out there that exists independent of our knowledge of it) and relativism (there is no one reality; instead there are multiple realities which depend on individual experiences and interpretations) (Crotty 2005).

Whilst a relativist ontology might appear most congruent with a constructionist epistemology, Crotty (2005, p3) proposed that constructionists are "at once realist and relativist". Taylor and White (2000, p25) similarly argued that constructionism "does not deny the existence of things" but instead that meanings emerge as a result of an individual becoming conscious of

an object or phenomena, interacting with and making sense of it. Through human interaction, meanings are constructed and consensus is achieved regarding 'reality' but due to the unique cultures and contexts in which such interactions and meaning constructions take place, the relativist nature of this 'reality' is acknowledged. As such it is argued that reality is a result of human perception, social experience and shared understandings which are context bound and not 'out there' waiting to be discovered (Denzin and Lincoln 1998, Crotty 2005). Taking this middle ground between realism and relativism therefore led me to identify my ontological position as critical or 'subtle' realism (Finlay 2006a, Duncan and Nicol 2004).

From this ontological position it is argued that although there is a 'reality' that can be studied in a systematic way, socio-cultural influences on the way reality is experienced mean that it can never be known with material certainty (Denzin and Lincoln 1998, Mays and Pope 2000, Duncan and Nicol 2004). This supports my view of reality that accepts the existence of things but acknowledges the important influences that the individual, culture and researcher have on how reality is experienced, interpreted and understood. It is also congruent with my belief that an individual's account of an experience can tell us something about their perception of that experience and as such their 'reality'. To present an example in relation to this study, I argue that occupational therapy students are required to engage in placements as part of their undergraduate education and are therefore a 'reality' in terms of their education. However, this 'reality' will be experienced differently by each student and as such is unlikely to be known with certainty. Despite this, previous experience and discussions with students indicate that there are commonalities in the way these placements are experienced and as such the 'reality' can become better understood.

3.1.4 Role of the researcher

In adopting an interpretative stance I acknowledge that I am part of the world I am studying and recognise that my own values, assumptions and experiences will have impacted on the final outcome of this study. Unlike positivist research, where objectivity is to be maintained at all costs so as not to interfere with uncovering the 'truth', researcher 'bias' is accepted and indeed embraced within the interpretivist paradigm (Finlay 2006a). Conroy (2003, p9) argued that knowledge is co-constructed between research participants and researcher as a result of interpretation and re-interpretation, with each interaction "building on each other's understandings over a period of time". As such, rather than trying to eradicate the influence

of the researcher, interpretivists view the researcher as a valuable research instrument and make explicit their role in constructing knowledge and meanings that emerge.

Whilst my role as the researcher is acknowledged, the influences that I have had on the research need to be made explicit to allow the reader to make decisions about the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. Finlay (2006b) and Shaw (2010) reinforce the importance of researcher reflexivity in ensuring critical self awareness throughout the research process. Indeed, King et al (2008, p96) suggests that without such reflexivity "we run the risk of letting our unelucidated prejudices dominate our research findings". A reflexive journal was therefore kept to help identify the way in which my personal values, feelings, experiences, assumptions, pre-understandings and interests may have influenced various stages of the research process. This journal formed the basis for the reflexive account that runs throughout this thesis.

3.2 Interpretative phenomenological analysis

Emerging in the mid 1990s (Smith 1996), interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) has since become well established in health psychology for exploring in depth how individuals experience and ascribe meaning to a specific phenomenon (Brocki and Weardon 2006, Smith 2011). With its idiographic focus on exploring and understanding an individual's lived experience of a particular phenomenon, IPA was identified as the methodological approach most congruent with the aims of this study, the philosophy underpinning my practice as an occupational therapist and my position within the interpretivist paradigm.

With its focus on understanding the "cognitive, linguistic, affective and physical being" (Finlay 2006a, p15) IPA is strongly influenced by phenomenology. Finlay (2006c) highlights how phenomenology is both a philosophy and an approach to research, which allows in-depth exploration of how phenomena appear to us in our consciousness and the nature and meaning of such phenomena. As such, IPA is an inductive approach concerned with understanding an individual's personal account of a particular experience and the sense that individuals make of their experience rather than trying to find causal explanations for events or produce objective facts (Smith and Osborn 2008, Smith 2011). The inductive nature of the approach allows ideas and themes to emerge from personal accounts rather than imposing a pre-determined hypothesis or theory, thus opening the researcher up to possibilities that had not been considered or expected (Shaw 2001).

In addition to the phenomenological focus which will shortly be discussed, Smith et al (2009) emphasise the interpretative element of the approach, highlighting the active role of both the participant and researcher in a dynamic research process. Whilst the aim of IPA is to understand a person's 'life world', it is acknowledged that it is not possible to have direct access to this world because this is influenced by the researcher's own experiences, values and pre-understandings, which are considered necessary in interpreting and making sense of an individual's experiences (Smith et al 2009, Smith 2011). This dual process is referred to as a double hermeneutic whereby "the participants are trying to make sense of their world, the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world" (Smith and Osborn 2008, p53). It is this emphasis on interpretation that moves the IPA researcher away from simply describing the individual's experience towards an understanding of the phenomenon that is inclusive of both the individual and the researcher. Such interpretations are also recognised as influenced by the social and cultural context in which the data is gathered (Reid et al 2005, Smith et al 2009). Shaw (2001, p49) suggests that it is this recognition of how contextual factors influence meaning construction that results in not only unique experiences being uncovered but also in revealing shared aspects of an experience across individuals that result from the "external forces within a culture". IPA is therefore concerned with developing a deeper understanding of what an experience is like for an individual whilst at the same time asking questions of the texts and language used by participants to try and make sense of the experiences within the socio-cultural context.

IPA also adopts an idiographic approach that requires the researcher to analyse each case in turn before patterns are explored across cases (Smith et al 2009, Smith 2011). This offered me a person-centred approach that allowed a deep exploration and understanding of each student's unique personal experience of their role-emerging placement as well as looking for commonalities and divergences, taking into consideration the socio-cultural context in which students were located. This was consistent with occupational therapy philosophy which values the uniqueness of an individual's experience and meanings but at the same time views the individual as embedded within a socio-cultural context and as such cannot be considered in isolation from their environment (Finlay 1999, Wilding and Whiteford 2005, Wilcock 2006).

Consideration is now given to the theoretical principles underpinning IPA and informing this study.

3.3 Theoretical perspectives

The decision to use IPA was influenced by its theoretical origins in phenomenology, hermeneutics and symbolic interactionism (Smith et al 2009). Literature on each of these is vast and cannot be considered in full within the constraints of this thesis. However the main principles that have been identified in the literature as relevant to the development of IPA (Smith et al 2009) are considered.

3.3.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology as a philosophy was developed by Edmund Husserl in the 1900s and later extended by philosophers such as Heidegger, Gadamer, Merleu-Ponty and Sartre. Philosophically, phenomenology focuses on the 'life world' of human beings and a person's 'lived experience' of a particular phenomenon and the meaning of the phenomenon as it is directly experienced. This has influenced thinking within qualitative research where phenomenology is now widely used as research methodology to describe and understand a person's everyday world in order to gain a deeper insight into the phenomena being studied (Finlay 1999, Crotty 2005, Holloway 2005, van Manen 2007). Dall'Alba (2009c) suggests that phenomenology has made a valuable contribution to education, providing new insights into the way in which students experience and make sense of their learning.

Whilst the key area of concern for a phenomenologist remains the 'lived experience', opinions have differed as to the extent to which meanings can be described without interpretation. As such, two main branches of phenomenological philosophy have developed; descriptive and hermeneutic (Crotty 2005, Holloway 2005). Husserlian descriptive phenomenology is now discussed followed by a consideration of hermeneutic phenomenology based predominately on the work of Heidegger and Gadamer.

Husserl's descriptive phenomenology, sometimes referred to as 'empirical' or 'transcendental' phenomenology (Todres 2005, Rapport 2005, Willig 2008), focuses on the 'life world' of an individual which "comprises the world of objects as we perceive them and our experiences of our self, body and relationships" (Finlay 2005, p1). Husserl adopted from his mentor Brentano a key concept of 'intentionality' as the starting point of his philosophy,

arguing that every conscious act is consciousness of something and, as such, an object and the perceiver cannot be separated (Finlay 1999, Crotty 2005). Epistemologically, Husserl regards experience as the fundamental source of knowledge and argues that the 'essence' of a phenomenon (or the qualities that make something what it is, common to everyone experiencing that phenomenon) can be understood only by separating the mental act of consciousness from the object or phenomena towards which it is directed, visiting a person's immediate conscious experience of it prior to any reflections or explanations being imposed (Koch 1999, Todres 2005, Dowling 2007, van Manen 2007). This is in stark contrast to logical positivism that argues it is only data gathered through the senses, and tested through scientific methods such as experiments and observations, that can be classified as 'facts' or knowledge (Crotty 2005). However, Husserl's belief that the 'essence' of a phenomenon can be understood without consideration of its context appears to highlight his commitment to the traditional sciences and attempt to explore human experience in an objective scientific manner.

Husserl argues that through a transcendental process of 'epoche' or bracketing out pre-understandings, pre-suppositions, attitudes and cultural influences, which are considered barriers to understanding the essential qualities of an experience, it is possible to carry out a detached analysis of the act of consciousness and see how the world is perceived and experienced from another viewpoint (Finlay 1999, Dowling 2005, Rapport 2005, van Manen 2007). The aim of phenomenology for Husserl is therefore to engage in a process of 'phenomenological reduction' in order to describe and understand the essential features of a phenomenon free from the constraints of the cultural context in which it is located and get "back to the things themselves" (Smith et al 2009, p12). As a result, Crotty (2005, p78) suggests that "possibilities for new meanings emerge for us or we witness at least an authentication and enhancement of former meaning".

Smith et al (2009) highlight how Husserlian phenomenology has influenced IPA through its exploration of individual consciousness and 'lived experience'. However, IPA is not fully congruent with the underlying principles of Husserlian phenomenology. Whilst the aim of IPA is to understand the individual's perspective, it is argued that it is not possible to bracket out the researcher's values and beliefs but instead consider these necessary in understanding and making sense of the person's experiences (Smith et al 2009). This is consistent with my interpretivist stance and would suggest that Husserlian phenomenology does not therefore

enable me as a researcher to be both interpretative and phenomenological. Having carefully considered the Husserlian position in light of the specifics of my inquiry it became apparent that some of its precepts did not fit. It therefore became necessary to consider the principles underpinning hermeneutic phenomenology.

3.3.2 Hermeneutic phenomenology

Hermeneutics is concerned with art or practice and theory of interpretation. It is a term that was originally associated with the interpretation of scriptures but is now more widely applied to the interpretation of a wider range of texts with the aim of developing a deeper understanding of the meaning inherent in the text (including meanings that may not have been recognised by the author) (Lopez and Willis 2004, Crotty 2005, Holloway 2005, Smith et al 2009). It is underpinned by the belief that meanings and personal realities are reflected in the language we use. Smith et al (2009) highlight the areas of concern for hermeneutic theorists as the possibility of revealing the intentions and meaning of the author through the language that has been used and exploration of the content of the text in relation to the context in which the interpretation took place.

Whilst hermeneutics is a body of thought in its own right it has been brought together with phenomenology as 'interpretative' or 'hermeneutic phenomenology. As an interpretative methodology, IPA is strongly influenced by hermeneutics, in particular the work of Heidegger, Gadamer, Merleu-Ponty and Sartre (Smith 2007, Smith et al 2009). Consideration of the key principles underpinning hermeneutic phenomenology is now given.

Heidegger was an existential philosopher whose interest was ontology. In perhaps what is considered his most influential work *Being and Time* (1973/ 1927), Heidegger's concern was existence and the question of the meaning of being. Heideggerian phenomenology is concerned with 'Being-in-the-world', in relation to understanding the meaning or nature of a particular phenomenon and the way that humans understand themselves, exist, act and interact in the world (Lopez and Willis 2004, Crotty 2005, Dowling 2007, Smith et al 2009). For Heidegger, human beings do not relate simply to the world as subject-object but as beings whose experiences and interpretations of themselves (influenced by their relations with the world in which they live) form an essential part of their reality (Rapport 2005). Unlike Husserl, Heidegger proposes that "consciousness is not separate from the world of human existence" (Dowling 2007, p133) and, as such, upholds the belief that all experiences are

always subject to interpretation and influenced by context, language and culture. He therefore adopts a more existential, reflexive focus for his phenomenology, "exploring a person's sense of self, space, time, embodiment and relations with others" (Finlay 2005, p2). Heidegger's (1973/ 1927) hermeneutic phenomenology therefore, whilst also concerned with the 'lived experience', differs from Husserlian phenomenology in the emphasis it places on interpretation and understanding of meaning and an individual's reality rather than a description of consciousness (Finlay 1999, Dowling 2007, van Manen 2007).

Heidegger focused on understanding and interpretation "believing that it was through language and speech that our 'Being-in-the-world' was both manifest and understood" (Rapport 2005, p127). Unlike Husserl, who attempted to bracket out existing values, judgements and experiences in order to objectively understand the essence of the phenomenon being studied, Heidegger emphasises that there is always an element of personal engagement that arises from being 'thrown into the world' (Smith et al 2009, p18) where some events, objects and experiences have more value, meaning and purpose than others and that these form the basis for interpreting and making sense of our experiences. Heidegger (1973 / 1927) thus argues that our experiences are always interpreted based on our 'fore-conceptions' (previous experience, assumptions, values, preconceptions) and that it is not possible to bracket these out (Koch 1999, Lopez and Willis 2004, Smith et al 2009). Finlay (1999, p302) highlights how Heidegger emphasised the influence of 'historicality' and importance of the cultural-social background of an individual that "gives us a pre-understanding from which we can understand and be in the world". Such 'fore-conceptions' and historicality need to be made explicit in order to prevent them acting as barriers to our understanding of an experience or phenomena, hence the importance of reflexivity (Finlay 2006b). Smith (2007) however suggests that we may not always be aware of such preconceptions and that it is not until we are actively engaged in the process of interpretation and understanding that our awareness of such preconceptions emerges.

This point is also raised in the work of Gadamer (1985/ 1965) when discussing the concept of the hermeneutic circle, the process by which an individual reaches an understanding of a phenomenon. Gadamer argues that interpretation takes place from the researcher's own 'horizon' which includes all their existing prejudices and pre-understandings, influenced by the socio-cultural context in which they are situated. He proposes that it is only possible to understand a phenomenon better once we question and amend our fore-structures (our

background, values, experiences) and prejudices, a process that requires a dynamic and reflexive approach moving back and forth between the pre-understandings, interpretations and what is being presented (Finlay 1999, Koch 1999, Dowling 2007, Debesay et al 2008). This is different to the concept of 'bracketing' as the prejudices and pre-understandings are not put to one side but are examined alongside what is being presented in order to help make richer sense of the phenomenon (Walsh 1996). The re-interpretation that then takes place expands the original 'horizon' and moves the researcher towards a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and to what Gadamer (1985/ 1965, p273) calls a 'fusion of horizons'. The concept of the hermeneutic circle is evident in IPA through the iterative approach to data analysis which enables the researcher to identify new ways of thinking about a phenomenon (Willig 2008, Smith et al 2009).

Another existential phenomenologist who influenced the development of IPA is Merleau-Ponty (Smith et al 2009). Concerned with developing an understanding of an individual's 'lived experience', Merleau-Ponty emphasises the relationship between the body and the world, focusing on space, time and human relations as we experience them (Dowling 2007). Similarly, Van Manen (2007, p101) offers four "existentials" of 'body', 'space', 'time' and 'relations to others' as a way of guiding analysis in phenomenological research. Whilst IPA studies are likely to differ in the emphasis they place on the 'body-in-the-world', Smith et al (2009, p19) states that it is significant and "should not be ignored or overlooked".

Finally, Smith et al (2009) acknowledge the influence of Jean-Paul Sartre whose concern is the developmental nature of humans and the 'action-orientated projects' in which they engage in order to realise their true self. Sartre (2007/ 1943) focuses on how individuals are always in a process of 'becoming' rather than 'being' as advocated by Heidegger. These concepts appear congruent with occupational science literature where it is argued that occupation is a blend of 'doing, being and becoming' (Wilcock 1999, 2006). Here, it is suggested that humans actively need to engage in occupation ('doing') and that through this engagement they can find their true sense of self ('being') and transform into the individuals that they have the potential and will to become ('becoming') (Wilcock 1999, 2006). In relation to this study, students' education could be considered part of their existential project (how they see themselves and who they want to become). As students, it could be suggested that they are engaged in meaningful 'action-orientated projects' in terms of the placements and education

they undertake in order to develop their identity and achieve their goal of becoming a therapist.

3.3.3 Symbolic Interactionism

In addition to phenomenology and hermeneutics, IPA is influenced by symbolic interactionism (Smith et al 2009). This is underpinned by the belief that humans are social beings and how we act, behave and interact is dependent on our relations with other beings and the meaning we ascribe to particular things and situations (Blumer 1969, Benzies and Allen 2001, Bluff 2005, Crotty 2005). An important theoretical perspective within sociology, symbolic interactionism derives from the works of George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) and Herbert Blumer (1900-1986) who suggest that people act towards things that have meaning for them. Nothing in the world is considered to have intrinsic meaning and it is only through interaction and experience that people make sense of their lives and meaning is created (Blumer 1969, Bluff 2005, Crotty 2005). Benzies and Allen (2001) state that, for symbolic interactionists, individual's structure the external world by their perceptions and interpretations of how they regard that world to be. Of importance is the relationship between the individual and their environment. Here, the two are considered to be "inextricably linked through reciprocal relationships" (Benzies and Allen 2001, p542) with ideas and behaviours changing in response to the individual's perception of the world but influenced by the constraints and characteristics of the environment. Benzies and Allen (2001, p543) state that, in his consideration of the 'self', Mead differentiated between "the spontaneous 'I' and the socially constructed 'me'", holding the view that "the self is a process of interaction between the 'I' and the 'me'". For researchers therefore, the focus of investigation is on understanding the individual's world, the way in which personal meanings are created through interpretation and social interaction and the influence this has on their behaviours and ongoing (re)negotiation of self.

This view that people are orientated towards meaningful things is again congruent with occupational therapy philosophy whereby individuals are seen as occupational beings who engage in occupations that have a sense of meaning and purpose. It is such occupations that are considered conducive to their health and well-being. In relation to this study, it could be argued that occupational therapy students engage in role-emerging placements as they are meaningful and have a sense of purpose in relation to attaining their chosen career. Through their engagement in the placement world it is possible that the students construct personal

meanings and build a sense of identity. Through a process of interaction and interpretation between student and researcher it is argued that these meanings can be understood (Smith et al 2009).

3.4 Consideration of IPA in relation to other approaches

3.4.1 Grounded Theory

IPA has been compared with grounded theory (GT), with authors often failing to identify the difference between the two (Willig 2008). Although often referred to as a methodology (Bluff 2005), GT is the outcome of a process originally described and recommended by Glaser and Straus (1967). Smith et al (2009) argue that IPA is different from grounded theory in its focus on an individual's experience and psychological world rather than social processes. Whilst, for example, GT is concerned with generating a theoretical, conceptual account or explanation of a social phenomenon or process, IPA provides rich detailed accounts of individuals' experiences (Smith et al 2009, Willig 2008). Whilst both GT and IPA adopt an inductive approach to data analysis, and often use similar methods of data collection, in order to generate broader theoretical accounts GT requires substantially larger amounts of data collection than IPA studies. Theoretical sampling is used with GT to identify participants that will help to develop theory and continues until data analysis reaches saturation (Stanley 2006). In contrast, IPA focuses on small sample groups to develop a richer, more detailed understanding of a phenomenon. Whilst the outcome of an IPA study may suggest that theory development is possible (Smith et al 2009, Pringle et al 2011) this is not the primary aim as is the case for grounded theory.

As the intention of the current study is to develop a deeper understanding of students' experiences of placement and not to generate theory, grounded theory was considered unsuitable as a methodology for this study.

3.4.2 Discourse Analysis

Whilst IPA and discourse analysis (DA) are both concerned with the qualitative analysis of language, IPA differs from DA in its regard for the role of cognition (Reid et al 2005, Smith et al 1999, Smith et al 2009, Smith 2011). Where IPA is concerned with linking language to an individual's underlying thoughts, beliefs, motivations, attitudes and subsequent behaviours in order to understand how they make sense of their experiences, discourse analysis rejects this notion and focuses instead on the function of language in the construction of social

reality, the way it is used to achieve social objectives and the structure of the specific context in which the individual is located (Ballinger and Cheek 2006, Biggerstaff and Thompson 2008, Smith et al 2009, Smith 2011). Willig (2008, p94) summarises this succinctly when stating that for discourse analysts "language constructs rather than represents social reality".

Much discourse analysis draws on the work of Michel Foucault and adopts a more post-modern, relativist view than IPA suggesting that social reality is constructed through various contextual discourses which ensure ways of thinking that either facilitate or exclude particular realities. Foucault (1977) argues that there is a direct link between power and knowledge where the knowledge that underpins particular discourses is used to gain dominance over and exclude or marginalise others (cited in Ballinger and Cheek 2006, p201). The ways that people therefore position themselves, speak, behave and interact are considered to be the result of the context in which they find themselves and the discourses that are in play. Ideally, DA uses naturally occurring texts to explore the ways in which these discourses are present (or absent) and how they influence the construction of social reality (Smith et al 1999, Reid et al 2005, Ballinger and Cheek 2006, Willig 2008, Smith et al 2009).

In respect of research it is argued that discourses influence the way in which an event is talked about and that an individual will respond to the researcher's questions depending on the context and discourses that are influencing them at the time. It is these discourses that are considered the important focus for analysis in order to make sense of social reality. This is in contrast to IPA where the focus remains on understanding an individual's experience of that reality. In respect of the current study, with its critical realist epistemology, I argue that there is a link between what a person says and what they think and feel and as such language does indeed tell us something about that person's experience. With the aim of this study to explore students' subjective experiences of their placements and not the discourses that influence that experience, DA was not considered an appropriate methodology.

3.4.3 Narrative

Narrative analysis has some overlap with IPA through its exploration of how individuals ascribe meaning to life experiences. In narrative research, individuals tell stories of past experiences and then through narrative analysis attempts are made to explore these stories in order to understand the person's experience and how the stories are used by the individual to make sense of their life experiences (Willig 2008, Smith et al 2009). Narratives are

considered an important way for individuals to make connections between events in their lives: to provide structure to their temporal and often disorganised world and create meaning from their life experiences (Murray 2008, Willig 2008). Where narrative analysis differs from IPA is its focus on the story itself. Whilst similar to IPA in its exploration of a story's content, narrative analysis is also concerned with how stories are constructed, why they are told in a particular way (Kohler Riessman 1993).

Similar to IPA interviews, narratives are recognised as being constructed within a specific socio-cultural context. As such, stories are likely to vary depending on where they are told, to whom and why (Kohler Riessman 1993). Narratives are generally told as a sequence of events with a beginning, middle and end and then, depending on the research question and desired outcome, various types of narrative analysis take place, for example looking at the content, tone, structure, linguistic choices, emergent themes, function or social and psychological implications of the stories (Kohler Riessman 1993, Murray 2008, Willig 2008, Smith et al 2009).

With the focus of the current study on understanding the specific experiences of the students rather than exploring their wider narrative life or the way in which these experiences are told and constructed, it was felt that IPA offered a more appropriate methodology than narrative analysis.

3.4.4 Thematic analysis

Some authors have questioned the extent to which IPA is different from thematic analysis (Willig 2008) and as such brief consideration of thematic analysis is necessary.

Thematic analysis is a commonly used approach for analysis of qualitative data. It is a process that enables a researcher to organise data and identify common themes and patterns both within and across the data (Green and Thorogood 2004, Braun and Clarke 2006). As a tool for data analysis it is not constrained by pre-existing theoretical frameworks or attributed to any one particular form of qualitative inquiry and has thus been used flexibly across different qualitative methodologies (Braun and Clarke 2006). It could be suggested that all qualitative analysis is thematic and that it simply depends on what the researcher is looking for as to how it is applied. However, whilst it can vary in its complexity, it would appear that most thematic analysis does not involve deep exploration or interpretation of the data. Braun

and Clarke (2006, p78) suggest that it is a 'foundational method of qualitative analysis' that researchers should learn in order to develop skills of analysis which can then be transferred to other types of qualitative research. Green and Thorogood (2004) also indicate that other approaches may be required for deeper data analysis.

Whilst IPA uses a form of thematic analysis, authors argue that IPA requires a much more detailed exploration and level of interpretation (Smith et al 1999, Smith et al 2009, Hefferon and Gil-Rodriguez 2011). As such, IPA was considered more useful than thematic analysis in enabling me to develop the depth of understanding and insight needed for this study. This was confirmed when I carried out the data analysis. Where I felt it would have been possible with thematic analysis to simply identify emergent themes, IPA required me to explore the data in a more interpretative manner, drilling down into the students' accounts in order to try and understand and make sense of what they were saying. This facilitated a much deeper understanding of how the students ascribed meaning to their placement experience.

3.5 Limitations of IPA

Whilst IPA was identified as an appropriate methodology for this study it was important to acknowledge its potential limitations. Firstly, it is a relatively new approach and as such is still being developed and reviewed as a research tool (Larkin et al 2006). It is also an approach that has been developed within health psychology and at this time is new to other disciplines. Whilst I, along with others, have suggested that IPA could offer a useful approach for other disciplines such as occupational therapy (Clarke 2009, Cronin-Davis et al 2009), it has not been widely used by the profession. Similarly, with its roots in health psychology, most IPA research has focused on 'illness experience' (Smith 2011) and as such its use has not been widely reported in educational research. However, of relevance to this study, are authors who have illustrated how IPA can be used to explore issues of identity (Smith 1994, de Visser and Smith 2006, de Visser and Smith 2007, Smith and Osborn 2007, Dickson et al 2008, de Visser et al 2009). I therefore believe that the principles underpinning the approach, and the flexibility in its application, made it a useful and relevant methodology for the exploration of student experience. The IPA research community, which includes a website, regional support groups, discussion forums, training sessions and an annual conference made IPA accessible to me as a researcher from another discipline.

Giorgi (2010 raises a number of concerns in his critique of IPA, the first being that it has little grounding in continental philosophy. This is a view that, in his response to Giorgi's paper, Smith (2010) argues is inaccurate, noting the various papers and books that have explored the relationship between IPA, phenomenology and hermeneutics (Smith 2004, Smith 2007, Eatough and Smith 2008, Smith et al 2009). It would appear from Giorgi's reference list that he had not explored this literature and certainly excluded Smith et al's (2009) book where detailed consideration is given to the theoretical perspectives and key authors that have influenced the development of IPA.

Giorgi (2010, p6) goes on to claim that IPA practices "are not scientifically sound". He raises concern about its lack of a prescriptive approach and issues of replicability. Giorgi argues that if each researcher is free to adapt the method as they see fit and details are not provided of how a study is carried out then this prevents others from being able to check the findings or replicate the study. This in Giorgi's opinion does not meet scientific criteria. However, it would appear that this is a misinterpretation of IPA and that Giorgi is using different 'scientific' criteria to Smith.

Although Giorgi (2010) criticises IPA for the lack of a prescriptive approach, there are clear guidelines for good IPA practice (Smith and Osborn 2008, Smith et al 2009) which provide a balance between prescription and flexibility. Smith (2010) argues that he is not able, or wanting, to prescribe carefully organised steps that may be evident in a quantitative study but has sought to offer useful guidelines for practice. These, he acknowledges, do not necessarily mean that high quality research will be carried out as this is dependent on the skills of the researcher. With regards replication, with its focus on developing deeper understandings of individual's experiences, IPA studies are unlikely to be replicable in the more quantative or positivist sense that Giorgi appears to be using the term. This does not fit comfortably with qualitative research. Smith (2010, p189) suggests "replicability is not an appropriate referent for judging qualitative research" and that other criteria should be used to judge the quality of a study. In relation to checking findings there is clear advice that the approach taken within a study needs to be fully documented, allowing a reader to assess the trustworthiness of the findings (Smith and Osborn 2008, Eatough and Smith 2008, Smith et al 2009, Smith 2010).

Practically, one of the main issues highlighted in the IPA literature is the length of time required to analyse the data in sufficient and appropriate depth (Larkin et al 2006, Smith and

Osborn 2008, Hefferon and Gil-Rodriguez 2011). Larkin et al (2006, p103) warn that "IPA can be easy to do badly and difficult to do well", a view supported by Hefferon and Gil-Rodriguez (2011) who suggest that students often fail to move beyond description and provide insufficient data extracts to support their analysis. I agree that IPA is a lengthy and detailed process that required a significant amount of time and commitment from me as the researcher. There were many times when I felt overwhelmed by the amount of data generated and I was always anxious about whether my interpretations were at the sufficient depth required of a good IPA study. In addition, whilst IPA values the dynamic interpretative relationship between participant and researcher it was difficult at times to recognise my own biases and ensure that data analysis was grounded in the individual's experiences and not representative of my own values, beliefs and pre-judgements. It was here that both supervision and reflexivity played an important role.

Brocki and Wearden (2006) highlight the lack of advice about how much the researcher should interact with the participant or start to interpret data within the interview in order to ask further questions. This has the potential to lead to variations in the amount, quality and depth of information provided from an interview. In their review of IPA studies, Brocki and Wearden (2006) also identify that limitations are often only minimally reported, making it difficult to ascertain the quality of existing studies. Whilst I would agree with this view, having the opportunity to read various IPA studies provided me some useful insights into how such studies had been operationalised and the way in which data analysis had led the authors towards more abstract interpretation and discussion.

Pringle et al (2011) suggest that the homogeneous nature of sample groups in IPA studies may make transferability of findings difficult. However if, as recommended by Smith et al (2009), sufficient detail is provided of the study then readers should be able to assess transferability to other contexts. Finally, Willig (2008) raises a concern that IPA is unable to provide causal explanations of a particular phenomenon. However, it is argued here that this is not the focus of qualitative research and that IPA is one way of contributing to an enhancement of the knowledge about a phenomenon.

3.6. Operational Considerations

3.6.1 Research population

This study applies to occupational therapy students who have undertaken a role-emerging placement as defined on page 12. However, as the study took place within one specific University in the South of England, the findings cannot be generally extended to a wider population, although readers may find them useful for reflecting on placement provision in other pre-registration courses. Generalisation was not the aim of this study as this is inconsistent with IPA which seeks to develop a deeper understanding of phenomena, not to create universal statements or generalisable theory (Smith et al 2009). Only one university was chosen for the study as IPA deliberately uses homogenous samples to explore a phenomenon as shared by a group. It is anticipated that sufficient detail is provided throughout this thesis to assess the findings for their transferability to other settings.

3.6.2 Study setting

Once the research population had been identified, a decision had to be made as to from where the sample group would be recruited. It could be argued that the research should have taken place at a university in which I did not work to avoid any potential ethical conflicts. However, part of the role of placement tutor is to monitor the placements used and as such it was felt necessary to carry out the study in my own setting in order to use the findings more confidently and fulfil this aspect of the role. In addition, each university has its own unique curriculum, teaching methods and placement structure which may have made transferability problematic to my setting. For example, some universities use compulsory role-emerging placements at an early stage in the occupational therapy course whilst others are given the option of undertaking such a placement towards the end of their education. In addition, some universities use traditional didactic teaching methods whilst others use approaches such as problem-based learning. Such variation is likely to have led to differences in students' experiences, leading to a less homogenous sample group. As it was not the intention of this study to compare students' experiences from different educational establishments it was considered appropriate to collect data from one university. It was anticipated that the findings could be used more confidently if they emerged from the university in which they would be used to consider future placement design.

Consideration of ethical issues raised by this study, including those related to researching my own practice, can be found in section 7 of this chapter.

3.6.3 Sample size

There is a lack of consensus within IPA literature concerning appropriate sample sizes, with participant numbers ranging from one to 48 (Brocki and Wearden 2006). However, Smith et al (2009) argue for small sample sizes in order that the required depth of analysis can take place. It is suggested that large sample sizes may become overwhelming and put at risk "a sufficiently penetrating analysis" of the data (Smith and Osborn 2008, p57). From their experience as supervisors of IPA studies, Hefferon and Gil-Rodriguez (2011, p785) concur with this view and argue that "less is more" in order to achieve the required depth and produce a good quality study. IPA studies do not require large sample sizes as they do not seek to make generalisations or achieve data saturation but to explore the participants lived experience, divergences and convergences amongst participants, and provide possible insights into particular phenomena (Smith et al 2009).

Smith et al (2009) suggest that there is no single answer to the question of sample size as this is dependent on the quality and richness of the data collected and depth of analysis. Whilst increasingly advocating for single case studies (Smith et al 2009, Smith 2011), it is suggested that five or six is an appropriate sample size for an IPA study (Smith et al 2009). After following the sampling procedures outlined below, the sample size for this study was set at five students. These students were interviewed twice, resulting in ten interviews for analysis. Data Analysis consisted of three phases: the initial interview, the follow-up interview and links between both interviews.

3.6.4 Sampling procedures

Purposive sampling was used to ensure that the students had experience of a role-emerging placement. This was consistent with IPA where homogeneous sample groups are advocated to allow the researcher to explore a phenomenon as it is shared by a specific group (Smith et al 2009). As discussed shortly, to try and minimise the ethical issues related to researching my own practice, students were recruited from the accelerated Masters programme rather than the BSc part time programme as I was not involved with placement allocation or academic marking for the Masters students. The inclusion criterion for participants was

therefore that the occupational therapy student had completed, within the previous month, a role-emerging placement.

3.6.5 Sample group

The sample consisted of five female students from the 2 year full time accelerated masters programme. These were the only students to choose a role-emerging placement in the year of data collection. The role-emerging placement was their final placement and had been chosen in negotiation with their personal tutor. The placement occurred towards the start of their final year of study. Students organised the placement directly themselves with no input from myself. Each student carried out a different placement, the settings of which were a community forensic team, a homeless service, a refugee service, a company that aimed to meet the needs of children and adolescents who had been excluded from school or were homeless and a drugs and alcohol rehabilitation team.

3.7 Ethics and Governance

Whilst there are variations in the literature concerning ethical guidelines, a consensus emerges of respecting and protecting the rights and interests of participants. Whilst the purpose of research is the development of knowledge, guidelines state that this pursuit should not take place at the expense of the participant's physical, social and psychological well-being (Denscombe 2003, Green and Thorogood 2004, Yates 2004, Department of Health 2005, Iphofen 2005). The main topics that emerged from literature concerning research ethics were: ethical approval, power relationships, protection from harm, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, deception, dissemination of results and data protection. It is with these is mind that the ethical implications associated with this study are discussed below.

3.7.1 Ethical approval

Research ethics and governance approval were gained from the University Research Ethics Committee (Appendix 1). As part of this study involved interviewing participants once they were practitioners, it was also necessary to seek clarification from the Local Research Ethics Committee as to whether further ethical approval would be needed where participants went on to work in the NHS. It was agreed that as participants had been recruited as students, and the focus of the study was their reflections on placement experiences rather than clinical work, further approval was not required.

3.7.2 Researching my own practice

One of the main ethical issues was that, due to the nature of researching an issue from my own practice, I was known to the students. As such, consideration needed to be given to the issue of power and coercion (Richards and Schwartz 2002, Green and Thorogood 2004, Copley Atkinson 2005, Iphofen 2005). I recognised that students may have felt pressurised to take part in the study, for example increasing anxiety that if they chose not to participate this would impact on their academic marks.

In order to address this, I did not directly contact students to ask them to participate. Instead, information sheets inviting them to participate were sent out via an administration assistant. These informed students that their education would not be affected in any way should they choose not to participate (Appendix 2). The letter asked interested individuals to contact me either by email or telephone if they wanted further information or wished to take part. As a tutor that worked predominantly on the part time BSc occupational therapy course I was also not involved in any assessment or marking of the participants' MSc academic work which is where the power relationship would have been most evident.

In relation to my role as placement tutor and any potential bias with regards to placement allocation, role-emerging placements only occurred for the students' final placement. I was therefore not involved in any future placement allocation for students. I was also not involved in identifying or selecting the chosen role-emerging placements.

I was aware that boundaries had to be maintained between my role as placement tutor and researcher and that I should not have used my position to exploit my professional relationship with participants to encourage more information than was required, for example asking them to divulge information that they did not want to (Iphofen 2005). The information sheet sent to students clearly stated that they had a choice whether to participate and that any decision not to take part, or withdraw from the study, would not affect their education. Supervision was used to review samples of interviews and a reflective approach was adopted to consider the influence that I had on interview data.

The professional relationship that existed between myself and the participants had the potential to impact on whether they felt they needed to give responses that they believed I

would want to hear or to only present positive experiences. In order to minimise this, I explained to participants the purpose of the study and that I was interested in all aspects of their experiences and encouraged them to give honest responses by asking them to talk as openly as they felt able to. I also reinforced that responses would be confidential and protected in the thesis through anonymity.

3.7.3 Protection from harm

Whilst no physical risks to participants were identified, Richards and Schwartz (2002, p3) highlight how research is "probing in nature" and as such may increase the risk of anxiety, stress or psychological discomfort for participants. In respect of this study, participants were not considered a vulnerable group. However, it was always possible that interview questions, which included their experiences, thoughts and feeling about the placements, may have been psychologically intrusive and caused distress. In practice this did not occur.

3.7.4 Informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality

An information sheet sent to students outlined the purpose of the study, what the benefits and risks may be and their required involvement so that they could give informed consent (College of Occupational Therapists 2003, Denscombe 2003, Department of Health 2005, Iphofen 2005). It informed them that participation was voluntary, interviews would take place in private and remain confidential, data would remain anonymous and that they had the right to withdraw at any time without repercussion on their education. Participants were assured of anonymity and asked to select their own pseudonyms when the study was written up. Participants signed a consent form that reinforced confidentiality, anonymity and rights of withdrawal (Appendices 3 and 4).

3.7.5 Integrity

To ensure participants were not deceived at any point about the study, I was explicit (through participant information sheets and consent discussions) about the purpose of the research and methods of data collection (Green and Thorogood 2004). Research supervision was used to enhance reflexivity and discuss data analysis to help ensure that misrepresentation of the data did not occur (Richards and Schwartz 2002, Green and Thorogood 2004). Participants were informed that a copy of the research findings would be made available to them upon completion if requested.

3.7.6 Data protection

To comply with the Data Protection Act (Great Britain, Parliament 1998), all data collected was securely stored in a locked filing cabinet at my own home. When stored on a computer, the data were password protected. All names were removed from the data and pseudonyms used. Data will be kept for five years after completion of the study to assist with the 'audit trail' (Yardley 2008).

3.8 Data collection

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were the method of choice as it was felt that these would provide the opportunity for detailed personal accounts of the students' experiences to be gathered. Semi-structured interviews are highlighted in the literature as an appropriate method for phenomenological studies (van Manen 2007) and the most frequent form of data collection for studies utilising IPA (Brocki and Wearden 2006, Smith et al 2009). Justification for the use of semi-structured interviews follows in the next section.

Initial interviews were carried out within two weeks of the student completing her role-emerging placement. Where possible, students were interviewed within a couple of days of the placement finishing so that their experience was fresh in their mind. However, due to a break in their academic timetable, this was not possible in every case as three students went away on holiday and were not available until they returned to campus two weeks later. Interviews took place at the University for a duration of 60-90 minutes.

A follow-up interview took place once the student had qualified and had been working as an occupational therapist for a minimum of 6 months. This time frame was chosen as it was felt it would give students time to settle into their new role, carry out induction programmes and overcome some of the issues raised in literature concerning the reality shock experienced by new graduates in their first few months of employment (Dearmun 2000, Tryssenaar and Perkins 2001). Interviews took place either at the university or at the therapist's workplace, depending on their preference, and lasted 45 – 90 minutes.

Multiple interviews within IPA are supported in the literature, allowing a deeper exploration of the topic and an opportunity to re-visit themes that emerge from analysis of earlier interviews (Flowers 2008, Smith et al 2011). A follow-up interview was required for this

study to answer the second research question and develop an understanding of how participants had gone on to make sense of their role-emerging placement in light of their practice as a qualified therapist. The second interview also provided the opportunity to discuss my initial analysis with each participant to help ensure that my interpretations reflected their experiences. This process sought to enhance the rigour of the study (Yardley 2008).

3.8.1 Justification for the use of semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews allow a flexible approach to data gathering and give a central place to individuals' experiences, whilst maintaining an awareness of the contextual factors surrounding the interview (Smith and Eatough 2006). As such, they were clearly an appropriate method of data collection to meet the aims of this study.

IPA studies are concerned with understanding the experiential world of participants. Smith and Osborn (2008, p54) state that the term 'understanding' is a useful one for IPA as it encompasses two aspects of interpretation, one of "understanding in the sense of identifying or empathizing with and understanding as trying to make sense of". With both aims in mind the IPA interview is led by the participant who is considered the 'expert' (Smith 1995) but guided by the researcher who is both empathic and questioning. Both these stances were adopted in the interviews for this study, particularly in the follow-up interviews when I was able to discuss with participants any inconsistencies that I felt were evident in the first interviews. For example, a student reported that her placement had been an entirely positive experience but actually spoke in some detail about issues such as fear, isolation and lack of confidence. These issues were reflected back to her and further exploration took place which enabled a deeper understanding of her experience and further insights to occur.

Dahlin Ivanhoff (2006) highlighted how interviews are specifically used to obtain an in-depth individual view as opposed to a collective view gathered through focus groups. Although focus groups have been used for IPA studies (Flowers et al 2003), it is argued that due to the idiographic emphasis of the approach, interviews are a more effective form of data collection (Smith et al 2009). With focus groups it may be more difficult to single out individual experiences and meanings (Smith and Osborn 2008) and participants may feel uncomfortable giving detailed accounts of their personal experiences, especially where these may be more negative or difficult. Although focus groups were considered for this study, it was felt that

there was a danger that the data gathered may have been too superficial and that sufficient individual depth of experience and understanding of meaning would not emerge.

Other types of interview structure were also considered. In contrast to semi-structured interviews, a structured approach appeared too rigid for this study. Here the researcher takes more control over the direction of the interview and short specific questions tend to be asked (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, Yates 2004). Smith and Osborn (2008) highlight the similarity to questionnaires where the researcher constructs the questions in advance in order to elicit answers that can fit into predetermined categories. This is likely to constrain the interviewee in their replies and appears to allow little opportunity for in-depth consideration of issues raised by the interviewee. In an attempt to enhance reliability, structured interviews also follow a particular order and ask the same questions of each participant (Yates 2004, Smith and Osborn 2008). This is a process that seems to pay little attention to the individuality of each participant and the complexity of their unique experience.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, unstructured interviews have no real structure and are guided entirely by the participant. The researcher starts with one interview question and then responds according to the interviewee's answer (Smith et al 2009). The strength of this approach is that data collected reflects what is of importance to the interviewee and not that of the researcher, although there is an element of direction where the researcher explores or delves further into areas of interest (Smith et al 2009). Whilst such an approach could arguably be seen as the most effective form of data collection, Smith et al (2009) advise against it for new IPA researchers. They suggest that semi-structured interviews allow enough flexibility for an in-depth exploration of the topic concerned but provide the researcher with a "loose agenda" (Smith et al 2009, p58) that helps to ensure that data, when analysed, will allow the research questions to be answered.

Whilst interviews were considered the most effective method of data collection it was important to recognise their limitations. Smith et al (2009) highlight how, due to the depth of analysis required for IPA, interviews take a long time to analyse. This was certainly my experience where many hours were spent transcribing and analysing the data. However, although this could be considered a limitation I would argue that such data is rich in content, providing insights that may not be available with other methods of data collection.

Smith and Osborn (2008) suggest that due to interviews being participant focused the researcher has less control over the content and issues that emerge during the interview. I agree with this point, finding that at times participants were keen to recount stories which did not appear to have immediate relevance to the research questions. For example, during one follow-up interview the therapist spent a large amount of time talking about her dislike of her new role and it was difficult to get her to focus on her thoughts about her placement and how this had influenced her practice and development. The context in which the therapist now worked impacted on her ability to reflect back on her placement. This was something that made me anxious during the interview as I was concerned that I would not have sufficient rich data. However, on reflection, by remaining participant focused I realised that I had been able to elicit data that enabled me to understand how her work context influenced the way in which she was making sense of herself as a therapist.

Taylor (2005) highlights the complex skills required for effective interviewing and the importance of researcher reflexivity. Whilst clinical, professional and research interviews are clearly different, it is argued that there are transferable skills between them (Taylor 2005). As an occupational therapist I have extensive experience in interviewing, whether for assessment purposes, treatment planning or carrying out job interviews and staff appraisals. In addition, I am experienced at carrying out in-depth interviews within the context of formal research presented at Masters level. These experiences enabled me to develop effective interpersonal skills that helped me to gain rapport with participants. However, I recognised through my pilot interviews that my research interview technique was not as effective as I would have liked, for example asking leading questions and not asking enough probing questions that allowed me to gain richer insights. My journal was useful for reflecting on these aspects of my technique and as I gained insight into the areas I needed to develop the quality of subsequent interviews improved.

3.8.2 Interview schedules

Whilst the aim of each interview was to focus on the student's individual experience, and as such the interview was guided by them, it was suggested that interview schedules be developed to identify questions related to the study aims (Appendices 5 and 6) (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, Smith et al 2009, Hefferon and Gil-Rodriguez 2011).

Schedules began with a broad question designed to encourage participants to talk generally about their experiences of role-emerging placements. Prompts and more specific questions were used as necessary to help participants focus on specific experiences in more detail, for example their first day, the worst day. It was important that the interview remained guided by the responses of the interviewee in order to elicit in-depth information regarding their specific experiences. As such, wording of questions changed depending on responses from participants and additional questions were asked that covered other issues raised by participants (Yates 2004, Smith and Eatough 2006). Such adaptability was considered an important part of ensuring that the interviews focused on what was important to the participant as well as covering main themes in the schedule. In this way the schedule acted as a guide for the interview rather than dictating the structure (Clough and Nutbrown 2002).

3.8.3 Pilot interviews

Pilot interviews took place after ethical approval had been granted, with two ex-students who had undertaken a role-emerging placement the previous year. Although I had carried out research interviews in the past, the pilot reminded me of the complexity of interviewing. I found that a combination of being anxious, trying to listen to the participants, remembering what they said in order to bring them back to points of interest and asking questions was an exhausting process. It was apparent that I could not underestimate the skill that would be required in order to capture the required data.

This realisation prompted me to spend additional time familiarising myself with the schedule so that in the main interviews I was more confident with the questions I wanted to ask. I also recognised that I had missed opportunities for more specific follow-up questions that would have allowed a deeper exploration of experiences and, as such, the interview schedules were refined to reflect this. A final lesson learnt, when the digital recorder stopped working, was to have a back up recorder. Material from the pilot interviews was not used for analysis, but did help to refine the interview schedule and interview technique.

3.8.4 Planning and carrying out the interviews

One of the key factors considered was where the interviews would take place. Jones (2002) advocates a quiet room with minimal distractions in order that participant and researcher can hear and listen to one another and the interview heard on the recording for transcription purposes. Interviews took place at the University in a room set up with appropriate seating,

ventilation and refreshments. A digital recorder was used but placed as unobtrusively as possible so as not to increase any participant anxiety. Written consent was gained prior to the interview.

It was important that I developed a rapport with the participants to enable open and honest dialogue to take place (Green and Thorogood 2004, Kvale and Brinkmaan 2009). This was achieved through adopting a friendly, relaxed manner and being non-judgemental. Through remaining neutral, providing encouraging probes and adopting an 'active listening posture' (Green and Thorogood 2004) I believe I avoided giving any sign to the participants that I approved / disapproved or agreed / disagreed with their views or experiences which may have impacted on the depth and quality of data generated. I tried to avoid asking questions that were biased or led participants to give answers that I may have wanted to hear and followed up points that I felt were interesting or important experiences presented by participants (Smith and Osborn 2008). I am mindful that this will have influenced the type of data gathered and that other researchers may have found or explored other points of interest.

With the aim of the study being to understand participants' experiences it was important to check with them that I had understood the meanings that they ascribed to their experiences and the language that they had used and not to make any assumptions. Whilst recognising that my interpretations would affect this understanding and that I would never truly have access to their direct experience, through reflecting back what I had heard I presented the opportunity for participants to clarify or expand on their experience and gained confidence that I had understood what they had said. Opportunity was given at the end of each interview to discuss any issues participants felt had not been covered as well as their thoughts and feelings about being interviewed by me as one of the university tutors. Whilst it is acknowledged that students may have found it difficult to be entirely honest about this it was considered important that they were given the opportunity to say how they felt it may have influenced the interview. All the students stated that the fact they already knew me helped them feel comfortable in the interviews and meant that they felt able to talk honestly about their experiences. It is of course possible that they were just saying this to please me but I do believe that the data gathered was reflective of their experiences and honesty.

With regards to follow-up interviews, participants were contacted again once they had graduated and been practising for a minimum of 6 months. The option of withdrawing from

the study was made clear in the follow-up consent form (Appendix 4). All participants consented to take part in the second interview. These follow-up interviews took place either at the participants' place of work or at the university. The location and time of the interview was decided by the participant depending on what was the most convenient.

Prior to the follow-up interview, each participant was sent a copy of the transcription of their first interview. The purpose of doing this was not to check for accuracy but to remind them of what they had originally said about their placement experience in preparation for the follow-up interview. In addition they were sent a copy of my initial themes/ interpretations of their interview with the aim of discussing this towards the end of the second interview. Whilst my interpretivist stance may have allowed me to simply present my personal analysis and interpretations, it was important to me that my final findings and discussion were as reflective of the participants' experiences as possible and that there was resonance for them with the findings (Holloway 2005).

3.9 Transcription

Initial interviews were transcribed verbatim into Word documents. Transcriptions included all the words used and other aspects such as false starts, hesitations, laughter. Each page and line was assigned a number and wide margins were provided for making notes and analytic comments. Smith and Eatough (2006) suggest keeping initial thoughts and comments during the transcription process and to re-visit these during and after analysis had taken place. These notes were written in an individual journal that was kept for each participant.

Transcription of the initial interviews was useful in enabling me to familiarise myself with the data in preparation for the analysis stage. I found that whilst transcribing, initial interpretations and feelings about the data started to emerge which were documented and revisited at the analysis stage. However, whilst I did all the transcription for the initial interviews, it was very time consuming and so I used a transcription service for the follow-up interviews. Each transcript was then checked by me against the digital recording for accuracy. I was very aware of the benefits that I had gained from doing the initial transcription myself and thus spent extra time listening to recordings of the follow-up interviews so that I could make similar notes regarding interpretations and reactions to the data. I felt that I was able to perhaps do this more effectively as I was no longer so focused on getting each word accurately transcribed.

3.10 Data analysis

Data analysis followed the principles of IPA (Smith et al 2009). I undertook IPA training in 2008. This was a 3 day course that enabled me to develop a deeper understanding of the philosophy underpinning the approach as well as practical skills in interviewing and data analysis. Smith and Osborn (2008, p66) highlight how the aim of data analysis is to "capture and do justice to the meanings of the respondents to learn about their mental and social world", although they acknowledge that such meanings are not directly accessible but emerge through "sustained engagement with the text and a process of interpretation".

IPA is an inductive approach so pre-identified themes or concepts were not used to analyse the data. The approach adopted both emic (insider) and etic (interpretative, outsider) positions (Reid et al 2005, Larkin et al 2006). Taking the emic position enabled me to hear and understand the participant's story and place their experiences at the centre of their account. Adopting the etic position involved me trying to make sense of the data and bring in my own interpretations and theoretical ideas (Holloway 2005), using verbatim quotes to illustrate my interpretations. Reflexivity played a key role throughout the data analysis process to identify where my interpretations had been made and rationale for such interpretations.

The stages of data analysis were as follows:

1: IPA adopts an idiographic approach so each interview transcript was analysed in turn. An idiographic approach is concerned with the particular rather than the more general (Smith et al 2009) and as such data analysis was firstly concerned with understanding how each student interpreted and made sense of their placement experience. Each transcript was read a number of times to ensure familiarity. Initial thoughts and feelings about the data were recorded in a data analysis journal that I kept for each participant. Notes were made in the left hand margin of key words or issues that emerged, using as close to possible the participant's own words. The right hand margin was used to note initial interpretations, ideas and points of interest. Once the transcript had been analysed I returned to the beginning and put each of the issues onto an excel spreadsheet (example provided in Appendix 7).

2: Issues were then clustered together in a way that enabled emergent concepts to be identified. This was an iterative process which involved a more interpretative stage of analysis to help me make sense of the data but at the same time revisiting the original transcript to check these interpretations and emerging concepts against what participants

actually said (Smith and Osborn 2008). Verbatim quotes were added to the spreadsheet to support the concepts.

3. Concepts were considered for ways in which they linked together and again clustered to form themes. Theme titles were developed that reflected the shared meaning underpinning the concepts.

4. At this point a table was developed of emergent themes and concepts for each participant (example provided in Appendix 8). A summary was written of the student's experience which I felt reflected their experiential and psychological 'placement journey' (example provided in Appendix 9). Van Manen (2007, p170) suggests that reworking in-depth interviews into "reconstructed life stories" can be a useful way of initially presenting phenomenological data before proceeding to examine and make sense of the themes. As I started the analysis process I became uncomfortable with participants becoming 'dissected' into small parts on an excel spreadsheet and wanted to find a way of ensuring that I did not lose sight of the uniqueness of each participant. The summaries were an effective way of helping me keep a sense of the whole person through the data analysis stage. Summaries were returned to participants with the aim of forming the basis for discussion for the second interview.

These four stages were repeated for each participant. At each stage of data analysis, the emergent concepts and themes were discussed with my supervisory team and refined as necessary. This supervision continued throughout all stages of analysis and write-up.

5. The next stage involved looking across cases to identify uniqueness, commonalities and divergences in themes. Where different concepts or themes were identified each transcript was revisited to check whether they were present but had not initially been identified. Smith et al (2009) highlight how, as data analysis moves from case to case the researcher's 'fore-structures' change. Whilst it remained important to explore each case individually, so that initial analysis was not influenced by what had been previously identified, it was considered useful to re-visit interviews at a later date to check that any emergent concepts or themes had not been missed. This cyclical process continued until I was confident that all transcripts had been analysed effectively and that the final list of themes reflected students' experiences of their placements.

6. Themes were finally analysed in relation to each other. Patterns were explored across themes to explore any inter-relationships. Themes were then clustered together in a way that

reflected students' shared experiences of placements. Master themes were then developed that captured the meaning ascribed to these clusters.

7. Stages 1-6 were repeated for the five follow-up interviews. Where concepts and themes that emerged from the follow-up interviews reflected those previously highlighted in the initial interviews the data sets were merged. For example, where therapists repeated or reinforced what they had said in the initial interview this data was included in the themes, sub-themes and concepts already established. New concepts and sub-themes that emerged from the follow-up interviews created a new over-arching theme that related to the reality of practice. A table of master themes, sub-themes and concepts was developed (Appendix 10).

8. The third phase of analysis consisted of aligning each participant's initial interview and follow-up interview. Consideration was given to how the participants' views and feelings about their placement and their professional identity had changed over the period of time between the two interviews as a result of the placement and subsequent experiences. This was reflected within the relevant concept.

3.11 Evaluating quality in qualitative research

Yardley (2008) outlines four main principles used to evaluate qualitative research; sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, impact and importance. These are now considered in relation to this study.

3.11.1 Sensitivity to context

Sensitivity to context was demonstrated through the study's relationship to existing literature. Chapter 1 provides a clear rationale for the study in the context of current occupational therapy education and practice. Research questions resulted from the review of literature on role-emerging placements and identification of a gap in knowledge. Findings of the study are discussed within the context of relevant literature.

Sensitivity was given to the data collected and analysis process. Smith et al (2009) suggest that sensitivity to context is demonstrated through an awareness and demonstration of the skill required for effective interviewing. I believe that I showed an awareness of sensitivity to participants' needs through the use of effective rapport, empathy and an awareness of the power dynamic between myself and the participants. This awareness continued in the data analysis stages where I remained sensitive to participants' experiences, ensuring that the interpretations I made were grounded in raw data.

3.11.2 Commitment and rigour

The study required a high level of commitment in terms of time and knowledge and skill development. To ensure the study was carried out effectively, I invested a lot of time reading and considering literature on IPA, philosophy, interviewing and ethics. It is hoped that this commitment is evident throughout the thesis, for example in the detailed attention given to what participants told me and how that has been represented.

Smith et al (2009, p181) refer to rigour as the "thoroughness of the study". This study sought to justify all decisions made and to follow IPA guidelines as thoroughly as possible. Detailed consideration has been given to all aspects of the study, for example that the sample group was appropriate to answer the research questions and data analysis was carried out in an idiographic, systematic and interpretative manner. Careful attention was given to interviews to ensure that I listened closely to what was said and gathered sufficient data to allow for detailed analysis. Rigour is demonstrated in the findings chapter where detailed analysis has taken place. Extensive quotes show the reader how themes reflect both individual and shared experiences and provide a plausible and convincing argument.

3.11.3 Transparency and coherence

To help the reader judge the trustworthiness and credibility of this study, each stage has been clearly documented throughout the thesis. This ensures that transparency exists about how decisions were made and processes followed. The reflexive account also makes explicit the influence that I had as the researcher on all stages of the study (Finlay 2006b, Shaw 2010). Through detailing each stage of the study, an 'audit trail' has been provided (Yardley 2008, Smith et al 2009).

Finlay (2006a) suggests that a good study needs to demonstrate a methodological fit to ensure coherence between the research questions, aims, methodology, underpinning philosophy and methods. It is hoped that sufficient detail has been provided for the reader to see how such consideration has been given to this study and the resultant coherence.

3.11.4 Impact and importance

King et al (2008, p83) argue that the "value of findings depends on the extent they help to generate insight into the mysteries of human life". Whilst perhaps role-emerging placements may not be considered a 'mystery of human life', I believe that identity change in any context

is interesting. This study has generated a deeper understanding of students' experiences of such placements and contributed to the knowledge base within occupational therapy education and practice.

Whilst IPA studies do not seek to be generalisable, sufficient details of the study have been provided for readers to assess whether the findings may be transferable to other settings. Biggerstaff and Thompson (2008, p212) suggest that findings are useful when validated by the "phenomenological nod", whereby findings have resonance with readers who may recognise their own experiences in the account. In relation to this study, findings may have resonance with other students who have completed a role-emerging placement as well as providing insights for those considering such a placement. They may also have resonance with placement tutors and as such offer insights that support further consideration of the use of role-emerging placements within occupational therapy and health professions' education.

3.12 Reflexive account

Despite previous research experience at Masters Level, it quickly became clear that 'methodology' was much more complex than I had realised. Whilst confident that I knew how the study would be operationalised, the philosophical concepts of ontology, epistemology and theoretical frameworks were unfamiliar to me. These were the aspects I found most challenging and many a note was made in my reflexive journal of the struggles I faced:

> *I hate philosophy! I read the literature and think I understand it but come to write it down or transfer it to my own work and it all becomes a muddle again, when will it become clear????..*

At the start of the process, I naïvely saw research as either quantitative or qualitative and had no idea that there was a whole range of positions and methodologies associated with each paradigm. Grappling with the philosophical assumptions underpinning these different stances became a full time 'hobby' for a while, firstly simply trying to comprehend the basic language used and make sense of dense, complex and opposing views. Whilst I believe this PhD is a measure of my progress from MSc level to a more sophisticated doctoral level understanding of epistemological and methodological understandings, I by no means believe that I have understood them in their entirety. This PhD is intended to be the start of my

research career and as such I look forward to developing my understandings further and applying new ideas and approaches in future.

I think in part my struggles were exacerbated by the practical nature of my personality. I was completely out of my comfort zone, having to explore philosophy which until this point had been of little interest to me. I found it confusing and was unsure about the level of depth required. However, guidance from Finlay (2006a, p9) on "mapping methodology" provided me with a framework through which I could make sense of how philosophy fitted together with my research questions, aims and methods. I gained confidence that IPA was the right approach for answering the research questions and developed an interest in phenomenology and hermeneutics in order to understand the theoretical concepts underpinning my chosen approach.

I spent a long time familiarising myself with IPA literature and became confident that I could carry out the study in practice. The practical step by step approach suited my organised, logical way of working but was not so structured that it restricted my own application in practice. It was exciting to use a methodology that was both new to me and not widely used in either occupational therapy or educational research. This excitement was enhanced when my opinion piece about the use of IPA for occupational therapy research was published (Clarke 2009).

I was pleased with the way that students were willing to engage in my research and the commitment they showed to the study. Once they agreed to take part they participated fully in both stages of the research. A particular strength of my approach was the rapport I felt I developed with them that enabled the interviews to be friendly and relaxed. However, whilst this had the advantage of enhancing the interview process, there were times when I questioned the extent to which some participants were editing what they said in order to come across as a 'good' student or occupational therapist. Notes in my reflective diary revealed times when I thought *"this is too good to be true"* and *"who are you trying to convince?"*. One extract from my diary highlighted a particular doubt that I had about whether students had been truly honest with me as a member of staff:

> *Poppy said at the end that she had felt able to talk to me and was relaxed but I wonder if she would have said more about her feelings of the lack of support*

from staff at the university if I hadn't have been part of the placement team- I suspect she would.

I was aware at the time that I did not want to challenge this as I was concerned it would upset the positive dynamic. I also recall in the early interviews the difficulty I had asking more probing questions, an issue I felt may have been exacerbated by the fact I knew the students:

I felt that I missed opportunities today to probe deeper into Jayne's experiences and I wonder what it is that is holding me back? Is it because I don't want to pry too much as they are students I know and will be seeing again?

Despite extensive preparation, carrying out the study brought its anxieties. I certainly found that interviewing was not as easy as I had first thought it would be. There were occasions when I was anxious about the quality of interview data due to issues such as tiredness of both myself and the participants, leading questions, clarity of questions and participants that spent a lot of time talking about aspects of the placement that I may have felt were not entirely relevant to the research questions and aims. I became acutely aware that my whole research depended on rich, quality data and that my skills as an interviewer were of paramount importance. The follow-up interview with Ella was a clear reminder of this. The interview took place at the end of the day and when I arrived she had not had a good day. She spent a lot of time talking about how she hated her current job and how tired she was. I found myself feeling guilty at keeping her behind and felt that I rushed through the interview so that she could go home. I noted afterwards that I felt I had slipped into, and struggled to stop myself from, adopting a supervisory role to help her deal with her feelings about her job. My initial disappointment with this interview (in that she had spoken little of the benefits of her role-emerging placement) was evident in this extract where my own biases were clearly evident:

There were a few times when she spoke about the impact of the placement but most of the time she was talking about issues such as the reality of practice, impact of environment, staff dynamics and her inability to carry out her role…
I feel I have let myself down… this may be because I am expecting too much or am waiting for them to say mind blowing things about the influence of their placement which is clearly about my own pre-conceived assumptions about the value of these placements.

It was not until my later analysis that I came to realise that all the issues Ella has spoken about were meaningful to her and linked to her professional identity.

Having undertaken the placement 9-12 months earlier, participants had difficulty reflecting back on the placement experience. I had pre-empted that this may have been the case and sent them a copy of their initial interview and my initial interpretations. However only one person read this and as such time had to be spent going back over what had previously been said in order to see if their perceptions of the placement had changed in any way. On reflection, a different time and place would be arranged for the follow-up interviews and key questions would be sent prior to the interview, for example 'what do you now feel about your placement?', 'can you recall an incident from practice which you feel your placement did (or did not) prepare you for?', 'what do you feel about your identity now as an occupational therapist?'. This may help the participants reflect on their current practice in relation to their placement and enhance the depth and quality of data gathered in the interview.

Having to think about 'methodology' in such detail has made me significantly more confident in my role as supervisor and advisor of student research projects. It has enabled me to develop a wide range of skills and knowledge that I have found myself sharing with students and colleagues and has enhanced my own reflexivity. However I am aware that I have now become more comfortable and perhaps biased towards phenomenological research and need to ensure that this does not influence the way that I support my research students.

3.13 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the rationale for positioning this research within an interpretivist paradigm and for using interpretative phenomenological analysis to guide data collection and analysis. Consideration was given to my constructionist epistemological and critical realist ontological positions as well as to the theoretical perspectives of phenomenology, hermeneutics and symbolic interactionism that underpin IPA and this study. Justification for the use of IPA was presented through consideration of qualitative approaches, including grounded theory, discourse analysis, narrative and thematic analysis. Strengths and limitations of IPA were acknowledged in relation to this study. Details of the research population, study setting, sample size and processes of data collection and analysis were provided. Consideration was given to ethical issues that arose from this study, in particular

those that related to researching my own practice, and how the quality of the study was enhanced. The reflexive account considered the influence that my own position, values and beliefs as an academic, occupational therapist and researcher had on the way in which the study was operationalised. The following chapter presents the findings of the study.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the interviews carried out with students shortly after their role-emerging placements and later as qualified practitioners. Analysis of the two sets of interviews revealed that they were very closely linked in providing a richer understanding of the influence of role-emerging placements on students' personal and professional development. To avoid repetition and discontinuity for the reader, a decision was therefore taken to combine the analysis of the two interviews. This enabled the students' experiences to be presented in a way that more clearly reflected their developmental journey through placement into practice.

Following an inductive process of data analysis, five master themes emerged. An overview of all the themes, sub-themes and concepts can be found in Appendix 10.

The five master themes were:

Theme 1: Not a run of the mill placement

Theme 2: Thrown in

Theme 3: Finding a way forward

Theme 4: Awareness of change

Theme 5: Reality of practice

These themes reflect my interpretations and understanding of students' experiences of their role-emerging placements. Whilst it is recognised that each student had a unique experience and perception of their placement, the themes identified are those that I believe reflect their shared experiences, even if there was individual variation within each theme. For example, whilst all the students found a way to adapt to and move forward in their placement following a period of anxiety (the common theme) they varied in the strategies used to do that. These individual differences are highlighted and reflected within the sub-themes and concepts. Whilst themes were constructed through an inductive data analysis process, it is important to note that not all students spoke about all of concepts identified. As such, findings do not represent a completely shared view or experience of role-emerging placements. Concept titles reflected the participants' own words.

Master themes reflect aspects of the participants' experiences that I deemed to be significant for them. Sub-themes provide greater detail of that experience and concepts are the deepest level, reflecting the component parts that made up the themes. It is important to note that, congruent with human experience which cannot be fitted into neat boxes, concepts were often not unique to one theme. However, a decision needed to be made as to where they best reflected participants' experiences and this is indicated in the thematic table. Where sub-themes or concepts overlap this is highlighted.

Data are presented here in the order in which they appear in the thematic table (Appendix 10). This reflected the students' experiential journey through their placement into practice and was felt to offer a useful way of allowing the reader to gain a sense of these journeys and experiences. Direct quotations from interviews are used throughout the chapter to support the analysis and interpretations. The use of verbatim quotes is an important feature of qualitative research which enables the reader to assess the trustworthiness of the researcher's interpretations (Willig 2001, Yardley 2008, Smith et al 2009). Quotations used in this chapter have been chosen as those I felt best reflect the concept being discussed. Additional quotes used to support the concepts are provided in Appendix 11. Pseudonyms chosen by the participants (Sally, Ella, Jayne, Sophie and Poppy) are used to protect students' identities. Table 1 provides an overview of each student's role-emerging setting, the type of supervision they received, employment setting on graduation and dates of interviews.

Participants pseudonym	Role-emerging placement setting	On-site educator (daily contact)	Off-site professional educator (1 hour supervision per week)	Employment setting on graduation	Date of initial interview	Date of follow-up interview
Poppy	Child and adolescent mental health charity	Psychologist	Occupational therapist from local mental health NHS Trust	Employed by the charity in which she did her role-emerging placement.	19.05.09	18.02.10
Sally	Refugee service	Service manager	Occupational therapist from local mental health NHS Trust	Community mental health NHS team.	28.09.09	06.04.10
Sophie	Mental health charity for adults.	Service manager	Occupational therapist from local mental health NHS Trust	Emerging role in private mental health unit.	16.05.09	01.03.10
Jayne	Homeless team	Nurse	Academic tutor	Mental health NHS trust.	20.05.09	12.02.10
Ella	Community forensic service	Community psychiatric nurse	Head occupational therapist for the forensic team	Physical acute NHS hospital	04.11.08	26.05.09

Table 1: Participant, placement, employment and interview information.

4.2 Master theme 1: Not a run of the mill placement

This theme concerns students' perceptions of their role-emerging placement prior to it starting, the unique opportunities and experiences they felt it would offer them and their feelings and expectations of the placement. Students had pre-conceived ideas about what the placement would be like and were explicit about why they had chosen it. The theme provides

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background to students' choice of placement and an understanding of the meaning that their placements had for them. It provides some insights into the type of students that chose to undertake role-emerging placements and who subsequently took part in this study.

This theme is divided into the sub-themes and concepts shown in Table 2

Theme 1: Not a run of the mill placement	
Sub-themes	**Concepts**
1.1 Outside the box	1.1.1 Testing themselves out 1.1.2 Standing apart from other students 1.1.3 Promoting occupational therapy in new settings
1.2 In two minds	1.2.1 Excitements vs. apprehension

Table 2 Master Theme 1: Not a run of the mill placement.

Sub-Theme 1.1: Outside the box.

This sub-theme reflects the way in which the students perceived their role-emerging placement to be very different from previous traditional placements. They anticipated that their placement would offer unique opportunities and challenges that they would not necessarily encounter in traditional placements; experiences they believed would help prepare them for future practice.

This sub-theme is formed of three concepts (Table 2). These reveal the way in which the students saw the placement as an opportunity to test themselves out in readiness for practice, to stand out from other students and to promote occupational therapy in new settings.

1.1.1 Testing themselves out

Students all chose a role-emerging placement of their own will, demonstrating a curiosity to explore new learning experiences. Whilst they could have chosen the more familiar traditional placement option they instead made a conscious decision to take themselves out of their comfort zone and undertake a placement that they felt would challenge them personally and professionally. Findings revealed that they were willing to expose themselves to these new experiences, despite an uncertainty about what lay ahead, and were excited by the opportunities that this presented for their personal and professional development.

Aware that they were nearing the end of their education they felt that it was important to check out whether they had assimilated previous learning and could put this into practice without an occupational therapist there to guide them. Having always had an occupational therapist working alongside them, or in close proximity, students experienced uncertainty as to whether they could work independently. However, despite this uncertainty findings indicated that they had a strong sense of self that gave them the courage to take on the challenge of the placement and to engage in more self-directed learning. There was a sense that the placement provided an opportunity to test out one way or another whether they could be successful. This was highlighted for example by Ella whose reference here to 'sink or swim' appears to reflect her anxiety about whether she was ready to work as an occupational therapist:

> the thing is, you don't know until you are in it, when you are thrown into something you either sink or swim, you thrive or you don't (Ella interview 1).

They recognised that they would soon be qualified therapists and for their own self-confidence wanted to know that they could work independently. Sophie, for example, needed to know that she could "meet those challenges and overcome them" (interview 1). Similarly, Jayne wanted to be able to consolidate her learning and feel confident in herself as an independent student. Here, she implied that she needed to find out for herself whether she could work independently, without having others to fall back on:

> I just wanted to give myself that little head start and work without an OT and see, perhaps testing myself on everything that I've learnt on the course and putting it into practice but without an OT there to copy I suppose (Jayne interview 1).

Such findings suggest that the students recognised the responsibilities that they would face as qualified therapists and the demands that would be placed on them to work autonomously. Jayne's reference to wanting a "head start" indicated that she wanted to make sure she was prepared for this by giving herself an insight into what independent practice would be like. Such findings suggest a level of self-interest in terms of not only improving their performance but possibly in gaining experiences that would give them an advantage in securing future employment.

Students made a distinction between role-emerging and "normal" placements, indicating that they perceived their placement to be special in some way. They anticipated that the role-emerging placement would be quite distinct from their previous placement experiences, with words such as "different" (Sophie interview 1), "unique" (Sally interview 1), "challenging" (Ella interview 1) "outside of the box" (Jayne interview 1) and "adventurous" (Poppy interview) being used to describe their expectations. This 'uniqueness' and contrast to previous traditional placements was made explicit by Jane:

> it wasn't your run of the mill placement (Jayne interview 1).

Students appeared to be drawn to a role-emerging placement in the belief that it would be more challenging and complex than traditional placements. This was evident, for example, when Jayne spoke of choosing her emerging role placement having already done "basic" (interview 1) mental health placements. Now she felt she was ready to build on these experiences and take on something different and more complex. A similar rationale was presented by other students who "wanted the challenge of something a bit different" (Poppy interview 1) in order to provide an additional challenge that would push them in their development:

> I wanted to do a bit of a different one I think, I've done in-patient and I've done community mental health you know for my previous placements erm yeah so I think I just wanted to see how, I guess to kind of push myself a bit (Sophie interview 1).

This highlighted a sense of personal agency that was evident in the way that students made a conscious decision to take themselves out of their "comfort zone" (Jayne interview 1) in order to test themselves and enhance their development. The students wanted to do something more unique and were willing to take on the challenge that this uniqueness presented.

Although each previous placement would have been in a new setting, and so arguably would have presented students with a 'unique', 'different' 'challenge', it was interesting that they saw the role-emerging placements as distinct from these placements in terms of the opportunities they presented to push themselves and to develop as an occupational therapist.

1.1.2 Standing apart from other students

This concept reflects the way that the students appeared to perceive their placement as a unique experience that would make them stand out from other students. Participants stated that they had chosen their placement because it was "different" to those they would normally have undertaken and to ones that the majority of their peers had chosen. There was a sense of adventure and uniqueness evident in the participants' placement choice as they were willing to venture into territory that only a select few had chosen. This included Poppy, who it could also be suggested saw her placement as an opportunity to stand out from the crowd:

> I quite like doing things that are different and I don't always like to follow exactly what people normally, I like to try different things (Poppy interview 1).

Being able to choose a role-emerging placement appeared to provide a boost to students' egos. Here it is possible to see, for example, how their self-esteem increased as a result of being able to choose a placement that made them feel unique. Jane stated:

> it was something that not a lot of other students had done, either. I think that was a big part of it as well. I wasn't just doing your - it wasn't a case of "Yeah I did this placement, but so have all the other students". I kind of felt a bit more, it sounds really big headed, I don't know, speci - not special, but different because it wasn't only, like, two other girls had done it, and yeah I just felt really proud of that fact actually (Jayne interview 1).

This was also reflected in an extract provided by Poppy who suggested that the way role-emerging placements had been promoted at university enhanced her perception of the placement as more prestigious. The impact of this on Poppy's self-esteem was implicit in her reference to having been allowed to do a placement that was reserved for students that had previously done well:

> not that many people do an emerging role placement, therefore, by that… it makes you feel that you're doing something different, so I suppose it's that, um… and… I think when it's…kind of when the… when the tutor talks about emerging role placements, there was some kudos related to it because it is given… presented as… you know, if you do well in your other placements um… you will be able to do an emerging role placement (Poppy interview 2).

In relation to future employment, three students believed that their placement would be perceived positively by employers. Sophie, for example, saw the placement as providing experiences that she could draw on and hoped that "it will be something I can talk about in interviews in future and will hopefully you know stand me in good stead" (Sophie interview 1). This suggested that they felt they would stand out from other candidates and that their placement experience may give them a competitive edge. This notion was confirmed in the follow-up interviews and is discussed in concept 5.1.1.

1.1.3 Promoting occupational therapy in new settings

Students all had a desire to take occupational therapy 'outside the box' of traditional practice contexts and promote its value in new settings. They had all chosen placements in settings where they felt occupational therapy could make a difference. Jayne had seen a role for occupational therapy with the homeless population, Ella wanted to promote the community role with forensic clients, Sophie wanted to take an occupational perspective into a mental health charity and Poppy, influenced by her distress at an increasing knife and gun youth culture, felt that occupational therapy could be of benefit to young people. They all had a belief in the profession and felt it was their responsibility to show others what occupational therapy could offer. Here, the importance of this educational role was highlighted by Sophie:

> I wanted them to kind of hold, grab on to that and why occupation is so
> important particularly with with erm people with mental health problems ... I'm
> a steward of OT (Sophie interview 1).

Similarly, Sally wanted to promote occupational therapy in an area of practice that had inspired her whilst she had been off sick from university. On previous placements she had struggled to recognise the benefits of occupational therapy and had made the decision to intermit from her course in order to reflect on whether she had chosen the right career. As a result of voluntary work carried out during this time, she saw the potential for occupational therapy and was inspired to return to her studies:

> I really got interested and I just saw the relevance of OT with this client group
> …this was all whilst I was off and it just kind of tapped into something I think
> that struck me with OT and the potential that OT has (Sally interview 1).

This area of practice had struck a chord for Sally and appeared to be a turning point for her in her education, in particular the way in which she now felt congruence between her own values and beliefs and those of the profession. She spoke of how the voluntary work had helped her see the potential for the profession and led her to describe how "passionate about OT" (interview 1) she was when she arrived on the placement and how she wanted to share this with the staff and clients.

Sub-theme 1.2: In two minds.

This sub-theme concerns the students' feelings about their placement prior to starting. In the weeks leading up to the placement, the majority of the students experienced a co-existence of both positive and negative feelings. The following concept reflects this ambivalence and illustrates how, in most cases, positive feelings become less evident as the reality of the placement drew closer.

1.2.1 Excitement vs. apprehension

Positive feelings of motivation, enthusiasm and excitement were expressed by all students. This was closely linked to the first concept of wanting to test themselves out and undertake a new challenge. They had all chosen placements in areas that interested and excited them and as such were motivated to engage and willing to embrace the challenges and opportunities identified in sub-theme 1.1. However, these feelings often existed alongside those of apprehension. Sophie stated:

> I was nervous, I was really really nervous, erm, but very enthusiastic and, you
> know, very excited about it as well (Sophie interview 1).

For four students there was a sense of mounting anxiety as the placement grew closer, the exception being Sally. Despite their initial courage to undertake the placement, students started to question their own judgement and anxiety emerged about whether such a decision was wise given the need to pass the placement. This appeared to dampen their initial excitement and led to feelings of self doubt. The sense of personal responsibility and trepidation experienced by students was reflected in an extract from the interview with Jayne:

closer to the time I started to think oh gosh I'm actually really anxious about this, **what have I done?**, was this a good idea? (Jayne interview 1).

Whilst other students spoke of pre-placement "anxiety", Ella recalled feeling "terrified" (interview 1*)* as she drove to the placement on her first day. Her use of such emotionally charged language highlights the intensity of her feelings and suggests she experienced a more extreme emotional reaction than the other students. This 'fear' appeared to result from a perception of the placement that she had developed for herself, linked to uncertainty about what was to come. The placement had suddenly become a reality for Ella, with a realisation that she would be working on her own with a client group that frightened her and that she did not know what expectations the team would have of her. This appeared to lead to a sense of pressure and indicated that she experienced a sense of professional isolation even before she started:

> I was terrified 'cause I really was, I was frightened I thought "Oh my God, it's
> forensic, I'm on my own, are they going to expect me to do it myself?" oh my
> god really frightened (Ella interview 1).

Feelings of isolation leading up to the placement were also evident in Sophie and Poppy's accounts. They felt unprepared and wanted more support and direction from the university to help reduce their anxiety. Here, Sophie's reference to being "in the dark" reveals the apprehension and uncertainty she experienced, suggesting that she had felt lost prior to the placement, not knowing what to expect or how to prepare herself and having to find her own way. Her use of the word "we" suggests that she felt that she was speaking for other role-emerging students:

> just to give us some ideas really, things we could do, to prepare us in terms of
> like you know like our expectations really, erm how best to meet the criteria and
> like I did do some reading before hand but I didn't feel like it was massively
> helpful, erm just to be able to discuss it really and chat and not feel like we were
> so, it just felt like we were in the dark really (Sophie interview 1).

On reflection, three students felt that pre-placement preparation sessions would have helped them to think more explicitly about the placement before they arrived. Sophie suggested that

a pre-placement visit would also have been useful. This was something that Poppy had experienced and found useful in reducing some of her initial anxiety:

> I think if I hadn't have been already before to visit the site I would have found that even more intimidating but because I saw the, I had already been actually that kind of wasn't so, I was ready for that (Poppy interview 1).

Sally was different from the other four students, stating that she never experienced any anxiety prior to starting. She attributed this to the excitement she felt about doing the placement and the "privilege of having that experience" (interview 1).

4.3 Master theme 2: Thrown in

This theme reflects the experiences of students during the early stages of the placement. In the majority of cases, the first half of their placement was physically, cognitively and emotionally demanding. There was a sense that students had felt 'thrown' into the placement which led them to become temporarily lost, anxious and overwhelmed by their experience as they struggled with issues of professional isolation, lack of professional identity, matching expectations with those of the team and increased responsibility. This led to feelings of anxiety, vulnerability, pressure, confusion and self doubt, all of which impacted on students' sense of self. The theme is divided into two sub-themes (Table 3).

Theme 2: Thrown in	
Sub-themes	**Concepts**
2.1 Going it alone	2.1.1 Uncharted waters
	2.1.2 Out there on my own
2.2 Facing the challenges	2.2.1 Need to sing from the same hymn sheet
	2.2.2 Responsibility on my shoulders
	2.2.3 The emotional toll

Table 3 Master Theme 2: Thrown in

Sub-theme 2.1: Going it alone

This sub-theme reflects the students' sense of isolation as they ventured into unfamiliar territory. The majority of students spoke about professional isolation and the realisation of how dependent they had been in the past on their professional supervisor and the familiarity

of an occupational therapy department for providing a sense of security and support. This sub-theme consists of two concepts: 'uncharted waters' and 'Out there on my own'.

2.1.1 Uncharted waters

This concept concerns the fear that arose for many students as a result of being in new and unfamiliar environments. No students had previously been into or tested out the settings and so they had no idea what it was going to be like. This was highlighted, for example, by Sophie who stated "it was a bit scary at times, it was new and there were lots of things that were unfamiliar" (interview 1). They were having to make their own way and were concerned about the challenges that they had to face. This was similarly reflected in Ella's use of the phrase "uncharted waters":

> it frightened me …it was in uncharted waters sort of thing (Ella interview 1).

Each placement that a student does is in a new setting and as such some anxiety may have been expected. However, the majority of students appeared to experience a more extreme reaction to their role-emerging placement. The intensity of their feelings was conveyed in words such as 'frightened' (Ella interview 1), 'scary' (Sophie interview 1), 'terrified' (Jayne interview 1) and 'daunted' (Poppy interview 1). This appeared to be closely linked to the self-directed nature of the placement, feelings of professional isolation and uncertainty about their role (concept 2.1.2).

Such feelings reinforced for Poppy and Sophie their earlier belief that they had been unprepared for the placement, reiterating their need for more support and guidance from the university. This lack of support appeared particularly absent at a time when they were trying to deal with early anxieties of being on their own in the placement. Although Sophie acknowledged that she had chosen to do the placement herself, she suggested that the lack of support had increased her feelings of fear, leaving her feeling as though she had been left to fend for herself:

> it did feel like quite a huge scary thing you know to be thrown into even though we had obviously elected to do it ourselves … just maybe just a little bit more support (Sophie interview 1).

2.1.2 Out there on my own

All students, other than Sally, experienced a sense of professional isolation. Although they had chosen their placements knowing that there was no occupational therapy service in place, once the placement started they quickly felt the absence of the profession. This was summarised by Ella who, despite being surrounded by other professionals, felt alone. Similar to Sophie's earlier extract, Ella's use of the metaphor "thrown in" reflected her sense of isolation and vulnerability:

> I really am out there on my own that would be the only thing I would say I felt a little bit out there on my own and thrown in you know (Ella interview 1).

Students had an on-site educator and an off-site occupational therapy educator that they met with weekly. Whilst they appreciated the support and guidance provided by these educators, in the early stages of the placement the majority of students were anxious about not having their professional supervisor in the setting. Ella, Jayne and Poppy missed having the occupational therapist on-site to help provide structure, prioritise cases and deal with the pragmatic and therapeutic questions that arose. Sophie's extract spoke for many of the others, highlighting the anxiety, isolation and uncertainty experienced:

> I was quite anxious really 'cause I think not having any erm OT direction really and knowing that I was very much on my own, lots of questions like "What is my timetable going to be like?" erm each week erm you know "How am I going to document what I am doing?", those kind of practical things I was quite quite you know anxious about (Sophie interview 1).

Students often reflected back on previous placements where the occupational therapy department had provided a sense of familiarity, reassurance and structure. These were cultural aspects of previous placements that appeared to give them a sense of belonging, comfort and security and were clearly missed. This was evident for example in an extract provided by Jayne who had felt implicitly understood on past placements and valued the support and guidance that other therapists provided:

> at first it felt kind of difficult erm because you're used to working in a team where there are OT's so they know where you're coming from all the time so

you don't necessarily have to explain what you're doing so much or you kind of get ideas from them, you're bouncing ideas off each other, the sort of types of assessment, interventions etc evaluation, procedures you can use (Jayne interview 1).

This previous dependence on the team was also recognised by Poppy who, following an assessment, suddenly realised that she did not know what to do next. With the absence of a supervisor to offer advice or an established occupational therapy programme from which she could draw ideas, Poppy found herself struggling to make decisions. She had been "hit" by the recognition that she was on her own and that there were aspects of occupational therapy that she did not know. This significant "moment" appeared to take place when Poppy was reflecting on how to 'be' an occupational therapist, something that may not have been facilitated if her supervisor had been present or she had simply been 'doing' or copying what was already in place:

it made me realize how much you rely on the OT departments that are already set up and that was I suppose probably quite a pivotal moment… I sat here with all this information and that was when I suppose it hit me, it was like, because normally you know you might know that they might do cooking or they might do a skills learning or they might recommend they join this group or, but I just didn't have any of that and I was like well great but now what do I do with it? so I had this kind of moment (Poppy interview 1).

Sophie and Jayne noted that they missed having an on-site occupational therapist who they felt would have understood where they were "coming from" (Sophie interview 1). This was similar to Poppy whose feelings of isolation were enhanced by the fact that "nobody knows what Occupational Therapy is" (Poppy interview 1). Although the students valued having an off-site occupational therapist with whom they could 'bounce ideas around', this support did not appear to be acknowledged in the same way as having someone within the setting with whom they had a common professional bond:

I suppose you don't realise how much you get informally off like a… working in an OT um… or with an OT around or with OTs or OT assistants so because I was only seeing her for one hour once a week I don't think you necessarily

realise what you get informally for the rest of the time that you're just there with other OT's maybe which with all… in all my other placements there's been… I've been surrounded by OTs (Poppy interview 2).

Feelings of professional isolation appeared to be linked to students' uncertainty about their role and identity. Sophie spoke of how, in the absence of an occupational therapist, she "had really very little idea" (interview 1) about what she would be doing. This was a familiar feeling for Ella who highlighted how this resulted in her being "fearful of getting it wrong a lot of the time" (interview 1). This insecurity and anxiety was also experienced by Jayne:

just all these thoughts, "Oh my God am I actually doing OT, is this right?" 'cause obviously there was no OT there that I could just ask, the nurses had had limited experience of working with OT's erm so yeah it was all sort of anxiety provoking (Jayne interview 1).

It was clear that for the majority of students this was the first time that they had recognised their lack of ability and confidence in being able to articulate their own professional role and identity. Here, when exposed to this challenge, Poppy realised that this was something she should have perhaps been able to do by this point in her education. This extract suggests that having to articulate this for herself was not something she had done before on placement:

I felt that for me to explain what OT was to other people I needed to really understand it so I realized that I probably should have understood it by this point in the course (laughs) but it is you know you never really realize what you don't know until you really start trying to explain (Poppy interview 1).

This lack of self-confidence highlighted their need for reassurance and positive feedback. Students often spoke of their insecurity at the lack of an on-site therapist who could legitimise their feelings and actions. There appeared to be an emotional dependence on others for reassurance and approval that had developed on previous placements:

Just not having somebody there to …you know bounce my ideas off and to, I think it's always nice to have someone just to say "Look this is what I'm thinking of doing what do you think, is that does that make sense?" erm you

know just having just having someone there that I that I know knows erm OT and knows erm the process (Sophie interview 1).

Despite professional supervision and peer support (Poppy and Sophie met frequently to discuss their placements and Ella emailed fellow students), they also felt isolated by their sense that no-one really understood what it was like to be doing the placement. Poppy highlighted this in her follow-up interview when she stated that she would have "liked someone from the university to have actually seen where I was on placement and the challenges that I faced" (interview 2). She had not found the half-way telephone call from the university particularly helpful as she did not feel that the tutor had understood what the placement was like for her. This had added to her sense of isolation and feelings of lack of support. This was similar for Sophie who felt that the absence of her supervisor from the setting meant she was not fully able to understand what the placement was like for her:

> it is very different and you know even talking to my OT educator about it, she she knew obviously what I was getting on with but not fully you know she couldn't meet the clients with me and she couldn't meet the staff with me, erm so it was, it was yeah it was just strange I think, just different from other placements in that sense not having someone physically there with me erm from my profession (Sophie interview 1).

Poppy and Ella's sense of isolation was enhanced by the lack of practical resources. Ella highlighted how she had tried to prepare herself by surrounding herself with assessments and resources at the start of the placement, almost like a security blanket. As well as providing Ella with a familiar structure, it could be argued that they made her feel less vulnerable to the professional isolation that she experienced, providing a practical as well as psychological link to the profession:

> I was very much on my own and I made, in the beginning of just grabbing all the MOHO [Model of Human Occupation] assessments, grabbing everything I could so I had a folder of whatever I might need 'cause I couldn't ask my educator (CPN) "what do you think about this?" although I did, I sounded stuff out with her but it's very different to having your profession around you and that

network to draw upon, I didn't have that and as a novice I felt that (Ella interview 1).

Similarly, Poppy still felt she needed assessments and models of practice to guide her. She did not appear to have the confidence to know what to do without these familiar tools and structures and indicated that this left her feeling vulnerable and anxious. This was evident in a reference she made to the way in which such tools provided a "safety net" (interview 1), a metaphor also used by Ella when reflecting on previous support provided by occupational therapy teams. As a safety net is used to catch you when you fall, it is possible that they both felt that if they got something wrong there would be nothing there to support them and their placement would be at risk.

In contrast to other students, Sally did not experience any feelings of professional isolation, something that she attributed to the support she received from her team. This was linked to theme 3 where all students highlighted the importance of team support and the sense of belonging that developed which helped them adapt to their placement. It would appear that, for Sally, this sense of belonging existed from the start and prevented the feelings of professional isolation experienced by the others:

> I never felt that actually. They were always so responsive to… to what I talked about and to what, you know, to my explanations of OT. I never felt isolated, ever, I always felt very welcomed, very supported, um… and you know, I saw people getting enthusiastic about what I was doing which is, you know, always amazing. I had my supervisor just down the road if I did need her help, um… but no I never felt that isolation (Sally interview 2).

Although professional isolation was a significant issue for nearly all students early in the placement, it was working autonomously that they later went on to identify as the aspect of the placement that they most valued in facilitating their personal and professional development (see Theme 4- Awareness of change).

Sub theme 2.2: Facing the challenges

This sub-theme reflects the students' struggle with role conflict, meeting the expectations of the team and their concern about the increased levels of responsibility they had as the lone

'occupational therapist'. This sub-theme also highlights the early emotional impact of the placement.

2.2.1 Need to sing from the same hymn sheet

Students started their placements with expectations of what it would be like and what they felt they could offer. However, one of the challenges they all faced was matching these expectations with those of the team. Whilst students primarily saw the focus of their placement as promoting a wider occupational perspective, some teams wanted them to facilitate specific groups or work with individual clients. This left many of them experiencing role conflict, fearful of the mismatch in expectations and, perhaps due to the pressure of wanting to appear competent, trying to do it all:

> before I went I think from speaking to staff here it was to look at the service as a whole so that's what I kind of went in thinking and then I realized that actually there was cases that people wanted me to work on so then I thought I needed to do that as well erm so maybe I should have done one or the other but I sort of tried to do both (Poppy interview 1).

The start of her placement was an "uncomfortable time" (interview 1) for Sophie who was highly anxious about the different expectations of herself and the team. She had a clear idea about the type of role she wanted to carry out but this did not match that of her manager. Having been "invited" to do the placement, Sophie felt a conflict between wanting to please the team and make a good impression (she was "really worried about their perspective of me and their feelings towards me" (interview 2)) but at the same time knowing that there were things she wanted to achieve which would mean turning down the team's requests. Sophie spoke of her need to ensure that "everybody was singing from the same hymn sheet" (interview 1), a metaphor that signified the importance for her of the team knowing what to expect of her. This was similar to a "same page" metaphor used by Sally who was also anxious about a possible mismatch of role expectations with her manager. It is possible that their desire for clarity was enhanced by the fact they were being assessed. They may have felt vulnerable to failure where confusion existed and clarity would have been important in providing them with the security and direction they felt they needed to pass the placement.

Poppy was also concerned about the high expectations that her team had of her. These expectations resulted in her being asked to assist with high risk cases for which she felt inexperienced and unprepared. When reflecting on a home-visit that she had assisted with she stated she would "like to have gone as a student" (interview 1), a statement that indicated she did not feel that she had been viewed as a student or indeed that she herself had adopted the student role. The team perceived Poppy as a professional and had expectations that she would be able to help. This was in conflict with her sense of self which left her feeling vulnerable:

> I think it's just feeling vulnerable as they came to me as an OT professional…
> and I didn't feel like I'm an OT professional yet (Poppy interview 1).

Poppy made reference a number of times to being "only a student" or to herself as someone "still learning", phrases also used by Jayne. Similarly, Ella referred to herself "as a novice" (interview 1). These suggest that the students lacked self-confidence and experienced feelings of insecurity and vulnerability due to their perceived inexperience, feelings that it could be argued were exacerbated by the absence of a professional supervisor who may have helped guide their learning, establish boundaries and define their role. Similar to Poppy, Sophie and Ella also found themselves in situations that they felt were above their level of competency. The concerns that this raised for them in relation to risk are discussed in concept 2.2.2 as this was closely linked to increased levels of responsibility.

2.2.2 Responsibility on my shoulders

One of the biggest challenges highlighted by all students was the increased responsibility that came with being an autonomous student. They reflected on how different their placement experience had been to previous traditional placements where direction had been in place and they had not had to worry about taking as much responsibility for their own learning:

> I remember thinking it was very different from first days of going into OT placements because you're told what you will be doing, whereas this they were asking me what I would be doing…so I think that was quite a big difference for me 'cause usually you go in and it's sort of "this will be where you sit and this will be what you will be doing" whereas this didn't have any of that (Poppy interview 1).

In this, Poppy appeared to have become aware of a shift in power dynamics between herself and her educator. She had moved from a more passive role on previous placements (being directed by the supervisor) to a more active role where she now recognised that she would have to take control of her own learning. Recognition of this role reversal and the increase in self-directed learning was also made explicit by Sophie:

> there were lots of things that maybe I, I felt that you know I was er maybe the one that was directing quite a lot of the time and in a traditional setting maybe would have been directed from somebody else, from my OT educator, so I was having to take on that role of making sure those things were done really (Sophie interview 1).

There was a close link between this concept of responsibility and that of matching expectations. Sophie, Ella and Poppy for example, recalled instances where they had been asked to work on cases that they felt were above their level of competency and voiced concern about the level of responsibility they had. When asked to assist with a high risk case, Poppy had been left feeling morally and professionally torn between wanting to help and her own expectations, competencies and confidence as a student. This dilemma was enhanced by staff who appeared to transfer their sense of helplessness onto Poppy, leaving her feeling an added sense of pressure and responsibility:

> it was kind of like "Well we've got nobody else so if you don't" … they just said to me "Well we'd really like you to just go, the keyworker would really like someone with a bit of support whose got at least a bit of training that can go" and and so at that point and I, I was sort of like well I don't you know didn't feel that I that I had all of the skills to kind of deal with this high risk situation but at the same time if I didn't this poor keyworker who was quite a young girl would have been dealing with it on her own (Poppy interview 1).

Poppy stated that although she had not felt prepared or skilled enough to deal with the case she never questioned that she would not visit the client due to a personal sense of responsibility and obligation as a human being. This resulted in her "moral dilemma" (interview 1) where a conflict between her personal and professional identities became evident:

myself as a human being I thought "Well you know well if I don't do it then no one else is going to do it" and "if I could just be a little bit of assistance then, I don't know, she, as a human being then why wouldn't I?" so I had that, but then I thought professionally should I be taking on this responsibility without proper OT support because they came to me as an OT professional (Poppy interview 1).

These findings highlight an issue of risk where the students felt under pressure to carry out a role for which they were not confident (or qualified). In the absence of an on-site occupational therapy supervisor who may have traditionally sheltered them from taking un-necessary risks, students found themselves taking on responsibilities that may have left them and others potentially vulnerable. It is possible that this was linked to a desire to present a positive image of a professional self, proving themselves as willing, trustworthy and competent students. On reflection, students recognised that they had been aware that the levels of responsibility were too high but felt a level of compliance was necessary in order to pass their placements. This was made explicit by Ella who stated "I needed to pass so I had to do it" (interview 2) and Poppy who highlighted how she "went along with it" (interview 2) and subsequently found herself "getting carried away with it all" (interview 2).

Students indicated that there was a need for educators to become more familiar with the placement setting in order to help them manage risk. They felt that, due to unfamiliarity with the setting, educators were unable to identify the risks they were exposed to and that this, coupled with the fact that they themselves experienced difficulty dealing with expectations placed on them, meant that this risk was not managed effectively.

Students felt an increased responsibility as the lone 'occupational therapist' to represent the profession. Although they had chosen their placement with this role in mind, once in the setting it was clear that they had not prepared themselves or considered the implications of taking on this responsibility. Sophie referred to herself as the "face of OT", a metaphor that reflected the responsibility and pressure she felt as the person solely responsible for how the profession was represented and perceived. This was similar for Ella who had been called a professional "ambassador" (interview 1) which, whilst seen as a compliment, increased the responsibility she felt for ensuring that the profession was perceived positively. This was also the case for Jayne who clearly felt an added pressure:

I felt like the whole OT side of it was coming from me and it was my responsibility to make OT work in that setting, I didn't want to, yeah I felt a huge responsibility on my shoulders to leave the placement, with the team understanding about OT and thinking that OT is really worth while, I didn't want to go away and them go "well I still don't know what OT was and actually it was rubbish and didn't do our clients any good" do you know what I mean, I felt like that was all on me to make sure that they understood and that they thought that OT was going to be worthwhile so that was really hard to deal with sort of pressure (Jayne interview 1).

This feeling of responsibility was exacerbated by the students' lack of confidence about their professional identity and role. Poppy, for example, recalled her early inability to communicate clearly to others what occupational therapy was but remembered thinking that by this stage of the course she should have had a better understanding. It was not until faced with the demand of having to think about and articulate her professional identity that Poppy realised this was something she was unable to do:

I sort of gave a garbled message of what I thought OT was and they sort of said "What will you be doing here?" and I just remember thinking that was hard because I wasn't really sure yet (Poppy interview 1).

This suggested that having to explain or reflect on her identity at a deeper level was not something Poppy had previously had to do on placement. This was confirmed by other participants in their follow-up interviews who reflected on the level of passivity they had experienced on previous placements in terms of thinking about professional role and identity:

I don't remember having to do it on the traditional placements. Um… and I think because the OT role had been um… developed for quite a long time in all the other placements, um… years and years and years I'd imagine… it was something that um… you know, didn't have to be made… made clear (Sophie interview 2).

Finally, students did not want to let themselves or others down. There was a sense of responsibility not only to themselves in the present but also to the team, University, profession and future students. Poppy, for example, was fearful that, had her placement not gone well, the profession would have been viewed negatively and that she would have spoiled the chance for others to work there in the future, stating "if I don't do a good job am I ruining the chance for other OT's in the future?" (interview 1). This was also a concern for Jayne, whose similar sense of responsibility appeared to result in a level of catastrophic thinking:

> going in thinking, "Oh gosh, they haven't had a student before", you see so I really was setting the way so that was a lot of pressure (laughs) it was a scary thought, I could have spoilt it for all students everywhere, they may not have wanted another student ever again…… I didn't want to let that happen that would have been awful, not just, I would have felt like I was letting the college down, OT down, the team, health team down and myself so there was all those things that were sitting there throughout (Jayne interview 1).

2.2.3 The emotional toll

All students, to varying degrees, found themselves having to deal with difficult emotions brought on by the early challenges of the placement. For the majority, feelings of uncertainty, self doubt, vulnerability, fear and frustration were particularly evident in their accounts. Some feelings have already been highlighted through their link to other concepts, such as the pressure and anxiety that resulted from increased responsibility and professional isolation. The impact that these feelings had on the students are presented in the following concept. More positive feelings were experienced later in the placement and are presented in themes 3 and 4.

For some students, the challenges that they had to face at the start of the placement left them feeling overwhelmed. This led them to question their judgment, ability to cope and choice of placement. The following quote from Sophie reflected this self-doubt:

> It just felt, felt very very overwhelming and erm and yeah there were a couple of days that week when I thought "this is too much what have I done?" (Sophie interview 1).

For Jayne the emotional impact of the placement was particularly difficult for her and she spoke explicitly about her initial dislike, and at times 'hatred' (interview 1), of the placement. Similar to Sophie, feelings of self doubt were evident and led Jayne to question her sense of self. Where she had previously thought she would cope well with the placement, she now questioned whether the beliefs she held about herself were right and whether she was good enough to get through the placement:

> I started, actually didn't like it at first I must say, the first few weeks I'd say, not just the first week, the first three weeks I was really doubting whether I could do it or not, whether I actually liked it, whether I was good enough to do it, whether I was going to get through it, it was all quite negative (Jayne interview 1).

Due to the close proximity of the placement to Jayne's home, the emotional impact of working with the homeless population quickly became apparent. She would see clients on her way home and at the week-ends when she was trying to switch off. This left her feeling unable to escape from the placement and emotionally overwhelmed. Her work and home lives had become intertwined in a way that was distressing for her, leaving her unable to separate herself either physically or emotionally from the placement. These situations caused an inner conflict for Jayne as she was torn between her sense of self as a nice person but at the same time feeling a need to protect herself from the emotional demands of the placement. This appeared to highlight the paradoxical challenge faced by students of getting to know their clients in order to develop a rapport whilst at the same time maintaining a distance as a means of emotional self-preservation. The difficulty that Jayne had with this left her with a diminished sense of agency as the placement started to take over cognitively, emotionally and physically, leaving her unable to sleep and scared of failure. This had a significant impact on her self belief and view of the placement:

> I'd see them all the time, on the weekend, the first weekend that I had I went down to the seafront just to sort off switch off and have a bit of time to myself and I saw a couple of clients down there and they called me over for a chat and it was kind of, I'd never really had the experience of seeing clients outside of work before so I didn't really know how to deal with it, I didn't want to ignore

them 'cause I'm not that sort of person, I'm not rude but I didn't want to be like bringing my work home with me type of thing so that was a major issue for me and that sort of made me doubt a lot about the placement (Jayne interview 1).

All the students spoke of this emotional demand of working with clients who had distressing stories and backgrounds. It took them time to adjust to hearing these stories as they appeared more emotionally challenging than those they had experienced in traditional settings. Sophie suggested that this may have been due to the setting where for her the clients were more "real" (interview 1), seeing clients in their own homes and in the community compared to institutional, hospital based environments. Sally highlighted how clients became a continual psychological presence which, like Jayne, impacted on her ability to switch off at the end of the day and a difficulty in separating herself emotionally from the placement:

it is very hard going 'cause of some of the stories that you hear and erm I I did struggle sometimes kind of bringing them home and going over them in my head (Sally interview 1).

Whilst early in the placement this difficulty with emotional distancing appeared to be an issue for many students, by the end of the placement they appeared to have managed this successfully and they all spoke positively about the impression that the clients had made on them and how they would always remember their clients' stories. They believed that this would affect their future practice and appeared happy to 'psychologically' take the clients with them when they left the placement.

At times during their placements, when faced with particularly anxiety provoking situations, some students appeared to present an emotional façade to hide their true feelings. Jayne, for example, spoke of how she felt she had to talk to clients even though she was "dying inside through like nerves and fear" (interview 1), an example that reflected the way in which her behaviour did not reflect her private feelings. Similarly, Ella highlighted the conflict between her external persona (presenting a sense of bravado) and her inner feelings of insecurity. This suggested that there was an inauthenticity of self that resulted from a need to cover their true feelings:

when I'm in fear and this is the truth when I started the placement I thought oh this is a bit scary I come across as being super confident, sometimes you wouldn't know, I'll come in with "yes I'm ready to go" "twenty on my caseload that's great" (Ella interview 1).

It is possible that the students felt a need to present a positive image in the placement to be seen as confident and capable students. This may have resulted from a pressure to make a good impression to those who had the power to pass or fail them on the placement and a desire to belong. Jayne, for example, was clearly struggling with negative emotions but appeared to feel the need to present a front that made her appear more confident than she was, possibly to ensure that her educators thought she was coping. This was evident in the following extract:

it was the art group, when it erm was one session where where my nursing educator came to it actually to observe it so I was a bit nervous because I wanted it to look good for her (Jayne interview 1).

Time pressure was experienced by all students. This appeared to result from the length of the placement and the need to make an impression and impact as quickly as possible. In the initial interviews students conveyed a sense of frustration and urgency to "get on with it" (Ella interview 1) which raises questions about how they perceived occupational therapy and the success of the placement. Their focus on 'getting on with the job' suggests that they saw occupational therapy as a tangible end product by which the success of the placement would be measured rather than recognising wider placement experiences (such as spending time with staff and clients) that would have been an important part of the learning process. An example of this urgency was provided by Sophie who "felt a real need to be getting straight on with assessments and interventions and things" (interview 1). Similarly, Poppy highlighted how ineffective she felt and the frustration she experienced as a result of being asked to spend time sitting in the canteen getting to know people, findings that suggest students perhaps wanted to prove their worth to themselves and their new teams:

I just felt a bit useless I suppose those first couple of days I wanted to be in there and be useful straight away (Poppy interview 1).

4.4 Master theme 3: Finding a way forward

Students utilised various internal and external resources and coping strategies to help them adapt to the placement and overcome the challenges faced. These were ultimately important in helping them move forward with their placements, despite the anxieties they felt, and contributed to the success of their placements. This theme is formed of the two sub-themes shown in Table 4.

Theme 3: Finding a way forward	
Sub-themes	**Concepts**
3.1 Drawing on inner resources	3.1.1 A certain type of student
	3.1.2 Making sense of the experience
3.2 Being part of the team	3.2.1 Sense of belonging
	3.2.2 Having the support
	3.2.3 Learning through doing

Table 4 Master Theme 3: Finding a way forward.

Sub-theme 3.1: Drawing on inner resources

This sub-theme considers personal characteristics and psychological resources that appeared important in helping students manage their emotions and successfully complete their placements. It also considers the way in which reflective practice acted as a transformative process, helping students make sense of experiences they were having, recognise their development and enhance their confidence and sense of efficacy.

3.1.1 A certain type of student

Students all suggested that a 'certain type of student' was necessary to be successful in a role-emerging placement. This concept reflects personal attributes that they felt were important in helping them adapt to, and cope with, their placement.

As identified in theme 1, they had all chosen placements that had interested them; a factor they felt was important in keeping them motivated, particularly during difficult times. Sally believed that this intrinsic motivation was an important starting point for all students and uncertainty was raised as to whether a successful outcome would have been the same in a setting that had not interested her:

I had a real interest in the field as well so I was very excited about getting the chance to go to the [placement], I thought wow the [placement] so I guess a student would would need that level of interest or at least be willing to develop that interest because I think it's the same with any placement you know, if I was put into an acute medical ward for my last placement I wouldn't have had the same passion (Sally interview 1).

The students' commitment to their placements continued even during the most challenging times and a clear sense of resilience and determination was evident throughout all their accounts. Jayne, for example, appeared to view her feelings of fear and anxiety as barriers that needed to be overcome. She did not to want to let herself down or spoil her past track record by ending with a negative placement and consciously drew on an inner determination to turn her negative feelings around. Here, the way in which she switched between first and second person suggests that she tried to distance herself from these negative emotions and she could be heard giving herself encouragement in an attempt to prevent these feelings getting the better of her:

I was just adamant that I'd had a really good placement experiences throughout the two years on this course, they have all been brilliant they've all, I've learnt a lot from all of them and I've loved them all and I didn't want to end the course on a you know on a bad experience I just would have been gutted about it so erm I think from that I'm just I just got a little bit of confidence to right just do it and get stuck in and "don't worry about it, you're fine" type attitude whereas before perhaps I was just a bit "I don't like it, can't do it" and a bit negative and so yeah I kind of just got a I don't know like a strength from somewhere I suppose just to go out and face it and do it (Jayne interview 1).

A similar intrinsic determination and sense of agency was displayed by the other students who drew on their self-belief and an inner strength to ensure their placements were a success. Ella, for example, spoke of how, when faced with negative feelings and "the chips are down" (interview 1) she would draw on her fighting Irish catholic spirit to make sure she overcame the challenge. This, together with Sophie's description of how she "poured" (interview 1) herself into the placement, reflects the resolve and personal investment of all the students:

I knew right from the beginning that I wouldn't have gone and done a half hearted job, that's just me and yeah I did I worked really hard, did extra extra stuff away from placement and erm yeah occasionally worked through lunch as well and erm I did you know invest quite a lot, it wasn't just investing a lot of you know myself as a student, there was a lot of myself as well I really poured into it (Sophie interview 1).

Students' views that particular attributes were important for such a placement were also reportedly held by their educators. Jayne, for example stated that her educators had said that "if they didn't have somebody who was so self sufficient then it would have been really difficult" (interview 1). This was a view also asserted by Poppy who agreed with her educators that a strong sense of self and tenacity were necessary characteristics for her placement:

[The educator] said herself that they need to be someone who is a very strong person that knew who they are, I think if you were perhaps less confident or less erm or maybe got low self esteem I could really find it, that initial sort of matter that I had in that first week I could maybe picture that as lasting longer and she confirmed that, she said you know you've got to be quite tenacious (Poppy interview 1).

It is interesting to compare the above quotes with those provided by Poppy and Jayne in theme 2 where they did not display feelings of self-confidence and were more anxious about their ability to cope. The extracts above were taken from towards the end of their first interviews where they had reflected on their placement and were expressing more positive feelings about their overall experiences. It would appear that in hindsight they had come to recognise the skills and attributes they had taken to the placement which had perhaps not been apparent to them during the early stages of their placement anxiety. This may have implications for placement preparation sessions and curriculum in general where students could be encouraged to develop an awareness of their personal attributes and ontological development as well as recognising knowledge and skills that they could utilise on placement.

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3.1.2 Making sense of the experience

This concept highlights the way that reflective practice was used by students to help them make sense of their experiences. This appeared to be a transformative process that enabled them to recognise their own development, increase their confidence, change their ways of thinking and assist in the construction of their professional knowledge and identity. Findings indicate that the absence of an on-site occupational therapy supervisor required students to be more active in the reflective process which appeared to lead to deeper levels of reflection than those experienced on traditional placements. Here, for example, it may be possible to suggest that through independent reflective practice Sally developed her critical thinking and clinical reasoning at a deeper level which in turn led to the construction of her own knowledge and identity, a process she felt may not have presented itself in a traditional placement:

> you have to sit down and you have to say, you know, "Look at the core skills. How am I going to use them?" And then consistently throughout, you know, your reflective thinking, how have I used them? How was this intervention OT? What core skills did I use? What core skills have been developed? What skills could I have used that I didn't use? Why didn't I use those? So there's way more challenging going on around that than there was had I been in a traditional setting where my educator asks me the questions and I answer and there's no kind of, you know, greater scope than that (Sally interview 2).

Jayne and Sophie highlighted the importance of reflective writing in helping them think about their experiences. Jayne, in particular used a diary as a private space and form of release (as her feelings 'poured' out of her) to help her make sense of her feelings. This helped her recognise her achievements and re-establish her self-confidence which had become lost due to high anxiety levels:

> three times a week I was writing in it and like each entry, you'd start of with what can I write about and you'd start with a sentence and then you'd just go on and on and on and it just all pours out of you into the diary and that was really useful as well just to sort of reflect back on actually well I have done quite a lot there and thinking about it (Jayne interview 1).

Sally and Poppy highlighted the usefulness of reflection when faced with the emotional demands of the work (for example, listening to clients' harrowing stories or dealing with an incident). In the absence of on-site occupational therapy supervisors, they felt they had taken more personal responsibility for finding ways to deal with their emotions. Poppy, for example, took responsibility for organising a de-briefing session following an incident to help her make sense of the incident and normalise her feelings. This was something she felt she "wouldn't have done if I had another OT there" (interview 1). Sally also highlighted how through reflection she been able to re-frame negative thought processes:

> She [OT supervisor] said you know "It's good that you're so reflective about it" and not only with her but with other team members as well erm and talked through you know their experiences, their similar experiences and how they kind of got through it and good ways of thinking about the situation and framing it in a different way (Sally interview 1).

Sub-theme 3.2: Being part of the team

This sub-theme reflects the way in which being made to feel, and working as part of the team helped the students adapt to their placement. They highlighted the importance of supervision and support from their educators and team and valued practical experiences that gave them the opportunity to see their skills and knowledge in action. This led to a sense of achievement at being able to do what an occupational therapist would do and led to an increased personal and professional confidence and belief.

3.2.1   Sense of belonging

This concept concerns the way in which students felt respected, valued and accepted by their teams. This led to a sense of belonging that reduced their feelings of anxiety and helped them to develop feelings of professional identity and confidence highlighted in theme 4. This concept was also closely linked to 3.2.2 where team support was important in fostering a positive learning experience for the students.

Students' first impressions of their team affected how they felt about their placements. They highlighted how welcome they had been made and the positive impact this had on their confidence. They spoke of how they had been accepted as a person in their own right (not 'just a student'), an acceptance that was clearly important in making them feel respected, valued and empowered. Sophie, for example, appreciated the way that her team "were so

accepting and so positive about the contribution [she] was making" (interview 1). Similarly, Ella stated:

> I was just part of the team and I said that to them at the end "I'm really grateful 'cause you didn't make me feel like a little student who didn't have a clue, you just let me crack on, I was part of the team, I had a valued contribution" (Ella interview 1).

Whilst the students' spoke explicitly about this acceptance there was also implicit reference made to their sense of belonging throughout their interviews. This was evident in phrases such as "my team" (Sally interview 1), "my office" (Ella interview 1) and "my site" (Poppy interview 1).

Agreeing with their team's philosophy was a factor that appeared to enhance students' sense of belonging. Sally, Poppy and Sophie, for example, highlighted the congruence between the way their teams worked and their own values and professional philosophy. The students all felt that their work had been accepted by the team and were motivated by the interest that the team had in their role. This appeared to provide a common bond that helped them fit into the team more effectively:

> they seemed to really get quite excited about about occupational therapy and what it means, more what I think occupations mean and how it, a lot of them are doing that anyway and are doing occupational therapy in a sense anyway at a different level erm and you know I mean they were so, the way they worked was so great and so real and they really did get alongside people and they were using a person centred approach and that was that was great 'cause I could talk a lot about how occupational therapists use a client centred approach a lot of the time and how important that it is (Sophie interview 1).

Poppy's sense of belonging was heightened by an offer of employment. This provided her with affirmation that she had done a good job and that she been accepted both personally and professionally by the team:

I just managed to fit in quite well there as well and got on with all of the staff so I suppose it was a combination, if they'd liked OT but not liked me probably wouldn't have got it but if they'd liked me but not OT I probably wouldn't have got it so it was quite nice to know that something worked and that they offered me a job (Poppy interview 1).

Poppy stated that knowing she was to return to the team stopped her feeling sad at the end of the placement. However, feelings of sadness and loss were evident for all the other students. This was clearly articulated by Sophie who described how her feelings of belonging had been so strong they had resulted in her becoming totally immersed in the placement, forgetting that she was a student and that it had to end:

I felt really sad I was so much part of the team and there were times when I would forget that I was going (Sophie interview 1).

This linked to concept 4.3.2 (leaving a legacy) where the team also experienced a sense of loss at the student's departure.

3.2.2 Having the support

All students highlighted the importance of supervision from both their on-site and off-site educators. It was seen as an opportunity to validate what they were doing, seek reassurance and feedback and reflect on their practice. Students also valued the support they received from their teams and other role-emerging students.

Whilst students recognised that they used their occupational therapy educator as a practical resource (for example, to provide assessment tools or ideas for interventions), supervision was seen as most important for providing space to talk about their feelings. This appeared particularly helpful in the early stages of the placement when they were trying to adjust to their setting and deal with their initial anxieties. Jayne, for example, was explicit about the importance of supervision for helping her deal with early insecurities:

(OT supervisor) was really, helped me with that a huge amount, I can't, it was just so valuable that supervision that I had with him every week erm I came away think, I went into supervision thinking "Oh he's going to think this is rubbish, I'm not really doing OT" or "My ideas are rubbish" and I came out

thinking "Oh actually I'm doing all right" 'cause he reassured me (Jayne interview 1).

Here it was clear to see the role Jayne's professional educator played in providing reassurance, validating her ideas and increasing her self-confidence. This was similar for Ella who also saw supervision as an opportunity to "sound stuff out with an OT, to say "This is what I'm doing, this is what I'm planning to do. What do you think?" (interview 1). Likewise, for Poppy supervision helped her feel more settled through providing a sense of security in her actions. Once she received clinical direction, positive feedback and reassurance about her marketing idea, she felt a sense of purpose which provided her with the confidence to carry out her role:

> she had a couple of cases which she thought would be useful if I worked on and
> then I said about my idea about doing a leaflet which she thought was a good
> idea so I then sort of then felt like I had purpose (Poppy interview 1).

In traditional placements students would have access to an occupational therapist on a regular basis to provide on-going supervision, reassurance and feedback. These extracts indicate that in the absence of this daily support, supervision became an important feature of the placement in providing them with a sense of security, encouragement and motivation. Students were clear that the role-emerging placements would have been much harder without the support of their professional educator:

> my OT educator was very supportive of me with that as well and I think that
> was very helpful as well I think had I not have had someone to bounce those
> ideas off, to bounce those kind of concerns off erm it would have been harder
> for me (Sophie interview 1).

As a result of supervising Sally, her educator had been reminded of what occupational therapy was and had become inspired to seek out a more occupation focused job. This highlighted the reciprocal nature of the supervisory relationship for both Sally and her educator and indicates that such placements offer reflective opportunities for both student and educator:

> She [her educator] gets them placements within their community and kind of works on building up their skills and getting them into employment and stuff but she was saying it's a very generic role so she was explaining this to me the first time I met her and then my last placement she said "oh I've actually applied for another job and it's specifically OT because you've inspired inspired me to get back to my OT roots" which is like amazing (Sally interview 1).

In addition to individual supervision, team support was particularly important. Sally repeatedly described her placement as an "amazing place" (interview 1) and was inspired by the receptiveness and "genuine interest" (interview 1) of the team in what she was doing. This was an experience similar to other students who were clearly motivated by the support they received from the team and the interest they showed in their work. Sophie, for example, enjoyed training staff who "showed real interest in OT" (interview 1), a statement that suggested this had been a new experience for her. Indeed Sally contrasted her experience with those she had had in traditional settings where she had felt a lack of interest in the profession:

> I think the first time I did an assessment and explained to the team what I'd done and the outcome of it they were really interested and I think that was the key really that people were interested to listen and that's maybe what I haven't had in past placements (Sally interview 1).

Trust was highlighted by the majority of students as something that made a difference to the way in which they felt part of the team. The autonomy awarded to students and the confidence that educators and team members had in them led to feelings of empowerment:

> having that freedom of you know what, we think you can do it, here's your caseload and we entrust these people to you and we have good full faith in what you can do and I kept getting really good feedback, that empowered me to continue on and grow in confidence (Ella interview 1).

Poppy suggested that her placement would have been "an awful lot easier" (interview 2) if there had been another student with her. Peer support was an issue also raised by Sophie and Ella. Whilst Sophie was the only student in the setting, she highlighted the support she gained

from contact with another role-emerging student. Meeting with them helped to normalise her feelings, reminding her that she was not alone in her feelings of anxiety and isolation. Her use of the phrase "cling on for dear life" indicated both the vulnerability that she felt in the placement and the psychological support she gained from 'holding' onto the other student:

> I'm really glad that I spent time with the other erm role-emerging student, that
> was really helpful just to kind of cling on for dear life at times 'cause it did feel,
> it did feel very tough and I know she felt similarly (Sophie interview 1).

This was a feeling similar to that expressed by Ella during her follow-up interview. She also gained comfort from contact with other students and used them to seek reassurance and alleviate worries. Like Sophie, Ella noted that this peer support became a psychological resource in helping her cope with the placement and stopped her feeling completely isolated:

> you know erm peers on emails and stuff we'd be chatting, that's what you do
> that's what you do when you're a student, chat with your mates and stuff, that's
> what I would do to get me through 'cause you need that otherwise you do feel
> very much as though you're in a void on your own and you worry that you're
> not doing enough or you know you've missed something or whatever you know
> (Ella interview 2).

3.2.3 Learning through doing

This concept reflects the way in which the students' active involvement in meaningful learning activities, in particular their encounters with clients, helped them to make sense of their role, enhanced their personal and professional confidence and helped to facilitate the construction of their professional identity.

Students all recalled stories of therapeutic interactions with clients. These encounters appeared to be particularly meaningful in terms of presenting students with the opportunity to practise what they thought occupational therapy was all about and put their skills and knowledge into action. It was through this work that students appeared to connect to the placement and make sense of their role and identity. Sally's extract reflects the connection she made with clients and the way in which they had inspired her to carry out her role as an occupational therapist:

I think erm the clients that I met were so inspiring and just erm the resilience
that they had and the hope that they had in the face of all of this stuff that was
going on that really kind of I don't know really touched me and I thought if I
can, if I can help you in any way through what I you know my knowledge or my
training then you know I would love to (Sally interview 1).

Jayne highlighted how two specific activities (an art group and team presentation) had been
the turning point for her in terms of her feelings about herself and the placement. Whilst the
art group had been therapeutic for the clients there was a sense that the group had also acted
as therapeutic medium for Jayne. Through running this successful group she recognised that
she did have the skills needed to complete the placement and gained a sense of achievement
at being able to do what an occupational therapist would do:

that was sort of sort of perhaps the turning point where I sort of thought "Well
actually you know I set this up, I planned it and organised it and I set this up and
am providing this for them" so I felt really proud of that and sort of thought
"Well actually you know I can do these things" (Jayne interview 1).

This was similar for Ella and Poppy who, despite their initial lack of confidence, found that
working with clients helped them recognise what they knew. For Poppy, one particularly
significant event had been a home visit. As was the case for Jayne, this appeared to serve a
dual purpose, providing an occupational assessment for the client but also an opportunity for
Poppy to recognise her own abilities and achievements and increased her self confidence and
belief:

I actually had a fantastic home visit with another young person that I had been
working with and really realized the things that I could do….it was positive in
terms of I really realized what I could do with this young person, in terms of
from an OT point of view so that made me sort of really realize the positives
that I could do (Poppy interview 1).

The interventions described by the students all had a clear occupational focus. This
demonstrated that, despite their initial anxieties about the lack of on-site occupational therapy
structures to help guide their practice, they had understood their professional philosophy and

been able to implement the occupational therapy role. Sophie highlighted the psychological rewards that such a successful encounter offered:

> he was able to present this bit of creative writing that he had done and and that was so wonderful to see his, just to see his face, just to see him, and he he was a client that was particularly depressed and I'd given this task of creative writing 'cause I knew it was something that he had been very interested in in the past and seeing him enjoying that occupation again (Sophie interview 1).

4.5 Master theme 4: Awareness of change.

This theme reflects the students' awareness of their personal and professional development and the positive impact they felt they had on the placement setting. Students highlighted three main areas of change as a result of their placement; their new sense of self, views of the profession and changes in clients and the team. This theme consists of the sub-themes and concepts presented in Table 5.

Theme 4 - Awareness of change	
Sub-themes	**Concepts**
4.1 Development of 'new' self	4.1.1 Emerging from the shadows
	4.1.2 Growing up
	4.1.3 Belief in self
4.2 Re-appraisal of the profession	4.2.1 Having that belief in the profession
	4.2.2 Seeing clients in a different light
4.3. Making a difference	4.3.1 Seeing that smile
	4.3.2 Leaving a legacy

Table 5 Master Theme 4: Awareness of change.

Sub-theme 4.1: Development of 'new' self

All students perceived their role-emerging placement to be an experience that had facilitated their personal and professional development. As a result of the autonomy afforded to them, they came to re-frame the way that they saw themselves and the profession and constructed their own identity as an occupational therapist. They were no longer reliant on their educator to guide them and worked out for themselves what occupational therapy was and what it meant to them. The views they held of themselves both prior to and at the start of the placement changed over the duration of the placement as they became more confident. By the

end of the placement they felt they had grown personally and professionally and were making the transition from student to therapist. This sub-theme is formed of three concepts that reflect the development of the students' professional identity, their feelings of growth and belief in self.

4.1.1 Emerging from the shadows

This concept concerns the development of the students' professional identities. Whilst they had initial anxieties about the absence of an on-site occupational therapist, it was this absence that appeared to facilitate the development of their own identity. They valued the autonomy that the placement afforded them and the opportunity this presented to define their own role and construct views of themselves and the profession. There was a sense that students felt empowered to become their own person and 'emerge from the shadow' of both their occupational therapy educator and traditional practices. The findings in this concept were initially identified in the first interviews but reinforced throughout the follow-up interviews. The emerging concepts were also confirmed by the third stage of analysis where links were made between the two sets of interviews.

Students reflected on times on past placements where they had felt a need to adopt their educator's identity. They highlighted a level of passivity that was evident in the way in which they had not been required to work out or articulate their role or identity for themselves, instead falling into existing practices, modelling themselves on their educator and carrying out the occupational therapy practice that they were told to do. In contrast, the role-emerging placement appeared to give them a sense of freedom to be their authentic self and develop their own individuality as a therapist. This was indicated by the use of metaphors such as "break the mould" (Sophie interview 2), "allowed to blossom" (Sally interview 2), "not to have a rein on me" (Ella interview 2) and "spread my wings" (Jayne interview 2).

Sally highlighted the significance of "making your own way" (interview 2) where, free from the pressure to 'become' her educator, she had moved out of the dark (shadow) and allowed her own personal as well as professional identity to emerge:

> I've always, in a way, you know, I've been shadowing another OT who had an
> identity and people thinking of that OT "Oh, you know, she does this or this.
> We'll send off the reports to her or him" and you're shadowing that person so

you're kind of almost take on that identity whereas in this role I was myself and you know I could just kind of develop my own as well as promoting the profession promoting myself a little bit and my identity and what I could do and what I like doing as opposed to trying to stick to that supervisor usually does and what they want you to do (Sally interview 1).

This was similar for Poppy who recognised that the freedom she had from an on-site therapist meant she developed her own understanding and vision of occupational therapy. Coming to see the value of the profession through her own eyes and not through those of her educator gave her a deeper sense of belief in the profession and self-confidence. Here, it could be suggested that Poppy was no longer just a reflection of her educator but was becoming her own person:

I wasn't just mirroring what had already done by other OTs and seeing that that was successful, it was me doing it and coming up with the ideas and you know seeing that there was a place for it so it really confirmed what I had started to think in the mental health setting about how good I thought OT was and then it confirmed that I thought, that I realized that I could do it I guess as an Occupational Therapist (Poppy interview 1).

This was similar for Sophie who, rather than being viewed as the 'student' that was attached or belonged to an educator, felt respected as an equal team member. Her use of the phrase "under this educator" indicated a sense of subordination felt on previous placements. However this was no longer evident on the role-emerging placement where she felt respected as an individual in her own right:

I felt people kind of respected my opinions more because there wasn't that obvious she comes under this educator who is in this placement…you know she's there in her own entity (Sophie interview 1).

On traditional placements, students had felt constrained by expectations to follow pre-defined processes. This confinement was evident for example in the way Sally described feeling "held back" (interview 1) and "hemmed in" (interview 1), unable to be her own person or make her own decisions. Her interviews suggested a level of passivity, enforced by a lack of

autonomy, which left her feeling restricted and frustrated. This passivity was also indicated by Poppy who highlighted how, on previous placements, it had been "easy to follow what they're already doing" (interview 1). Both Sally and Ella also highlighted the impact that being assessed had on the way that they behaved, feeling a need to be compliant in order to pass:

> you do feel that need to kind of do that if it's ... you know, your placement educator suggests oh, you know, maybe you could do this ... you feel you need to do that in order to ... for them to mark you, you know, well (Sally interview 2).

In the past Sally and Ella had felt inhibited by their educators whose presence had raised their self-consciousness. Sally felt that she would always "second question" herself for fear she "would say something that wasn't right" (interview 1) and Ella, through her reference to always having someone "over your shoulder" (interview 1), highlighted the psychological presence (or 'shadow') of the educator, even in their physical absence. Her use of the phrase "over perform" indicated that she also felt a need to act out a part, ensuring that she did everything she was supposed to do to be seen as a good student. These examples indicate that a sense of inauthenticity existed in the way that students had interacted with their previous educators, feeling unable to be their true selves:

> all the way through training you have someone over your shoulder, you might not directly have it all the time but you know it's there, you're being graded you're being marked erm have you made the grade have you done all the competencies and all the rest of it and you feel that all the time, you have to over perform almost (Ella interview 1).

In contrast, on their role-emerging placements, the students all felt empowered by the freedom from the on-site occupational therapy educator. Whilst at the beginning of the placement this had, for some, caused high levels of anxiety they soon came to value the freedom that this presented. In the absence of someone to "lean on" (Sophie interview 1) the students had to take responsibility for their own learning and development, a responsibility that resulted in increased self- awareness and confidence:

I felt that I'd built up enough confidence in my knowledge to to kind of do the work myself without having to always and I think it's not always good for me personally to have a supervisor there and say oh you know should I do this and waiting for their confirmation rather than just having the belief in myself that its okay (Sally interview 1).

Ella referred to her autonomy as "a gift" (interview 1), a metaphor that suggested she had been awarded the opportunity, trust and respect that allowed her to develop as an independent practitioner. This was similar to other students who attributed their increased confidence to their autonomy which had forced them "to be more proactive" (Jayne interview 1*) and "step up my game" (Sophie interview 1). Reflecting on her role-emerging placement in her follow-up interview, Poppy suggested that students "can probably only really get that [autonomy] in the emerging role placement" (interview 2) and that this led to a deeper, more meaningful level of learning:

I think a lot of what I learnt was sort of self-taught which is always more powerful when you learn it and you sort of realise these things for yourself rather than someone telling you you're… you know, this is what OT is or whatever (Poppy interview 2).

Such realisations were in contrast to the anxieties expressed in theme 2 at the start of the students' placements. It appears that having successfully worked through the challenges of their placements they were able to recognise the important influence that autonomy had on their development. Poppy's extract above, for example, can be clearly contrasted with one from interview 1 where she talks of the early stages of her placement:

the anxieties that I'd had from the first week about the resources and about the no other therapists there and nobody knows what Occupational Therapy is (Poppy interview 1).

Such extracts demonstrate the way in which the students intensified their personal engagement and investment in the placement and took responsibility for their own learning and development, an investment that led to the personal and professional confidence highlighted in concept 4.1.3.

4.1.2 Growing up

This concept relates to students' feelings of personal and professional growth and the belief that they were successfully making the transition from student to therapist.

Jayne referred on a number of occasions to 'growing up' as a result of the placement. She recalled feelings on past placements where she had perceived a clear distance between the experienced "grown up" clinicians and herself as the inexperienced "little" (interview 1) student:

> I felt a bit young and not immature but a bit not experienced enough and those are really grown up things to me, those are things that professionals do, you know get up and do a presentation or write an article or you know experienced people you know all the way over there and I'm here (Jayne interview 1).

However, as a result of the challenges that she overcame on her placement, this perceived gap become smaller and her confidence grew. Jayne's use of the word "little" (interview 1) implied that she went into the placement feeling like a 'child' (young, inexperienced), needing the support and comfort of familiar surroundings and the protection and guidance of a grown up adult (educator) to help her. However, as a result of positive outcomes during the placement and the feedback she received she appeared to become a more confident 'adult':

> it was kind of like a learning curve for myself as well 'cause my personal development, not just professional but me as a person yeah I am grown up enough to do that sort of thing I'm not little anymore (Jayne interview 1).

This sense of growth was implicit in other students' accounts. Sophie, for example spoke of how her placement had been important in "building me up" (interview 1), pushing her to develop as a professional. Similarly, Ella felt that her placement had been "a massive opportunity to grow" (Ella interview 1), a growth that was clear to see as she made the transition from dependent infant at the start of her placement to a more confident independent adult:

I'm frightened somebody's going to say "ooh you don't know what you're talking about", if I'm coming out with my rationale about something and they'll just pick holes in it and tear it apart (Ella – start of interview 1)

I'd gone from frightened baby to you know what I can do this (Ella - end of interview 1).

Closely linked to the following concept (4.1.3 Belief in self) all students believed that their placements had enabled them to prove to themselves that they could be an occupational therapist and appeared significant in helping them make the transition from student to therapist. This again indicated that they experienced a sense of professional growth. Ella, for example, would go home and tell her family "I really feel like I'm doing the job" (Ella interview 1). Similarly Sally "felt like a professional" (interview 1) and Poppy "could really see how occupational therapy could help a lot of these young people erm and I definitely saw that I definitely felt that" (interview 1). This indicated that this was a rich placement experience that had become embodied; they were not only seen as therapists by others but now 'felt' like professionals:

I kind of started to **feel** a good sense of professional identity as well and erm I **felt** like I was less of a student and more of an OT really (Sophie interview 1).

4.1.3   Belief in self

This concept reflects the way in which the students developed a confidence and self-belief that they could be occupational therapists. This manifested itself in a sense of competency in skills such as decision-making, clinical reasoning and promoting the profession but was also evident in the way in which their perception of self changed over the duration of the placement. Placement experiences increased confidence for future practice and gave students a sense of personal and professional achievement.

Autonomy was an important contributory factor in enhancing students' confidence. Having had the opportunity to work independently they knew what it felt like to have the autonomy that would be expected of them as qualified therapists and as such felt better prepared:

I think the level of autonomy that I had there will definitely help me going into a job and having that kind of this is it this is your job, obviously you'll have induction and training but that first time when you're left alone I think this will have really trained me well, set me up well for that …having that you know freedom and that autonomy I think that's really you know better than any other placement would have done (Sally interview 1).

With no existing service or therapist to rely on, students had to direct their own learning and take responsibility for their own practice. This responsibility brought home the importance of being clear about what occupational therapy was. They all highlighted the significance of having to work this out for themselves, something that appeared to be intellectually stimulating and bring about psychological rewards:

I think learning on your own gives you a boost of confidence because it kind of pushes you and forces you to make sure you really actually understand what, you know, really basic things like what is OT and how does it apply to this client group?. And being able to do that yourself I think is a really good learning curve (Poppy interview 2).

Sally suggested that because she was on her own she "made more of an effort" to seek out and "absorb" (interview 2) information on this placement as she knew people would be asking her about her role. This 'absorption' perhaps reflected the depth of learning that Sally felt had taken place on her placement, a depth also reflected in the other student interviews. Like Poppy, Ella spoke about how she now 'knew' and 'understood' what she was doing. Through being empowered to take responsibility for her own learning, she had constructed her own knowledge and enhanced her professional confidence and self–belief:

now that I know more of what I am doing and do understand what I am doing a hell of a lot more, I felt more empowered to take risks with people to just go for it 'cause a lot of my journey through my training has been er confidence building and checking it out with people, is this okay, am I doing the right thing and all this sort of stuff, now I'm more, even though I check it out I know, I intuit that it's right, I've done my assessments, I understand, I've weighed it up and I still check it out with someone before I go launching in but I know that it's

right I'm just double checking, I'm not kind of really fearful that it is wrong, I know that it is okay (Ella interview 1). [My emphasis underlined].

Here, it was clear to see the intensity of Ella's confidence, depicted in her phrase "a hell of a lot more" (interview 1). This increased strength of belief was present among all of the other interviewees, highlighted through phrases such as "much more confident in my own abilities" (Sophie interview 1), "an added confidence" (Poppy interview 1), "really confident" (Jayne interview 2), "a stronger confidence in myself" (Sally interview 2). [My emphasis underlined].

As a result of having to establish their roles and defend their own decisions students developed an increased confidence in skills such as communication, clinical reasoning, problem solving, decision-making and assertiveness. They saw the value of being challenged by others and recognised this as a positive opportunity for the development of these skills. Sophie, Poppy and Sally also became more confident that they could work in an emerging-role and promote occupational therapy in the future, something that indicated increased confidence in their professional identity and belief in the profession. This was similar for Ella, whose confidence to return to the placement setting was in direct contrast to the first day when she had arrived "terrified" (interview 1):

you know I feel really able to go back, if I had to go back in there tomorrow I could do it and that's a really nice feeling to think I could do that and it wouldn't faze me (Ella interview 1).

On reflection students were able to see changes that had taken place in their sense of self over the duration of the placement. Ella, for example spoke of how she shifted from feeling "frightened" (interview 1) at the start of the placement to someone that was proud to be described as an "ambassador for the profession" (interview 1). Knowing that others respected her had a positive impact on Ella's self belief, particularly at a time when she was about to start her first job. A further example was provided by Jayne who moved from a position of uncertainty to one of self-belief. Here it could be suggested that Jayne recognised not only her professional competency but also her own ontological development:

> how OT could benefit that particular client group?, what interventions I could
> do?, how could I assess them? (Jayne interview 1) [Start of placement]

> I grew in my confidence of what I was doing, what actually what OT is erm how
> you could sort of implement interventions, how you can assess people, perhaps
> not even formal assessments just you know just chats and things and evaluating
> it all and reflecting on it, I grew practically like that but also sort of just with my
> self belief as well about my own abilities (Jayne interview 1) [End of placement]

In their initial interviews Sally and Sophie spoke of feeling more prepared and confident for forthcoming job interviews. They felt that they would be able to talk about and use their placement experiences to demonstrate their competencies in relation to the job requirements. Sally believed that people would be able to see the genuine passion that she had for her placement, something that would perhaps give her a personal as well as professional advantage:

> thinking about this interview that's coming up I feel like I'll be quite confident
> in talking, I can think of so many appropriate examples for their person
> specification to say well you know this is an example of erm how I've worked
> with multi-cultural clients and staff members and worked in MDT [multi-
> disciplinary team] teams and worked, organising work to tight budgets and all of
> this because I really can use all of that experience, but also whenever I talk
> about the placement I just feel so passionate about it and I think that that alone
> will come over to people (Sally interview 1).

This was confirmed in their follow-up research interviews where three of the students spoke about their positive job interviews. This is discussed in concept 5.1.1.

Students experienced an overwhelming sense of pride and satisfaction at their personal and professional achievements. These feelings appeared greater than those they had experienced on past placements due to the challenges they overcame. Jayne, for example, felt that her feelings "were a little more enhanced, well not a little more they were much more enhanced because it was more challenging" (interview 1). Sally's extract also spoke for all the participants where the impact on her sense of self was evident:

I can look back at that placement and honestly say I am so proud of myself for everything that I did and some of the situations I found myself in (Sally interview 1).

All students were keen to promote role-emerging placements to others due to their belief that it had made a difference to their personal and professional development and provided them with confidence for future practice. Poppy suggested that role-emerging placements should be compulsory for all students. She believed "an emerging role placement could be the thing that makes them. That could be the thing that pushes them to really understand it themselves" (interview 2), a statement that perhaps illustrates the way she felt the placement facilitated a deeper level of learning. Similarly, Ella's use of the phrase "springboard" reflects the way in which the students perceived their placement to have been a catalyst for their development:

I would fully advocate people doing emerging role 'cause it was brilliant, it's a really good springboard for your confidence coming out of training to do that and to be autonomous (Ella interview 1).

Sub-theme 4.2: Re-appraisal of the profession

This sub-theme reflects the way in which students developed a deeper understanding and appreciation of occupational therapy which led them to re-appraise their view of the profession and their place within it. Through their engagement with clients, students also developed an enhanced awareness of the importance of client-centred practice. As students developed their professional values and beliefs their professional identity was strengthened and as such this sub-theme linked with that of 4.1.

4.2.1 Having that belief in the profession

The students all spoke of an enhanced belief in occupational therapy as a direct result of their placement. Through seeing their occupationally focused interventions work with clients and the positive impact this had on the clients and team, they saw the value and role of occupational therapy for themselves. The resultant belief in the profession was evident in phrases such as "I absolutely love OT" (Sally interview 1), "I loved it" (Ella interview 1) and

"I know now how incredibly important occupation is in peoples lives" (Sophie interview 1). Such extracts illustrate the authenticity and strength of feeling experienced by the students:

> everyone always says your passion just comes across and it really does, and you
> know, I can't fake ... I can't fake that (Sally interview 2).

Sally contrasted this belief with more negative feelings experienced on previous placements. She spoke, for example, of how a year ago she would have said "I don't really like OT, I don't really know what it does, what's the benefit of OT?" (interview 1), a feeling that contrasted directly with her new "love" of the profession (interview 1). This passion for the profession continued when she was working as a therapist and appeared to intensify: "I'm really, really, I'm really passionate about the profession" (interview 2).

These doubts about the profession had also been experienced by Poppy. On previous placements she had struggled to see the value or uniqueness of occupational therapy as a profession. The following extract shows how her doubt and confusion impacted on her sense of professional identity:

> I did doubt OT to be quite honest with you in other settings, I just didn't,
> couldn't quite work out what we were learning here and how it related to giving
> out a raised toilet seat or, the work in my other placement was Social Services,
> adaptations putting in stair lifts and I think that's probably a personal thing as
> well I just didn't, I personally didn't get it or I got it but I just felt anyone could
> have done it (Poppy interview 1).

Students emphasised how their belief in the profession had developed from seeing authentic occupational interventions work with clients. Sally, for example was clear that her interventions had been "real OT" (interview 1) and not generic in nature, something that consolidated her belief that the profession offered a valuable contribution to the clients. Sophie also reflected on how her work with the clients and her understanding of the profession had "been more real doing this placement I think from maybe others" (Sophie interview 1), suggesting that her placement had been an authentic learning experience that had brought occupational therapy to life.

Students reflected on how their stronger sense of belief and identity had manifested itself practically. Many of them for example, compared their early struggle to explain what occupational therapy was with their new found confidence and ability to promote the profession. Ella's confidence was evident in the way she wanted to make sure everyone heard about the value of the profession by "shouting from the rooftops" (interview 1). Students' belief in the profession also led to a shift in their professional identity where they no longer struggled to articulate their role and often referred to themselves as "occupational therapist":

> I found it easier even to explain to to people like the owner of this flat who said "what do you do?" and I was like "I'm an occupational therapist", "oh so what exactly do you do?" and I was you know really quite you know articulate in what I do which I have never had before, I've always kind of struggled with oh er… mmm (Sally interview 1).

It is possible to suggest that students had developed a sense of belonging not only to the team but now to the profession. This was implicit in comments made by students who often referred to 'we' or 'our' and not 'I' or 'OT'. When talking about helping clients to be independent, Ella for example stated "that's where **we** come in" (interview 1) even though she was the lone occupational therapy student. Sophie provided a similar example:

> I think **we** do get so focused on making sure that the full process has been done
> with people and that you know **we** are using **our** theory (Sophie interview 1).

It was clear that this sense of belonging was closely linked to the development of their professional identity. This appeared particularly significant for Sally who believed that her placement had helped her find her professional "niche" (interview 1). She felt a stronger affiliation with the profession and spoke of how "privileged" (interview 1) she was to say she was an occupational therapist and how proud she was of "my profession" (interview 1). This was in stark contrast to feelings experienced prior to the placement where she had been uncertain about what occupational therapy had to offer and had little sense of professional identity:

it was difficult for me to kind of find my niche within that, find my identity within that erm and that's what I kind of struggled with throughout the course (Sally interview 1).

4.2.2 Seeing clients in a different light

The stories students recounted about work they had done with clients revealed how their role-emerging placements had helped them develop a greater awareness of client-centred practice. Students came to value the uniqueness of each client and highlighted the importance of collaboration and listening to the individual's story and needs. On reflection they questioned how client-centred previous placements had been. A number of students also acknowledged a shift in their own prejudices.

Through critical reflection, students recognised how on past placements clients had often been fitted into existing departmental procedures, models of practice or groups. Poppy, for example highlighted how in other settings there had been "some kind of process and you fit it around the individual rather than having an individual and then fitting the process around them" (interview 1). This made them question the level of client-centredness. However, in the role-emerging placement they were free from these constraints which allowed them to work in a more client-centred way:

> you know in that you know we we use the MOHO [Model of Human Occupation], we use these assessments, these are the groups that are set up, these are the groups that you've been put in to and I realised in this placement just how unique everyone is and how dependent, context dependent it is as to which assessment to use and which intervention you use with them and which groups you set up and I love that variety and I think I've really responded well to that as well (Sally interview 1).

In stories students told, key principles underpinning client-centred practice were evident. They recognised the uniqueness of each client and the importance of listening to what was important to each individual. Poppy, for example, recognised how "it is so much down to the individual" (interview 1) and, like Sally, appreciated the uniqueness of each intervention. They were also aware of the need to adapt their approach and form collaborative relationships with clients. Sophie, for example, appeared to develop a greater awareness of the 'use of self'

in developing client-centred relationships. The placement had taught her that spending time with the clients and "really listening to what was on their heart" (interview 1) could bring about a more effective therapeutic relationship and end result, an awareness she felt would change her future practice: "yeah I think that will that will affect me in practice" (Sophie interview 1). This sense of collaboration was evident throughout all accounts both explicitly, when students recounted stories of how they had facilitated activities that were meaningful to the client, and implicitly through use of words such as "we" and "together". Ella provided a clear example of this:

> we're off we're going to do this, right I'll work with where you're coming from
> and we'll eventually get there and we did and it was grand and we did it and we
> did it weekly went off to do our art (Ella interview 1).

Some students suggested that in past placements the formality of the occupational therapy role led therapists to become task rather than client focused. This was something that they had initially experienced at the start of their placement where there was an urgency to get on with specific tasks for example, assessments, set up groups. However, as the placements progressed they came to recognise the importance of spending time getting to know the clients, listening to what was important to them. Sophie compared her perceptions of the occupational therapy role on past placements, which appeared to be quite mechanical, to that on the role-emerging placement where she could work alongside clients in a way that made her more comfortable. Again there was a sense of authenticity about her role in the absence of any "ulterior motive":

> I think in other placements erm there's that, there's that erm task isn't there that
> job to do, you know I am an OT and I am here to assess you and I am here to
> help you know to meet your goals and erm I think that's definitely the kind of
> focus and has been the focus erm whereas with this placement it felt like we
> were kind of going very much from what the service user was saying and erm
> we were there just to help them to kind of meet their goals and it was it was just
> the way that we did that was different it was it was almost like there wasn't an
> ulterior motive, it was just I'm here to help to kind of help you erm to help
> yourself (Sophie interview 1).

The majority of students noted a shift in their prejudices and attitudes towards clients. Jayne, for example, recognised that through working with homeless clients she now saw them in a "different light" (interview 1), moving away from a position of fear to one of protection towards the clients. Likewise, Ella had initially been influenced by prejudices and public attitudes towards forensic clients but had felt able to move away from these and the associated feelings of fear as a result of her placement:

> I was able to kind of move through stuff and move through my prejudices actually 'cause I spoke to (OT) about this that level of fear that you have when you read this stuff its about self protection and looking after yourself 'cause you're frightened but it's also about a level of prejudice which people in society have about forensic clients and their propensity to kill and murder whatever, all the stuff we read in the tabloids, and moving away from that (Ella interview 1).

Sub-theme 4.3: Making a difference

This sub-theme reflects the impact that the students appeared to have on the placement setting, in particular the clients and team. They felt they had "made a difference" to clients through their occupational approach, being able to engage those that had been resistant to previous interventions. They experienced a sense of satisfaction at seeing clients engage in activities that were meaningful to them and highlighted the lasting impact they believed their work with clients would have on them. They also felt they had made a positive contribution to the team and increased awareness of the benefits of occupational therapy. There was a sense that students left behind a personal and professional legacy. This sub-theme is formed of two concepts: seeing that smile and leaving a legacy.

4.3.1 Seeing that smile

This concept concerns positive changes in clients that students perceived to be a result of their interventions. They noted that clients saw their occupational approach as different to that provided by other team members which enabled them to successfully engage clients that had previously refused to engage in therapy. This reinforced students' feelings of achievement and enhanced their belief in the profession.

Students were able to offer clients an alternative occupational approach to that provided by other team members. They felt this enabled them to successfully engage clients that other

team members had not been able to. Poppy for example, recounted a story of a young woman who was adamant she would not see a therapist and was yet willing to engage with her due to the practical nature of the intervention. Other students had similar experiences where the occupational nature of the intervention and relevance of the activity to the client was significant in the development of therapeutic relationships and clients' engagement. Ella, having identified an art class, had been able to engage a client when "nobody had been able to get him out of his house prior to that" (interview 1), an experience similar to that described by Sally:

> the guy from Afghanistan that I was working with just just seeing his level of engagement that I'd never seen before, all the times that I'd seen him before and based on other peoples reports about him erm and when I reported back to the team they were saying I cant believe it, he just he never turns up for sessions, appointments he just doesn't come (Sally interview 1).

In addition to increased levels of engagement, students highlighted the positive impact that engagement had on clients' feelings of well-being. Seeing this change was clearly important for students and gave them a sense of achievement and satisfaction at the work they had done. Sally's extract provided an example not only of the impact on the client but also feelings of personal agency that students experienced in terms of bringing about positive changes:

> doing the drumming session with the young guy who just, the biggest smile I've ever seen I think, just the whole hour that we sat there he just had this big smile on his face and I thought it was worth it just to see that smile because you know this poor guy had been so depressed (Sally interview 1).

Clients appeared to make a lasting impression on students and their 'presence' was evident even after the placement had finished. Sophie, for example, found herself "thinking back to how clients are doing" (interview 1) and Ella stated that she still remembered various people and would "wonder how they are, when I'm driving around I think 'I hope they're all right'" (interview 2). Similarly, Sally spoke about the "goose-bumps" (interview 1) she experienced when thinking about the work she had done with clients and the positive changes she had witnessed. She believed that she would "remember the stories that I've heard and these

clients I think for the rest of my life, I think they just made such an impact on me" (interview 1). Such extracts illustrate how students' experiences with clients had become a meaningful, integral part of their being.

4.3.2 Leaving a legacy

By the end of the placement students all felt they had made a positive difference to the teams in which they worked and there was a sense that they had left behind both a personal and professional legacy. It appeared that the students' participation in the placement setting shaped not only their own experience for example, enhancing their self-confidence, belief in the profession and sense of achievement, but also shaped the placement community itself. Here, teams came to recognise the value of the profession, wanting to alter their practices to incorporate an occupational perspective.

Students noted that team members, like clients, valued the alternative occupational perspective and philosophy they took to their placement. Sally highlighted how her team reflected on their practice in light of the perspective she offered and came to recognise the relevance and value of occupational therapy in enabling a more empowering, holistic view of clients. This receptiveness to her approach was an important motivator for Sally:

> they were just so receptive to it that I just, I think that kind of pushed me along really and after the first session, after the first client session and I kind of fed back to them what I was doing they were just, they were just like "this is great, this is just what we need"… … they were saying "it's so relevant to this field because we can only do, we can only talk so much about what's gone on in the past and we can only do so much for them but through, you know OT is actively seeking to empower them to do something with their future and to make something of themselves other than just an asylum seeker (Sally interview 1).

Similar accounts, which appear to demonstrate the mutual learning that had taken place, were provided by other students. Jayne, for example, felt a sense of accomplishment when her team acknowledged that they had "got a different way of looking at things now" (interview 1). Both Jayne and Sophie expressed a sense that their work had been validated through changes seen in team members:

seeing [the project worker's] response to a person who she had been working with who had always been very very very down and who found it hard to engage in anything and seeing how this was really helping him and on the way back to the office she said "that really works doesn't it" and I was like "yeah it does" and it was really exciting to see that response erm from both the client and the project worker (Sophie interview 1).

It was important for students that they felt able to make a difference in their placements. They had clear expectations of what they wanted to achieve prior to the placement, including promotion of the profession and its philosophy. By the end of their placements students felt that they had not only achieved this but had left part of occupational therapy behind. This "legacy" was not only in a practical sense in terms of resource folders and intervention plans but also through the teams' increased awareness of the value of the profession and their motivation to continue the work started by the students. This appeared to be closely linked to the pride that students articulated earlier about the work they had done and the impact they had made during their time on the placement:

I think I think I really feel like I have left like you say a little bit of a legacy with the team and that I have helped them you know with their work and enhanced what they are already doing and erm I think that's surely a good thing (Sophie interview 1).

It was clear that students had made a practical difference to the teams in which they worked. In addition they also appeared to have made a lasting psychological impact, something that was captured explicitly in the extract below. Compared to a "butterfly", Sally had brought something new to the placement setting, something that the team had appreciated and valued. They were excited by her arrival and she made a real difference to the team as indicated by the way she 'changed the landscape'. Their sense of loss at her leaving was evident:

my immediate manager, he was, the most beautiful analogy he came up with he said "it reminds me, you coming here reminds me of a song that we used to sing in Sudan" erm he said "it's about butterflies, it said that you know butterflies they arrive one day and everyone marvels at their at the butterflies, they're beautiful and they make the landscape look so lovely and then they suddenly

unannounced they leave and then we say "Oh where's the butterflies gone and like there's something missing" and he said "that's how I feel about you coming here" (Sally interview 1).

Like Sally, the belief held by other students that they had made a difference was reinforced by parting gifts and words. Teams often tried to retain students by asking them to return as volunteers or seeking funding for occupational therapy posts. This confirmed for the students that they had made a valued contribution and that occupational therapy had something unique to offer.

The placements had also made a lasting impression, and perhaps left their own 'legacy', for the student. The placements had become an integrated part of students' personal and professional identity, something that was highlighted when they spoke about what they would take with them from the placement. Sally provided a clear example of how her placement was now an integrated part of her and her future:

I think that's such a rich and important experience for me that you know I don't in a way even have to explain it to people because I know it's enriched me and I can kind of take that through to other jobs that I have erm you know even if it's not in an overt way I know inside that it's just been amazing (Sally interview 1).

4.6 Theme 5: Reality of practice

This theme reflects the findings of the follow-up interviews and concerns the extent to which participants felt their role-emerging placement had helped them in their transition from student to practitioner and influenced their practice as an occupational therapist. It should be noted that this was not the only purpose for which the follow-up interviews were used: previous themes were based on analysis of both the initial and follow-up interviews. This theme presents more obvious analysis of the sense of both continuity and change between the two interviews. In comparison to initial interviews, where similarities were evident regarding the way that students experienced their placements, follow-up interviews revealed very different experiences for each of the therapists. This appeared to be heavily influenced by the setting in which the therapists went on to work and as such it is felt necessary to provide the reader with a brief overview of these circumstances before the emerging concepts are presented.

- Poppy was offered a job as an occupational therapist towards the middle of her role-emerging placement in the charity in which she had been based. This was a post that had been created just for her and was the first occupational therapy post in the organisation. In comparison to the other four students, who all started work in a new setting, Poppy's transition from student to practitioner appeared to be a much smoother and more positive experience. She was pleased to be working with the team again and had settled into her new role quickly and with apparent ease.

- Ella and Jayne were working in traditional NHS jobs and were having a difficult time at work due to problems with the teams that they were working in and the nature of the work they were doing. Ella had gained employment (prior to her role-emerging placement) in an acute physical hospital and Jayne was based in a mental health unit. She was the first new graduate (band 5 Occupational Therapist) to be employed in the team and the rest were experienced therapists who had been working in the team for a long time. However, they were undergoing a period of re-deployment and Jayne experienced feelings of resentment from these staff at her arrival. Both Ella and Jayne were generally unhappy with their jobs and appeared to be struggling to cope with the day to day pressure of working as qualified therapists. Whilst they remained positive about having done their role-emerging placement, they found it difficult to reflect on the ways in which the placement had prepared them for, or influenced, their practice. Ella had however set up a small private practice one day a week as a result of the confidence she gained from her placement. This was something she felt very positive about and appeared to gain some respite from the negative experiences in her NHS job.

- Sophie was working in a private mental health hospital. At the job interview she had not been made aware that there were no other occupational therapists in the setting and so consequently found herself in an emerging role by default. Whilst this had initially caused her some anxiety, Sophie had drawn on her experiences from the role-emerging placement and at the time of the interview was positive about her role.

- Sally had gone on to work in a traditional NHS community mental health team and although she experienced some frustration with the generic aspect of her role she had a clear sense of identity and purpose and felt that she was having a positive impact on her team.

Analysis of follow-up interviews revealed two main sub-themes (Table 6). The first sub-theme reflects ways in which the therapists drew on their placement experience to help them gain employment and carry out the practical aspects of their role. The second sub-theme concerns thoughts and feelings that they had about what it was like to work as a qualified therapist, the extent to which they had been able to sustain their professional identity and their vision for their future. The term 'therapist' was used in this theme to reflect the fact that they were qualified practitioners.

Theme 5: Reality of practice	
Sub-themes	Concepts
5.1 Standing on my own two feet	5.1.1 Gaining employment 5.1.3 Confidence for practice
5.2 'Being' an occupational therapist	5.2.1 Real life 5.2.2 Consolidation of identity 5.2.3 Challenge to identity 5.2.4 Looking to the future

Table 6: Master theme 5 Reality of practice

Sub-theme 5.1: Standing on my own two feet

This sub-theme reflects therapists' views of how their placement experiences gave them the skills and confidence to gain employment and carry out their roles independently. It is formed of two concepts; 'Gaining employment' and 'Confidence for practice'.

5.1.1 Gaining employment

Therapists had high levels of confidence going into their job interviews and attributed much of their success to being able to talk about occupational therapy in a clear and passionate way. They valued their role-emerging placement for giving them experiences that they could draw on that enabled them to demonstrate their core skills and competencies. Unaware at the time that she was being interviewed for an emerging role position, Sophie, for example, felt that she had been able to talk about working independently and how she had helped developed an occupational perspective on her placement:

> I was spot on in terms of some of the questions I had about developing, you know, a new OT role here, um… and developing the, you know, an OT programme here, so I was definitely able to draw on experiences that I'd had in terms of being on my own (interview 2).

Similarly, Jayne "talked about doing presentations for the team and how that helped me understand that I knew what I was talking about when it came to OT" (interview 2). Sally's earlier belief that the passion for the profession she had developed during her placement would be evident to others had indeed been affirmed by those doing her job interview:

> Actually from my interview um ... they said that I spoke with such enthusiasm
> and passion about occupational therapy, and that definitely came from my
> placement (Sally interview 2).

Concept 1.1.2 highlighted how, as students, they had felt that their placement may give them a competitive edge at interview. This was confirmed by Sally who had been given her job over more experienced therapists. Here, she clearly attributed this to the enthusiasm and vision she had created on placement:

> they told me a little bit about the other candidates that I was up against, and
> actually a few of them were um ... they were Band 5s, but not newly qualified
> Band 5's, so I actually got the job above some ... some more qualified OT's based
> on how enthusiastic I was ... and my vision for OT. And um ... and that was
> definitely a result of the role-emerging placement without a shadow of a doubt,
> completely (Sally interview 2).

Jayne also believed that the placement had given her a "head start in applying for jobs and in the interview process because it made my application form look good" (interview 2). She had spoken a lot about her placement during the job interview as she "thought it would be impressive" (interview 2), indicating that, similar to concept 1.1.1 (standing apart from other students), she perhaps felt she would stand out from other candidates. She believed that managers would want to employ someone with her type of role-emerging experience and that this would help her be seen in a positive light. She suggested "people might look at you differently, that you have the balls almost to go and do something outside of your comfort zone" (interview 2). Here, her use of the metaphor "have the balls" suggested Jayne believed others would see her courage and strength of character to do such a placement as positive attributes for employment. She had left her interview with high levels of confidence and optimism that she had secured her first job:

I went into my interview really confident, and I had the best interview I've ever had, for that job. I was really happy. I came away smiling and I was quietly confident that I was going to get offered the job (Jayne interview 2).

5.1.2 Confidence for practice

All therapists felt that their placement had in some way helped prepare them for practice, although there was diversity in opinion regarding the extent of this (as highlighted in sub-theme 5.2). Despite these differences, phrases such as "lucky to have had the opportunity" (Poppy interview 2), "fantastic opportunity for me" (Sophie interview 2), "glad I did it" (Jayne interview 2), "stood me in good stead" (Sally interview 2) and "great experience for me" (Ella interview 2) demonstrated the belief held by each of the therapists that the placement remained a meaningful learning experience.

Having overcome the challenges they faced on placement, for the majority of participants there was an increased sense of self-belief and efficacy that they could take on the challenges of their new role, the exception being Jayne who experienced a drop in her confidence levels (as discussed shortly). Poppy, for example, stated that her role-emerging placement had given her "a massive amount of self-confidence" (interview 2) and she did not believe there was "any way I'd be able to take the responsibilities that I've got now without that placement" (interview 2). Similarly, Sally believed her placement had helped her to "hit the ground running" (interview 2), giving her a sense of purpose and direction as well as the confidence to work autonomously. This was also evident in the following extract which highlighted the personal insecurities that Sally felt would have been evident without the placement experience:

I really think if I hadn't have had that experience I wouldn't have responded as quickly and as well as I have done, um… because I'd constantly be looking for someone to guide me and constantly be asking questions… but I was just um… really quick to act and I didn't even really think about it, I kind of had a clear idea in my head of where I was going with it (Sally interview 2).

Ella highlighted how, through her placement, she "had proved to herself that she could do something outside the norm" and as a result had the "confidence to not be frightened to do the same in practice" (interview 2). As such, she had started a small private practice working

as an independent therapist in the community. Ella suggested that without having done her role-emerging placement, she may not have had the courage to undertake this challenge. This was similar to Sophie who believed that she would not have had the confidence to stay in her emerging role and would "have really, really struggled had I not have had that experience that I'd had in that emerging role placement" (interview 2). Ella indicated that had she not tested herself in the placement she would probably still be constraining herself to working within what she perceived to be less challenging settings:

> that's come from having the courage to do something a bit different earlier on 'cause I think if I'd have stayed with just the easy, safe options I might just be doing the easy, safe options and wouldn't be venturing out so soon into other things (Ella interview 2).

This outlet was particularly important for Ella as she was very unhappy in her NHS job and needed to have something positive in her professional life. Her private work was reminiscent of her role-emerging placement where she had the independence to create a service that reflected her values and beliefs and she felt able to do what she "trained to do" and "to do proper OT" (interview 2). This indicates that Ella had become uncomfortable with the nature of the work she was doing in the NHS, work that she found mechanical and incongruent with her personal and professional philosophy. In contrast, she valued the autonomy in her private work and the opportunity this gave her to be holistic, client-centred and creative. The positive feedback that she received from her clients gave her feelings of worth and efficacy that resembled those experienced on the placement. These were aspects of her practice that she was not gaining from her NHS job which left her feeling "frustrated", "constrained" and "demoralised" (interview 2).

The majority of participants reflected on what they had achieved on placement and were proud of how far they had come. Sally's confidence for example was evident when she stated "I really felt like I could walk in and hold my head up and be an independent employee (interview 2). This confidence was in direct contrast to insecurities she had prior to her role-emerging placement: "I struggle at times with confidence in myself and whether I can do it (interview 1). Now, Sally's doubt had faded away and there was a sense of self-belief and positive anticipation about her future potential:

I kind of look back and think "Yeah, I achieved that", and "I did that myself, so if I can do that, I can do this". And then six months into this job, if I can do six months in an assertive outreach team, in… in (name of place), then I can do… you know, what… what more can I can do? um… so it's… it's kind of constantly reflecting back on how far I've come and how much I've done and kind of um… giving myself a little bit of a pat on the back for… for doing it (Sally interview 2).

Therapists all cited professional skills and knowledge that they felt were valuable to them in practice and which they attributed to their placement experience. Examples included Poppy's increased awareness of risk management, Ella's ability to advocate for her clients, Sophie's time-management and report-writing skills and Jayne's confidence in her decision-making. The relationship between the role-emerging placement and the development of their skills was made explicit by Sally who suggested that "initiative, problem solving, good communication skills, developing relationships, trusting relationships with your clients" were "a lot better than perhaps if I'd have done just a traditional" (interview 2). Sally's reference to the nature of her therapeutic relationships was also highlighted by all the other participants who indicated that they now tried to work in a more client-centred and occupationally focused way. Ella's holistic philosophy was evident for example when she spoke of the importance of considering "every area of a person's life" (interview 2), an awareness she attributed to the placement. Similarly, Sophie felt that her placement had enhanced this aspect of her practice by enabling her to "get to grips with the… with the individual's needs, um… without somebody… without somebody there um… directing me" (interview 2).

Jayne, Sophie and Sally spoke about their increased confidence to promote the profession. In the initial interviews they reported that doing team presentations had helped them work out their role and given them the confidence in their own understandings of practice. Jayne suggested that having done this on placement it now came more naturally to her in practice:

What has helped me from the emerging role placement is promoting OT and explaining what OT is, when there's a new group of clients in I'll explain to them the benefits… what… what is goal planning, how to do it, the benefits, and then what OT is and what OT can… because there are people who think OT is just yeah, activity coordinator on the ward, but I was explaining to the clients what it was, giving examples of how OT could help people and I felt that that

came out quite easily and naturally, um… because that… I was doing in the role-emerging placement (Jayne interview 2).

Whilst Jayne recognised that this was one area in which she had transferred her confidence from placement into practice, in contrast to the other participants she generally experienced a diminished sense of confidence and self-belief. This was in the context of Jayne joining the team at a time when team dynamics were difficult due to long-standing staff being transferred into different settings. Jayne described how staff were reluctant to accept these changes and she felt some resentment towards her new position. This left her feeling that she was "going into a bit of a war, a minefield" (interview 2), a metaphor which perhaps reflected her feelings of anxiety and vulnerability as a result of the battle she was fighting at the time. Jayne spoke a number of times about mistakes that she had made when she started and the negative feedback she had from staff which slowly "chipped away" (interview 2) at her confidence. As is evident in the following extract this, together with the lack of any positive reassurance from her educator, made her doubt herself and left her questioning her competency level and the perception she held of herself as a professional. This appeared to have come as a bit of a shock as she had been so confident leaving her placement. This was evident in her reference to feeling "knocked off my feet" (interview 2), a metaphor that appeared to reflect her feelings of instability. Here, Jayne appeared to experience feelings of inferiority; she had taken a step backwards and felt like a student again, emotional and dependent on others for reassurance and internal validation. The following extracts show the contrast between the end of her placement where Jayne had felt like a 'grown up' professional and her perception of self in her current role:

I came out the other end thinking well actually no I am grown up enough to do this (Jayne interview 1).

I started losing my confidence then, thinking well if I'm making silly mistakes like that, they're like, I'm not fit to practise and I can't do this, and I can't do that, and just bit by bit I think, it was just like a knock on effect, it just…And the other thing, I wasn't getting any feedback, I wasn't getting any positive feedback. Every bit of feedback that I was getting was something that I'd done wrong or hadn't done right and just bit by bit it chipped away and I… I need… I'm not like… I'm not desperate for reassurance all the time, but I need a little

bit of… oh 'you did that really well today' and 'you're coming along nicely'
and I wasn't getting that (Jayne interview 2).

This contrasted with Poppy, Sophie and Sally's experiences where their teams had given
them lots of encouragement and positive feedback. This once again contributed to their sense
of belonging within the team and had a positive impact on their self-esteem, confidence and
sense of efficacy:

whenever you get complimented on doing something well it boosts me a little
bit more and, you know, and I do feel like I am coping amazingly well (Sally
interview 2).

Sub-theme 5.2: 'Being' an Occupational Therapist.

This sub-theme reflects the reality of being an occupational therapist in practice and the
extent to which therapists felt they had been able to sustain the strong professional identity
that had developed by the end of their placement. It also concerns the vision that they had for
the future. This sub-theme consists of four concepts: 'Real life', 'Consolidating professional
identity', 'Challenge to professional identity' and 'Looking to the future'.

5.2.1 Real life

Although participants had previously considered their role-emerging placement to be a "real"
authentic learning experience, once qualified many of them questioned the extent to which it
reflected or had prepared them for the "reality of practice". This was a particular concern for
Ella, Jayne and Sophie where 'reality' appeared to be related to the permanence of their
position and the increased levels of responsibility which caused feelings of pressure and
anxiety. This distinction between the way that they perceived their placements (and as such
their status as a student) and 'real life' (as qualified therapists) was highlighted by Sophie:

It was pretty scary initially thinking "Right this is my… it's **not just** a placement,
this is real life and I don't want to be getting stuff wrong" (Sophie interview 2).

Here, Sophie's fear at the reality of her situation indicated the seriousness for her of being
qualified. When asked whether she no longer felt the placement had been "real" (interview 1)
she stated that, whilst she still believed it had been an important learning experience, she felt
added pressure in terms of the responsibility she had as a qualified therapist and that the

placement had not been as fully representative of the demands placed on her as a therapist as she had perhaps anticipated. This was similar for Ella who spoke of her "baptism of fire" (interview 2) when she started work. Here, Ella was left feeling overwhelmed by the level of responsibility she had and the sense of pressure associated with being the lone therapist on her ward. Where she had previously been responsible for three or four clients on placement she now had an independent caseload of 35 and as such felt that the placement had been "very easy" (interview 2) in comparison to the reality she faced in practice. Similarly for Jayne, being a qualified therapist was a "whole different ball game" (interview 2). This metaphor suggests that she now found herself faced with a completely new set of rules, players and responsibilities to those experienced on placement. She was now working in an unfamiliar environment which led to feelings of anxiety and insecurity in much the same way that she experienced in the early days of her placement. This sense of responsibility, expressed by nearly all the participants, was reflected in Sophie's extract; there was no-one else for them to rely on- it was down to them now:

> Well yeah… I guess in the …in terms of um… I'm responsible now for…really fully responsible for… for what I do in terms of, you know, treatment with patients, um… and I guess as a student, you know, there's still that safety net of being a student. Um… obviously, you know, I wouldn't have wanted to do anything that I felt was dangerous so I… you know, I was very careful with the decisions I made then, but here, being qualified and being the only OT um… working with patients with, you know, really, really um… complex needs, um… I've just been very aware that… that there's little room for… for error (Sophie interview 2).

This revealed the feelings of protection that Sophie felt had been provided by her student status. This was also indicated by Ella who, similar to Sophie's "safety net", felt sheltered as a student by the "nurturing network" (interview 2) around her and Jayne who felt reassured by the fact that if she "missed something you kind of… you would take it back to your educator" (interview 2). There were clear similarities here where, although Sophie, Ella and Jayne had taken their placements seriously and were quick to highlight their level of professionalism, they now had different expectations of themselves as therapists and felt the onus was on them to do things "properly" (Jayne interview 2). It could be suggested that they were now more concerned about how they would be perceived by others in the team if

they made mistakes or asked for help. As students, they accepted that if they needed help they "could ask for it" (Ella interview 2) but as qualified therapists they could no longer hide behind their student status, instead having to prove themselves as competent therapists.

Jayne appeared ambivalent about the usefulness of her placement in preparing her for practice. On the one hand she felt that it had been a valuable experience, and one that she would "do over and over again" (interview 2), but at the same time stated "you're only really learning when you start practising" (interview 2) which suggested that it was only through working as a qualified therapists that she felt 'real' learning took place. Following her placement, Jayne had felt confident about starting work, "going in there thinking that it was going to be OK" (interview 2), but in reality had found it a "lot harder" (interview 2) than she had anticipated. Jayne suggested that the placement may have given her a "false sense of hope that everything was going to be lovely" (interview 2) when she qualified and was disappointed that the placement "just didn't help as much as I thought it would" (interview 2). It is possible that, for Jayne, the placement led to a higher level of anxiety and frustration in practice as a result of the false sense of security it had given her that everything would be fine.

Conversely, Sophie and Sally believed that their role-emerging placements had helped them make a successful transition from student to therapist. Due to the independence demanded of her in her new role, Sally found that starting work had been like "doing the role-emerging placement all over again" (interview 2). She was grateful to have had the placement experience behind her and felt that it had provided "a really good progression" (interview 2) in terms of her preparation for practice. Similarly, Sophie felt that without her placement experience "it would have been a much bigger step to where I am now" (interview 2) and that her transition would have been a greater challenge. Working as a lone therapist, she too was grateful that she had gained some insight into what this would be like during her placement:

> it's definitely been beneficial and there have been so many times when I've though I'm so glad I did that, I had that experience, you know, to have… to have at least felt what it was like to be… to be on my own, you know (Sophie interview 2).

Poppy perceived little, if any, distinction between her placement and her current role. It could be suggested that, as a result of being offered a job, the placement blended into 'real life' before it had finished, making the transition for Poppy much easier. Any threats to her success were minimised by the familiarity of the environment and the confidence she had gained from the placement which were now directly transferable to her role as a qualified therapist. Poppy highlighted how the team considered her to be a 'working' member of the team even before she left the placement, a view that she also held herself. Even though she had only been in her official role for seven months, Poppy's identity and affiliation with the team stretched back to the placement. She stated "even though it's actually... I've only been there um... seven months, I think it feels like... for me as well a bit... that I've been there over a year" (interview 2). This sense of merger between the placement and her current role was also illustrated in the following extract where Poppy reflected on what it felt like to return to the placement setting:

> when I started again, I didn't feel like a new starter at all, I felt like someone who's been on a break... and had come back, which was a lovely, lovely feeling, really lovely, and that was just part of the nature of everyone being so welcoming, but I think partly it was maybe because they didn't necessarily by the end, see me as a student. They saw me as someone that was working there (Poppy interview 2).

5.2.2 Consolidation of professional identity

At the end of their placements the participants all believed that they had developed a strong sense of professional identity and belief in occupational therapy. However, follow-up interviews revealed that, whilst they all still maintained their belief in the profession, they had mixed feelings about the extent to which they had been able to sustain this identity. This concept reflects the ways in which Poppy, Sally and Sophie felt they had a clear identity as an occupational therapist and had been able to consolidate this in their new role. In contrast, Ella and Jayne expressed more negative views and at times questioned their professional identity, a finding that is discussed in concept 5.2.3 'Challenge to identity'.

Sophie, Poppy and Sally spoke about how their placements had enabled them to start work with a clear sense of purpose, direction and clarity. Sophie stated:

I came in with a much clearer idea of my role, um… I think the placement definitely helped me to clarify that, because I had to clarify it you know (Sophie interview 2).

In this, Sophie indicated that she went into her job with a stronger sense of identity due to the responsibility she had on placement to work this out for herself ('**I** had to clarify it') [my emphasis in bold]. This was supported by Poppy who also felt that the demand placed on her to articulate what she had been doing on placement made her secure in her understanding of what occupational therapy was and what she could offer in practice. This was further reinforced by Sally who was clear that it was her placement that had helped her develop this confidence in her identity. Here, the strength and permanence of her identity was evident in the way it had become 'cemented' in her head:

because I saw that it did work and because I had cemented a firmer idea in my own head as to what OT was um ... the philosophy of OT and what I wanted, you know, to make from OT in my ... in my next job (Sally interview 2).

This appeared to be a particularly important for Sally who, as previously discussed, had struggled with her identity throughout her education. However, as a result of her placement experiences, Sally appeared to have found her place within the profession and was now professionally much "happier" (interview 2) with a new found confidence and self-belief. The following extract appears to reflect Sally's personal transformation and the way in which her identity had moved past a superficial level of 'doing' occupational therapy to include her sense of 'being' as an occupational therapist:

professionally I feel a lot happier than um… you know, throughout the course, where there was a lot of kind of questions and wobbles and um… and you know, I feel um… a much stronger sense of who I am within the profession, there's a much stronger um… understanding of.. of OT for me, and a stronger confidence in myself and belief in myself to… to… **to do** and **to be** a good OT…it feels good to have that, having had such a negative, you know, belief in myself before. So I've obviously found a profession that I love and that… that helps (Sally interview 2). [My emphasis in bold].

Like Sally, Ella spoke about her "love" for the private occupational therapy work that she did. In contrast to her role in the NHS where she felt restricted and disempowered, Ella's confidence, self-belief and identity were sustained in her private work where she felt free to do what she believed in. This contrast was evident in the following extracts where it was possible to compare the way in which her sense of self was influenced by the different environments in which she was practising. Similar to the role-emerging placement, it was the autonomy and respect that she experienced in private practice that appeared to enhance Ella's sense of self-efficacy:

> [re: Private work] I am doing what I'm trained to do, really you know concentrated and I love it and I've got freedom and autonomy, I have autonomy and I'm trusted to do what I trained to do and I'm good at it (Ella interview 2).

> [re: NHS job] It feels like I have gone backwards doing what I'm doing at the moment 'cause it feels like I've got my hands tied erm so it's quite frustrating (Ella interview 2).

Ella spoke of how her private work kept her "sane" (interview 2) at a time when her NHS job was "doing [her] head in" (interview 2). Here it was clear to see the way in which Ella's own occupational engagement impacted on her feelings of well-being in the different environments and highlighted the importance of meaningful and satisfying employment. The challenge to Ella's identity brought about by her NHS role is discussed in the following concept.

The way in which Sophie had been able to sustain her professional identity was evident in the way she spoke about her practice. As the first occupational therapist for twenty years in her place of employment, she had to spend lots of time educating others about the profession and what it could offer. Here it was clear to see that Sophie's clarity and confidence to do this was underpinned by an identity grounded in occupational therapy philosophy and core values:

> being clear that that's not my role to provide entertainment, that it's… it's to provide structured meaningful occupation for patients and, you know, that we're working towards… working towards goals with patients, um… so… so yeah,

um… that's been interesting to… to… to make that very clear that my role is um… is to be, you know, engaging patients with… with therapeutic purposeful activity, not… not just filling their time (Sophie interview 2).

This implicit sense of identity was evident in other participants' accounts, including Sally and Poppy's - both of whom had roles that were often generic in nature. For Poppy her generic role did not appear to be an issue as she believed she was confident enough in her professional identity not to worry about whether she was always doing specific occupational therapy. Even when undertaking generic tasks, Poppy believed that her professional identity was evident through the way in which she saw her practice through her "OT glasses" or occupational lens. Whilst it could be suggested that glasses can be taken off and as such may not be a permanent part of Poppy's identity, it could also be argued that her 'professional eyes' made her unique from the rest of the team and as such enhanced her sense of professional identity and contribution:

I still feel like I've got, like I said, my OT kind of like professional eyes or whatever it is… what's that?, OT glasses (Poppy interview 2).

Unlike Poppy, Sally was frustrated and unhappy with the generic aspect of her role. She was disappointed that her core skills were not always being used as she believed they could be "so rich in that team, and could give so much" (interview 2). However, the strength of Sally's professional identity appeared to give her the impetus to challenge the generic nature of her role and establish a more occupational focus:

[name of placement setting] has made me see how effective an OT service can be and it's kind of propelled me now, thinking in this generic role, I'm not ... I'm not happy with it, you know, just being generic, and I want to do more, so now it's kind of propelled me to do more OT stuff (Sally interview 2).

Her determination and enthusiasm also appeared to impact on others in the team. In the same way that her placement educator had been inspired by Sally to apply for a more occupationally focused job, her manager also came to question her own identity and practice:

my manager keeps saying oh you know it's great that we've got ... that I've got you here, because if it wasn't for you I would just go along, you know, doing the generic work. But because kind of ... new blood and enthusiasm has come in, she has, you know, started thinking what ... what more we could do in an OT way (Sally interview 2).

5.2.3 Challenge to identity

This concept primarily concerns the experiences of Ella, Jayne and Sally who were struggling to sustain their professional identity, particularly in relation to their new working context. The dynamics of the working environments and the nature of occupational therapy practice led them to question their ability to sustain the identity that they had developed on the role-emerging placement.

Throughout her follow-up interview Ella contrasted the way she felt about her NHS and private work many times and it was clear to see the shift in her sense of self and confidence in her professional identity. Ella hated her NHS role which, as demonstrated by the use of phrases such as "mind-numbing" and "groundhog day" (interview 2), she found repetitive, frustrating and un-stimulating. In contrast to the excitement and optimism about her new role that was evident at the end of the placement, Ella now experienced strong negative emotions. The strength of feeling and the duress under which she felt to do the job was clearly evident in the following extract. Here it is possible to compare her initial optimism and confidence in interview 1 with the despair that was evident in interview 2:

I hate it, it's like you know putting a gun to my head every day (Ella interview 2).

prior to my first job to know that I can work on my own, because on rotation my hand will be held to some degree and I guess it always is when you are training as well, but it was just really great to know that I did it really well and I got great feedback (Ella interview 1).

Having developed a strong professional identity on placement, Ella was uncertain whether this still existed in her NHS role. This uncertainty resulted from working with a medical team that she felt did not understand or respect her or the profession and led to her feeling "demoralised" (interview 2). She also felt that the job she was doing was not what she

"trained to do" (interview 2) and as such struggled with carrying out a role that she felt was incongruent with the personal and professional values and beliefs she had developed on placement. This was evident here for example when Ella spoke about her frustration at not being able to work in a client-centred way and her belief that what she had learnt on placement had been lost:

> I don't have the luxury of being polite and saying "I know you don't feel well" and "I know you are in pain" but it's like "I need to get you up and I need to get you up now 'cause you've got to go and we need that bed", it's not a very nice environment, it's very, er, it's not client-centred, its everything, everything I learnt has gone out the window, so that's quite demoralising (Ella interview 2).

This was a similar experience for Sally who, despite feeling that she had a strong professional identity, struggled with being able to carry out practice in a way that was congruent with the identity and vision she had created on placement. Here, her frustration at the inflexibility of current practice led to her desire to seek employment elsewhere in the future:

> another example of where I feel a little bit hemmed in in this job, I… I met up with the… the Lead OT of… of the… the Trust and um… was explaining to her how useful I found the Kawa Model when I used it at the [name of placement setting] and how useful I feel it would be with some of my clients, you know, now, being from different cultures, and she said oh yeah it sounds like a really interesting tool, but, you know, sadly our system is geared up for MOHO and um… so you can only really do MOHO, and that was it. And so, you know, all of that um… all of those ideas and that inspiration I had from using the Kawa Model, just completely like discredited… oh you can't use that, yeah. Um… so, you know, I'm really… I'm really eager to… to find something, you know, in… maybe a year's time where, you know, there… there is the potential to use that. But you know, sadly in the NHS everything is becoming standardized and this is… this is how it's done, this is what you do (Sally interview 2).

Perhaps to try and protect herself emotionally from negative feelings, Ella appeared to adopt a mechanical attitude to her NHS role. The creativity and individuality that Ella had valued so

highly in the role-emerging placement no longer appeared to exist and she would simply "get on with the job and it's done" (interview 2). This was in stark contrast to the private role where - as in her role-emerging placement - she came alive. Here it is evident to see the sense of respite and freedom that Ella experienced from being outside of her NHS job, a freedom that allowed her to be her authentic professional self:

> I come to life once a week in that area, in other areas of my life of course I do but you know professionally its like thank God this is where I want to be, I can get to do what I really love doing, quality with people and not just ticking boxes and filling forms (Ella interview 2).

What were evident from Ella's follow-up interview were her feelings of despair and frustration at the situation she found herself in (in her NHS job). She recognised that she had become mechanical in her approach and indicated that she was being drawn into the cultural ways of working. Her unease at this was demonstrated in the following extract where she reflected on the psychological conflict that she experienced between the way she had behaved and the person she wanted to be:

> you know if somebody's died I go great I don't have to do that and that's kind of where you go with it and I felt, I did that once up there and I just thought I just thought that is not who I want to be I don't want to be like that (Ella interview 2).

In this, Ella appeared to be trying to hold on to her identity, actively resisting becoming emotionless like some of the ward staff. This was also evident when she stated "I can't become how they are up there I just won't" (interview 2). Ella likened these staff to "stone" (interview 2) and her critical reflection was clear that this not a future that she wanted for herself:

> I don't want to be one of those people who just becomes hardened, I'm very aware of that, I hope I never forget that. If I forget that, I might as well leave (Ella interview 2).

Although Ella questioned her professional identity, it could be argued that rather than being eroded, Ella's identity had simply been threatened and that it was in fact still implicit throughout her interview. For instance, the fact that Ella spoke about not being able to do what she trained to do and her resistance at becoming somebody she did not want to be indicated that her frustration resulted not from a lack of identity but from not being able to be true to this identity and implement what she believed in. It is possible that, like Jayne, Ella had given herself a 'false sense of hope' that her work would be as exciting, challenging and empowering as her placement which made her transition into practice more difficult.

Of all the therapists, Jayne appeared to be the one that had the greatest struggle making the transition from student to occupational therapist. At the end of her placement she had been confident that she had done really well and spoke explicitly about how she felt that she had moved away from an identity as a student to one of an occupational therapist. However, since starting work her confidence had taken a considerable knock and she felt that it was "all going wrong" (2 interview 2). Jayne regressed to feeling like a student once again:

> I'm finding it really hard because in my mind I still feel quite young and I still feel quite student, because I've obviously never had this level of responsibility before, been a professional before, and in my mind I'm still battling with that. I still feel like ... at student level, but I know I'm not (Jayne interview 2).

Here it was clear to see the cognitive challenge or 'battle' that Jayne was experiencing between knowing that she was a qualified therapist, and as such having to accept the level of responsibility she was exposed to, but at the same time feeling vulnerable and inexperienced which took her back to her feelings as a student. Her reference to feeling "quite young" (interview 2) was in contrast to the "grown up" (interview 1) she had felt at the end of her placement and again reflected her sense of regression. Jayne's insecurity appeared to result from her perception of the teams' expectations of her. Concerned that she was not meeting these expectations, the self-doubt that had existed at the start of her placement emerged once again in practice:

> I think… some of the nursing staff kind of forgot I was newly qualified, because they've never had a Band 5 there before, so I think they were expecting perhaps more of me than what I felt that I could do. So then I was in conflict

then thinking well should I… should I actually be able to do this then as a Band 5? If they're expecting me to do these things should I be able to do them? (Jayne interview 2).

Despite the difficult start for Jayne, towards the end of her interview she spoke of how, having been in post for six months, something had now "kind of clicked in [her] head" (interview 2) and she felt more secure in herself and in what she was doing. She had asked her manager for more feedback (and this was now forthcoming) and the staff appeared to have accepted the team changes which now left her feeling part of the team. Whilst Jayne felt that her confidence was increasing as an occupational therapist, the following extract demonstrated that, unlike participants such as Sally, Sophie and Poppy, she still experienced a level of uncertainty and was reliant on others for validation:

I don't think that I'm a bad OT, you know. I don't… I think I know what… what I'm doing and I think I'm going in the right direction, it's just that… I just need the confidence to prove… and I just need to keep telling myself I'm going in the right direction really and… yeah, and having a bit of feedback every now and then to say, yeah you're doing well (Jayne interview 2).

5.2.4 Looking to the future

This concept reflects the way that therapists saw their placement as having "opened [their] eyes" (Jayne interview 2) to possibilities for the future and the anticipation they held of their future journeys as occupational therapists. They had been inspired by their placements and appeared to have found a professional direction that had purpose and meaning for them. There was a sense that they were now giving attention to their professional lives and knew what they wanted to achieve either in their current post or in the future. Even for those who were struggling with their new roles there was optimism that the future would be different.

Sally, Ella and Jayne spoke about not wanting to become like some occupational therapists that they had met along the way; those "that stay safe and stay in the same job for ten years" (Ella interview 2). They believed that having done the placement they had the confidence to seek out and try new areas of practice and would "go looking for opportunities now" (Jayne interview 2) to avoid the stagnation that they perceived other therapists had succumbed to. Sally's statement "I've never been like that and I'm never going to be like that" (interview 2)

reflected the resistance that she, Ella and Jayne had to this stagnation and the agency they exercised in choosing to practise in a different way. For Sally, occupational therapy had become much more than just a job and the thought of not being able to do what she believed in clearly scared her:

> not just, you know, thinking of it as a safe profession, that you can get your pension, and you can get a mortgage and, you know, it's always going to be there and that, you know, petrifies me to think I'm just going to be a generic OT for the rest of my life. I think no way, don't want that (Sally interview 2).

Sally and Ella who were both frustrated with the lack of occupational focus in their practice appeared to view their jobs as a temporary transition on route to more meaningful roles. Ella stated that the way she coped with her NHS job was the fact she knew it was "not forever" (interview 2). Similarly Sally and Jayne spoke about how their jobs were a means of gaining the experience required to branch out into new areas of practice. They were both starting to think about potential emerging roles (not just for themselves but also for the profession) and the excitement that Jayne had experienced prior to her placement appeared to return once again:

> When I'm ready to move on from the rotation I would perhaps look at more alternative jobs and not just your mainstream ortho, you know, mental health, and working with the homeless in the future would be great, I'd love to do something like that, or early intervention or… because there's no OT in early intervention in [name of town]. So looking at different… different… different roles… health promotion would be really cool as well I think. OT's could work really well in health promotion (Jayne interview 2).

Sally was determined to try and develop a more occupational focus to her current role as she did not want the job to "kill the enthusiasm" (interview 2) that she had developed on placement. Here, it could be suggested that Sally was anxious that she could become 'dead' in her role and lose the passion and commitment she had for the profession. She spoke of how, as a result of the "huge impact" (interview 2) that the placement had on her, she was always thinking about future opportunities and the potential for her and the profession:

I'm constantly thinking of where I can take it and what I can do with it and the opportunities that I could, you know, go with it um… so yeah, that's definitely, definitely still there (Sally interview 2).

Sally reflected on how her placement had "created this ball of passion within me" (interview 2), a metaphor that reflected her inner drive and desire to develop a meaningful occupational therapy role. Similarly, despite her negative experiences, Ella's use of the metaphor, "pilot light", presented an image of a flame still burning, waiting to ignite when the situation is right:

I can only say I know where I want to go, I know why I why I trained, I haven't lost sight of that, the pilot light is still on with where I wanna go (Ella interview 2).

In summary, findings revealed that role-emerging placements were seen by the students at the time, and on reflection, to have enhanced their professional identity; increasing their sense of being as an occupational therapist in contrast to simply learning how to do occupational therapy. For those employed in role-emerging positions, this sense of identity continued but for others who were working in traditional roles and settings there was disappointment and frustration at the lack of opportunities available to them to enact practice in a way that reflected the vision of occupational therapy and sense of self as therapists they had developed on placement.

4.7 Reflexive account.

Data analysis and writing of this findings chapter took many months and was a totally absorbing and intensive process. I found myself constantly thinking about what the students had told me and what sense I made of their accounts. There was many a time when my bedside clock read 2:30am as I pondered on how best to represent their experiences in this chapter. It was as if these students had become a psychological presence in my life, similar to the presence of the clients for them on their placement.

The part that I found the most difficult was developing themes that reflected the meaning of the students' experiences and even after hours of deliberation I am not entirely happy that this has been achieved. Some interpretative titles came more naturally to me, such as 'emerging

from the shadows' whilst others I feel I never truly managed to move away from what I consider to be more descriptive. However, I do feel that following the IPA approach helped me to drill down into participants' accounts and formulate an understanding of the meaning that they had attributed to their experience and that this is reflected in the content under each heading.

I fluctuated between anxieties that I was too descriptive in the write up and then conversely that my interpretations were too far removed from students' experiences and were starting to be influenced by my own views. I was particularly aware of the way in which my role as an academic and my beliefs in the value of role-emerging placements were likely to have impacted on the way in which I was drawn to particular aspects of the data. For example, as placement tutor I had seen students come back from role-emerging placements as 'different' students, having experienced a growth in confidence in both themselves and their practice. I was therefore aware that I went into the data analysis with my own biases, perhaps wanting to find data to highlight the value of such placement, and that I needed to ensure I was open to data that may have challenged these beliefs. I feel that this reflexivity allowed me to 'hear' (in the interviews) and 'see' (in the data analysis) the early anxiety and discomfort that had been experienced by the students, the extent of which I had not previously recognised or anticipated would emerge.

Both the positive and negative comments made by the therapists in their follow-up interviews helped to alleviate the anxiety I highlighted in an earlier reflexive section about whether they had simply been telling me in their initial interviews what they thought I wanted to hear. Their honesty about the challenges that they now faced in practice and the strength of feeling that many of them had about the placement confirmed for me that, even though they had mixed feelings about the extent to which the placement had prepared them for practice, they had clearly gained some personal benefit from having done the placement.

As a tutor, my experience has been that, on campus, students' focus of concern is often on developing skills and competencies needed to carry out occupational therapy practice, for example what anatomy and physiology they need to know, assessments that occupational therapists use, skills needed to run a group. Whilst such aspects are of course important, as I read around subjects such as professional identity and ontology I became increasingly aware that students do not appear to be so overtly reflective about their beliefs, values, attitudes and

understandings of practice. This is, however, in contrast to data that has emerged from this study where students appeared to be more insightful about their own personal and professional journey of development and discovery. I remember being excited about this aspect of the data but aware that I needed to continue to ensure that I was representing their experiences (grounded in their data) and not simply trying to find data to support my views about this important aspect of education. I am mindful of the way in which my background as an occupational therapist is likely to have influenced the attention I have given to students' identity development and to aspects of the data such as client-centred practice, the use of meaningful occupation and professional philosophy. As an academic who adopts a more humanist approach to education, it is evident on reflection that I have been drawn to data that reflects the growth and development of the student.

I re-visited transcripts on numerous occasions to ensure that my analysis did indeed reflect their experiences and that my own beliefs and assumptions did not mean I was blind to alternative views. This was perhaps demonstrated through original drafts where excessive word counts reflected my need to convey everything that students had told me so I could not be accused of bias. However, with reassurance from my supervisory team I became more comfortable making decisions about what issues were most pertinent to answer the questions and am confident that the resultant findings chapter reflects the experiences that students shared with me.

4.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the findings from the interviews carried out with five MSc occupational therapy students two weeks after their role-emerging placement and six months after they had graduated and been working as occupational therapists. Five main themes emerged from the data analysis: Not your run of the mill placement, Thrown in, Finding a way forward, Awareness of change and Reality of practice. Each theme was presented, along with a number of sub-themes and concepts that revealed the meaning that the participants attributed to their role-emerging placement. Findings indicated that role-emerging placements were seen by the students at the time, and on reflection, to have been a challenging learning opportunity but one that was significant in enhancing their professional identity; helping them to develop an identity that was of their own making and increase their sense of being as an occupational therapist. This was in contrast to simply learning how to 'do' occupational therapy or taking on the identity of their educator. For those employed in role-emerging

positions, this sense of identity continued but for others working in traditional settings there was disappointment and frustration at the lack of opportunities available to them to enact practice in a way that reflected the vision of occupational therapy and sense of self as therapists they had developed on placement. The following chapter presents a detailed discussion of the findings and considers their relationship to existing literature.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Overview

The aims of this study were to develop an understanding of occupational therapy students' experiences of role-emerging placements and to consider the influence, if any, that these placements had on their practice once qualified. The findings in particular provide new insights into the way in which role-emerging placements act as a catalyst for students' ontological development, presenting them with opportunities to develop their own sense of professional self in their journey as they work towards becoming occupational therapists. Whilst the development of professional identity has been highlighted in the literature as one of the benefits of such placements, no studies have previously explored or discussed this in relation to students' ontological development. This is also the first study to explore graduates' reflections on their role-emerging placements once qualified.

For each of the students there was a profound sense that they had learnt what it really meant to 'be' an occupational therapist. The autonomy that the role-emerging placement afforded them seemed to enable the development of their own individuality and creativity as a therapist and to construct their own understandings of practice and identity when previously they had felt the need to reflect what their educator wanted them to do or be. These placements provided an opportunity for students to challenge what they had previously taken for granted and to arrive at new perspectives and understandings, not only of what they knew but also of whom they were becoming as occupational therapists.

This has resonance with the development of a professional way of being described in the literature (Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2006, Dall'Alba and Barnacle 2007, Dall'Alba 2009a, 2009b, Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2010, Vu and Dall'Alba 2011), a development that appeared evident in students' embodiment of ways of knowing, acting and being in relation to occupational therapy practice. The significance of this is highlighted by Dall'Alba (2009b) who argues that the integration of what students know with who they are and how they act is crucial to the art of skilful practice.

Findings support the view that learning and professional development can be considered an ontological process of becoming (Jarvis 2010) where students encountered transformative

experiences that affected their way of being. Whilst students recognised that their placement had facilitated skill and knowledge acquisition it was their understanding of themselves as occupational therapists and the profession that appeared to be the most significant placement outcome. It is therefore suggested that role-emerging placements provide an important space in occupational therapy curricula for increasing students' awareness of their becoming as an occupational therapist. Such pedagogic spaces are necessary to balance out the current epistemological focus on knowledge and skill acquisition that is becoming increasingly evident in higher education programmes (Barnett 2007, Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009b, Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2010).

For all participants, there was a journey of development and discovery that led to this enhanced sense of self as an occupational therapist. As with any journey there were stages through which participants travelled. Firstly there were choices to be made as to which placement path they would follow with an initial excitement about their choice of destination. This was followed, for most of the students, by a period of anxiety and doubt as the placement drew closer and they began to question whether they had made the right choice. This anxiety continued throughout the early days of the placement as they found themselves in uncharted territory with no familiar structures or signposts and no clear path to take. However, once they became familiar with the setting, found a way in which they could engage in a meaningful way with clients and had been accepted by the team they found a sense of purpose and direction and became more comfortable with the journey they were making.

Through being exposed to a new and challenging learning environment, participants seemed to experience a powerful upward trajectory in terms of the development of their authentic professional way of being. They saw changes in themselves, both personally and professionally and they reflected on exciting possibilities for the future. The benefits that they gained from their placement experience stood them in good stead for their new journey as qualified occupational therapists but for some this journey was a turbulent one, principally due to difficulties encountered in their new work settings. Whilst each stage of their journey was a unique experience for each participant, similarities revealed the importance of role-emerging placements for enhancing a student's personal and professional development.

This chapter follows the path of the students through their placements into practice and considers the research questions in light of the findings of the study. Further consideration of the emergent themes presented in the findings chapter revealed the importance of the students' development and understanding of self. This led to a higher-order visualisation of the findings that reflected the temporal experiences of the participants in terms of their ontological development: Venturing forth (Not your run of the mill placement); Ontological discomfort (Thrown in); From trepidation to transformation (Finding a way forward); Becoming an occupational therapist (Awareness of change) and 'Being' in the real world (Reality of practice). Themes, sub-themes and concepts identified in the findings chapter are highlighted in the discussion through the use of italics. Consideration is given to the relationship of these findings to existing literature. Implications for education and practice and recommendations for further research are made in chapter 6.

5.2 Venturing forth

Not content with staying on a familiar placement path, students wanted to push themselves out of their comfort zones in order to *test themselves out* and further their development. Their placement choices appeared to be influenced by their ways of being which, in the context of this thesis, is their sense of self, how they see themselves within the world, how they feel about what they do and who they are learning to be. Barnett (2007) suggests that a student's personal self is not separate from their educational self, they are inter-related. In relation to this study it was therefore necessary to consider the way in which students' being may have influenced the educational choices they were willing to expose themselves to, their interpretations of the experiences they encountered and the way they came to enact practice.

These participants demonstrated a desire to learn and a willingness to be changed. This reflects the professional will that Barnett (2007, p104) suggests shows itself through dispositions and qualities that form a student's "pedagogical being", a being that influences the way in which they engage with their educational world. Here, students seemed to possess dispositions such as a willingness to learn, engage and explore, and qualities such as courage, resilience and robustness in the face of uncertainty. Through their desire to do a placement that was *outside the box* they demonstrated the "excitement for discovery" that Boud (1980, p80) suggests is an important motivator for learning, and appeared to display activist learning traits (Honey and Mumford 2000, Jarvis 2010), being open-minded to, and seeking out, new and exciting learning experiences that would stimulate and challenge them. They also

exercised self-direction in their own learning which reflected the characteristics of the "field-independent learners" described by Knowles et al (2005, p211), choosing novel and independent learning environments in which they could solve their own problems and direct their own learning.

Students' personal agency in being able to choose a learning experience that was meaningful to them and their future practice appeared to enhance their motivation to take on the challenges that the placement presented. They had a specific interest in the chosen client group and in promoting the profession, interests that appeared to increase their level of commitment and give them a greater sense of ownership over the placement and their learning. This was highlighted by students as particularly important in helping them manage their anxieties in the early stages of the placement. This is consistent with the view of Totten and Pratt (2001) who suggest that personal commitment is higher when students choose their own placements. These findings also support Billett's (2006) notion that the greater the harmony between an individual's interest and opportunities available in a workplace the higher the degree of engagement and quality of learning experience. This has implications for placement tutors as consideration needs to be given to how students can best be matched with placements that are of interest and have meaning for them.

Students had made a commitment to becoming occupational therapists and appeared to be making placement choices that were directed towards that aspiration. It could be suggested that in selecting placements where there was no on-site professional educator they were demonstrating the desire to shape their own becoming as therapists, opening themselves up to new professional understandings and ways of being. This could be likened to Sartre's (2007/1943) notion of meaningful action-orientated projects (cited in Smith et al 2009, p19) where students chose placements that they believed would be significant in helping them progress towards their goal of becoming a professional. This lends support for more humanistic adult learning theories, including Knowles et al (2005, p66) and Brookfield's (1986, p53) contentions that adult learners are goal-orientated and have a "readiness for" and "openness to" learning when the activity is meaningful and relevant to their real-life situation and future direction.

Whilst the majority of occupational therapy students may have the necessary dispositions needed to engage in education and to push themselves towards their goal of becoming an

occupational therapist, not all may have the qualities or more confident sense of self necessary to take the leap of faith that is demanded by role-emerging placements. Literature suggests that the possession of such qualities and self-concept alerts students to possibilities in their learning environments that can further their development and that students who lack strength in these areas may fail to take advantage of new and unfamiliar learning opportunities (Claxton and Carr 2004, Hodkinson et al 2008). Whilst it was not possible from this study to determine the reasons why other students chose not to opt for role-emerging placements, these participants had the will to travel into unknown territory, and as such appeared more open to risk-taking and opportunities for personal and professional change than students who, it could be suggested, chose to shy away from this learning experience perhaps due to a lack of self-confidence or for fear of the challenges that they perceived lay ahead.

This is likely to have implications for education where students who lack confidence or a willingness to take risks, and are more reliant on structure and external guidance, are unlikely to choose role-emerging placements and therefore miss out on the potential benefits that this study would suggest such placements may offer. It is with this in mind that consideration needs to be given to making role-emerging placements compulsory. It is likely, however, that some students are going to require more support than others and that matching students to appropriate placements and pre-placement preparation will require careful consideration. This is clearly of importance to all practice placement tutors.

Whilst some level of anxiety was to be expected due to starting a new placement (Spiliotopoulou 2007), the pre-placement anxiety experienced by nearly all of the students appeared to be particularly heightened. This anxiety was perhaps more than would have been anticipated in light of the fact that they had chosen the placement themselves, although reflective of the fact that they were doing something unfamiliar. The build up of anxiety may have been reflective of their personality and activist traits where they could have been seen to rush into the placement choice, attracted by opportunities for independence, without really reflecting on the challenges that the placement was likely to present. Despite their initial confidence and courage to take on the placement, students doubted whether such a decision was wise given the need to pass the placement assessment. Their ambivalence was reflected in the ways students felt *in two minds* about the placement, experiencing both excitement and apprehension. This indicates that whilst they recognised the valuable learning opportunities

that these placements presented, their self-confidence was affected by a focus on assessment. This supports Barnett's (2007) contention that student anxiety is often rooted in assessment and indicates that students perhaps need to understand and be involved more collaboratively with assessment procedures and construction in order to lessen this anxiety.

Students' pre-placement experiences, and in particular pre-placement anxiety, have received little attention in existing literature. Whilst pre-placement anxiety has been noted (Mathews et al 2009, Alecock 2010, Thomas and Rodger 2011) this does not appear to have been explored in any detail. This is perhaps due to the focus of literature on evaluating the placement itself and bias towards reporting the positive outcomes of such placements rather than exploring the reasons why such placements are chosen, feelings prior to starting or students' negative experiences.

This study provides initial insights into students' feelings and perceptions of role-emerging placements prior to them starting. This could be explored in more depth by carrying out interviews with students prior to placements. Nevertheless, the insights already found in this study may prove useful for placement tutors in terms of pre-placement preparation, particularly in relation to reducing and managing anxiety and supporting students who may not have a strong sense of self or the learning and / or personal dispositions necessary to take on the challenge of such placements. Further implications for practice are presented in section 5.8.

5.3 Ontological discomfort

As the students ventured into the *uncharted waters* of their placements their sense of self took a distinctive turn, with many of them appearing lost, confused and anxious. They felt out of their depth and lacked confidence in themselves to meet the challenges of the placement, a finding similar to those of existing studies where students experienced a sense of uncertainty and culture shock (Prigg and Mackenzie 2002, James and Prigg 2004, Fieldhouse and Fedden 2009). When faced with the unfamiliar placement environment, students questioned what they and the profession had to offer and struggled with the challenges that this presented to their perception of self, professional role and identity.

Such findings suggest that students' sense of being had been displaced by a strange and challenging learning environment. This resulted in feelings of isolation, doubt and

uncertainty that appeared to reflect the "ontological discomfort" described by Barnett (2007, p76). They became confused and overwhelmed by their experiences, wanting to continue with the placement but becoming stuck by the realisation that they did not have a clear sense of self, purpose, role or direction. Their struggle with what they could offer and who they were as occupational therapy students appeared similar to the "fragmentation" that Thomas and Rodger (2011, p46) suggest occurs on role-emerging placements when a student's identity is challenged by an unfamiliar environment. Such feelings also have resonance with the state of "being-for-anxiety" that Barnett (2007, p35) suggests is often experienced in higher education due to the competing demands of being a student. Here, students appeared to be caught in a conflict between wanting to pass the placement and presenting themselves as competent students whilst at the same time dealing with their own uncertainties about competencies, professional understandings and sense of self as occupational therapists.

The notion of disjuncture (Cross et al 2006, Jarvis 2010) also appears relevant where students grappled with feelings of apprehension, uncertainty and self doubt as a result of encountering new and unfamiliar experiences rather than routine and taken for granted practices. They could no longer rely on others, familiar structures or past placement experiences to guide them and the impact of *going it alone* was felt at an emotional, cognitive and practical level. The students had to deal with negative feelings about themselves and the placement, ask questions of themselves, their knowledge and understandings, and find their own meaningful ways forward. They had to look within themselves to bring forth their own coping strategies, reasoning and voice (Barnett 2007), a position that appeared to lead to high levels of anxiety but at the same time facilitated development of their own professional ways of being.

Students' feelings of anxiety were greater than those they had experienced on traditional placements, perhaps indicative of the lack of familiar structure, nature of the placements and absence of on-site occupational therapy educators. Edwards and Thew (2011) similarly suggest that anxiety is greater for role-emerging students due to a fear of the unknown. It seems likely however that these feelings were also a reaction to the placement design which demanded an increased level of self-directedness, in comparison with traditional placements.

Although working autonomously had been one of the placement attractions, students quickly recognised how reliant they had been in the past on the explicit and implicit culture of a traditional occupational therapy department. This could be likened to the "occupational

therapy bubble" described by Fieldhouse and Fedden (2009, p306), whereby existing departmental philosophy, assessments, interventions and team support would have provided the students with a sense of purpose, direction and support. The absence of such a service created feelings of anxiety and vulnerability and highlighted the extent to which valuable support, structure and feedback had been provided by previous communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 2003) and perhaps been taken for granted by the students. It was not until they experienced the lack of familiar structure that they realised how important this had been to them in the past and the sense of security and identity that this provided. This would appear to reflect Heidegger's (1973/1927, p69) notion that tasks and routine practices are often carried out in a mode of "average everydayness" and it is not until these practices are absent or altered that one becomes aware of their significance. For Heidegger, developing critical awareness is important in challenging taken for granted practices and assumptions and in opening up other possible ways of being (Dall'Alba 2009b). Role-emerging placements appeared to provide students with just such opportunities.

Students' anxiety was exacerbated by their *need to sing from the same hymn sheet* and match their expectations with those of their teams. This is consistent with findings of existing studies that identify this as one of the main causes of student stress on role-emerging placements and from which useful recommendations have been made for placement tutors, students and educators (Fisher and Savin-Baden 2002b, James and Prigg 2004, Mulholland and Derdall 2005, Thew et al 2008, Edwards and Thew 2011, Thomas and Rodger 2011).

A particular concern raised in this study was the pressure that some students felt to work on cases they perceived to be above their competency level. Whilst reference has been made in the literature to the possible risks of role-emerging placements, the potential vulnerability of students and clients as a result of this particular pressure is not something that appears to have been addressed. The morale dilemmas that students faced and the responsibility they felt 'on their shoulders' to be seen as competent students, and to not let themselves or others down, would suggest that taking on tasks outside their competency level would seem to be an inherent risk of such placements in the absence of on-site occupational therapists who, as suggested by Hook and Kenney (2007), often shelter students from conflict and risk on traditional placements.

Here, there appeared to be an interplay between students' modes of being (Barnett 2007); namely their personal being where they felt a moral obligation as a human being to help the client or member of staff and their pedagogical (student) being where they were aware they were not yet qualified and lacked confidence and expertise but still wanted to make a good impression, demonstrate their competencies and pass the placement. The risk of students taking on tasks above their competency level appears to be increased by their need to be seen in a positive light and a fear of failure if their weaknesses are acknowledged.

The façade of competence that the students in this study presented could be likened to the "professional face" that Sweeney et al (2001, p384) suggest occupational therapy supervisees often use to safeguard their sense of professional competence, although their study was carried out with qualified therapists rather than students. Evans et al (2010) however suggest that students are often similarly reluctant to discuss problems or anxieties for fear of disapproval and that learners seek to create workplace identities that present themselves in a positive light as trustworthy and competent individuals. This 'professional face' has implications for practice where educators and students need to develop relationships that allow students to become more authentic in their way of being and to voice anxieties without fear of reprisal. This would protect all parties from the risks associated with such a presentation. Furthermore, whilst the issue of risk clearly needs to be addressed there is a fine balance to be struck here between sheltering students from the risks involved in independent working and allowing them to take positive risks in order to further their development. Here, Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development appears relevant where students can be guided towards safer decision-making and risk-taking by either their educator or through working more collaboratively and reflectively with peers either on placement or through action learning sets. As Barnett (2007, p145) suggests, without positive risk taking students are not afforded the space to develop either "intellectually, practically or in their own being". Whilst previous authors have indicated that similar feelings have been experienced by other occupational therapy students (Totten and Pratt 2001, James and Prigg 2004, Rodger et al 2009, Thomas and Rodger 2011), in-depth consideration of ontological challenges that students face on role-emerging placements is largely absent from previous literature. It is, however, important that consideration is given to a student's ways-of-being in the early stages of a placement in order to identify how this impacts on their learning and development.

Whilst Galvaan (2006) suggests that no amount of preparation will protect students from feelings of discomfort, enabling students to take control of the way in which they perceive a stressful event could be the difference between their experience of "distress" or "eustress" (positive stress that enhances performance) (Le Fevre et al 2003, Gibbons et al 2007). Eustress was a term originally developed by Hans Selye in 1964 to describe what he perceived to be healthy or good stress (Le Fevre et al 2003). As a result of studying people's reactions to stressful events, Selye argued that stress could be divided into two main forms depending on a person's interpretation and reaction to the event. It has, for example, been suggested that reacting to an event with negative feelings such as anger, fear or hopelessness is likely to lead to experiences of distress, whilst adopting a positive perception of the event (with feelings such as excitement, hope, anticipation) is more likely to maximise eustress (Le Febre et al 2003, Gibbons et al 2007, Gibbons et al 2010). This view is supported by other authors who suggest that different types of learning occur depending on the learners frame of reference and the way that a learning event is perceived (Boud et al 2008, Billett 2010).

Whilst there appears to have been little research carried out with students as to the causes of eustress (Gibbons et al 2010), and this was not a concept identified in occupational therapy literature, it clearly has relevance for this study. Sally, for example, who embraced the challenges of the placement and saw them as an opportunity for growth, had a more pleasurable early experience than Jayne whose hatred of the placement and perceived feelings of isolation and self-doubt caused her initial distress. However, as reflected in the theme *from trepidation to transformation,* once students adopted coping strategies that helped them overcome their initial anxieties, and they came to view themselves and the placement in a more positive light, they developed a sense of control and self-efficacy. As a result, the placement challenges became a source of eustress, leading to feelings of empowerment, fulfilment, achievement and satisfaction. As literature tends to focus on the factors that cause students distress, further study is warranted to explore occupational therapy students' experiences of eustress, particularly in relation to their ways-of-being on placement.

Whilst the early stages of the placement were a difficult time for the majority of students, later placement experiences indicated that their discomfort was perhaps necessary in order to facilitate a deeper level of learning and to come into their new self. Had students simply been in familiar waters their development may not have been as significant. Such anxiety and discomfort could therefore be considered a necessary and enlightening event as they moved

forward into a new authentic way of being. This is supported by Cross et al (2006, p127) who suggest that without a certain level of challenge and discomfort a student does not learn. They argue that opportunities for dissonance should in fact be created as through facing challenges that cause uncertainty and confusion, students have to work through gaps that open up and subsequently move forward in their understandings. This position is also advocated by Barnett (2007) who suggests that emotionally challenging pedagogic situations should not be avoided in higher education but instead need to be created in order to move students into a new place and prepare them for future turbulent professional journeys. The findings support Dall'Alba's (2009a) suggestion that by pushing forward into their chosen project, with all the anxieties that this presents, students expose themselves to possibilities for new ways of being. It could therefore be suggested that "signs of discomfort and upset are not necessarily negative, on the contrary, they often signal that developmentally fruitful encounters are occurring, that stimuli for learning are at work" (Chickering and Reisser 1993, p479).

5.4 From trepidation to transformation

Each student took her placement seriously and invested a lot of herself in it- physically, cognitively and emotionally. They seemed to demonstrate courage, commitment, robustness, perseverance and resilience, all of which have been cited as important learning attributes, albeit research on learning dispositions and attributes has tended to focus on children in school (Carr and Claxton 2002, Claxton and Carr 2004, Barnett 2007). They drew on these attributes, together with internal and external coping strategies, to help them *find a way forward* and re-stabilise the sense of self and emotional equilibrium that had been disrupted at the start of their placements.

Personal attributes identified were similar to those considered important in other studies of role-emerging placements (Bossers et al 1997, Friedland et al 2001, Totten and Pratt 2001). Although it has been suggested by some academics that students should be screened for attributes such as self-confidence and independence (Sullivan and Finlayson (2000), it has also been observed by students that these develop as a result of the placement (Friedland et al 2001). The latter opinion is consistent with Bossers et al (1997) and supported by the findings of this study. It is therefore suggested that whilst such attributes may help students to manage their early anxieties more effectively, it would be unfair to penalise those without such qualities from being able to undertake a placement that appears to offer a significant

opportunity for personal and professional development. The key consideration for placement tutors and educators is how to support such students.

The importance for students of developing a *sense of belonging* and *having that support* from their educators and team highlights the importance of effective inter-personal relationships and the impact that team-working has on a student's self-concept (Cope et al 2000, Clouder 2003, Davis 2006, Levett-Jones and Lathlean 2007, Evans et al 2010). Here, Heidegger's (1973/ 1927) notion of being-in-the-world is relevant where the development of the students' professional way of being and becoming as an occupational therapist could not be considered in isolation from those with whom they interacted. Links can also be made to van Manen's (2007, p106) "lived relation to the other" where the support, trust and validation that students received from those around them helped to reduce their feelings of anxiety, confusion and self-doubt and played a significant role in the development of their professional ways of being, increasing their confidence in self and the profession. Congruent with the findings of Levett-Jones and Lathlean (2008) the sense of belonging that students experienced appeared to be an essential pre-requisite to learning, helping to free them from their initial anxieties so that they could focus on their learning and development.

Due to the lack of an on-site professional hierarchy students no longer felt that they belonged or "came under" an educator as had been the case on traditional placements. As such, they felt more respected and valued as individuals and able to establish a professional identity in their own right. This was similar to the sense of empowerment experienced by students in other role-emerging studies (Bossers et al 1997, Prigg and Mackenzie 2002) but in stark contrast to findings from traditional placements where students felt disempowered by their "naturally lowly position" as a student (Tompson and Ryan 1996b, p69). This reveals the way in which the structure of placements and the interactions between student and educator either serve to facilitate or constrain opportunities for becoming. This is supported by Duncan et al (2008, p115) who suggest that the "architecture of the educational setting" creates a learning environment which either supports or inhibits a student. Whilst initially causing the majority of students high levels of anxiety, the placement 'architecture' was such that it afforded them significant opportunities for personal and professional development, for example increasing their confidence, independent thought, reflective practice and identity development. It is this affordance that Billett (2010) argues is a key ingredient for effective practice-based learning.

Using Lave and Wenger's (2003) theory of situated participation, it could be suggested that students came to negotiate and understand themselves as professionals through their participation in the placement communities. This was evident in the awareness of self as occupational therapist that unfolded as a result of planning and carrying out what were seen as more authentic occupational therapy interventions. Students seemed to move away from the peripheral participation described by Wenger (2006) to more central participation as they took responsibility for developing the occupational therapy role. In doing so they earned professional acceptance from members of the team, working alongside them to contribute to the organisations' goals, and gained a sense of empowerment and competency as they made an authentic contribution to the team. This contribution impacted not only on the student but also on the community itself as team members came to reflect on and change their own practices and ways of being as a result of the students' presence. This supports the notion that transformation can occur for both the learner and practice community (Lave and Wenger 2003, Wenger 2006). It could be suggested that this is a key difference to traditional placements where students, whilst often being considered part of the team, may remain on the periphery of the teams' activities, carrying out designated tasks that contribute to those activities rather than being a central player in service development.

In contrast to literature that suggests occupational therapy students need to work alongside other therapists to develop a sense of identity (Tompson and Ryan 1996a, Fisher and Savin-Baden 2002b, Wood 2005, Robertson and Griffiths 2009), findings indicate that students do not have to rely on occupational therapy communities of practice to develop this sense of self as therapist. Indeed they suggest that it may be students' interactions with those outside of the profession, and the opportunities that this presents to reflect on their professional ways of being, that helps to enrich their becoming as occupational therapists.

Critical reflection was important in helping students *make sense of their experiences* and in facilitating their personal and professional development. This is a finding that supports existing literature which highlights the value of reflective practice on placement (Andrews 2000, Stockhausen 2005, Bossers et al 1997, Thomas and Rodger 2011). In particular, findings reveal the depth of reflection that took place due to the self-directed nature of the placement. In the absence of an on-site professional educator, students had to ask searching questions of themselves and the profession. This led them to identify and challenge

previously held assumptions and beliefs (they often stated that their experiences had brought about new ways of thinking), understand the relevance of the knowledge and skills learnt and construct their own knowledge and identity as occupational therapists, including reflections on the type of therapists they wanted to become. This can be likened to Conroy's (2003, p21) notion of "ontological reflection-in-action". Dall'Alba and Sandberg (2010) suggest that such reflection is significant in extending students' knowledge beyond what they can do to who they are becoming as therapists, bringing about changes in their unfolding developmental trajectory.

Findings suggest that students did not experience this ontological reflection in the same depth on their traditional placements. This was evident when they spoke of the level of passivity they experienced in terms of their learning; following procedures, rules and routines of practice and developing skills and competencies identified by their educators as necessary for carrying out their role (the knowing that). It is possible that this was caused by a focus on procedure and skill development on traditional placements due to current practice demands, for example assessing and discharging clients as quickly as possible in order that their stay in hospital is kept to a minimum. These demands may result in educators becoming too focused on teaching students the occupational therapy process, with less time being spent on developing self-awareness and understandings of practice. This focus would appear, however, to be at the expense of helping students to develop their own reasoning (the knowing how) (Gustavsson 2004, Whiteford and Wright-St Clair 2005, Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2010) and clearly runs the risk that students learn to carry out tasks with limited understanding of their practice or identity. This appears evident in this study in students' decreased self-confidence and inability to articulate their role at the start of the placement. Here it seems that graduates need to understand what it means to 'be' an occupational therapist, a view supported by Tompson and Ryan (1996) who suggest that it is not enough for students to simply watch occupational therapy being carried out: they need to understand and be able to articulate the reasoning behind it. Such views support calls made for an integration of epistemology and ontology within professional education (Barnett 2007, Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009c, Vu and Dall'Alba 2011).

5.5 Becoming an occupational therapist

This study highlights the way in which role-emerging placements appear to facilitate movement by students away from a concern with how to 'do' occupational therapy towards a

deeper understanding of professional practice and what it means to 'be' an occupational therapist. Findings indicate that students experienced a paradigm shift as a result of their placements; a shift that Conroy (2003) suggests occurs when there is a change in understanding and way of seeing the world. Images that students held of themselves and occupational therapy prior to their role-emerging placement were challenged and re-constructed in light of apparently new ways of knowing, understanding and being.

In the *development of a 'new' self,* students came to embody their own values, beliefs and understandings of practice. This allowed them to develop what Heidegger (1973/ 1927, p68) referred to as an "authentic" mode of professional being and turn away from one that may previously have been "inauthentic" or "undifferentiated" (Conroy 2003, p31), based on the passive assimilation of ideas, values, beliefs and practices of others on traditional placements. Heidegger (1973/ 1927) suggests that this passivity is not uncommon as humans frequently fall into everyday routines and practices that they take for granted. However, in doing so there is a danger that they come to conform to ways of thinking and acting as others do without exploring other possibilities, leading to an inauthentic mode of being (Barnett 1996, Vu and Dall'Alba 2008, Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009b, Vu and Dall'Alba 2011).

It seems that the students, when faced with the 'everydayness' of occupational therapy practice on their traditional placements took for granted the established ways of doing, thinking and acting and conformed uncritically and rather passively to practices they encountered. This led to the creation of an identity or professional way of being based on these experiences and that of their educator. Perhaps for fear of failing or not being accepted by their community of practice, students' inauthentic modes of being may have been enhanced by the need they felt to respond to the external demands of being a student which required them to follow adopted practices, acting and thinking in ways that were expected and perhaps 'playing the game' (Clouder 2003, Barnett 2007) in order to pass the placement.

In contrast, role-emerging placements appeared to give students the freedom to *emerge from the shadow* of their educators and existing practices, and develop a way of being that was of their own making. Here, the individual agency exercised by students appeared particularly significant in their ontological development as they explored new perspectives, questioned and challenged past practices and assumptions, established their own values, beliefs and understandings, made their own choices and created their own images of occupational

therapy practice. They were no longer willing to simply go along with what appeared to be the ways of thinking, acting and being of others but wanted to take responsibility for developing their own identity and ways of enacting practice. The image that the students presented of *growing up* would appear to reflect the sense of ownership that they felt over their own identity and the confidence they gained for future practice as a result of this ontological development. Here it is possible to suggest a link to Sartre's notion of the student's becoming for-herself (cited in Barnett 2007, p76) where placements had a self-transformative effect, moving students forward in their discovery of self. This would support Kralik et al's notion (2006) that transition is a psychological process concerned with the reorientation of the sense of self and Meleis et al (2000) and Goodman's (2006) theories that successful transition occurs when individuals feel a sense of mastery, confidence, connection and strength of identity.

Barnett (2007, p51) suggests that an authentic student is one who can find his or her own pedagogic voice and "takes hold of her educational experiences in her own way and makes something of them of her own account". This is a view that supports Baxter Magolda's (2008) notion of self-authorship and is evident in this study where students moved away from being shaped by others to shaping themselves, understanding and defining themselves as the occupational therapists they wanted to be. Students appeared to find this process liberating, a feeling also experienced by role-emerging students in Bosser et al's (1997) study. Schon's (1987) notion of 'knowing-in-action' and Billett's (2010) distinction between mastery and appropriation appear relevant as students moved away from superficial acceptance of knowledge to an active engagement in what was being learnt and an integration of this into a professional way of being, enacting practice that was evident both as students and later as practitioners.

Doubts that students may have had about the profession prior to the placement dissipated as they saw for themselves what they perceived to be the benefits of *real* occupational therapy in practice. Being able to offer a unique occupational perspective provided students with a sense of purpose and worth and seeing the impact that engagement in meaningful occupation had on clients' feelings of well-being reinforced both their *belief in the profession and belief in self:* enhancing their sense of efficacy and passion for the profession. Congruent with existing studies, all the students reported a sense of achievement at being able to *make a*

difference to those in the placement setting (Rydeen 1995, Bilics et al 2002, Banks and Head 2004, Mullholland and Derdall 2005, Chandler 2010).

This lends support to occupational science which advocates that through 'doing' (active involvement in meaningful activity) individuals can develop a more authentic sense of 'being' as they work towards 'becoming' what they want to become (Wilcock 1999, 2006). For students in this study, this 'being' manifested itself as an inner confidence, enjoyment, commitment, understanding and identity. There was a sense of their 'becoming' as they strove towards meeting their potential, expressing their hopes, expectations and possibilities for their futures. They were clear about the type of therapist they wanted to become and the way in which they wanted to enact practice, a vision that was clearly congruent with core occupational therapy philosophy and values of practice.

The requirement for, and the practice that students had, articulating the role of an occupational therapist to others appeared to be crucial in their re-conceptualisation of the profession and the confidence and identity they developed. As the first occupational therapy students in the setting they had to continually reflect on and educate others about the contribution they were making and the added value that an occupational perspective brought to the clients and team. They were no longer constrained by existing occupational therapy practices and free to return to their core philosophy to guide them in their thinking and practices. Having to initially and continually verbalise what occupational therapy is and what it can offer appeared to take students' understandings to a higher level. This resulted in a clarity of understanding about the uniqueness of occupational therapy and their subsequent belief in, and passion for, the profession. It would therefore appear that the students were able to develop an internal schema of their role and identity that Creek (2003) suggests is necessary for therapists to ensure that practice is congruent with core philosophy.

This is an important finding as it has long been recognised that occupational therapists struggle to articulate their role and find a clear professional identity (Kielhofener 2006, Creek 2009, Turner 2011). This has particularly been the case in traditional settings where therapists have been dominated by the medical model, resulting in a conflict between the profession's original occupational paradigm and the more mechanistic paradigm that has developed as a result of the pressure to align the profession with medicine and that influences much of practice today (Kielhofner 2006, Creek 2009, Turner 2011). It would appear that role-

emerging placements provide students with a unique opportunity to 'live' occupational therapy philosophy. This enables them to gain a deeper understanding of their role and gives them the confidence to clearly articulate this understanding to others.

Such positive outcomes for the students clearly contest the view expressed in some literature that role-emerging placements may be a waste of core placement time and are inferior to traditional placements (Fisher and Savin-Baden 2002, Kirke et al 2007, Wood 2005). The d*evelopment of 'new' self* also challenges the view that the development of professional identity is at risk on role-emerging placements due to the lack of an on-site professional role model (Tompson and Ryan 1996a, Fisher and Savid-Baden 2002b, Wood 2005, Toal-Sullivan 2006, Robertson and Griffiths 2009). Whilst it has been suggested that it is not possible to develop a professional identity without having a professional role model to watch (Fisher and Savin-Baden 2002b, Robertson and Griffiths 2009), this study reveals that such role-emerging placements can be emancipatory in terms of freeing the student from the constraints of carrying out existing practices and a pressure to adopt the role of their educator and to 'be' what their educator wants them to be. It would therefore appear that such placements provide the critical encounters that Adams et al (2006) and Mackey (2008) suggest are needed to lead students towards more active engagement in the construction of their own understanding of what it means to be a professional.

This study does not support concerns that role-emerging placements restrict the amount of client contact and opportunity to consolidate clinical skills (Friedland et al 2001, Prigg and Mackenzie 2002, James and Prigg 2004, Wood 2005, Kirke et al 2007). The students in this study spent a significant amount of time with the clients and valued these encounters not only for the opportunities they presented to enhance their clinical skills but also in enabling them to extend their ways of knowing and acting in relation to client-centred, occupation-focused practice and enhancing their sense of self as professionals and belief in the profession. It would appear that it was the occupational nature of the placement, in terms of identifying clients' occupational needs, using client-centred meaningful activities as therapeutic interventions and having to articulate to others what occupational therapy is that was particularly valued by the students. This was similar to the findings of Tryssenaar (1999) and Stockhausen (2005) where authentic encounters with clients were important to students in their becoming as professionals.

It has been suggested that role-emerging placements should not necessarily focus on student-client encounters but may be more concerned with carrying out projects related to role development or promotion of the profession (Thew et al 2011). The findings of this study, however, indicate that client encounters play an important role in the development of students' professional ways of being and, as such, consideration needs to be given to the type and focus of such placements to ensure that students continue to gain hands-on experience.

Contact with clients appears particularly important in increasing students' understanding of them as people with their own needs, helping to move away from a biomedical model (often encountered in traditional placements) towards a more humanistic approach. The way in which students came to *see clients in a different light*, resulting in a shift in students' presumptions and prejudices, was a finding similar to existing studies (Fleming et al 1996, Heuber and Tryssenaar 1996, Bossers et al 1997, Totten and Pratt 2001, Banks and Head 2004, Fieldhouse and Fedden 2009, Fitzsimmons and Allcoat 2010, Chandler 2010). Such changes appear to be a result of students' recognition and internalisation of the core values of the profession. The change in students' way of being was particularly evident as they learnt how to be with clients, "*listening to what's on their heart" (Sophie Interview 1),* considering their lifeworld rather than focusing on diagnosis or fitting them into existing assessments, models or interventions. This challenged and broadened their view of occupational therapy practice and opened up new insights into other possible ways of being and carrying out practice. Such findings demonstrate the potential for such placements to bring about transformative learning, changing the 'points of view' and 'habits of mind' that Mezirow et al (2009) suggest influence the way that experiences are interpreted and practice enacted.

Whilst it is likely that the students would have had opportunities on past placements to develop client-centred practice, the findings of this study suggests that, paradoxically, this was more successfully facilitated on role-emerging placements due to the lack of occupational therapy procedures, structures and on-site educator. This meant that the students had to adopt a more pragmatic approach than on previous placements, assessing and understanding for themselves the client's needs, and planning specific interventions to meet those needs rather than fitting the client into existing processes or being told what to do, a passivity it is argued may restrict students' development at a higher level. This is supported by Bossers et al (1997, p76) who suggest that the inflexibility of the environment and procedures of more traditional settings may restrict the opportunity for true client-centred

practice. Creek (2009) raises similar concerns about traditional practices which she believes are often mechanistic and process-driven and suggests that a pragmatic approach, as demonstrated by students in this study, often leads to more thoughtful, individualised, contextualised and meaningful intervention. This has implications for practice where therapists in traditional settings perhaps need to give consideration to the client-centred nature of their practice and for educators who need to encourage students to reflect more critically on client-centred practice and the development of their autonomous thinking.

Through their engagement in placement activities students recognised the acquisition and development of professional skills such as clinical reasoning, assertiveness, therapeutic use of self, problem solving and decision-making, as well as an increased confidence to promote the profession. This echoed existing role-emerging literature (Bossers et al 2007, Mulholland and Derdall 2005, Cooper and Raine 2009, Fieldhouse and Fedden 2009, Thew et al 2011) and was consistent with those skills identified as being necessary for future practice (Soloman and Baptiste 2005, Fortune et al 2006, Rodger et al 2007a, Rodger et al 2007b, Department of Health 2008). However, in contrast to existing studies, whilst these skills were valued by participants they were given minimal attention in the interviews of this study. This perhaps suggests that they were not seen as important as the development of their professional understanding and identity.

Although the students in this study did not discuss using PBL, they were all from an occupational therapy course that adopted a PBL philosophy. It is possible that they utilised this approach to help them identify their learning needs and to direct their learning in the absence of an on-site educator. Certainly the acquisition and development of skills identified by the students in this study are consistent with literature that has explored the effectiveness of PBL (Hammel et al 1998, Lindstrom-Hazel and West-Frasier 2004, Scaffa and Wooster 2004, Davys and Pope 2006, Halliwell 2008). There is clearly a need for future studies to be carried out that explore the impact of PBL on students' development on role-emerging placements.

The contrasts that students made between their role-emerging and traditional placements indicated that traditional placements had not enabled them to develop a professional identity in the same way as their role-emerging placement. This finding conflicts with much of the literature that suggests traditional placements are highly significant in the development of a

student's professional socialisation and identity. Tompson and Ryan (1996b, p69) suggest that professional socialisation occurs through role-modelling on traditional placements and that students absorb professional values and beliefs through a process of "osmosis". However, it would appear that students in this study struggled to 'absorb' a meaningful professional identity in this way. Using the metaphor of an iceberg, findings suggest that on traditional placements students and educators are perhaps too focused on the part of practice that can be seen, namely the 'doing' of the occupational therapy process: learning and developing clinical knowledge and practical skills needed to carry out their role and a focus on meeting the external demands of being a student (namely competencies, course demands, departmental discourses). Whilst this is of course a vital component of education for any student preparing to be a professional, this may be at the expense of gaining a deep understanding of the part of the iceberg below the surface, namely the way that they understand occupational practice and themselves as occupational therapists. This can be likened to what Barnett (1996, p76) calls the "internal world" of the student (their personal knowing, beliefs, values, understandings and becoming), a deeper inner world that would appear to be the focus of development for the students on role-emerging placements. As Dall'Alba (2004) highlights, it is this understanding that is central to how a student enacts and develops his or her future practice. As such, this should be central to occupational therapy students' practice placement experiences.

Without this understanding there is a danger that students may graduate with a weak professional identity (and possibly one not of their own making) and limited confidence as autonomous practitioners, a concern that has already been highlighted in literature (Atkinson and Steward 1997, Tryssenaar and Perkins 2001, Ikiugu and Rosso 2003, Toal-Sullivan 2006, Hodgetts et al 2007, Davis 2008, Creek 2009, Turner 2011). Educators on traditional placements, together with lecturers responsible for academic modules, therefore need to reflect on how they can more effectively help students to develop their own sense of professional self and promote opportunities for autonomy to flourish. If the findings of this study are reflective of other students' experiences, this will give therapists the belief and confidence in self and the profession to articulate more effectively what occupational therapy is and what it is able to offer. This is a confidence that therapists currently appear to be lacking (Creek 2009, Turner 2011) and is much needed if the future of the profession is to be protected.

It would appear that educators therefore need to provide creative opportunities that let students learn in order to promote this self awareness rather than adopting "decanter" (Dall'Alba and Barnacle 2007, p688) models of education which simply reinforce the notion of knowledge transfer from expert to novice. Whilst knowledge acquisition remains important for students, and there will always be a place for learning specific skills from an experienced therapist, letting students learn in a more autonomous way would appear to allow such knowledge and skills to become embodied and progress them towards the development of their professional way of being. This can be achieved in both role-emerging and traditional placements if a shift in focus is adopted by educators. Barnett (2007) urges all teachers (and here his argument would appear to be applicable to placement educators) to ask themselves whether their presence is necessary for the development of the student and not be afraid to make themselves redundant by the encouragement of more self-directed learning. The findings of this study, which highlight the constraints felt by students on traditional placements due to the presence of their educator, compared to the empowerment gained from the autonomy on their role-emerging placement, lend support to such recommendations.

In chapter 2 I suggested that the notion of acquisition and transference of knowledge implicit in much of the placement literature is too simplistic and that placements present students with much wider opportunities for personal and professional development. The findings of this study support this view highlighting in particular the important role that role-emerging placements play in facilitating a deeper understanding of the profession and Self as an occupational therapist, understandings that it has been argued are central to skilful professional practice (Barnett 2007, Dall'Alba and Barnacle 2007, Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009b). This lends support to the lifeworld adult learning theories that call for a move way from curricula predominantly focused on teaching the technical and epistemological aspects of the professional role, towards ones that conceptualise learning as a process of becoming, embracing the ontological dimension of students' development and finding learning experiences that allow them to consider who they are becoming as therapists and the type of therapists they want to be (Barnett 2007, Dall'Alba and Barnacle 2007, Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009b, Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2010, Hagar and Hodkinson 2011, Scanlon 2011). The findings thus have an important theoretical impact in relation to the way in which occupational therapy, and indeed other health professions, curricula are designed and students' learning is facilitated.

The emphasis often found in traditional placements on the development and assessment of skills and competencies is likely to encourage educators to adopt more behaviourist or cognitivist approaches that emphasise the transmission of knowledge from educator to student and role modelling. The findings of this study however support the view that professional practice is more than the application of techniques, skills and knowledge and that a reliance on role modelling decreases the agency of the student to develop their own ways of understanding and being (Barnett 2007, Dall'Alba and Barnacle 2007, Dall'Alba 2009a, Dall'Alba 2009b, Dall'Alba and Sandberg 2010). There is a danger that such approaches lead students into a position of 'role-taking' (Blair 1998), passively falling into existing practices and taking on the role of their educator without consideration or understanding of the role for themselves. This is in stark contrast to the students' experiences in this study where they clearly engaged in a process of 'role-making' (Blair 1998), negotiating their own role and taking a stand on what they were leaning and who they were becoming. This was clearly significant in the development of their strong and authentic professional identity and suggests that concerns raised in the role-emerging literature that identity development is difficult on such placements in the absence of a role model (Tompson and Ryan 1996a, Fisher and Savin-Baden 2002) are tenuous, if not unfounded.

Jarvis's (2010) and Mezirow et al's (2009) adult learning theories, underpinned by the notions of disjuncture and critical reflection, would appear particularly relevant to this study. The students, when faced with unknown situations in which they were unsure of what to do or how to cope, began questioning self and practice and found new ways of understanding, being and of enacting practice. This more conscious, reflective process of learning brought about significant change in the students' professional and self awareness. Congruent with the view of Billett (2002), it is suggested that it was through their engagement in new and challenging placement activities that possibilities for the students' learning occurred and they were able to extend their ways of knowing beyond those previously encountered. The intense role-emerging placement experiences therefore acted as important disorientating triggers that provoked critical reflection and meaning making and enabled the students to be transformed by their experience.

It was clear from this study that the students valued the placement as a learning experience that had purpose and meaning to them in their developmental journey towards becoming occupational therapists. The importance of the placement in terms of their self-development

was evident as was their intrinsic motivation to learn. The autonomy awarded to them by the placement structure allowed the students to discover for themselves what they needed to know and to direct their learning experiences towards meeting their individual needs. The importance of this personal agency supports Knowles et al's (2005) humanistic learning theory which advocates learner-centred approaches to adult education. Similar to the lifeworld perspectives, humanistic theories of learning emphasise the process of learning rather than the end product, providing a more holistic picture of students' development. It would appear that this was particularly significant for the participants in this study and would suggest that students on all types of placement need to be encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning and development, leading to professional understandings and a role and identity or their own making. This view is congruent with Heidegger's (1973 / 1927) notion of authenticity and the work of Baxter-Magolda (2008) who highlights the importance of self-authorship in students' development.

5.6 'Being' in the real world

This would appear to be the first study to explore occupational therapy graduates' reflections of role-emerging placements once qualified. As such, it provides new insights that may contribute to the debate and evidence base concerning the use and value of such placements in current occupational therapy curricula.

In addition to providing graduates with practical experiences that they could draw on to demonstrate their skills and competencies, the enhanced sense of self as occupational therapists that they had developed by the end of the placement was evident in the authenticity and ease with which they felt able to speak about the profession and their role at job interviews. This was a confidence that all the participants attributed to the role-emerging placement and clearly has implications for practice if graduates are able to more effectively present themselves and the profession at interview, and secure employment. The findings that these graduates felt more confident and secured employment whilst on placement, and over more experienced therapists and in emerging roles, would support Gilbert Hunt's (2006) suggestion that such placements may give students a competitive edge.

Participants spoke of the courage and inspiration they had developed on placement to work in an emerging role in future. This provides further evidence to suggest that meaningful placements have an important influence on future practice preference (Christie et al 1985a,

Atkinson and Steward 1997, McKenna et al 2001, Crowe and Mackenzie 2002, Rodger et al 2007a) and that role-emerging placements offer graduates the opportunity to develop the confidence to work in more diverse settings (Prigg and Mackenzie 2002, Jung et al 2005, Swedlove 2006, Rodger et al 2007a, Rodger et al 2007b, Thew et al 2008, Thew et al 2011). This is particularly important for the expansion of the profession if, as Crowe and Mackenzie (2002) suggest, graduates have no desire to work in practice settings of which they have no experience. It is possible to suggest that role-emerging placements broaden the vision of graduates outside of traditional services and encourage them to seek employment in new areas of practice. This has the potential to expand graduates' career opportunities and may also help to address the shortage of newly qualified posts within traditional services as graduates seek employment outside of these settings. However, perhaps of more significance to the profession, if increasing numbers of graduates leave university having experienced the benefits of a role-emerging placement, and consequently with the confidence to take up employment and establish occupational therapy in new areas of practice, then new possibilities for service development could be opened up. It is likely that such opportunities will be advantageous for the profession in broadening the scope of practice, thus helping occupational therapists meet Wilcock's (2006) vision for an occupation-focused approach to health and well-being within society.

Contrasts evident in *confidence for practice, consolidation of professional identity* and *challenges to professional identity* reveal graduates' mixed feelings about the extent to which role-emerging placements help prepare them for practice. This appeared to be primarily influenced by the setting in which the graduates worked, the responsibilities they faced and nature of occupational therapy practice they encountered. However, all the therapists continued to believe that it had been a significant and meaningful learning experience in terms of their personal and professional growth and development and advocated that other students should experience a role-emerging placement, with the majority recommending that they be made compulsory. This view supports those expressed by other students in existing literature (Garrity 2010, Riches 2010) and by some placement tutors (Thew et al 2008) but is in contrast to those who suggest such placements are only suitable for the more academic students (Sullivan and Finlayson 2000, Fisher and Savin-Baden 2002b, Soloman and Jung 2006).

Whilst at the time of the placement the students all felt that it had been an authentic learning experience, follow-up interviews revealed that the placement did not reflect the true nature of working as a qualified therapist. This is a discrepancy that has been highlighted in previous research with new graduates (Rugg 1996, Rugg 2002, Tryssenaar and Perkins 2001, Toal-Sulivan 2006, Hodgetts 2007). This is likely to be a result of the anxiety that graduates experienced about the levels of responsibility they had as new therapists. As they faced a new professional context and their status changed from student to practitioner so did their level of responsibility and the expectations that they placed on themselves. There was no longer the protection provided by the safety net of their student status. This brought about another shift in their sense of being, leaving some of graduates feeling exposed, vulnerable and experiencing the same reality shock, angst and self-doubt described in existing studies of new graduates (Toal-Sullivan 2006, Tryssenaar and Perkins 2001, Robertson and Griffiths 2009, Seah et al 2011). Findings suggest that the placement may have enhanced these feelings by giving some graduates a false sense of hope. Having coped well on placement and gained a sense of self as confident occupational therapists, some participants developed a view that they would have a smooth transition into practice and were frustrated by their lack of confidence in practice.

Concerns about high levels of responsibility as qualified therapists were perhaps to be expected. Students do not have the accountability that qualified therapists have and as such are protected from the pressure associated with taking full responsibility. Although increasing levels of responsibility are given to students as they progress towards the end of their education, their student status prevents them from being able to fully experience what is required of them as qualified therapists. This would explain the view advocated by some of the students in this study that no placement could ever prepare them for qualified practice. However, findings highlighted in initial interviews suggest that role-emerging placements provide students with the highest level of autonomy and responsibility possible and that this is significant in terms of their development. As such I would argue that such placements offer the closest experience to that of a qualified therapist as is possible. However, as this is the first study to explore graduates' experiences of practice following role-emerging placements this is a tentative suggestion.

In contrast to the findings of Toal-Sullivan (2006), where graduates were heavily reliant on a mentor to teach them the occupational therapy role and help them make the connection

between theory and practice, graduates in this study did not have anxieties about the role of the occupational therapist, clinical reasoning or client-centred practice. These were areas that they all believed they had gained a deeper understanding of on placement. They were no longer reliant on their team to induct them into the role of the occupational therapist and had their own sense of purpose, direction and vision. In general graduates were more confident of their competency levels, highlighting in particular the value of skills learnt on the role-emerging placement such as autonomous working, problem-solving, assertiveness, communication, time-management, team-working, marketing, documentation, initiative, decision-making, clinical reasoning and therapeutic use of self. Such skills have been identified as important for coping with the demands of increasingly independent practice (Mackersy et al 2003, Duke 2004, Mulholland and Derdall 2004, Baptiste 2005, Fortune et al 2006).

The ability of graduates to sustain the professional identity, or way of being, that they had developed on placement in their new role appeared to be significantly affected by the practice setting in which they were employed. This supports Blair's (1998) notion that roles are intrinsically linked to identity and role construction is influenced by the practice setting. Whilst the majority were working well in their teams and felt confident in their professional identity others found themselves in positions where they appeared to be resented by the team, received minimal positive feedback or were carrying out occupational therapy practices that they felt were either too generic or incongruent with the profession's core philosophy. This appeared to lead to a decline in their self-confidence and regression of their sense of self as a professional. This highlighted the way in which, for some therapists, having a strong professional identity was not enough to limit the disillusionment they experienced in practice. Indeed it is possible that such identity may have enhanced this disillusionment. Such findings reiterate the significance of the working environment on a new graduate's self-concept (Tryssenaar and Perkins 2001, Rugg 2002, Lave and Wenger 2003, Toal-Sullivan 2006, Wenger 2006).

Dall'Alba (2004) argues that professional understanding is central to how practice is enacted and developed. This study highlights that the way in which graduates come to understand occupational therapy practice is significant in relation to the way in which they want to perform and develop their practice once qualified. Having implemented occupational therapy in a way that was congruent with the profession's core philosophy, and seen the impact of

this on the clients, therapists in this study wanted to be able to continue to enact practice in this way. They went about trying to introduce a more occupational focus in their setting, introducing occupational therapy models of practice, meaningful client-centred activities and educating team members about the links between occupational engagement, health and well-being. It would appear advantageous for the profession that, at a time when there is pressure on therapists to adopt more generic aspects to their practice, graduates enter employment with a stronger allegiance to the core values of the profession and with an increased confidence to re-focus practice in an occupational way.

Whilst the graduates were open to, and had developed new ways of understanding and being on placement, sustaining changes so that they became "integrated into customary ways of being" (Dall'Alba 2009a, p41) was a challenge. In traditional settings they were once again expected to fall in with established practices rather than having the freedom to enact practice in the way in which they now understood it. Findings revealed that graduates working independently or in less traditional roles, where they had the same autonomy that they had experienced on their placement, were more satisfied and experienced a stronger sense of self as therapist than those that had gone into traditional settings where roles were already established and where they felt constrained and frustrated. This was consistent with the findings of Shea et al (2011) who found that graduates' experiences of transition were influenced by the organisational context. They found it harder to adjust if their expectations and philosophy of practice did not match those of the setting and graduates were more satisfied in roles that allowed them to work in ways consistent with their professional identity (Shea et al 2011). Also consistent with Shea et al (2011) is the finding that new graduates had the confidence to work in emerging settings or private practice and felt more able to maintain their professional identity in this context. This is in contrast to the findings of Toal Sullivan (2006) who identified that new graduates working in traditional hospital settings with established occupational therapy services had a stronger professional identity than those in less traditional settings. What is ironic here is that the role-emerging settings in this study appeared to offer students and graduates the opportunity to work in ways that could be considered more congruent with core occupational therapy philosophy and values than settings in which practice had already been established.

It is possible that the understanding of occupational therapy practice that graduates developed on placement led to an idealistic vision of the profession and increased their frustration in the

traditional settings where this vision was incongruent with the practices that they now encountered. On role-emerging placements they experienced an opportunity to carry out occupational therapy in a way that they felt was consistent with the profession's philosophy and this was the lens through which they now interpreted their work experiences. It could be argued that images they had constructed on placement and now held of themselves and the profession became distorted by the realities of the working practices they encountered.

It may be that graduates' identities of self as occupational therapist and their "ontogenies" (Billett 2001, p213), or personal histories (that now consisted of values, beliefs and ways of knowing and being created on the placement), together with the lack of opportunities for occupationally focused practice afforded by the workplace, led to feelings of disengagement, disempowerment, and concern that they could not be the therapists they wanted to be. Graduates' frustration appeared to be exacerbated by the placement giving them insight into their potential, a potential that they felt was then restricted in practice by either the team they were working in or the nature of occupational therapy practice. Here, it may be possible to suggest that the participants' struggle was between the professional way of being that they had developed as an occupational therapist and the demands placed on them to fall in with traditional practices that no longer matched their perception of self or the profession. Blair (1998) suggests that the need to negotiate roles within the new realities of practice can lead to role strain or conflict, a position that was clearly evident for these participants. Dall'Alba (2009a) suggests that 'being' is an issue for humans. They have a concern for who they are and who they are becoming which would again appear relevant to the graduates in this study.

Ontological issues have implications for practice if graduates become frustrated and disempowered when employed in settings that restrict their opportunity to enact practice in a way that is congruent with the sense of professional self they develop on placement. This highlights a potential issue for the retention of newly qualified staff in traditional settings where graduates may become disillusioned with current practice and seek employment in alternative environments. Whilst this may be of benefit to the development of the profession elsewhere, it may lead to a shortage of therapists working in mainstream services. It is, however, possible that, as highlighted by this study, graduates who have done a role-emerging placement, and developed a stronger allegiance to the profession's philosophy, may become agents for change through their increased confidence and determination to re-centralise occupation within traditional practices.

In summary, this study provides useful insights into the experiences of five occupational therapy students who undertook role-emerging placements, highlighting the important ontological development that took place. As the first study to explore graduates' experiences of such placements, findings reveal the difficulty that many of them experienced in being able to sustain the professional way of being that they had developed on placement in their working practice. Such findings highlight the clear benefits of using interpretative phenomenological analysis in educational research, in particular in gaining a deeper understanding of the development of professional identity. The findings are important for students, academics, placement tutors and practitioners as they have implications for both practice and education. These are discussed in the final chapter.

5.7 Reflexive account

In addition to the attention to personal reflexivity that has been presented at the end of each chapter thus far, authors highlight the need for epistemological reflexivity (Willig 2008, Kinsella and Whiteford 2009). This requires me as the researcher to give careful and critical consideration to the assumptions I have made about the world and knowledge in the course of this study and the implications of these assumptions for the study and findings. Wilkinson (1998, p495) also refers to this as "functional" reflexivity, highlighting the need to "examine the research process to reveal its assumptions, values and biases" and consider the way in which the researcher's choice of theories and methodology originate from both personal and disciplinary concerns and interests. Willig (2008) suggests that such reflexivity demands that I ask myself questions such as: how have the research questions, design and process of analysis constructed or limited what was found? Could the research questions have been investigated differently? How would this have provided a different understanding of role-emerging placements? How has the thesis been influenced by own professional interests and beliefs? What can I claim in terms of my contribution to knowledge? Having completed the discussion chapter, this appears an appropriate time to reflect on these questions.

In epistemological terms IPA seeks to gain an understanding of what an experience is like for an individual, acknowledging that direct access to this experience is not possible and that the researcher is therefore required to engage with the individual to try and gain insights into that person's thoughts, feelings and beliefs. This is where Smith's (2009) notion of the double hermeneutic is of significance with the researcher interpreting / making sense of the

individual interpreting / making sense of their experience. In this respect, my aim was to produce knowledge of what it was like for students to undertake a role-emerging placement and to understand the meanings that they attributed to these placements in their journeys to becoming occupational therapists. I was not seeking to eliminate the 'biases' that I brought to the research process but recognised that these shaped the way that the knowledge was created in a fundamental way and embraced my role in co-constructing the knowledge that was produced. My aim was not to make a causal link between placements and professional identity but to provide the academic community with insights and understandings grounded in students' experiences; a perspective largely missing in current literature. Providing this type of rich qualitative data and understanding was important to me as an occupational therapist that, as noted in chapter 3, has concerns about the emphasis and priority given to quantitative research in relation to hierarchies of evidence and evidence-based practice.

Kinsella and Whiteford (2008, p251), utilising a phrase developed by Bordieu (1992), highlight the importance of "epistemic reflexivity" which involves "critical reflection on the social conditions under which disciplinary knowledge comes into being and gains credence". Here, it is my belief that the dominant discourse that exists within healthcare and academia in favour of positivist research traditions is problematic in the way it dismisses the very research that health professionals and academics should be aspiring to produce; that which provides deeper understandings of personal experiences and allows services and curricula to be developed that have meaning to clients and students and not ones solely based on measurable outcomes, assessments and competency frameworks. Although qualitative research is increasing, it currently exists in the shadow of more positivist research and much needs to done to ensure that important findings produced by qualitative approaches are not devalued and that there becomes an acceptance of multiple ways of knowing. It is my hope that in disseminating my findings members of the academic and occupational therapy community will recognise the usefulness of IPA for facilitating a particular 'way of knowing'; revealing important aspects of students' development that to date have been given little consideration in current research or modern day curricula. This may provide insights that allow thought to be given to the ways in which students' ontological development can be enhanced; facilitating them to move forward in their professional becoming. Dissemination through publication and conference presentations is for me an important means of making qualitative research more visible and challenging the dominant discourses that exist both in terms of types of research

that are awarded status over others and the focus on epistemology at the expense of ontology in professional curricula.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, careful consideration was given as to why IPA was the most appropriate choice for this study. This is not to say that other approaches do not have their place, just that they would not have enabled me to explore the research questions as they stood. With their focus on understanding participants' experiences the research questions defined the methodological approach that was required, clearly leading me to explore phenomenology and subsequently IPA. The questions did not demand an exploration of other aspects of role-emerging placements which although of interest would have nevertheless been a different study, for example the influence of the placement culture on identity development, comparisons of role-emerging students' experiences with those doing traditional final placements, perceptions of educators or service users. Had the research questions been framed in a different way, other methodologies could have been utilised thus enabling role-emerging placements and students' experiences to be investigated from different perspectives, for example ethnographic, narrative, discursive, grounded theory approaches. As noted in the methods section these would have yielded potentially different (and equally interesting and illuminating) insights and types of knowledge. This thesis is therefore one type of knowledge that I believe can contribute to the various knowledges that seek to enhance our understanding of particular phenomenon.

Underpinned by phenomenology and hermeneutics, Smith (2011) highlights the way in which IPA studies frequently have an existential focus and that data analysis often leads to exploration of issues of identity. This was certainly the case for my study where I was struck in the analysis stages by the importance of the students' ontological development and the relationship of this to their professional identity. This was not something that I had consciously been looking for but became more and more apparent as the analysis stages progressed and for me went on to become the most significant part of the findings and the predominant focus of this discussion chapter. I believe that it was the nature of the IPA process and its requirement to explore experiences in detail, delving below superficial accounts to gain deeper and richer insights, which allowed both the participants and me to reflect on aspects of their personal and professional identities that would not necessarily have been revealed using other approaches. As well as providing valuable insights for me as a researcher, the students themselves spoke of the benefits they had gained from the interviews

in allowing them to reflect on their own development; for them it had been an important opportunity to recognise how far they had come and to consider where they wanted to go in their future career. This would appear to me to be a significant benefit of using IPA for educational research where issues of professional identity are clearly of importance in preparing students for practice as health professionals.

It was this ontological dimension that drew me to authors such as Barnett (2007, 2009) and Dall'Alba (2004, 2009a, 2009b) whose ideas had resonance with my findings and led me to structure the discussion chapter in the way that I have. Although I believe that the chapter is grounded in the students' experiences, I am mindful that I had final control over the analysis and write-up; deciding which data was presented, which parts of their experience to focus on at the expense of others and which literature I drew on to make sense of their experiences. It is of course possible that other perspectives and theories could have been used to explore and discuss the findings, for example a more sociological perspective drawing on role or social identity theories. Further analysis of the data is of course possible in this respect but for me this chapter reflects what appeared to be most significant for the participants, capturing some of the complexity and ambiguity of becoming a professional. I believe the thesis offers a useful and insightful way of thinking about student and graduate experiences and development that have not been discussed in occupational therapy literature to date.

5.8 Chapter summary

This chapter conceptualised the journey that participants took through their placements into practice as a significant ontological one, highlighting the way in which they ventured forth into the placement with excitement and apprehension, experienced ontological discomfort when faced with the unfamiliar setting, moved from a position of trepidation to one of transformation as they overcame placement challenges, experienced a sense of becoming as occupational therapists as new insights emerged of self and practice and managed their professional way of being when faced with the realities of practice. It would appear that it was the autonomy of the placement, and the demand that this placed on the students to explain what occupational therapy is, that led them to think more reflectively and form deeper understandings of the profession and self as therapist. Drawing on Heidegger's notion of authenticity, participants came to embody their own values, beliefs and understandings of practice which led to the development of their own professional way of being, an ontological dimension of students' development given little consideration in existing occupational

therapy literature. In particular, findings had resonance with the writings of Gloria Dall'Alba and Ronald Barnett and would support the use of a lifeworld perspective in adult learning, a perspective that would encourage academic programmes to address the current imbalance in academic curricula towards epistemology and integrate more of the ontological dimension that is clearly important in the development of health professionals.

The discussion also considered current occupational therapy practice in light of participants' difficulties sustaining the identity they had developed on the role-emerging placement. It was suggested that where graduates leave university having experienced a role-emerging placement they may be more confident in articulating the role and value of occupational therapy and become agents of change in providing services more congruent with the profession's core philosophy, both within traditional and emerging practice settings.

The findings are important for students, academics, placement tutors and practitioners as they have implications for both practice and education. These are now discussed in the final chapter, along with a consideration of the contribution that this study has made to knowledge, limitations of the study, strategy for dissemination and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The first aim of this study was to develop an understanding of how occupational therapy students experience and ascribe meaning to role-emerging placements, exploring commonalities and divergences in experience. A second aim was to consider the ways in which such placements influence the professional practice and development of these students once qualified. The final aim was to consider the possible implications for education, practice and future research. This study has met all of these aims through the provision of an in-depth analysis of five occupational therapy participants' experiences.

This first half of this chapter considers the contribution that this study has made to knowledge before presenting the implications for education and practice. The second half discusses the limitations of the study, strategy for dissemination and areas for future research. The thesis is drawn to a close with my concluding thoughts.

6.1 Contribution to knowledge

In order to carry out the occupational therapist's role, students have to be able to move beyond being able to 'do' occupational therapy and develop an understanding of what it means to be an occupational therapist. The integration of these epistemological and ontological dimensions of a student's development is important in providing not only the skills and knowledge required to carry out the role but a confidence, passion, understanding and belief in self and the profession that helps to prepare them more effectively for practice.

This study illustrates how role-emerging placements provide an important pedagogic opportunity for occupational therapy students to develop this deeper understanding of who they are becoming as professionals, including the type of therapist they want to be. Through engaging in challenging and autonomous learning experiences presented to them during their placement, in which perhaps the familiar is presented to students in an unfamiliar light (Vu and Dall'Alba 2011), new insights and a depth of understanding of occupational therapy can be revealed and possibilities presented for students to develop new ways of being as an occupational therapist.

This study suggests that students had not been as exposed to this ontological development on their traditional placements, tending instead to fall uncritically into existing practices,

routines and the ways of thinking of others. In contrast, the autonomy demanded of them in role-emerging placements meant that they had to work out for themselves what occupational therapy could be in the setting, what it meant to them and how it should be carried out. This required a depth of reflection that challenged their own and existing practices and helped them to construct their own professional identity rather than passively accepting the ways of being and practices of others. The knowledge and skills they had learnt on campus, previous placements and the role-emerging placement came to be better understood and integrated into a professional way of being that helped prepare them for practice, although for some the ability to sustain this was hampered by the context of their new working environment. This finding adds depth of understanding to existing role-emerging literature which tends to focus on knowledge and skill development and provides little in the way of discussion regarding important ontological aspects of a student's development.

This study not only provides useful insights about students' development on role-emerging placements, but also reveals aspects of practice education on traditional placements that appears to need consideration. Whilst it has long been accepted that working alongside a professional role model on traditional placements enables students to develop a professional identity, these findings suggest that this cannot be taken for granted, and that more needs to be done to ensure that this identity is one of students' own making and one congruent with occupational therapy philosophy. Whilst traditional placements clearly offer an important opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge needed to carry out practice, students need to be encouraged to work more autonomously in order to help them reflect on their own becoming as a therapist. It is clear from students' experiences in this study that this ontological dimension of their development had not been a central focus on previous placements and as such may be a potential weakness of traditional placements.

This appears to be the first study to explore the experiences of graduates that have completed role-emerging placements. A significant finding was the difficulty that graduates experienced working in NHS settings where the nature of occupational therapy practice and the teams in which they worked restricted their ability to work in a way that was congruent with the professional way of being that they had developed. Findings therefore suggest that whilst role-emerging placements may ease the transition of those graduates who go on to work in non-traditional settings, or in other settings where they have the autonomy to develop and

enact practice in a way that is meaningful to them, such placements may make transition more difficult for graduates working in more traditional settings.

Recent destination data from the university in which this study took place reveals that traditional settings are where graduates are likely to be employed. In 2010, 75% of the BSc graduates gained NHS or Local Authority employment and none went on to work in emerging roles. In 2011, 45% of MSc students and 33% of BSc students were employed in NHS and Local Authority settings and 2% were employed in non-traditional settings. It is important to note that 2011 data is incomplete due to the number of students who continue to seek employment. It is also unclear from the data whether those working in non-traditional settings were employed as occupational therapists. Nevertheless, with this data in mind, the findings of this study have implications for the large number of graduates employed in traditional services. Whilst it is acknowledged that the assumptions made in this study are based on a small sample size, if the findings are representative of other graduates' experiences, this has implications for occupational therapy practice in such settings where consideration clearly needs to be given to the nature of service provision.

This thesis has highlighted the importance of students' ontological development on role-emerging placements and the impact on this on their professional practice. Whilst previous studies have highlighted the growth and development of students undertaking such placements, the notion of ontological change has not previously been used to examine this development or consider its implications for practice and education. Through using IPA, with its phenomenological and existential focus, it became clear that for the students in this study this ontological development was the most significant aspect of their placement experience. The depth of analysis demanded by IPA allowed me to move beyond simple descriptions of students' experiences to present much deeper understandings of the meaning that the placements had for them and the influence of the placements on their vision of self, the profession and their practice both as students and as occupational therapists. The detailed micro-analysis undertaken in this thesis, of individual and collective experiences, has enabled not only consideration to be given to the important role that role-emerging placements play in students' professional development but also of the potential influence of such experiences on occupational therapy as a profession and future pedagogic development.

The study highlights the confidence that students experienced on completion of their placements in regards to their professional identity and ability to communicate this to others. As previously discussed, this was attributed to the autonomy given to them in the setting and the demand this placed on them to work out for themselves what their role was and who they were becoming as occupational therapists. In the absence of a professional on-site educator, the onus was on the students to appraise and think more deeply about their role in order to understand and explain to others what they and the profession could offer. This was a demand that they had not previously experienced with the same intensity on previous placements and took their conceptualisation of self and the profession to a higher level, learning that was clearly transformative in nature.

The development of this strong professional identity is clearly important at a time when authors have highlighted the difficulty that occupational therapy has as a profession with its identity (Wilcock 2006, Creek 2009, Turner 2011). If curricula can provide pedagogic opportunities that encourage students to develop these deeper understandings and to articulate their role then it is hoped that they will become agents of change; realigning practice with core occupational therapy philosophy and helping others to see the value and role of occupational therapy in meeting the occupational and health needs of the population. This is clearly needed as evidenced by the findings of this study where graduates found traditional practices to be incongruent with the profession's core philosophy and values and which led to feelings of frustration and disempowerment. A recent example highlights the need for more effective professional promotion where, at a time when public health is high on the government's agenda and occupational therapy has a clear role to play in this area of practice (Spalding 1996, Godfrey 2000, Creek 2002, Clarke et al 2004, Scriven and Atwal 2004, Wilcock 2006), occupational therapists were not included in the public health workforce strategy (Department of Health 2012). Role-emerging placements have the potential to offer significant benefits here; firstly promoting and raising the profile of occupational therapy in new areas of practice (including those associated with public health), secondly making students more politically aware, a need identified by Sakellariou and Pollard (2012) and thirdly facilitating the development of the strength of identity and confidence needed for graduates to challenge such incidences when the profession is overlooked.

Although further research is needed to explore graduates' employment opportunities, it is hoped that, at this time of austerity and intense competition for occupational therapy

employment, graduates that have undertaken a role-emerging placement will be in a stronger position to gain such employment, demonstrating the confidence to articulate their role and vision of the profession in both traditional and non-traditional settings. However, there is also a clear indication that those graduates who find themselves in settings where practice does not allow them to be their authentic professional self and where they cannot become agents of change that issues of recruitment and retention may present themselves for employers. This clearly needs consideration by the profession.

This thesis has highlighted the significant personal ontological development that occurred for the participants and has considered the link that this has to lifeworld learning theories. I suggest that adopting such a lifeworld perspective to practice education, and indeed academic curricula in general, would encourage students and educators to conceptualise learning as an existential phenomenon, helping them to move beyond an epistemological focus (the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies) and allow students more opportunity to reflect on how they make sense of their experiences and what these experiences mean in terms of their personal and professional development. Such an approach appears to overcome the separation of mind, body and world evident in other more behaviourist or cognitivist approaches whilst integrating key ideas from humanistic and social learning theories, in particular the attention given to the students' entwinement with the world around them and the focus on self-development. The aim of higher education from a lifeworld perspective is the encouragement of an authentic professional way of being (Barnett 2007, Dall'Alba 2009, Vu and Dall'Alba 2011) and the findings of this study indicate that developing this way of being is empowering and emancipatory for students and has the potential to shape not only their vision of self but of future practice. This is a vision that has surely to be of benefit to the profession and should be encouraged. It is with this in mind that the following implications for practice and education have been identified.

6.2 Implications for practice and education

Findings provide insights into the experiences of new graduates in their first role and how role-emerging and traditional placements can be improved. The following implications for education and practice can be identified:

1. With the appropriate level of support and preparation, it is proposed that role emerging placements are made compulsory for all students. This is currently the case in some

Universities (Thew et al 2011, Totten and Pratt 2001) but where others do not use role-emerging placements it is recommend that such placements be included as an important part of the curriculum, particularly in relation to the development of occupational therapy students' professional understandings of self and occupational practice. Whilst some authors have argued that such placements are not suitable for all students (Huddleston 1999b, Sullivan and Finlayson 2000, Fisher and Savin-Baden 2002b, Wood 2005, Fleming et al 1996, Kirke et al 2007), little evidence was found to support this, although it is recognised that the students in this study did choose to do a role-emerging placement. Whilst it is acknowledged that some students may find these types of placement more of a challenge than others, it is suggested that with support all students are given the opportunity to experience the benefits that such placements would appear to offer.

2. Role-emerging placements may best be positioned towards the middle of a student's education, rather than as a final placement. There is currently conflicting opinion concerning the most appropriate positioning of such placements (Bossers et al 1997, Jung et al 2005) but findings suggest that students feel more confident having undertaken previous *basic* (Jayne Interview 1) traditional placements. This could indicate that role-emerging placements should be placed at a late stage in a curriculum. However, students in this study were nearing the end of their education and it was only through participation in the role-emerging placement that they had become aware that they lacked their own understanding and identity. It is therefore argued that undertaking a role emerging placement at an earlier stage of their development would be likely to pay dividends for their future academic work and performance on later placements through helping them to develop, reflect on and enhance their understanding of practice and identity. Findings however indicate that such placements should not take place at too early a stage in a student's education as this may be damaging to their self-confidence if they are not able to draw on knowledge and skills developed on previous placements.

3. Educators on traditional placements need to consider ways in which they can structure placement experiences to provide some of the benefits highlighted by this study. This is something that may require a shift in their approach to placement education, letting the student become more self-directed. Educators need to encourage deeper levels of critical reflection in order to help students question their personal and professional values, beliefs, assumptions and understandings of practice and consequently form their own authentic understandings, perspectives and professional ways of being. Time therefore needs to be

spent on educator training courses reinforcing the importance of self-directed learning, critical reflection and ontological development.

4. Campus based modules need to provide sufficient opportunity for students to reflect on their becoming as occupational therapists. As suggested by Vu and Dall'Alba (2011) there is a need for curricula and assessments to integrate epistemology (knowledge and skill development) with ontology (understanding of self and development of ways of being and enacting practice as an occupational therapist). Approaches such as problem-based learning would appear to offer a way of actively engaging students in their learning and encouraging critical reflection that allows them to challenge what and how they are learning (Sadlo 1994, Cross et al 2006, Davys and Pope 2006, Halliwell 2008). This is likely to help facilitate students' becoming as occupational therapists. Post-placement de-briefs should also provide an opportunity for students to reflect on their ontological development, discussing the ways in which they have been able to develop their own understandings of self and professional practice.

5. Where possible students should be matched with placement settings that are of interest and have meaning to them in order to enhance their commitment to the placement. As placement tutor, I am aware that it is not always possible to match student preference and placement site primarily due to the placements available. However, findings suggest that consideration should be given to students working more collaboratively with placement tutors to help recruit their own placement sites, particularly for role-emerging placements where aims include being able to identify a role for occupational therapy and self-directed learning.

6. As the quality of a learning experience appears to be affected by students' ontological being and the way in which they approach and interpret that experience, this study highlights the need for placement tutors and educators to discuss with students the way in which they perceive their placements (for example the way the placement challenges are viewed, how they see themselves, how they think they are managing, what opportunities there are to further their development) and to help them re-construct perceived negative stressors in a positive light. This is most likely to be achieved through engagement in supervision, reflective practice, induction, peer support, action learning sets and pre-placement preparation.

7. Whilst findings support existing recommendations that pre-placement sessions for students are important (Mulholland and Derdall 2005, Jung et al 2005, Overton 2009, Thomas and Rodger 2011), they indicate that these need to be combined with longer periods of induction in order to fully address the levels of anxiety, uncertainty, expectations and professional isolation experienced by those in this study. Whilst a short placement visit may offer some insight into the placement setting, an extended induction period, for example the one day a week for five weeks option suggested by Thew et al (2008), may be more effective in allowing students to familiarise themselves with the setting, reflect on the aims of the service and consider their role and possible interventions before starting the placement full-time. In addition, as part of this induction period, it is recommended that students meet regularly on campus to discuss their thoughts and experiences with peers and tutors. Action learning sets (ALS) are recommended to encourage students' critical reflection, self-awareness and understandings of practice as well as providing a forum to discuss practical concerns. Meeting together in small groups, ALS would allow students the opportunity to discuss and explore individual issues that arise from the placement induction days, find their own solutions and develop action plans for how to move forward with the placement. It is suggested that this longer induction period and time for critical reflection, along with half way visits from tutors and placement blogs would provide strategies to support students towards successful placement outcomes. However, caution needs to be given to the extent of pre-placement preparation as findings indicate that much of the students' development occurred as a result of their experiential learning in terms of the situations and challenges that they had to work through. High levels of preparation may inhibit this development. Therefore, whilst pre-placement preparation is clearly an important part of role-emerging placements, a balance needs to be struck so that students do not become too sheltered from the practical, emotional and cognitive experiences that it is suggested cause significant learning and development to take place.

8. Pre-placement sessions with placement tutors are required for all educators to ensure that they are clear about the expectations of students and learning outcomes. This is particularly important in terms of managing the risks highlighted by this study, in particular that of students carrying out tasks for which they do not feel confident or competent. Universities have a clear role to play in clarifying with students and educators their roles, responsibilities and expectations in order that students are not placed in situations, or adopt roles, that are above their level of competency. Where possible, on and off-site educators should meet with

each other and the student at the start of the placement to clarify roles and expectations. Off-site educators should also become as familiar as possible with the setting in order to give them some insight into the environment in which the student will be working and possible challenges that the student will be facing.

9. Feelings of isolation and anxiety may be reduced by students undertaking role-emerging placements in pairs. This recommendation is supported by literature that advocates peer-learning and support on placement (Martin and Edwards 1998, Martin et al 2004, Soloman and Jung 2006, Mackenzie et al 2007, Thomas and Rodger 2011). However, further study needs to explore the impact of peer-learning on role-emerging placements. It is possible that undertaking the placement in pairs may dilute students' experiences if they become reliant on each other to overcome challenges rather than engaging in the deep personal reflection, and working through of the challenges on an individual basis, which students of this study highlighted to be of significant benefit.

10. Role-emerging placements could be explored by placement tutors in other health professions. Changes in the health and social care climate will require graduates from all professions to be equipped with the knowledge, skills and understandings of self and professional practice necessary to face the challenges that await them. Developing a professional way of being is clearly of importance to all health profession students. In line with government and higher education policy that seeks to enhance the quality of service provision through inter-professional education (Department of Health 2000c, Department of Health 2001a, Department of Health 2001b, Barr 2005, CAIPE 2007) consideration should also be given to inter-professional role-emerging placements.

11. Traditional occupational therapy service personnel need to reflect on the nature of their service provision and its congruence with the profession's philosophy and core values. At a time when there is increasing pressure on therapists to work more generically, this is essential for the future protection of the profession. Therapists need to be encouraged to re-visit their professional roots and to align practice accordingly. This is likely to enhance the satisfaction and retention of employees.

12. Findings indicate that there are benefits to the profession through the increased awareness of both clients and teams as to the role and value of occupational therapy. This is an

important benefit of role-emerging placements, helping to promote the profession outside of traditional practice settings and addressing the occupational needs of groups of people who may not otherwise benefit from the profession. It is therefore recommended that, where possible, new placement sites are continually identified rather than simply using the same site on a recurring basis.

13. Findings reveal that there can be mutual gain for both students and educators involved in role-emerging placements with both parties reflecting on and changing their practice and understandings of self and the profession. It is recommended that all practice-based educators are therefore encouraged to supervise role-emerging students to assist in the development of their reflective practice. Education needs to be provided to highlight the benefits of this supervisory role to the educator and profession as well as to the student.

6.3 Limitations of the study

Because they are based on the experiences of five occupational therapy students, the findings of this study cannot be considered representative of other occupational therapy students. The sample group was taken from one particular university and as such the findings may have been influenced by the type of education and academic philosophy that students were exposed to. Students who participated in this study had also chosen to do a role-emerging placement and experienced positive outcomes. As such they may have been more willing to take part in the study and led to a more positive skew of the findings.

The study may be limited by the exclusion of students that did not do a role-emerging placement. Whilst it was not the intention of this study to compare students' experiences of different types of placement, it may be useful in future to include students that had chosen traditional placements to explore in more depth their identity development and to explore commonalities and differences in students' learning experiences and outcomes.

Participants all spoke positively of the teams in which they were based for their placements and as such the findings are likely to have been influenced by the placement setting and may not reflect experiences of students in different placement contexts. However, it is hoped that whilst the findings cannot be generalised they will have resonance with other students who have completed such a placement and may assist placement tutors in the development of such placements in the future.

Whilst the interviews produced rich data, these were retrospective accounts and as such were reliant on participants' memories of their experiences. As students had all passed their placements this may have coloured the way that they interpreted and presented their experiences in a positive light. Richer insights into their experiences may have been elicited if intermittent interviews had been carried out throughout the placement. This would have allowed further exploration as they made their journey through the placement rather than waiting until the end. This may also have illuminated the more negative experiences that students reflected back on. To avoid any intrusion into their placements, this could alternatively have been done by asking the students to keep weekly reflective diaries that could then have been subject to analysis in addition to the final interviews.

As highlighted in the methodology chapter, the data gathered in follow-up interviews was not as extensive as that gained in initial interviews. This was a limitation that led to the second research question not being explored as fully as I would have liked. There were a variety of reasons for this, including the timing and setting of the follow-up interviews and the difficulty therapists had reflecting back on placement experiences. These are factors that would need to be addressed in future studies. Nevertheless, I believe important insights were gained from the data which provide a good basis for further exploration.

6.4 Strategy for dissemination

An opinion piece concerning the use of IPA for occupational therapy research has been published (Clarke 2009). Work in progress has been presented for the last five years at the University of Brighton PhD / Professional Doctorate conference. Findings were presented at the College of Occupational Therapist's Annual Conference (Clarke 2011).

Whilst findings are likely to be of interest to occupational therapy students, placement tutors and educators, they suggest that role-emerging placements may be of benefit to students from other disciplines. As such I will look to allied health profession conferences and higher education journals for publication.

6.5 Future research

Findings indicate that further research is required to explore the use of role-emerging placements and aspects of student practice education in general. The following suggestions for future research are made:

- Further phenomenological studies are needed to establish whether similar themes emerge. Weekly reflective journals may provide deeper insights into a student's development, capturing data as it occurs rather than relying on post-placement reflections. Ethnographic studies would allow exploration of the impact of the placement culture on the students' development.

- To date no studies have been carried out that have explored the experiences of 'academically weaker' students. This area of exploration would allow a deeper understanding of the extent to which academic ability impacts on placement learning outcomes and provide recommendations for placement tutors who may need to consider additional support for these students.

- Further research is required to understand the experiences of students who undertake compulsory role-emerging placements to determine the extent to which their sense of self, personality or learning attributes influence their engagement in placement and placement outcomes. Studies could also explore the experiences and outcomes of students undertaking early role-emerging placements compared to those undertaking them towards the end of their courses.

- Pre- and post-placement questionnaires and / or focus groups would allow placement tutors the opportunity to evaluate the use of role-emerging placements with larger cohorts. Future studies should include pre-placement anticipation and expectations in order to identify further pre-placement preparation that needs to take place.

- Longitudinal studies are needed to explore the ontological development of occupational therapy students as they progress through their education. Studies need to evaluate the extent to which academic curricula encourage students to critically reflect on, challenge and extend their own understandings of practice as well as focusing on knowledge and skill acquisition. Pre and post placement data collection would further illuminate the ways in which professional understanding and identity develop on placement.

- No studies have evaluated or compared models of role-emerging placements. Studies could therefore consider the benefits and limitations of models such as peer learning and interdisciplinary role-emerging placements.

- There is a current gap in literature that explores the experiences of the occupational therapy and on-site educator. Research also needs to determine the impact of the student on the organisation to highlight the potential benefits of such placements or concerns that could be addressed by placement tutors. Studies should also explore client and service outcomes as a result of student intervention.

- Deeper exploration of the development of professional identity on both traditional and role-emerging placements would highlight specific factors that facilitate and inhibit such development. In particular, studies that explore the nature of the supervisory relationship would shed light on the extent to which the educator influences or restricts the development of a student's identity. Grounded theory would provide further insights into the way in which professional identity is constructed by occupational therapy students. Studies exploring the use of PBL on placements are required.

- This is the first study to explore graduates' reflections on their placement once working as qualified therapists. Further longitudinal studies are needed to establish whether emergent themes are representative of other graduates' experiences. Such studies could also explore the career pathways of graduates following role-emerging placements, providing an indication of the long term impact of such placements on employment and whether graduates go on to work in less traditional settings.

- Further research is needed to compare graduates' experiences of transition to practice having completed role-emerging and traditional placements.

- Research with employers would provide insights into the ways in which role-emerging placements are perceived by those recruiting occupational therapists. This would highlight the potential benefits or limitations of such placements from an employer's perspective and the impact of role-emerging placements on the employability of graduates.

6.6 Concluding thoughts.

Similar to the students in this study, I have been on a journey. My research journey has been challenging, stimulating, frustrating, frightening and empowering. The mixture of emotions that I have experienced was not always expected but in working through and embracing these

I came to learn not only about the research process but also my own becoming as a researcher. I recognise that the practical skills and knowledge I have gained have given me the confidence to engage in further research projects and supervise other students. Perhaps more importantly, the understandings that I have gained from listening to and reflecting on students' experiences, and thinking more reflexively about responses that I had to these accounts, has changed the way I think about my own profession, practice and self as an occupational therapist. In this way, the doctorate has integrated the epistemological and ontological dimensions of my own development, enhancing both my knowledge and skill base and identity as an occupational therapist and academic researcher.

Insecurities in my knowledge and skills that presented themselves at the start of this doctorate have been minimised through the completion of this study and I now feel more confident to engage with the research community. This is an engagement to which I now look forward as I seek to learn new ways of knowing and continue to strive to achieve my potential as an academic and researcher. Let the journey continue.

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Appendix 1: Ethics approval

01273 644763

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25th September 2008

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Dear Channine

**Title of Proposal: Occupation therapy student's experiences of role emerging practice placements and the influence such placements have on their professional practice once qualified.
FREGC Application Number: 08/57**

We are writing to confirm that the above-mentioned proposal has been approved by the Research Ethics and Governance Committee of the Faculty of Health and Social Science (FREGC) after an independent scientific and ethics review.

Although approval has been given to start the research work, it is the ultimate responsibility of the researchers to ensure that the work is conducted within the Research Ethics and Governance Framework of the University of Brighton, and if applicable, those of the Department of Health and any funding body. Approval of project is given for the duration of the research indicated in the application form, although FREGC may review this decision at any time and has the right to suspend or terminate this approval. Please ensure that you comply with all the criteria and provisos set out by the R & D Lead.

You are required to notify the Committee in writing if there any substantial changes in the research methodology or any serious adverse events or accidents during the conduct of the study. As a requirement of the Governance Framework, please submit annual progress and completion reports to the Committee. You may not be need to prepare a separate progress report for the Committee as we would be happy to receive a copy of annual report submitted to funding body, NHS or other relevant body to satisfy this requirement. Please see the Guidance Notes of the Application Pack (Section 7) for further information.

Yours sincerely

Professor Julie Scholes RN DipN DANS MSc Nursing D.Phil
Chair of Faculty of Health Research Ethics & Governance Committee

Appendix 2: Participants Information Sheet

Dear Occupational Therapy Student

My name is Channine Clarke and I am working as an Occupational Therapy Practice Placement Tutor at the University of Brighton. As part of my professional doctorate in Occupational Therapy I am planning to carry out some research that looks at occupational therapy students' experiences of role emerging placements and the influence these placements may have on their practice once qualified. The research questions are:

- What are students' experiences of occupational therapy practice placements in role emerging settings?
- In what way (if any) do role emerging placements influence the professional practice of occupational therapy students once qualified?

It is hoped that this research will enable a deeper understanding of how role emerging placements are experienced by you as a student and the influence that such placements may (or may not) have on your practice once qualified. The findings will help the profession consider how useful such placements are in preparing students for practice and encourage higher education institutions, as well as students and practitioners, to reflect on how role emerging placements can be used to meet the needs of students and the future profession. Finally it is anticipated that the findings will be used to inform curriculum design to ensure that the issues highlighted by the study participants are addressed, evaluated and discussed within training and education programmes.

In order to carry out this study I would initially like to interview students who have undertaken a practice placement in a role emerging setting. For the purposes of this study a role emerging placement has been defined as one that has taken place in a new or recently established setting, without the on-site supervision of an occupational therapist, either within or outside the NHS or Local Authority.

Following this initial interview I would then like to interview the student again once they have qualified so we can discuss any influences that they feel their role emerging placement has had on their practice as an occupational therapist.

For those students who are willing to participate in the study, I would hope to initially meet with you within one month of you completing the placement for approximately 90 minutes. During this time I would be asking you about your experiences of your role emerging placement. I would then carry out another interview once you had qualified and were practicing as an occupational therapist. These interviews will take place on the university campus and at a time convenient to you.

I do not anticipate that you will be exposed to any risks through your participation in this study, although it is possible that questions asked in the interviews, which will include your experiences, thoughts and feeling about your placement, may bring back memories and cause distress, especially if difficult experiences were encountered for you during the placement. This is not my intention and I can assure you that you do not have to answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable with.

The interviews will take place in private and be tape recorded so that I can remember what has been said and make notes later on. I would like to assure you that your responses would be strictly confidential and your name would not be included in the results. Tapes and interview transcripts will be kept securely locked in a filing cabinet and information on the researcher computer will be password protected.

As this study is part of a professional doctorate it is anticipated that the findings of the study will be published upon completion. Findings will also be disseminated through local and national conferences. I would like to reassure you again that you will not be identifiable in any publications or presentations. You will of course be welcome to receive a copy of the findings of the study upon request.

The study has been reviewed by the University of Brighton Research and Ethics committee. It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. Should you agree or not agree to participate this will not in any way affect your occupational therapy training. If you do agree to take part you would be free to withdraw from the study at any time without question.

If you would like to participate in the study I would be grateful if you could contact me at the University (01223 643771) or email me on cc121@brighton.ac.uk . I will then contact you to arrange a convenient time to meet. If you have any questions that you would like to ask me before deciding whether or not to participate please feel free to contact me. You are also free to contact my supervisor Dr Liam Clarke (number) if you have any questions.

I include the contact details of Dr Graham Stew, Course Leader (number) in case you have any concerns relating to the conduct of this research.

Thank you

Channine Clarke

………………………………………………………………………………………….

Appendix 3: Student consent form

Title: Occupational therapy students experiences of role emerging placements and the influence such placements have on their practice once qualified.

♦   I agree to take part in this research which aims to explore occupational therapy students' experiences of role emerging placements and the influences these placements have (if any) on practice as an occupational therapist. I understand that this study is being carried out as part of the researchers' professional doctorate in Occupational Therapy.

♦   I understand that my participation is voluntary.

♦   I understand that my participation will not have any repercussions on my occupational therapy training.

♦   I understand that should the researcher be concerned about any issues related to mal practice raised as a result of the interview she has a duty, under her Code of Professional Conduct, to report these concerns to my University tutor.

♦   The researcher has explained to my satisfaction the purpose of the study and the possible risks involved.

♦   I have had the research process explained to me and I have also read the information sheet. I understand the process fully and am aware that I can ask the researcher any questions or discuss any concerns that I may have at any time.

♦   I am aware that I will be required to participate in at least one interview with the researcher which will last between 1 and 1.5 hours. I understand that this interview will be tape recorded to allow the researcher to write it up later.

♦   I understand that any confidential information will be seen only by the researcher and will not be revealed to anyone else. My name will not appear in the results of the study.

♦   I understand that direct quotes may be used in the final thesis but will remain anonymous.

♦   I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Name (please print) ....………...

Signed:..

Date : ....

Appendix 4: Occupational Therapist's Consent Form

Title: Occupational therapy students experiences of role emerging placements and the influence such placements have on their practice once qualified.

- ♦ I agree to take part in this research which aims to explore occupational therapy students' experiences of role emerging placements and the influences these placements have (if any) on practice as an occupational therapist. I understand that this study is being carried out as part of the researchers' professional doctorate in Occupational Therapy.
- ♦ I understand that my participation is voluntary.
- ♦ I understand that my participation will not have any repercussions on my occupational therapy position.
- ♦ I understand that should the researcher be concerned about any issues related to mal practice raised as a result of the interview she has a duty, under her Code of Professional Conduct, to report these concerns to my work based manager.
- ♦ The researcher has explained to my satisfaction the purpose of the study and the possible risks involved.
- ♦ I have had the research process explained to me and I have also read the information sheet. I understand the process fully and am aware that I can ask the researcher any questions or discuss any concerns that I may have at any time.
- ♦ I am aware that I will be required to participate in at least one interview with the researcher which will last between 1 and 1.5 hours. I understand that this interview will be tape recorded to allow the researcher to write it up later.
- ♦ I understand that any confidential information will be seen only by the researcher and will not be revealed to anyone else. My name will not appear in the results of the study.
- ♦ I understand that direct quotes may be used in the final thesis but will remain anonymous.
- ♦ I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Name (please print) ....………..

Signed:...

Date : ....

Appendix 5: Interview schedule for initial interview

Name: ………………………………………………………………….

Contact number …………………………………………………………..

The interview will start with an introduction of myself to the participant and an outline of the purpose of the study and interview. I will then inform them how the time will be spent, e.g., that I have various questions that I wanted to ask but that there may be other areas related to the topic that the participant may want to discuss.

I will confirm that they are happy for the interview to be recorded for transcription purposes. I will also confirm that they consent to the interview.

1. Can you tell me about your recent role emerging placement?
Prompts – where was it, how long, who were you working with, type of clients, what did you do, can you tell me about the first day

2. Can you tell me about the best day of the placement? Why?

3. Can you tell me about the worst day of the placement? Why?

4. Can you tell me about any significant event that happened for you during the placement?

5. Can you tell me about the last day of the placement? Prompts- what were your feelings?

6. What are your feelings about this placement? Prompts – physically, emotionally, mentally, are your feelings different now from when you were on the placement

7. Can you describe your role during this placement? Prompts – how did you spend you time, how did you feel about your role

8. Do you feel that your placement was a positive or negative experience?
Prompts – in what way, can you give me an example, did you manage to overcome any

difficulties and if so in what way
9. Do you feel this placement has influenced your personal and professional development? Prompt – in what way, can you give me an example, how do you feel about these changes
10. How has this placement changed the way you think about occupational therapy? Prompts – in what way, how do you now think about the profession,
11. Do you feel this placement has helped to prepare you for future practice? Prompts – in what ways has or hasn't it helped, do you think it will influence your future role
12. We are coming to the end of the interview shortly, is there anything that you would like to add? Are there any questions you thought I would ask that I didn't ask? (gives an idea of their preconceptions). What was it like being interviewed about this by a member of faculty? (good for reflexivity, and may address some Qs about methods, etc)

Appendix 6: Interview schedule for follow-up interview

Name: ……………………………………………………………………….

Contact number …………………………………………………………..

Date of interview ……………………………………………………………

The interview will start with reminder about the purpose of the study and interview.

I will confirm that they are happy for the interview to be recorded for transcription purposes. I will also confirm that they consent to the interview.

---

1. Can you briefly describe your current area of practice?

Prompts - How long have you been working, what type of client group

---

2. Can you briefly describe your current role as an occupational therapist?

Prompts – what do you do, how do you feel about your role

---

3. I sent you the transcript of our last interview – What are your feelings about your role-emerging placement now?

---

4. How much of the role emerging placement have you been able to transfer into your practice and influences you now?

---

5. Do you think that the placement has influenced your professional development as an occupational therapist in any way?

Can you give me examples of this?

Prompts – examples (if needed) confidence in OT philosophy, confidence with your role, knowledge and skills you use, growth and self awareness

---

6. Do you feel that that the placement helped to prepare you for practice in any way?

Prompts – skills you use, confidence for undertaking specific aspects of your role, ability to work independently, clinical reasoning, marketing the role

In your first interview you stated that the placement had helped prepare you e.g., confidence increased due to the level of autonomy—has that been you recent experience?

---

7. Do you feel the placement has influenced your professional identity in any way?

Prompts can you give examples of when you have felt a strong / weak professional identity?

8. Use the second half of the interview to pick up on some of the themes I identified in the data analysis of first interview: Show her the mind-maps of themes.

For example: When I analysed the first interview I identified aspects such as :
Increased self awareness and personal and professional growth e.g., autonomy, opportunity for development of clinical reasoning, feeling empowered, skill development --- has this transferred to your current practice?

Challenge contradictions – you stated that there was not anything negative but I identified times in the interview when you spoke of fear, professional isolation, decreased confidence?

Do you feel these themes reflect your experience of the placement at the time?

9. You spoke about wanting to do a non-traditional role in the future – is that still the case or do you feel differently now?

10. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experience of the placement or the influence of the placement on you as a therapist now that you are practising?

Appendix 7: Example of excel spreadsheet of identified concepts.

Data analysis for Jayne	Place found in transcript	Verbatim quotations.
academic requirements		
impact of length of placement	34.8	"I only had eight weeks"
placement requirements achieved	1.19	"I'd covered everything that I needed to cover"
Autonomy		
required by the team	33.22	"they actually said that was good for the team 'cause if they didn't have somebody who was so self sufficient then it would have been really difficult"
to choose role emerging placement	1.23	"I was lucky 'cause I was free to do what I wanted for my last one"
forcing her to develop skills	33.16; 34.1	"this placement has forced me to be proactive …….because there's been nobody there"
required by this stage of placement	35.15	"just doing that off you're own back without somebody having to tell you I suppose which I think you should be able to do at this stage"
Belonging		
to the team	18.2	"so I felt sort of more integrated"
being part of clients positive experiences	20.7	"the guy who didn't want to engage………everybody laughing and joking, it was just nice, I don't know just being part of that was quite nice"
building rapport		
with clients	24.1	"I had to sort of go in and just mingle and chat to people whilst they were eating their lunch about you know anything just to get to know them and that was really outside my comfort zone"

Challenge		
wanting a challenge	1.11; 2.13	"I'm the kind of person who likes to challenge myself"
wanting to work with new client group	1.25	"I wanted to work with a client group I hadn't really encountered before"
Change		
in her view of clients	15.23	"I see them in a different light now"
in attitude to placement	10.24; 11.6; 14.14; 42.12	"I hated the placement and just was really negative about it, I started completely changing that, yeah about half way I started really enjoying it"
in view of society	17.4	"that was completely awful but it was a shock because I didn't know that people did that"
in her reactions to clients stories	17.6	"I suppose it got to the point where nothing else could shock me anymore…. You got used to it"
ability to handle her emotions	17.12	"maybe I was just more equipped for dealing with it then or maybe I was just able to handle my emotions more"
of teams view of work	43.18; 44.13; 44.15 ; 44.17	"one of the educators felt that they had got a different way of looking at things"
checking things out		
with OT tutor	25.18; 25.22; 32.23	"if I had any doubts about anything I could just tell him and we would discuss it and it would be fine"
confidence		
in own abilities	10.9; 12.2; 26.17	"the experience that I have had is perhaps more than perhaps what the nurses have had"
gained through REP	33.16; 46.7	"it forced me to be proactive, with the whole work really, just sort of setting up things, researching and erm reflecting"
gained from feedback	12.18	"I got a really really good response from that"

from autonomy	26.2	"to go out there on your won and try to prove to a group of different health professionals what you I felt was just really good for me, I just grew out of it"
in her clinical reasoning	12.2; 26.12	"I just stated talking and I kind of realised how much I knew…..I was able to explain it all to them"
to be an OT	42.15	"I feel like I could do and would like to do it"
of educators in her	7.8; 48. 12	"it makes me feel really grown up that (tutor) has even considered mentioning it to me, he obviously thought my experiences were worth talking about"
gained from running a successful group	11.9; 12.4	"yeah it was the art group…."
to turn placement around	14.14	
influenced by setting, personal interest	37.18; 38.12	"something physical anyway, I don't think I would have been so confident ……it appealed to me"
to do this work in future	42.15	"I feel like I could and would like to do it"
Consolidation		
theory and practice	12.2o; 12.25; 13.13	"I kind of realised how much I knew…"; "it was kind of like a summary for me as well of what I had done and why"
comparison		
with past placements	5.7; 8.20; 45.22; 46.7	"I has seen people with poor lifestyles, really major issues that they are carrying around with them but it just seemed slightly different with the homeless population"
with other students	45.25	"it was something that not a lot of other students had done either I think that was a big part of it"
to other settings	23.4	"you wouldn't have to worry about that when you were in an OT kitchen….."
conflict		
emotional attachment vs. professionalism	16.3	"you kind of get emotionally attached but then you cant, you've got to be professional as well"

taking work home with her	16.5	"towards then end I wasn't taking work home with me which I didn't think I would be able to do but I did manage to switch off by the end"
having to deal with team dynamics	22.21	"the managers said I could use the kitchen, the volunteers said I was in the way, it was all awkward so I had to deal with that in a professional way"
want to help vs. clients willingness to change	29.23; 30.15; 31.16; 32.2	
building rapport vs. intimidation	36.4	
external presentation vs. internal feelings	39.9	"I was right I have to talk to these people and I was just getting on with it but I was actually dying inside through like nerves and fear"
Development		
Personal	10.14; 47.5	"'cause my personal development…me as a person yeah I am grown up enough to do that sort of thing, I'm not little anymore"
Professional	48.1	"things have come from it…writing an article…OT conference, I'm really proud of those things as well"
expectations		
her expectations of placement	2.8; 44.23	"something a bit different, I knew it would be challenging
meeting expectations	42.6	"you'd just have to get on with it and do what was expected of you"
expectations of herself	7.1; 21.18; 44.1	"I was just perhaps setting high expectations for myself I guess rather than concentrating on the little things I was doing for people"
Familiarity		
being used to having Ots around	8.2o	"You're used to working in a team where there are OT's"
Common ground with OT	8.22	"they know where you're coming from"; "you don't necessarily have to explain what you're doing so much"

Fear / anxiety		
being the first student	52.6	"they haven't had a student before so I was really setting the way so that was a lot of pressure and a scary thought, I could have spoilt it for student everywhere"
before starting placement	2.11	"closer to the time I start to think oh gosh I'm actually really anxious about this, what have I done, was this a good idea"
of clients / intimidation	3.21; 17.23; 24.19; 36.4; 36.19; 39.18	"the client group it was quite intimidating at times, especially as a young woman"
of not passing	3.19	"whether I was going to get through"
of having no OT's around	4.3; 8.20	"is this right 'cause obviously there was no OT there that I could ask"
of getting it wrong	4.2	"is this right"
of not doing OT	4.2	""oh my God, am I actually doing OT"
of responsibility	9.21	"huge pressure on my head to make sure that they see OT in a positive light which was quite scary"
of not being able to do it	3.19	"whether I could do it or not"
not sleeping	4.5; 17.15	"it was all sort of anxiety provoking and I didn't sleep very well for the first three weeks"
of being observed	11.11	"my nursing educator came to it to observe it so I was abit nervous"
of presenting to non professionals	12.12; 13.2	
unfamiliarity	21.3; 23.4; 24.16	"just going into a new place where you are a new face is hard anyway"
nerves	39.9	"I was actually dying inside through like nerves and fear"
of violence / getting hurt	39.2o; 40.17	"I was scared of other clients getting hurt or you know staff, myself getting hurt"
letting self and others down	52.7; 52.16	"I would have felt like I was letting the college down, OT down, the team, health team down and myself"

feedback		
positive feedback to her	12.18; 36.12	"I got a really good response"
future		
using this experience	32.11; 33.14	"all the thoughts and feelings and everything that I have experienced even negative or positive will help with future practice
need for feedback and support	33.1	"get sort of feedback and back up that way I think I will always do that now in future practice"
work	42.15	"I feel like I could and would like to do it"
Growth		
through autonomy	26.2	"to go out there on your own and try to prove to a group of different health professionals what you do I felt was really really good for me"
of self awareness	12.2o; 13.15	"I kind of realised how much I knew, I didn't think I knew that much but it all came out and I was able to explain it to them"
in self belief	26.18	"I grew practically like that but also sort of just with my self belief as well about my own abilities"
through being challenged	27.8	"to have these little challenges or actually it was quite a big challenge not a little challenge at all, just to sort of reinforce that and sort of make you grow a little bit more and just be more confident"
confidence	10.7; 12.24; 26.2; 26.12	"I came out the other end thinking well actually no I am grown up enough to do this"
Interest		
In mental health	1.12	"I have a huge sort of love for the mental health side of things"

isolation		
professional	4.3; 6.3; 8.19; 33.18	"there was no OT there that I could ask"; "the fact that there was no OT there, sort of off my own back having to think of how to do occupational therapy…that made it difficult as well"
knowledge		
of educators of OT	4.3; 9.1	"the nurses had had limited experience of working with OT's"
lack of confidence		
as a novice	48.11	"you know experienced people you know all the way over there and I'm here"
of knowing what to do re OT process	6.4; 6.12	"having to think how to do OT with these people… I couldn't really get my head around that, that made it difficult as well."
about doing a rep	2.12	"the closer to the time I start to think oh gosh I'm really anxious about this what have I done, was this a good idea"
in self	3.18; 5.17; 6.1; 7.4; 21.17; 26.18; 34.19; 35.1	"whether I was good enough to do it, whether I was going to get through it"
with client group	5.22; 24.22	"I'd never really worked with young people before ,especially babies, I had no experience of children at all and that was quite hard hitting"
not grown up enough	10.3	" I just felt like I wasn't grown up enough or experienced enough to teach other people about OT"
hiding lack of confidence	21.22; 39.9	"go in with confidence, look and act confident even if you're not and you get great results from it"
dealing with violence	40.1; 40.11; 41.11	"I just get nervous with that sort of thing, I cant, I feel perhaps I cant hold my own"
due to lack of experience	5.24; 9.24; 10.4	"I had no experience of children at all and that was quite hard hitting"

motivation		
of self	14.8; 14.15	"I was adamant…. I didn't want to end the course on a bad experience"
of clients	28.23; 30.11; 30.15; 31.15	"whether you would be better off working with them when they were sort of ready to change, when they were ready to move on and do something about their situation"
need		
to challenge self	1.11; 2.13; 27.8; 35.6	"I'm the kind of person who likes to challenge myself really"
to talk about feelings / thoughts	8.9; 32.22	"if you have a worry on your mind just to bring it up informally and put your mind at rest"
to promote OT / make a good impression	9.12; 9.21; 11.12; 12.14	"I didn't want to go away and them go well I still don't know what OT was and actually it was rubbish"
to keep reflective diary /importance of reflection	3.25; 7.18; 8.1	"my reflective diary was, really helped me as well actually I must admit"; "it just all pours out of you into the diary and that was really useful as well just to sort of reflect back"
to do something different	1.12	"I like to do something a bit different"
for time to herself / switch off	4.17; 16.6	"I went down to the seafront just to sort of switch off and have a bit of time to myself"
to overcome fear	13.5; 39.8	"I was terrified and could quite happily not have done it, yeah I decided it would be good to do it and I'd only be disappointed if I didn't 'cause I was scared, you know that's not an excuse"
to turn placement feelings around	14.8; 14.19; 52.15	"I was just adamant…."
to have a good placement experience	14.12	"I didn't want to end the course on a bad experience, I just would have been gutted"
to remain professional	16.4	"you kind of get emotionally attached but then you cant, you've got to be professional as well"
for affirmation from educator	18.15	"my educator came down, it was a really positive vibe…and I'm just glad that she experienced"

to go outside her comfort zone	23.23	"I'd be forced into situations that would perhaps be outside my comfort zone, I consciously did that because I knew it would be good for me"
to test herself	25.2; 25.12	"it was sort of testing me on that… I just wanted to know that I could do a placement without an OT sort of there"
for autonomy	25.6; 25.24; 35.7	"I just wanted to know I could do a placement without an OT"
to prepare for being a basic grade	25.1o	"I just wanted to give myself that head start"
to reassure herself	27.19	"I think it was just to reassure myself even that you know you can do these things"
for reflection	32.17	"it's just a case of constantly reflecting on your thoughts and why you're thinking those things and what's the evidence for them"
to be busy and doing	35.8; 35.11	"I don't like to have nothing to do"
to get on with it	42.6	"you'd just have to get on with it and do the work and what was expected of you"
to achieve her aims	45.1	"that's my aim and that's what I need to achieve and if I don't I'm going to be really A disappointed within myself for not trying hard enough and B just be sad really that I hadn't achieved the aims"
Negative feelings		
Dislike of the placement	3.16; 11.5; 14.17; 39.4; 42.8	"I actually didn't like it at first I must say, the first few weeks I'd say"
self doubt	2.11; 3.17; 4.2; 4.25; 5.17; 14.7; 21.18; 40.8	"I'm actually really anxious, what have I done, was this a good idea"; "I was really doubting whether I could do it or not "
vulnerability	3.21; 21.4; 24.19	"especially being a young woman I suppose going into a client group that was predominantly men"; "you've got nowhere to hide"
living close to the placement- seeing clients	4.12; 4.20; 5.2	"I'm living in town so I was basically close to where the team was based, where the clients all hang out so I'd see them every day"; "I definitely think twice about living and working on the same environment"

not being able to switch off	4.23; 5.5	"I didn't want to be bringing my work home with me type of thing so that was a major issue for me"
guilt	5.13	"I'd be going home to my nice cosy flat…and I'd be thinking of him and thinking well where's he going to be sleeping tonight and that really got to me"
confusion / uncertainty	6.13	"should I be working with this person, should I maybe be spending more time with this client or whose needs are stronger, who would benefit more from working with me, I couldn't get my head around that"
shift in negative feelings	10.24	"when I got perhaps midway….the sort of turning point…..I really started enjoying it"
shock and sadness at clients stories	5.7; 15.16; 6.22; 17.6	"it was quite shocking I suppose to hear their stories"
anger at poor communication	23.1	"it made me a bit angry actually that the manager hadn't really explained it properly"
low points at home when thinking	42.4	"my worst moments were when I went home"
sadness at leaving	42.23; 43.1; 43.7; 45.14	"I was really sad"
normal placements		
OT presence	8.2o	"OT's know where you are coming from"
support	8.23; 26.2	"you get ideas from them, you're bouncing ideas off each other…"
personal attributes		
age		
getting on with people	43.2	"I can get on really well with people and I always seem to settle in a team"
personality	1.11; 16.2	"I'm the kind of person who likes to challenge myself really, I like to do something a bit different"
inner strength	14.18	"I kind of got a kind of strength from somewhere is suppose to just go out and face it"
determination	35.18; 35.21	"I was determined to have a good experience"

positive feelings		
towards team	8.11	"support from the team, definitely"
towards work she did	11.7; 15.22; 19.5; 19.14; 20.7; 44.15	"I really started enjoying it"
towards placement	2.13; 14.20; 35.24; 46.9	"I'm glad I did it, definitely"
at end of the placement	10.7; 44.15; 45.10; 46.4	"it was really a sort of positive thing and I came out the other end thinking well actually no I am grown up enough to do this"
recognising achievements	8.2; 10.11; 13.20; 18.24; 21.16; 39.7	"well I have done quite lot there….you kind of think well that's actually quite a big deal looking back but at the time you think well I haven't really done much today"
being lucky to be able to choose placement	1.23	"I was lucky 'cause I was free to chose what I wanted"
proud	12.3; 13.1; 21.14; 43.15; 45.5; 46.6; 48.16	"I set this up and am providing this for them and I felt really proud of that"
feeling grown up	10.8; 10.16; 12.24; 25.23; 48.13	"I just felt really grown up actually"
surprise	14.7	"I'd never had thought I could have got to that point"
towards clients	15.15	"they're gentleman they really are, they're lovely"
making a difference	19.5; 43.18	"knowing that you had a part in that"
feeling settled	20.21	"I think that was the point when I felt settled"
feeling accepted	21.1o; 21.14	"I just felt really as if I'd settled there, that people knew me, that I knew everybody else and that I was kind of accepted"
appreciating the negative experiences	45.6; 45,12	"I'm glad I didn't like the first week because you can appreciate it even more when you kind of achieve what you have achieved"
feelings more enhanced than usual	45.24	"they were much more enhanced because it was more challenging"
achieved what other students hadn't	46.1	"it wasn't a case of yeah I did this placement but so have all the other students
feeling unique	46.5	"it was something that not a lot of other students had done"; "I kind of felt a little bit more speci, not special but different"

recommending placement	46.18	"I would definitely recommend it to anybody to do a role emerging placement"
previous experiences		
on placements	1.14; 14.9; 28.2; 35.17	"I'd done a basic MH community placement"
drawing on her knowledge and skills	28.9	"it was a similar kind of approach and that things I had learnt working with MH applied"
using past work experience	36.25	"perhaps experience of chatting to people with MH problems might have helped….I worked in a crisis team as well"
helping her to cope with this placement	37.5; 37.20	"if I hadn't had had that experience I probably would have found it more difficult than I did"
pressure		
to make sure OT was understood and valued	9.14	"that was really hard to deal with sort of pressure"
of time	34.1o	"I was on a tight time schedule"
being the first student	52.4	"oh gosh they haven't had a student before you see so I was really setting the way so that was a lot of pressure"
helping her perform	52.19	"there were all those things sitting there throughout but maybe that made me perform better"
reason for choosing placement		
wanting a challenge	1.11; 2.8	"I'm the kind of person who likes to challenge myself really"
Doing something different	1.11; 2.7	"I like to do something a bit different"
being free to chose	1.23	"I was lucky 'cause I was free to chose what I wanted"
Something new	1.25; 2.8	"I wanted to work with a client group that I hadn't really encountered before"
taking her fancy	2.7	"it just took my fancy straight away"

pushing her outside her comfort zone	23.23	"I'd be forced into situations that would perhaps be outside my comfort zone, I consciously did that because I knew it would be good for me"
the client group	37.22	"it's just the client group that yeah it just appeals to me"
reassurance		
from educators	7.7	"he reassured me and was happy with the ideas"
responsibility		
for whole OT process	9.5	"I felt like the whole OT side of it was my responsibility to make it work"
to ensure team understood OT	9.7; 9.9; 9.12; 9.19	"I felt a huge responsibility on my shoulders to leave the placement with the team understanding about OT and thinking that OT is really worth while"
support		
supervision from tutor	7.1; 7.4; 8.11; 25.19	"it was just so valuable that supervision that I had with him every week"
from the nurse supervisor	7.17	"so the supervision… from the nurse in the team as well was really valuable"
from team	8.8	"definitely just an informal chat with the staff was brilliant …sort of support from the team"
Time		
taken to not take work home with her	16.8	"it did take a long time to sort of build up to that"
getting used to the setting and clients	17.9; 17.25; 42.16	"then over the weeks"; "even after eight weeks of doing that I sort of gradually got used to it and felt less intimidated"
leading to familiarity	18.1	"as time went on perhaps because is started to know faces and people started to know me"

leading to shift in self perception	27.4	"that sort of shift has perhaps been happening over the years for me, like from school to now I'm a completely different person"
needed for clarity of role	29.2o	"I think you'd have to be working in that field for a long time to figure that out"
needed to influence change	31.19	"if I'd been there longer term…perhaps we would be willing to make that change"
forcing her to be proactive quickly	34.8	"I just couldn't dawdle about and wait …'cause I only had eight weeks……I was on a tight time schedule
needing to make use of spare time	35.11	"just finding things to do……."
to think / reflect	42.1o	"low points tended to be at home when I was sort of out of it and you had time to sort of think about it"
length of placement	42.17	"eight weeks is not a long time to get used to somewhere and I think I did it pretty quickly"
Uniqueness		
of placement	28.1	"it was a completely different experience from anything I've ever experienced before"
uncertainty		
about how to help / role	4.2; 6.12; 28.23; 29.18	"I was questioning well you know should I be working with this person…..who would benefit more from working with me, I couldn't really get my head around that"
occupation / activity		
positive experience for client group	11.14; 19.1; 19.7; 19.14	
important for her	11.9	"I started completely changing ....yeah it was the art group"
for assessment purposes	19.8	"it was a way for me to see lots of people at once"
addressing clients needs	19.9	"it could address sort of the clients different needs"

| familiar assessments used | 30.8 | "it was based on MOHO" |
| | | |

Appendix 8: Example of themes identified for Jayne.

14.3.10
Jayne Transcript 1.

Super ordinate theme 1 – "Not run of the mill"
This theme represents Jayne's perception of the placement, the opportunities it would offer her and her anticipation prior to the placement starting.

Sub-themes	Concepts from transcript that emerged	Initial Thoughts for the discussion chapter
Perception of the placement	-New -Exciting -Challenging -Interesting client group -More complex than normal placement -Unique- not basic / run of the mill.	How idealistic were her perceptions of the placement and how did she develop these visions?- was she naïve in thinking that it was all going to be exciting, new- did this naivety make her more vulnerable to the anxiety and distress she then experienced in the beginning of the placement- Further role of the Uni needed to prepare students for these placements.
Feeling special / "getting a head start"	-one of only a few student; being different -make her stand out from the other students -give her a head start fro interviews and also confidence to be independent in practice.	Needing to feel that she had to stand out from the crowd in today's climate of competition for OT jobs

Mounting anxiety ("what have I done?")	-Self doubt (would she be able to do it) -questioning choice of placement (was it the right choice, what have I done?) -anxious but excited at same time	Impact on view of 'self'. Still showed resilience to carry on.

Super ordinate theme 2 – "It was all quite negative"
This theme represents Jayne's experience of the placement for the first three weeks and the impact this had on her.

Sub-themes	Concepts from transcript that emerged	Initial Thoughts for the discussion chapter
1) Experience at start of the placement Expectations	Of self, team, conflicting expectations, surprise	Link with previous theme about her perceptions of the placement and lack of preparation and consideration of role, expectations of placement. Jayne had thought that the level of autonomy in the placement was going to be a positive thing but in fact became a huge pressure. This wasn't something she had expected and led to self doubt about her sense of self and the way she had previously thought about how she would cope.
Professional isolation	Lack of OTs around Lack of familiarity	In traditional placement Jayne felt they "knew where I was coming from" (therefore sense that she felt more clearly understood in an OT dept and less clearly in this REP). She states on a traditional placement "you don't have to explain what you're doing"- implies there are things unsaid in an OT department that are taken for granted (culture of the dept and OT knowledge that is assumed??). This

		implicitness (structure and support) of the OT dept is therefore perhaps more essential than we recognise for students at the start of a placement in terms of making them feel safe and protected. This reminds me of Sarte's 'nothingness' whereby the student isn't aware of how much they rely on the OT department until it's not there anymore.
		However, does the fact that certain things are implicit and not demanded of a student in an OT dept actually make it harder for them in the long term because they aren't being challenged, asked to articulate their role etc which may then result in a weaker identity than that in the REP where they are having to justify every aspect of their role and decision making to people who don't understand where they are coming from?
Responsibility "sitting there throughout"	To make OT work To promote OT To make a difference for clients and team First student-paving the way Not letting self, Uni, team, profession, clients, future students down.	Responsibility was "sitting there" on her shoulder and "huge pressure on my head" weighing her down at the start of the placement (link with lived body— felt the responsibility and pressure physically). Link with professional isolation (1.2) as there was a sense she had no-one to share this responsibility (?burden) with. Link with number 1.2 her recognition of how reliant she had been in the past on the OT supervisor, departmental structure, community of practice to provide her with support, resources, guidance and identity.
2) Impact of the placement on Jayne at the start Cognitive	Uncertainty - role (knowing what to do) - self belief (can I do this) - right choice of	Links with emotional and behavioural impact- she was becoming intertwined with the placement, she was unable to separate herself physically or emotionally from the placement. She was unable to escape the placement, unable to sleep, eat and this all led to a decreased sense of self belief and shift in her sense of being.

	placement - who to help, what to do	
	Lost Resentment, hatred of placement, Questioning who she thought she was	On traditional placements the OT's may have given her a case load, prioritised which clients to see so she was perhaps sheltered from the moral, ethical, emotional dilemmas she was facing in this placement. Conflict for Jayne between her 'nice' self who wants to be nice to all clients but also wanting / needing to escape the placement and clients as she didn't want to see "them" out of work (? sense of de-personalising the clients-refers to "them", they reminded her of the placement and her difficulty coping, wanting to shut them out of her life, were they too close for comfort physically (living opposite) but also psychologically??) Jayne thought she was prepared from her previous MH experiences, she had heard difficult stories in the past but she said it was different with these clients, she wasn't as prepared as she thought—were they more real, sleeping opposite her house and therefore more part of her personal world–? Does this link to learning the art of professional distancing- is this easier to do in a traditional placement e.g. behind a uniform???
Emotional	Distress, crying- ?helplessness, vulnerability Guilt, shock Fear / anxiety- Intimidation Of clients Not passing	This may have resulted in a dilemma for Jayne as who she thought she was (her past coping mechanisms, how she felt about her clients in the past) was not what she was experiencing now. p.40 says she questioned whether she was cut out for this work even though she had thought she was- change in perception of self. Link here to 'lived body' and how placement was physically and psychologically experienced by Jayne.

Behavioural	Unfamiliar Hiding fear	Her true feelings emerged only at home (?lived space) where she felt safe.
	Hiding fear- needing to present a façade.	Shock at hearing what life is like for these clients- sense that she realised how naive she has been in the past. Vulnerability- fear of clients, she had nothing in common with them at all. Having to be 'inauthentic' in herself, hiding how she truly felt for fear of being seen as weak, vulnerable and not passing
	Inhibited rapport	Having to put on a front- for fear of others seeing weakness, fear of failure. (she was "dying inside"
	Autopilot	The impact of the placement and her anxiety inhibited her development of rapport with clients which is something she normally had no problem with—again there appears a change in her perception of 'old' and 'current' self. "do what was expected", "get on with it" – sense of loss of control and acting in an 'inauthentic way"?

Super-ordinate theme 3 – Adapting to the placement This theme represents how Jayne adapted to the placement, bringing about a shift in her attitude to the placement and a perceived positive ending.

Sub-themes	Concepts from transcript that emerged	Initial Thoughts for the discussion chapter
1)External coping mechanisms	- Supervision (reassurance, checking things out) - team support - reflective writing	Although she felt professional isolated it is clear that there was an OT presence within this placement as she used the supervisor for advice, checking things out, reassurance. Supervision and reflective diary seen as 'spaces' to be honest about her feelings (and ?helped her move towards authentic self)

		(offloading feelings and reflecting on achievements) - running group successfully (seeing for herself she could do it- showing her skills to others) - professional distance - time for familiarity	Emotions "pouring out" into her diary (sense of a tidal wave, intense emotions that she was experiencing had to be released somehow) - space for true feelings to emerge. Feedback from team about her a nice person- ? this had been previous worry when she was struggling to deal with conflict of not wanting to be horrible by not speaking to clients outside of work. (see earlier themes). Feedback and supervision= Validation of self, thoughts and actions Helping her to see her achievements--- this helped to increase confidence and sense of self belief. Did the art group become her own therapy – if we look at Wilcock's Occupational Science literature on occupational beings and that through 'doing' we transform our 'being' then the art group may be considered a therapeutic conduit , helping her in the same way as the clients. The initial rawness of the clients stories went and she 'got used' to it – did she become became emotionally hardened or perhaps quickly institutionalised???
2) Internal coping mechanisms	- sense of belonging / acceptance by team and clients - Inner drive / motivation/ determination to turn the placement around from negative to positive -Drawing on previous experiences and skills- work, placements -Personality, liking a challenge.	Linked to time needed for increased familiarity. She also felt part of something successful with the art group- clients engaged with her and made he feel that she had made a difference. Giving herself a talking to/ shaking herself out of the negativity (e.g., p39) Wanting to make sure the placement was as successful as previous placements, not wanting to let herself down at the last hurdle. Needing to have an interest on the setting and being a certain type of student (self sufficient). –may imply student need to do REP in area of interest when they become compulsory at UOB.

		Without previous experience she would have found placement more difficult than she did (p37).May need to consider the role of Uni in considering the type of students that may be mores successful in these types of placement and how to support students that don't have a particular interest, personality, experience to draw on.

Super ordinate theme 4 – Growing up- "I'm not little anymore" (Development of 'new' self)
This theme represents Jayne's development of her 'new' self as a result of the placement. The way she now perceives herself ('new' self) compared to previously e.g., she was surprised that she had been able to achieve things that she believed her 'old' self would never have done.

Sub-themes	Concepts from transcript that emerged	Initial Thoughts for the discussion chapter
Autonomy	-Confidence gained through autonomy -helping to develop skills needed for practice anxiety provoking but very important to her -needing to be self sufficient	She states that she needed to be self sufficient and the team feel you need a certain type of student. Where does this leave students who are not so self sufficient- how will they cope with this type of placement??? Having to be proactive to get the most out of the placement- realising it was her who needed to direct the placement as no-one else was going to (unlike other placements where the path through the placement is often all laid out for a student).
Recognition of achievements	-surprise -proud -deeper sense of achievement at end of placement -shift of negativity-	Feelings of achievement more enhanced at the end of the placement may be due to the shift she had in her sense of self (being) and a paradigm shift in relation to how she perceived the profession , clients (see super ordinate theme 5). Impact of the placement has been at a deeper level and feelings are more enhanced.

	sadness at the end compared to hatred at the start of placement	
Growth / Maturity	-Self awareness -self confidence -self belief	She saw this is particular activities she did e.g., the team presentation. Surprised herself with what she knew- "I just started talking and suddenly realised how much I knew, I didn't think I knew that much, it just all came out"- link to reflecting in action. Shift from 'child' (she says "little") to adult ("I am grown up enough to do this") – professional / personal maturity. Change over time- compares herself to how she was previously, before the course, on other placements. E.g., "I'm not the most confident person in the world usually….but I can do these things" (p21)- says change has been happening over time (p27 completely different person to before) She sees value in the negative start to the placement and feels this actually was a good thing in helping to develop the skills needed to overcome the challenges (the pressure helped her to perform). Grew to "love" the placement as opposed to "hating" it at the start (two extreme emotions) The perceived distance between her and the OT professionals has become smaller as a result of the placement. Started by thinking they "are all the way over there" (perception of 'old' self as insignificant ?) but now felt she was "grown up" enough to be a professional ('new' self).. Link with ontological literature – Being, Becoming. Historicity – who Jayne was, past experiences and how that has influenced perception of old and new self. Dall'Alba literature – need for ontological focus in educational curricula. Wilcock – occupational beings. Through 'doing' a role emerging placement

| | | Jayne has shifted in her sense of 'being' and who she can 'become' as an OT. |

Super ordinate theme 5 – Paradigm Shift
This theme represents Jayne's apparent re-evaluation of occupational therapy as a profession and what it means to her.

Sub-themes	Concepts from transcript that emerged	Initial Thoughts for the discussion chapter
Shift in belief about Occupational Therapy	-enhanced belief in OT -Seeing power of occupation for herself	Being able to develop an identity as an OT for herself through the autonomy that she was given. Links with other students who have spoken about developing identity rather than having to develop the identity of their supervisor, follow the protocols of a department etc.
Shift in view of clients	-more holistic -away from fear and intimidation to empathy and understanding	Increased awareness of what client centeredness is actually about, is able to look more holistically at the clients- this links with other literature that suggests students develop a more holistic view of clients in these placements as opposed to medically orientated placements e.g., seeing diagnosis first. Also Jayne may have become more aware of her prior prejudices – she says "I see them in a different light now" and has become quite protective of them "I get quite defensive".

Appendix 9: Example of Participant summary

<u>**Summary of Jayne's first interview**</u>

Having successfully completed all her previous placements, Jayne felt she was in the lucky position of having the autonomy to choose her final placement in any area that she felt would meet her needs. When making this choice Jayne stated that she had wanted a placement that would be exciting, new and challenging; pushing her outside her comfort zone:

"I went and you know organised the placement for myself knowing that if I just did that I'd be forced into situations that would be perhaps outside my comfort zone, I consciously did that because I knew it would be good for me"

Although she knew she wanted to do something in mental health, as this was the area that interested her most, she stated she had done a "basic" mental health placement and didn't want to do a "run of the mill" placement. This may suggest that Jayne saw the role-emerging placement as special and more complex than a traditional placement; one that would provide her with the challenge she was looking for:

"it just took my fancy straight away because it was something a bit different, something I hadn't done before, something that I knew would be challenging"

The role-emerging concept was fully embraced by Jayne and seen as an opportunity for her to test herself prior to graduating, checking whether she had assimilated her previous learning and whether she could put this into practice and work without an occupational therapist. She identified that, for her, there was also something about a role-emerging placement being a bit special in that she would be one of only a small number of students that had taken on this challenge. Jayne also believed that doing such a placement would give her a "head start" for her future, equipping her with skills that perhaps other students wouldn't develop in more traditional placements. Jayne may have perceived that this would help make the transition from student to occupational therapist easier and more successful. There is a suggestion that Jayne also perceived this placement opportunity as one that would make her stand out from the rest of her cohort and give her an edge over other students when competing in the job market in future:

"I just wanted to know that I could could do a placement without an OT sort of there do you know what I mean, I didn't, I wanted to 'cause I suppose at this stage you're practically, you're not qualified but you're practically almost are I suppose aren't you I mean even when you're a basic grade you're still going to be learning but I just wanted to give myself that little head start and work without an OT and see, perhaps testing myself on everything that I've learnt on the course and putting it into practice but without an OT there to copy I suppose".

As the placement drew closer elements of self doubt started to appear with Jayne becoming increasingly anxious about the placement, questioning her own reasons for choosing the placement and wondering whether she had done the right thing:

"then sort of closer to the time I start to think oh gosh I'm actually really anxious about this, what have I done, was this a good idea"

However despite this anxiety and doubt Jayne did not allow herself to be put off the placement and started work with a homeless team as planned.
By the end of the first week Jayne was struggling to cope with negative feelings about the placement. For the first three weeks Jayne clearly disliked, and at times "hated", the placement and intense feelings of self doubt were evident during this time. Much questioning was taking place about whether she would get through the placement and whether she was good enough:

"the first three weeks I was really doubting whether I could do it or not, whether I actually liked it, whether I was good enough to do it, whether I was going to get through it, it was all quite negative"

Feelings of fear, intimidation, vulnerability and guilt that resulted from hearing clients' stories and spending time with clients had an emotional impact on her. Despite being aware of these feelings Jayne experienced a conflict with her sense of self where she felt the need to hide her lack of lack of confidence and present a front that made her appear more confident than she was. It is possible that the pressure of having to pass this placement and therefore her need to make sure her educators thought she was coping made her adopt this strategy rather than being able to honest and discuss her feelings more openly:

"I have to talk to people I have to talk to people and I was just getting involved with it but I was actually dying inside through like nerves and fear"

For Jayne it appeared that she managed to get through the early days of the placement, almost on autopilot, but it was at home in her private space where she allowed herself to reflect on her sense of being and her true feelings emerged:

"my worst moments were when I went home, maybe not during the day 'cause you just kind of flow with it, you'd just have to get on with it and do the work and do what was expected of you and then when you get home and think oh god I really don't want to do that again tomorrow erm so it was yeah low points tended to be at home when I was sort of out of it and you had time to sort of think about it"

The lack of existing OT service made Jayne recognise how much structure an OT department provides for a student and how much this is perhaps taken for granted. It may have been that it wasn't until Jayne experienced this lack of OT that she realised how reliant she had been on the implicit familiar structures in the past:

"at first it felt kind of difficult erm because you're used to working in team where there are OT's so they know where you're coming from all the time so you don't necessarily have to explain what you're doing so much or you kind of get ideas from them, you're bouncing ideas off each other, the sort of types of assessment, interventions etc evaluation, procedures you can use"

The autonomy that Jayne had initially perceived as being something that would be a positive aspect of the placement quickly became a huge pressure. Her sense of professional isolation and pressure to perform left her feeling solely responsible for how both she and the profession were perceived:

"I felt like the whole OT side of it was coming from me and it was my responsibility to make occupational therapy work in that setting, I didn't want to yeah I felt a huge responsibility on my shoulders to leave the placement make, with the team understanding about OT and thinking that OT is really worth while, I didn't want to go away and them go well I still don't know what OT was and actually it was rubbish and didn't do our clients any good do you know what I mean, I felt like that was all on me to make sure that they understood and that they thought that OT was going to be worthwhile so that was really hard to deal with sort of pressure"

There was also an additional responsibility felt by Jayne for ensuring that not only did she not let herself down but that she didn't let the team, University or future students down. She was fearful that had the placement not gone well that the profession could have been viewed negatively and that future students would not have been given the opportunity to undertake placement there in future:

"going in thinking, oh gosh they haven't had a student before you see so I really was setting the way so that was a lot of pressure (laughs) it was a scary thought, I could have spoilt it for all students everywhere, they may not have wanted another student ever again…… I didn't want to let that happen that would have been awful, not just, I would have felt like I was letting the college down, OT down, the team, health team down and myself so there was all those things that were sitting there throughout"

For Jayne there appeared a conflict between her aim of making a difference on the placement and promoting the role of OT, and her limited experience that she felt gave her no authority to undertake such a role:

"only two years that I have properly be studying OT, I've had yeah a few practice placements 8 weeks each, it's not as if I've had years and years of experience to go in and say right this is OT blah blah this is how they are going to benefit, these needs, you know I'm still learning obviously and I will be even when I qualify well not probably but I just felt like I wasn't grown up enough or experienced enough to yeah to teach other people about OT"

Jayne felt lost in the early weeks of the placement; uncertain what to do, how she could help, whether she could cope:

"it was sort of thinking about my sort of, my own personal ability to deal with those sorts of situations and how I could help and also the location of the placement and then also just the fact that there was no OT there sort of, off my own back having to think of how to do occupational therapy with these people and how OT could benefit that particular client group, what interventions I could do, how could I assess them erm the whole referral process as well …then I was questioning well you know should I be working with this person, should I be maybe be spending more time with this client or whose needs sort of are stronger than the other, who would benefit more from working with me, I couldn't really get my head around that, that made it difficult as well"

Due to the close proximity of the homeless service to her home the emotional impact of the placement quickly became apparent with Jayne experiencing early feelings of guilt and whether she would be able to cope:

"when one guy told me where he was sleeping and it happened to be across the road from where I was living and so I passed this sort of multi-story car park and I be going home to my nice cosy flat and I can lock the door at the end of the day and I'd be thinking of him and thinking well that's where he's going to be sleeping tonight so that was really really got to me erm that got to me a lot and I thought oh gosh I don't know if I can sort of be doing this or how can you actually help these people and lots of feelings like that"

Jayne would also see clients at the week-ends when she was trying to switch off and so there was a sense that she felt unable to escape from the placement and that it was becoming overwhelming. Her work and home lives were being intertwined in a way which was distressing for her, leaving her unable to separate herself either physically or emotionally from the placement. These situations caused an inner conflict for Jayne as she was torn between her sense of self as a nice person but at the same time feeling a need to protect herself from the emotional demands of the placement. This emotional impact left Jayne unable to sleep, anxious and scared of failure and had a significant impact on her self belief and view of the placement:

"I'd see them all the time, on the weekend, the first weekend that I had I went down to the seafront just to sort off switch off and have a bit of time to myself and I saw a couple of clients down there and they called me over for a chat and it was kind of, I'd never really had the experience of seeing clients outside of work before so I didn't really know how to deal with it, I didn't want to ignore them 'cause I'm not that sort of person, I'm not rude but I didn't want to be like bringing my work home with me type of thing so that was a major issue for me and that sort of made me doubt a lot about the placement"

This impact did not appear to have been anticipated and for Jayne possibly came as a bit of a surprise as she had willingly put herself in this position, all her previous placements had gone well and she had high expectations about what the placement would be like and what she could achieve.

The negative feelings that Jayne was experiencing appeared to lead to her questioning her own beliefs about her self and sense of Being. Where she had previously thought that she would cope well with this placement her experiences were now making her question whether she had been right about her perceived abilities:

"maybe I'm not really cut out for it maybe even though I think I am"

Support from her academic tutor was invaluable for Jayne in helping her to develop her self confidence and belief. Through being honest about her feelings, as well as talking through some of the work she was doing, she received positive feedback and encouragement and was consequently able to recognise the small achievements she was making, leading to an increased self belief:

"(Tutor) was really, helped me with that a huge amount, I cant, it was just so valuable that supervision that I had with him every week erm I came away think, I went into supervision thinking oh he's going to think this is rubbish, I'm not really doing OT or my ideas are rubbish and I came out thinking oh actually I'm doing all right 'cause he reassured me"

Jayne also found her reflective diary useful in helping her think about her thoughts and feelings and recognise the work that she was doing and the changes that she was facilitating. The diary appeared to provide her with the private space to allow her to make sense of her feelings and the placement:

"my reflective diary was really helped as well …. about three times a week I was writing in it and like each entry, you'd start of with what can I write about and you'd start with a sentence and then you'd just go on and on and on and it just all pours out of you into the diary and that was really useful as well just to sort of reflect back on actually well I have done quite a lot there and thinking about it"

These coping strategies helped her to develop her self awareness and gradually change her cognitive thought process about the placement from negative to positive. Jayne also had an internal drive to turn her feelings about the placement around so as not to spoil her experience of the course and her previous placements which had all been positive. At times it appeared that she gave herself a 'talking to' as she was adamant that her negative feelings were not going to get the better of her:

"I was just adamant that I'd had a really good placement experiences throughout the two years on this course, they have all been brilliant they've all, I've learnt a lot from all of them and I've loved them all and I didn't want to end the course on a you know on a bad experience I just would have been gutted about it so erm I think from that I'm just I just got a little bit of confidence to right just do it and get stuck in and don't worry about it, your fine type attitude whereas before perhaps I was just a bit I don't like it, cant do it and a bit negative"

A significant event for Jayne half way into the placement was running an art group. It was this activity that she identifies as being the turning point of the placement and it is possible that this occupational activity became her own therapy as well as helping the client group. Jayne spoke of the activity having the ability to increase peoples self esteem, abilities and skills and there is a sense that this is what the group did for her.

Through successfully planning and facilitating this group, and receiving positive feedback from her educator and team, Jayne's confidence in her knowledge, skills and abilities improved and the self-belief and motivation that she had had prior to the placement appeared to return:

"that was sort of sort of perhaps the turning point where I sort of thought well actually you know I set this up, I planned it and organised it and I set this up and am providing this for them so I felt really proud of that and sort of thought well actually you know I can do these things"

Jayne also recognised that by half way she was more familiar with the clients, the team and the setting and with this increased familiarity came feelings of acceptance and being settled. Such feelings meant she was less fearful and insecure and better able to deal with the requirements of the placement:

"I just felt really sort of as if I'd settled there, that people knew me, that I knew everybody else and that I was kind of accepted there as well, not that I wasn't accepted beforehand I don't think it's just that perhaps people are wary of you if you're a new person, they don't know who you are erm so yeah I felt it was important for me 'cause I just felt accepted, settled erm at ease as well"

Positive feedback from the team was also significant in helping Jayne to feel accepted and valued:

"I had really positive feedback at the end from one of the volunteers at (drop-in centre) saying I was just I had a way with people and could just chat to them, she said I don't know what it is about you but you've just got this warmth about you or something and people are just open to it and I thought that was really lovely thing to say, I thought that was really nice actually, it touched me"

Jayne also felt that she had perhaps adapted to the setting and become more emotionally hardened. The initial shock that she experienced as a result of hearing the clients stories became less as the placement progressed which helped her to develop and emotional resilience:

"I think after the initial shock of, I suppose it got to the point where nothing else could shock me anymore really because you'd heard the worst of the worst I suppose and then over the weeks you kind of, not go numb to it 'cause I'd never be numb to it but you just kind of got used to hearing about it so you'd sort of, perhaps I was just more equipped for dealing with it then or maybe I just was able to handle my emotions more"

Although she felt more distanced from their emotional stories, Jayne recognised that there was a shift in her perception of the client group away from fear towards empathy and understanding and protection:

"it's definitely working with the client group and I see them in a different light now and if ever people talk badly about about homeless people I get really defensive"

"I sort of gradually got used to it and felt less intimidated as time went on, perhaps because I started to know faces and people started to know me so I felt sort of more integrated into it erm so yeah I suppose it was just getting to know people and their stories and the types of issues they have and then you can sort of deal with it a bit better yeah"

Initially Jayne had been inhibited from developing rapport with the clients by fear and intimidation. She found herself in vulnerable situations that were so far removed from her own experiences and was having to integrate with people with whom she had nothing in common for the purposes of passing the placement. This was perhaps different from previous placements where clients' stories may have been more familiar to her and the settings were less volatile,

making it easier to use her skills to develop rapport with the clients, something that she felt she was usually able to do with no problem.

Over time she became more familiar with the clients and through her work she was able to view the clients more holistically and she stated that the clients were, in the end, the best part of the placement. There is a sense that it was through her work with the clients that Jayne was able to develop her professional and personal identity and confidence.

Jayne identified another significant event as doing a presentation to other team members about her role. Where she accepted she would quite willingly have avoided this due to her anxiety and lack of confidence she recognised the importance of the presentation in meeting her personal needs and made a deliberate choice to challenge herself and face her fear, perhaps needing to prove something to herself and not wanting to let herself down. In the end the presentation appeared to have a duel purpose, firstly of educating others about what she had been doing and the value of activity for the client group but also, and perhaps more importantly, it gave her the opportunity to demonstrate to herself what she knew which in turn furthered her level of self awareness and confidence:

"I was really really nervous but I just started talking and I kind of realised how much I knew, I didn't think I knew that much but it just kind of all came out and I was able to explain it to them and they were asking questions and they were all engaged and yeah I just felt really grown up actually after I had done that just, it was kind of like a summary for me as well of what I had done and why I had set up the art group and yeah I just felt really proud of doing that even though I was terrified and could quite happily not have done it and avoided doing it, yeah I decided well actually it would be good to do it and I'd only be disappointed if I didn't because of I was scared"

Leaving the placement was sad for Jayne as she had developed a sense of belonging; feeling an integrated member of the team. She was also sad that she was leaving the clients behind and that OT would not be available to them anymore. She did however feel proud of the impact she had made and that some of the work she had started was going to be continued by the team and that she had changed the way team members viewed clients. This appeared to enhance her feelings of achievement whereby she had set out to educate the team about OT and wanted them to recognise the benefits of the profession and this is what she had achieved. Although there would be no OT service once Jayne left the placement there was a sense that she was leaving part of herself and OT behind:

"I also felt really proud because well (drop-in centre) were going to continue running an art group there every week 'cause they didn't want to it, 'cause I'd started it up and they didn't want it to end 'cause they could see the benefits"

"just felt that one of the educators felt they had got a different way of looking at things now, it's not just all health focused they said that they're gonna take on board sort of the things I have been doing and the occupational perspective of it a little bit more"

Although Jayne may have felt anxious and lacking confidence at various times throughout the placement, she was obviously perceived positively by the team who felt she was self sufficient and had the competency to work autonomously. This was something that the team felt was a required skill for any student working in this team:

"just let me sort get on and they actually said that was good for the team 'cause if they didn't have somebody who was so self sufficient then it would have been really difficult because they are such a complex group of people they are working with 'cause there's only a few of them as well they needed students who were self sufficient"

Jayne also felt that it was her motivation to work with this client group and the ability to draw on her previous experiences that had helped her to be successful. She was uncertain whether the outcome would have been the same in a different setting, something that may have implications for students undertaking placements in areas where they lack interest or confidence:

"I think because the client group had elements of mental health and social issues, those sorts of things that I am interested in anyway and have experiences in anyway and I think that helped a lot because it appealed to me it's just the client group that yeah it just appeals to me as well it wasn't just that it was a role-emerging placement but because of the client group erm I don't know if I had a been so confident in a role-emerging placement in a physical setting"

Jayne referred a number of times to 'growing up' as a result of the placement. Where for her there was initially a huge gap between herself as a 'little' student and the experienced clinicians and academics, as a result of the challenges and experiences she encountered and overcame on this placement this perceived gap became smaller and she 'grew' into a more confident person both personally and professionally:

"I grew in my confidence of what I was doing, what actually what OT is erm how you could sort of implement interventions, how you can assess people, perhaps not even formal assessments just you know just chats and things and evaluating it all and reflecting on it, I grew practically like that but also sort of just with my self belief as well about my own abilities"

"I came out the other end thinking well actually no I am grown up enough to do this"

It is possible that Jayne went into the placement feeling like a 'child' (young, inexperienced), needing the support and comfort of familiar surroundings more than she realised as well as an experienced educator to guide and encourage her. However, through the experiences she had and feedback she received she grew up into an 'adult' there was recognition that she was 'becoming a therapist':

"it was kind of like a learning curve for myself as well 'cause my personal development, not just professional but me as a person yeah I am grown up enough to do that sort of thing I'm not little anymore"

By the end of the placement Jayne appeared to feel that the gap between her and the 'professionals' had narrowed and where once she saw professional activities such as conference presentations and writing articles as "grown up" things which she never would have considered, with the reassurance of her tutor she had developed the confidence and belief in herself as a professional to submit an abstract for the professional conference:

"I felt a bit young and not immature but a bit not experienced enough and those are really grown up things to me, those are things that professionals do, you know get up and do a presentation or write an article or you know experienced people you know all the way over there and I'm here and I just, it makes me feel really grown up to even, that (tutor) has even really considered mentioning it to me, he's obviously thought my experiences are worth talking about so yeah that's made me feel really proud of myself"

Throughout the interview Jayne makes mention of time and how this was needed to help her adjust to the unfamiliar setting, get to know the clients, adapt her style and gain confidence in her abilities. She recognised a change in herself over the duration of the 8 weeks and believed that because of the challenges she had to face the placement had a bigger impact on her than previous placements. At the start of the interview Jayne had identified that she had chosen the placement as she felt it was unique and would challenge her. This was reinforced by her at the end of the interview where it was clear that she felt a great sense of achievement and that the placement made her stand apart from other students. She believed that the feelings she

experienced of satisfaction and achievement on previous placements were more enhanced at the end of this placement as she perceived it as more challenging and perhaps more special:

"I've always felt sort of satisfied and happy with my placements but all those feelings were just more a little more enhanced, well not a little more they were much more enhanced because it was more challenging, because it was something that not a lot of other students had done either I think that was a big part of it as well, I wasn't just doing your, it wasn't a case of yeah i did this placement but so have all the other students, I kind of felt a bit more, it sounds really big headed, I don't know, speci not special but different because it wasn't, only like two other girls had done it and yeah I just felt really proud of that fact actually that it wasn't your run of the mill placement that yeah I did well and passed and I've done this and that's great, it was like well actually it was a really hard placement and I chose to do it and it shoved a lot of challenges on my face and I had to be really proactive and yeah it was just that enhanced sense of satisfaction with it, just doing something different, a little bit outside of the box, a little bit outside of my comfort zone so yeah I definitely felt different"

It seemed ironic that in the beginning Jayne spoke of not being a very confident person and yet she had consciously put herself into this placement situation which was outside of her comfort zone and initially left her feeling vulnerable, anxious and frightened. However, it appeared that it was facing these feelings and overcoming the negative experiences that actually enabled her in the end to "love" the placement and feel exhilarated, proud, challenged and positive:

"I felt really proud and happy that I'd, I think it's good to have negative actually, I'm glad that I didn't like the first week because you can appreciate it even more then when you kind of achieve what you have achieved because at the start I thought I'm just not going to do well here at all, I was not good enough, I cant do it and then that sense of achievement at the end was just greater then for me I guess because I'd felt that was at the start so in a way negative experiences are good in the end"

Jayne identified that the placement had allowed her to prove to herself that she could be an OT, and was significant in helping her make the transition from feeling like a student to being an OT. She felt that she had developed in a number of ways that would help her with her future practice, including her belief in occupational therapy, self confidence and ability to be proactive and autonomous. It appeared that by the end of the placement it had changed Jayne's sense of Being, having become part of her with "every thought, feeling and experience" being taken with her for the future.

Appendix 10: Master table of themes

Master Themes	Sub-theme	Concepts
1. Not a run of the mill placement	1.1 Outside the box	1.1.1 Testing themselves out 1.1.2 Standing apart from other students 1.1.3 Promoting occupational therapy in new settings
	1.2 In two minds	1.2.1 Excitement vs. apprehension
2. Thrown in	2.1 Going it alone	2.1.1 Uncharted waters 2.1.2 Out there on my own
	2.2 Facing the challenges	2.2.1 Need to sing from the same hymn sheet 2.2.2 Responsibility on my shoulders 2.2.3 The emotional toll
3. Finding a way forward	3.1 Drawing on inner resources	3.1.1 A certain type of student 3.1.2 Making sense of the experience
	3.2 Being part of the team	3.2.1 Sense of belonging 3.2.2 Having the support 3.2.3 Learning through doing
4. Awareness of change	4.1 Development of 'new' self	4.1.1 Emerging from the shadows 4.1.2 Growing up 4.1.3 Belief in self

	4.2 Re-appraisal of the profession	4.2.1 Having that belief in the profession 4.2.2 Seeing clients in a different light
	4.3. Making a difference	4.3.1 Seeing that smile 4.3.2 Leaving a legacy
5. 'Being' in the real world	5.1 Standing on my own two feet	5.1.1 Gaining employment 5.1.2 Confidence for practice
	5.2 'Being' an occupational therapist	5.2.1 Real life 5.2.2 Consolidation of identity 5.2.3 Challenge to identity 5.2.4 Looking to the future

Appendix 11: Extra quotations to support concepts.

These extracts provide some additional examples to support the identified concepts.

1.1.1 Testing themselves out.

I went and you know organised the placement for myself knowing that if I just did that I'd be forced into situations that would be perhaps outside my comfort zone, I consciously did that because I knew it would be good for me (Jayne interview 1).

I just think I wanted the challenge of something that was a bit different (Poppy interview 1).

I thought I'll go for it 'cause I always believe, I always think when I'm training, whatever I'm doing, I need to challenge myself 'cause if you don't do it in your training I don't believe you are going to do it in your practice (Ella interview 1).

1.1.2. Standing apart from other students

I have this certain smugness, I don't know if that's the right word but kind of that I've had this experience you know" (Sally interview 1).

I'm hoping it will be something I will be able, I can talk about in interviews in future and will hopefully you know stand me in good stead (Sophie interview 1).

1.1.3 Promoting occupational therapy in new settings

I just thought wow what a brilliant idea, you know like I'm sure there are so many areas that OT can be used (Sophie interview 1).

My aim was to go in and help them understand how OT can help the homeless population (Jayne interview 1).

1.2.1 Excitement vs. apprehension

I was quite excited about it because I've always been interested in the work of the [placement name] and similar organisations so I was excited that I had the privilege of having that opportunity (Sally interview 1).

I think with hindsight that it would have helped to get a lot more support from University before I even went (Poppy interview 1).

it was like you know "what's going to happen?, how's it going to go?" (Sophie interview 1).

I thought "Is this a good choice considering that I need to pass this course?" that did go through my head, I thought 'oh dear I've got to pass' (Ella interview 1).

2.1.1 Uncharted waters

it was bit scary at times, it was new and there were lots of things that were unfamiliar (Sophie interview 1).

definitely like I said erm at the beginning a feeling of not, not having massive support, not having OT support I did feel not very supported at the beginning because if I'm very honest I didn't feel like I got a huge amount of support from

the university, in particular the person that was supposed to be supporting me I didn't find supportive erm when I went for help when I sort of had my panic in the first week (Poppy interview 1).

it's probably important to say as well that probably some more support and guidance before I went on placement probably would have been helpful (Sophie interview 1).

2.1.2 Out there on my own

the fact that there was no OT there sort of, off my own back having to think of how to do occupational therapy with these people and how OT could benefit that particular client group?, what interventions I could do?, how could I assess them? erm the whole referral process as well… then I was questioning well you know should I be working with this person?, should I be maybe be spending more time with this client? or whose needs sort of are stronger than the other?, who would benefit more from working with me?, I couldn't really get my head around that, that made it difficult as well (Jayne interview 1).

it's very different to your normal placement erm you have that kind of structure and that safety net of support and there are OT's around and you can call on them as and when should you need to (Ella interview 1).

probably in other placements I've had when there's been an OT there with me, maybe more of the time or at least someone I could I can go up to and say "can you have a look at this?", it's nice to hear that affirmation that I'm that I'm doing okay, so maybe not having had that, you have so many questions that you know "am I doing, you know is this all right?, am I doing all right?" (Sophie interview 1).

2.2.1 Need to sing from same hymn sheet

I was quite concerned thinking back, thinking that erm making sure that people had the right idea of me as an OT student, that I was you know a mental health OT and it, I think I wanted people to know as well what I was going to be doing as a role-emerging student, that it wasn't going to be maybe what they were expecting from an OT and I wanted to make that very clear from the start, again without kind of pushing myself on people yeah so that was that was quite important to me that they knew they knew where I was coming from and what I felt you know that I wanted to do for them (Sophie interview 1).

we had like a joint supervision erm and she came in an extra time when I was having this trouble with him and she said lets arrange another meeting, I'll come in and we'll just make sure we're on the same page (Sally interview 1).

this project worker said "I would like you to come and do some stuff you know with this with this client" and I had made it clear, I thought I had made it clear that it was just going to bring an occupational perspective and to er to see if there was anything new with this erm that this project worker could do to help this client and erm obviously I hadn't made it clear enough and so then it was difficult because she had told this client that I would come back and see her and that was difficult and yeah there were occasions when I just felt there was quite a lot of demand of me, more that went probably beyond my capacity really, I felt as if I was just being a bit drained really at times (Sophie interview 1).

I think I was nervous about erm about meeting their expectations of me but also meeting my own erm my own criteria as a competent student and also you know

meeting expectations of myself as a student as a role-emerging student particularly (Sophie interview 1).

2.2.2 Responsibility on my shoulders

I guess it was more 'Oh wow', sort of realization that I'm coming in here and I'm going to be telling them what I think I will be doing (Poppy interview 1).

I think I felt that I had to quickly go in there and get on with the job (Sophie interview 1).

a huge feeling of responsibility and just huge pressure on my head to make sure that well what I just said that they see OT in a positive light which was quite scary (Jayne interview 1).

for me it wasn't in question that I wouldn't go because as a human being I was, they were saying to me you know to support the keyworker, to support her they want someone whose had a little or at least some training rather than someone that's had no training (Poppy interview 1).

I definitely felt wow this is quite serious stuff you know, this is someone you know she was high risk of self harming and it's quite you know, and it suddenly…..I felt quite overwhelmed by that situation and I hadn't, didn't have you know an MDT to kind of work with and I think that as a student maybe that was too much responsibility (Poppy interview 1).

I think I did realise and actually it came to realisation more when I was actually speaking to you about it, kind of what I was doing and… and the amount that I was probably doing for a student and the potential risks I was putting myself in. And I think in the moment I didn't really… I knew, but just sort of went along with it because there was a need there. And I think looking back on it I probably did do things that were beyond what I probably should have been doing or would have done if there was an OT there that probably would have protected me (Poppy interview 2).

going in thinking, oh gosh they haven't had a student before you see so I really was setting the way so that was a lot of pressure (laughs) it was a scary thought, I could have spoilt it for all students everywhere, they may not have wanted another student ever again…… I didn't want to let that happen that would have been awful, not just, I would have felt like I was letting the college down, OT down, the team, health team down and myself so there was all those things that were sitting there throughout (Jayne interview 1).

2.2.3 The emotional toll

my worst moments were when I went home, maybe not during the day 'cause you just kind of flow with it, you'd just have to get on with it and do the work and do what was expected of you and then when you get home and think oh god I really don't want to do that again tomorrow (Jayne interview 1).

I did feel quite a lot of pressure from from management to be running this group and it felt it was very much something that the manager had taken hold of you know and had spoken to other people in management in other, she said that she had spoken to other people in management about that it was something that I would I would do so I was feeling all this pressure (Sophie interview 1).

at the start I thought I'm just not going to do well here at all, I was not good enough, I cant do it (Jayne interview 1).

I came home and I don't mind admitting I burst into tears and I said to my partner "oh it's horrible" (Poppy interview 1).

I thought oh my god you are letting me on my own go and work with this gentleman and I was frightened and I sounded that out with (OT) and with (CPN) and said look I don't know about this (Ella interview 1).

3.1.1 A certain type of student
I was really determined to have a good experience and even though my first few weeks were a bit mmm dodgy, wasn't quite enjoying it so much my determination to have a good experience out of it, to make the most of it sort of helped turn that around (Jayne interview 1).

it's who you are and how you approach stuff I think 'cause I'm a fighter Irish catholic you know, you give me something to do I will do it, if it kills me I will do it, that's part of my make up to do that, when all the chips are down I will stand up, it might kill me yet that but you know it's stood me in good stead so far (Ella interview 1).

I think because the client group had elements of mental health and social issues, those sorts of things that I am interested in anyway and have experiences in anyway … it wasn't just that it was a role-emerging placement but because of the client group erm I don't know if I had a been so confident in a role-emerging placement in a physical setting (Jayne interview 1).

I just decided that if I was going to make this placement work I would just have to be very proactive (Poppy interview 1).

it was very self directed, now I'm quite proactive, I think if if it had been someone that had less confidence or who was less able to be proactive I think you might have just sat there, I I could have spent eight weeks sat around doing nothing because there was no nobody to tell me what to do (Poppy interview 1).

3.1.2 Making sense of the experience
I think it's just a case of constantly reflecting on your thoughts and why you're thinking those things and what's the evidence for them and what could you possibly do instead (Jayne interview 1).
I really did kind of question a lot of the time what is OT here and what would an OT do and how is it different from what they're doing and and having that challenge it kind of at times made my head hurt because just like thinking about it all the time and you know how can I explain what I do to this guy and you know and why is it relevant to his situation at the moment and all of that it really really challenged me to think about it (Sally interview 1).

3.2.1 Sense of belonging
I really enjoyed it, really enjoyed being part of the team erm and yeah working working alongside people rather than being like I was there to bring OT or to introduce OT I felt like I was, it was like being part of an MDT you know (Sophie interview 1).

the people I worked with really believed in the charity and the philosophy and what they do one hundred percent erm or you know how much of it was that and

how much of it, I was there 'cause if I was in an emerging role setting that I didn't feel quite as comfortable in that (Poppy interview 1).

I was really sad 'cause I'd got on really, like I said I can get on really well with people and I always seem to settle into a team like I've always been there and you kind of get to really know people and the teams only small as well so I got on really well with everybody and I was really sad to be leaving them (Jayne interview 1).

it was lovely to have felt so much part of the team but really hard to leave and say goodbye (Sophie interview 1).

it was so humbling to feel so so drawn into the team and so accepted and welcomed by the team erm and for them to be so erm yeah so so accepting of and so positive about the contribution I was making (Sophie interview 1).

everyone was so welcoming and so erm so sweet to me, really really interested in what I was doing and erm and so I felt very much from the start that I was that I was going to be part of the team and going to be really, you know my skills were going to be really drawn on by the team erm so it was yeah it was it was it was lovely (Sophie interview 1).

I was already concerned about leaving and sort of feeling upset 'cause I had really fitted in with the team and the young people, everybody erm but when I knew then that I was coming back it didn't really feel….Yeah it was just like I was like well I'll see you again in September and it just felt it felt lovely it felt really nice erm but yeah if I wasn't going back I think I would have felt quite sad (Poppy interview 1).

3.2.2 Supervision and support

I think it definitely did help to have, to meet up with the other student, the role-emerging student and I also, we also emailed to and from the other one as well, both myself and the other student did that as well just to feel, just to know that we were all feeling the same and there was that anxiety and was that normal and just you know to talk about that, that was really helpful (Sophie interview 1).

that's what made the difference, they had faith in me, they trusted what I could do, I mean I'm sure they were watching and observing, they're not silly they're not going to let me fly off with clients if I didn't have a clue but they were really encouraging and the whole team were really encouraging (Ella interview 1).

the team I was in was just so respondent to my ideas… I'd never ever kind of witnessed such an openness in response to OT (Sally interview 1).

I probably wouldn't get that in a normal placement because erm either people will pretend to know what OT is which is what usually happens or they're not interested in what you're doing (Sally interview 1).

I think I think they they seemed to really get quite excited about about occupational therapy and what it means (Sophie interview 1).

I had my first supervision session with my OT supervisor who was fantastic and very much just told me to really you know she was good she was really good in terms of her support and I think it wouldn't have been successful as successful that placement if it wasn't for her (Poppy interview 1).

just an informal chat with the staff was just brilliant just if you have a worry on your mind just to bring it up informally about it and put your mind at rest and definitely sort of support from the team (Jayne interview 1).

3.2.3 Learning through doing

I was really really nervous but I just started talking and I kind of realised how much I knew, I didn't think I knew that much but it just kind of all came out and I was able to explain it to them and they were asking questions and they were all engaged and yeah I just felt really grown up actually after I had done that just, it was kind of like a summary for me as well of what I had done and why I had set up the art group and yeah I just felt really proud of doing that even though I was terrified and could quite happily not have done it and avoided doing it, yeah I decided well actually it would be good to do it and I'd only be disappointed if I didn't because of I was scared (Jayne interview 1).

4.1.1 Emerging from the shadows

I think as well that the trust that the [placement name] placed in me as well erm encouraged me and my confidence increased because of that and the level of autonomy as well so they just kind of, I said to them "This is what I'm going to do with this client" and they said "Great, you know tell us how it goes" so it was literally go off and do it and I think I responded so well to that (Sally interview 1).

I think sometimes again when things are already set up for you by other OT's it's kind of easy to follow what they're already doing (Poppy interview 1).

I think it's really good to get the opportunity to focus on OT for your own… just do it yourself, rather than follow what the team's already doing or… you know, follow what your OT educator's already doing, and I think you can probably only really get that in the emerging role placement (Poppy interview 2).

I've enjoyed all my placements in different ways but I have felt quite hemmed in and you know in that you know we we use the MOHO, we use these assessments, these are the groups that are set up, these are the groups that you've been put in to (Sally interview 1).

I think to kind of look outside the box a little bit and not just do your stereotypical OT interventions and really to look at someone's needs and think creatively about how I can you know how I could help that person to meet you know their particular goal and erm meet those needs and yeah there was there was one time in particular I felt I used kind of creative ways of helping someone to kind of solve their needs or meet their goal and erm it was having freedom to do that was really important and not to feel that I had to do the intervention, the type of intervention that my OT educator would do (Sophie interview 1).

it almost becomes quite mechanical when you do your placements, you know what you've got to do, you kind of… you get used to your educator and what they like, what you know their kind of ideas are, and you work towards kind of pleasing them in a way (Sally interview 2).

if you've got a supervisor there I personally always second question myself so if someone was to come up to me and say oh what do you do what's your role and my supervisor was there I'd feel a little bit worried that I would say something that wasn't right and she'd pick up on it (Sally interview 1).

I had to kind of answer some of my own questions really erm so in a sense it was good not to have someone to lean on 'cause I had to go off and do it erm for myself and learn from my mistakes (Sophie interview 1).

4.1.2 Growing up

it really helped me grow because I was thrown in and I had autonomy from day one (Ella interview 1).

to go out there on your own and try to prove to a group of other different health professional what you do I felt was it was just really really good for me to yeah I just grew out of I suppose I think, it can just get better from here I guess yeah (Jayne interview 1).

I think definitely in terms of building me up as a professional and helping me to erm to you know to be developing as a professional I think that was kind of important for me for to feel that I could do that and I can meet those erm meet those challenges and er overcome them really (Sophie interview 1).

I **felt** like a professional and I was treated like a professional even though I was a student they still referred to me as occupational therapist and that was really lovely as well because they obviously saw me as that and respected me within that role (Sally interview 1).

4.1.3 Belief in self

I think that's such a rich and important experience for me that you know I don't in a way even have to explain it to people because I know it's enriched me and I can kind of take that through to other jobs that I have erm you know even if it's not in an overt way I know inside that it's just been amazing (Sally interview 1).

feeling more able definitely by the end just to make a decision and go for it and not have to feel that I had to have you know an OT there to say yeah you know that's right, that's the right thing to do erm 'cause more often than not you know it was the right thing to do and if it wasn't quite the right thing to do then I would learn from it and I'd change it next time erm so so yeah that was something for me personally that was I think good for me erm not always having to have someone there to affirm my decision erm to to make it for myself and to feel to feel comfortable with that decision yeah (Sophie interview 1).

knowing that you can do it on your own is fab for your confidence really and can make a difference in doing what you're doing, not just doing it but doing it positively (Poppy interview 1).

I struggle at times with confidence in myself and whether I can do it even though my placements, my past placement reports have shown that I can do it and they've got confidence in me but it's just something I have but erm I don't think, I can maybe count on one hand the times on this placement that I doubted myself or that I had that kind of drop in confidence that I'm kind of so used to (Sally interview 1).

I'm not perhaps not the most confident person in the world usually, I usually doubt myself or sort of perhaps set expectations that I cant reach, that's got a lot to do with it maybe but just the fact that I did that [the placement] made me think well you know I can do these things (Jayne interview 1).

It's made me realize what I can do on my own, definitely as an independent worker … I know that some people will suddenly be put onto a ward and they're the OT of that ward and they have to deal with all of that so I sort of have had that now maybe rather than later on so I feel much more confident in myself knowing that I can make the right judgements (Poppy interview 1).

yeah it pulled it all together from day one of haven't got a clue following someone around in your fist two week placement to I'm out there, I'm doing it and I actually feel ready now to go to work and it took to the last, I mean I did I felt a good bit of that on my prior, you know on my penultimate placement as well but this very much was definitely concrete and I felt yes I can do it (Ella interview 1).

I would definitely recommend it to anybody to do a role-emerging placement…for all the reasons that I've given but for just for your own personal sort of development , your personal sense of satisfaction (Jayne interview 1).

having done one I would encourage others to do them, erm definitely from a kind of personal point of view, erm I feel like it has helped me so much (Sophie interview 1).
do I think any other students should do it? Definitely, I'd promote it to any student who wanted to do it (Poppy interview 2).

I would do it again, over and over again and I would definitely recommend people to do it (Jayne interview 2).

I still advocate that people should do emerging role 'cause it is great freedom and it's a great confidence booster and you can prove to yourself that you can do something that you think you might not be able to you know (Ella interview 2).

I'm really glad I did the placements and I would still um... say to anybody, do a role emerging placement, because it was fantastic and I really enjoyed it and it was nice to sort of have that freedom with what I was doing on that placement in terms of OT (Jayne interview 2).

4.2.1 Having that belief in the profession
I can honestly say like I absolutely love OT from the placement that I done and just having that belief in the profession, I think that's what it was (Sally interview 1).

this really kind of consolidated my learning and kind of cemented in my head my identity and what my identity is within OT erm but also it definitely definitely made me more erm…what's the word…before with OT I've often kind of picked up I think on other peoples feelings about OT, it's a bit fluffy you know and where's all your findings and you know all of that and I think and I think that's reflected, and I'd think oh yeah well you know how can I kind of protect that identity of OT but erm on this placement I saw that it does work and that erm and that I have I think developed an identity within that (Sally interview 1).

the main resounding thing I would say is that you know (OT educator) kept saying to me "we are trying to determine how valid OT will be in the community, how much it's needed, is it really needed, is it going to be useful?" and I would shout from the rooftops "yes you really need it" because that's where I felt the client would fall apart, they are suddenly in the community they don't have any

structure there's no routine, their motivation is really lax , they've got all this behavioural stuff that's waiting to explode and nobody is helping them with that and that's where we come in (Ella interview 1).

I am probably more confident about about the role of OT as well and just how it can be beneficial in so many different areas (Sophie interview 1).

I think the whole profession has got to do that come on we're here we're not the theeny thorny we're somewhere in the back of the hospital or back of the service whatever we need to push ourselves out there (Ella interview 1).

Now I just think it's amazing and I feel privileged to say that I am an OT which is erm amazing to have that (Sally interview 1).

4.2.2 Seeing clients in a different light

I think it's got to be about being just just spending time being with them and really listening to what's on their heart, what their concerns are and not rushing in and taking over and like this is what I'm going to do for you, just being there I think (Sophie interview 1).

I keep using the word real, I don't know why I but I think it was something about that, you know about meeting real people in their real homes and and you know have real issues (Sophie interview 1).

it's actually about you bringing to the table what you want to do rather than us dictating this is what we are doing, I'm actually giving you the chance to say this is what, this is my needs, this is what I need to do and if I can facilitate that then that is what I'll do (Ella interview 1).
you have to adapt to what the client is able to do and work at that level with them and build that motivation up erm, you cant go running in with er here's my art class and off we go jolly ho lets all go it's just not going to happen (Ella interview 1).

there's such stigma attached to homeless people you know, people just think they're horrible and nasty and you know they're drug addicts and don't do anything to help themselves, they want to be that way and they're not (Jayne interview 1).

it's definitely working with the client group and I see them in a different light now and if ever people talk badly about about homeless people I get really defensive (Jayne interview 1).

4.3.1 Seeing that smile

I'd set [the art group] up for them and it made a positive impact on them, maybe just for the couple of hours that afternoon you know it might not have been long lasting but for those couple of hours people came and interacted and enjoyed themselves … … like one guy … he sort of engaged with the art group for an hour or so and then he kind of went off and started playing cards but he brought the cards over and was showing everybody magic tricks and it was just really sweet that he was the guy who didn't want to engage initially, he just sort of sat in the corner and then he was showing us all these magic tricks and stuff and everybody was laughing and joking (Jayne interview 1).

She was a classic example of someone who wouldn't, didn't feel comfortable sitting and talking to a therapist, psychoanalyst or clinical psychologist or any of

the talking therapies erm but would happily sit and talk to me and like I said I don't think she quite realized how much of our sessions was actually us talking about how she was feeling and what she was doing erm and we talked a lot about past and things that had happened to her in the past erm yet she still saw our sessions very much as practical because she was coming to see me to talk about her routine, she was coming to see me to talk about her budgeting so for her, I really saw the place that it worked because it was just she, yeah, yeah, she saw me as a practical person that could really help her with her practical problems and that worked for her (Poppy interview 1).

he was able to present this bit of creative writing that he had done and and that was so wonderful to see his, just to see his face, just to see him, and he he was a client that was particularly depressed and I'd given this task of creative writing 'cause I knew it was something that he had been very interested in in the past and seeing him enjoying that occupation again (Sophie interview 1).

4.3.2 Leaving a legacy

they're gonna offer that service with a health perspective on it as well erm so I was really pleased with that as well and one of the educators felt they had got a different way of looking at things now, it's not just all health focused they said that they're gonna take on board sort of the things I have been doing and the occupational perspective of it a little bit more (Jayne interview 1).

I'm really proud of my profession and I'm glad that other people can now see the benefits of it and the real benefits (Sally interview 1).

I also felt really proud because well (the drop-in centre) were going to continue running an art group there every week 'cause they didn't want it to, 'cause I'd started it up and they didn't want it to end 'cause they could see the benefits (Jayne interview 1).

5.1.1 Gaining employment

even actually going for the interview, the first time… I mean um… you know, I've had interviews before in my life and been quite nervous about going into an interview, but I was actually quite excited about it. I'd got so much to talk to them about and, you know, when they say, give us an example of when da-di-da… um… and I just… it was all kind of based around the Refugee um… Council, and they said at the end, you know, you spoke so passionately about it and… I think if that can come over in a job interview then… and it obviously did, it's going to work in your favor (Sally interview 2).

I brought in aspects of the placement… of my experience on the placement in terms of, you know emerging the role of OT in this unit, um… So… and I… and I felt really pleased that I'd been able… that I'd had that experience because um… it was, you know, spot on in terms of some of the questions I had about developing, you know, a new OT role here, um… and developing the, you know, an OT programme here. Um… so I was definitely able to draw on experiences that I'd had in terms of being on my own and having to um… you know, to develop stuff without um… another OT around and stuff that hadn't been, you know, hadn't existed in that placement before, um… yeah I did speak quite a lot of that" (Sophie interview 2).

I just knew the answers to everything. I don't know, it was really weird. Um… I just felt confident in my answers. Every time they asked a question it was like oh yeah I know the answer to this, because I'd prepared I think and I just really had

prepared for … it was the most I'd ever prepared for an interview in my life, um… and it was a really important interview because I really needed a job, you know. It was… it wasn't like I was already in one so it doesn't matter if I don't get it. It was like kind of the be-all and end-all at the time and I was just happy with the responses that I gave and felt really confident that I was saying the right things and that I knew what I was doing and… yeah, I felt that I knew… knew what OT was as well, um… and how well… yeah, it was just… positive." (Jayne interview 2).

I've had interviews before in my life and been quite nervous about going into an interview, but I was actually quite excited about it. I'd got so much to talk to them about (Sally interview 2).

It gave me a head start in applying for jobs and in the interview process because it made my application form look… look good, I think, saying that I did an emerging role placement and it was good to say in interviews um… that you've done something a bit different (interview 2).

5.1.2 Confidence for practice
my supervisor said to me, you know, she was really happily surprised at how quickly I adapted to the setting and how quickly I was doing my own things and um... you know, not needing her to be there all the time which was what she expected, having a Band 5 (Sally interview 2).

I had to, you know, hit the ground running, because there was no other option. The week that I started, um... I kind of er... shadowed the previous OT for a couple of weeks, and she left the same week that my manager went on two weeks' holiday. So I literally was in it by myself from, you know, the first week almost. So I had to, and um... and I do think that that placement really stood me in good stead, um... because on that I was, you know, initiating everything and um... you know, standing my own ground and saying this is what I'm doing and this is why I'm doing it (Sally interview 2).

I think one thing that's been helpful is feeling confident to ask people, you know, how do you do it, and then coming up with my own method, um… so that was something I did on the placement…and here I've asked my supervisor, I've asked my team leader um… and I've collated some kind of way of doing it myself, um… and I think that's another thing I'd have been really um… really scared about doing (Sophie interview 2).

being more independent in my thinking I suppose and... and coming up with ideas for what we can do in terms of activities and intervention (Jayne interview 2).

being able to learn how to communicate that effectively on placement has helped me here, um… because it's not about just saying no, it's about saying no and this is why, these are the reasons why I'm not going to do it (Sophie interview 2).

I think professionally just knowing… feeling secure that I understand what OT is and what it can do (Poppy interview 2).

5.2.1 Real life
Yeah it's different, now I am that person who has to get that information and I'm responsible… there's more pressure I think to do it well and do it properly…I need to be doing it now really as best as I can (Jayne interview 2).

I'm a qualified OT so I've got to ..I've got to ensure that everything I do...it's not as if, when you're obviously don't get me wrong, as a student I was very very, I tried to be very careful in that I'm you know, I was doing everything as professionally as I could and but there was that feeling that, you know, I… I could run to my supervisor up the road and say look I don't really know what I'm doing, is this right? … but it's that feeling of, you know, I'm qualified… I don't have as much of an excuse to do that now (Sophie interview 2).

5.2.2 Consolidation of identity

I wouldn't want to be mechanical, you know. That for me is not what OT's about. OT's about, you know… thinking outside the box, working creatively um… you know, problem solving creatively, and that's what I want to continue doing, um… so… and that's what the role emerging placement enabled me to do (Sally interview 2).

I think when you're with an educator you tend to mirror their understanding of the philosophy, rather than developing your own. And I certainly did in the [name of placement setting] and have continued to um… with, you know, ever increasing confidence in my current job. (Sally interview 2).

in fact it's what's keeping me sane here 'cause I'm actually getting to do proper OT, little tiny a little section of the week and I get great feedback on it and I think that's what I trained to do, this is not really what I trained to do in orthopaedics (Ella interview 2).

I hate being pigeonholed at all, so kind of to have such a clear identity of who I am within my profession um… I love that… I love that fact and not just, you know, thinking of it as a safe profession, that you can get your pension, and you can get a mortgage and, you know, it's always going to be there and that, you know, petrifies me to think I'm just going to be a generic OT for the rest of my life. I think no way, don't want that (Sally interview 2).

my OT manager does keep saying, um… you know, she really, really… and she has been thinking for a while that she wants to get this group started and she wants to start using MOHO assessments and she said it's taken you to come in here to actually make me do it, because I was just, you know, procrastinating (Sally interview 2).

both consultants at one point, sort of both said to me at individual points, um… I've done all I can do with this… with this patient medically at the moment, over to you, you know, I really feel that this is your place to make some change and… and um… that's just been wonderful because it's like real… real free rein to be able to get on and… and do what I feel is really effective and um… and that's been lovely to… to feel so respected from the word go (Sophie interview 2).

5.2.3 Challenge to identity

I think if anything um… I preferred my… my placement to my current job so I'm kind of thinking oh it's a shame that on my role emerging placement I had such a clear OT focused role and in this current job it is not as clear. It kind of seems the wrong way round almost (Sally interview 2).

I'm struggling with this, with this kind of culture, it's driving me, it's doing my head in, it's like don't give up before the miracle type thing, hold on mate it will be all right, I'm only in there for one, I don't have to stay there so it's fine (Ella interview 2)

I still feel young and studenty in my mind so it hasn't.. there's going to be a time where it's going to click into place and it's like oh yeah I'm a professional now and I'm… I am grown up (Jayne interview 2).

5.2.4 Looking to the future

I don't want to be one of those people that stays safe and stays in the same job for ten years 'cause I wont and I know that already 'cause I want to explore and find a niche and if I find an area I love I'll stay with it but it's given me the courage to do that and I think that is kind of I had that before the placement but it gave me another layer of that (Ella interview 2).

going to push what I can, as far as I can, but I've also got to accept that I might not be able to and… and that's fine, and there will be other opportunities for me to use those skills in the future because um… you know, this… this was the first stepping stone. I had to get a job um… and this is my first job, from my first interview, which is another success and I've just got to… to ride it, basically and um… get the reference at the end, um… and then hopefully find another job that's… that's going to be more suited to me and accommodate um… my… my passions more (Sally interview 2).