

**A DESCRIPTION OF THE THEORETICAL AND
PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES
OF CRITICAL CARE NURSING STUDENTS**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Hester Cathrina de Swardt, declare that:

**'A DESCRIPTION OF THE THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES OF
CRITICAL CARE NURSING STUDENTS'**

is my original work, and that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other institution. All the sources that have been used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references in the text and bibliography.

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'Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy and loving kindness endure forever!' (Ps 118:1).

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RINA DE SWARDT

ABSTRACT

TITLE: A DESCRIPTION OF THE THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES OF CRITICAL CARE NURSING STUDENTS

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This qualitative study was aimed at exploring and describing the theoretical and practical experiences of second-year critical care nursing students. Purposive sampling was done, and unstructured interviews and narrative descriptions were used as data collection tools. An adaptation of Johns's Framework, the *Guideline for the Facilitation of Reflection as Teaching Strategy*, was used during interviews to guide participants in reflecting on theory-practice integration. Multiple strategies were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. Concerning patient data, communication, and the administration of life-saving medications, theory-practice integration did occur. Regarding treatment and the outcome of nursing interventions, it seemed that knowledge deficiencies and a lack of exposure to practical situations contributed to the inability to apply theory to practice. This apparent inability evoked negative feelings, such as guilt. Discrepancies between practice and theory taught led to confusion. Guided reflection assisted students in gaining a new perspective on nursing and theory-practice integration.

KEY TERMS:

Theory-practice integration; Guided reflection; Accompaniment; Clinical facilitator; Critical care nursing students; Theoretical knowledge; Practical skills; Experiences; Feelings; Johns's Framework; Theory-practice gap

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CPR	Cardiopulmonary resuscitation
CVP	Central venous pressure
DENOSA	Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa
ET	Endotracheal tube
pH	Hydrogen ion concentration (potential hydrogen)
SANC	South African Nursing Council
tPA	Tissue plasminogen activator
UK	United Kingdom
UNISA	University of South Africa

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