

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### Focus of the Study

The focus of this study evolved from my own training in clinical psychology at Unisa. I experienced the explicit context of training as ecosystemic (explained in Chapter Two) and the implicit context of training as hierarchical (also explained in Chapter Two). I felt that these contexts were inconsistent with each other, and this contributed to an experience of double bind (see Chapter Three) for me in training. According to Bateson's double bind theory (cited in Becvar & Becvar, 2000), which I have already discussed, I had three options in responding to this experience: to comment; to flee the field or to become symptomatic. Initially I became symptomatic. My symptoms included feelings of confusion and powerlessness. This sense of powerlessness prevented me from commenting on what I was experiencing; and I felt that the option of leaving the training context was not viable, as I wanted to qualify as a clinical psychologist.

I am aware that I made meaning of, and named my experience as that of a double bind, because I was trained, at an explicit level, according to social constructionist and ecosystemic principles, which included instruction about double bind situations.

I was curious about whether other trainees at Unisa had similar or different experiences of training, and finally this prompted me to examine the issue more closely by taking it as the topic of this dissertation. For the purpose of this research, therefore, I asked the following questions:

- Can I formulate an understanding of the explicit ecosystemic context (and discourses) within the Unisa clinical psychology training system?
- Can I formulate an understanding of the implicit hierarchical context (and discourses) at Unisa?
- Are the explicit and implicit contexts (or discourses) of learning within the Unisa training system experienced by trainees as inconsistent, and if so, does this contribute to a “double bind” experience for students who find themselves unable to comment on this experience and unable to leave the field?
- Does this double bind experience contribute to an experience of confusion and powerlessness for trainees?
- Can the process of interviewing the trainees elicit an alternative, non-dominant discourse to that of training, one which can encourage trainees to comment on their double bind experience, thereby helping them to construct a sense of clarity, personal power and liberation?

### Who are the Participants?

I used the entire population of available Master’s trainees at Unisa, for three consecutive years, as the participants in this study. I chose Unisa as the training institution for my study, as this was where I had trained, and I was interested in the experiences of other Unisa trainees. I chose three groups of Master’s level trainees who had studied clinical psychology in three successive years. The training groups were: the group who had started training the year before me (at that time they were doing their internship), the group in which I was training (the “second years” at the time), and the

group that started training the year after me (the “first years” at the time). I wanted to know what the similarities and differences of trainees’ experiences were, within groups, and from year to year.

It was viable to interview these participants, as the first and second year students were available at Unisa during the week, and the interns were posted at hospitals in Pretoria and Johannesburg. As I lived in Johannesburg and attended Unisa in Pretoria, these groups of trainees were easily accessible to me for the interviewing process.

At the start of each interview, I asked for participants’ permission to audiotape the sessions. I was aware that the information I was requesting from participants would probably be sensitive, as participants (especially from the groups still undergoing the training process) could feel apprehensive about the possibility that they might be identified by their comments, and that this might affect trainers’ responses to them. I therefore assured each participant of her or his anonymity. I did make it clear, however, that I would be grouping the results into the three groups of students, and identifying the groups as “first years”, “second years” and “interns”. I offered participants the opportunity of reading the draft of my dissertation before I sent it in for printing, so that anything that might make a participant feel uncomfortable could be removed or edited.

There were no obvious ethical reasons why these participants should not be involved in this study. To the contrary, this research could contribute to the body of research in which the experiences of trainees are uncovered, and it could act as a feedback mechanism that would assist in altering and improving training contexts. The interviewing process may, in fact, have proved therapeutic for the participants, who were asked to comment on the training process and therefore had a chance to tell the personal

stories of their training. In addition, the interviews might provide trainees with a platform for commenting on the double bind situation within training, and doing so could facilitate a sense of personal power, personal agency and liberation.

One interview was done with each participant, as I was more interested in a cross-sectional than a longitudinal study.

The study explores the stories of nineteen trainee clinical psychologists (eight “first years”; six “second years” and five “interns”), whose individual experiences are analysed in the next chapter. Discourse analysis was used to reveal the discourses operating in the text of the interviews.

### Research Paradigm

According to Maione (1997), a research paradigm, or “research tradition”, is “a set of assumptions about the nature of reality, knowledge, and the goals and aims of a research process” (p. 3). Research paradigms can be roughly divided, for conceptual purposes, into two broad categories, namely, quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative and qualitative research paradigms generally make “different assumptions about the nature of reality and have different research objectives” (Lincoln & Guba; Smith; Smith & Heshusius; cited in Moon, Dillon & Sprenkle, 1990, p. 357). Quantitative research is based on the dominant model of science during the twentieth century, and is known as Cartesian-Newtonianism. This model embraces the assumptions of reductionism, atomism and linear causality (Rapmund, 2000). Reality is assumed to be absolute, quantifiably measurable and capable of objective observation. Although the quantitative research model is a useful tool for the social sciences researcher, it does not

take into account the social and political contexts in which “knowledge is produced” (Terreblanche & Durrheim, 2002, p. 5). If these wider contexts are taken into account, it is found that new forms of knowledge are being produced all the time. Qualitative research takes these contexts into account and acknowledges the relativistic, relational, contextual and subjective nature of knowledge (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). Qualitative research paradigms assume that different people have different perspectives on the world and therefore experience different realities.

Qualitative research also focuses on the role of language in constructing reality, for both researchers and participants. Interpretations of observations are made contextually and multidimensionally, and the goal may be to empower participants. Qualitative interpretations are often tentative, as opposed to law-like, and these interpretations fit with hermeneutic and narrative forms of expression, rather than with a discourse that is purely didactic, as is the case with the more traditional, quantitative forms of research. Interpretations are evaluated according to the impact on readers, researchers and participants (Stiles, 1993).

Qualitative research methodology is used in this study. There are, however, many types of qualitative (and quantitative) research methods: more specifically, therefore, the approach used is the social constructionist qualitative research approach.

Social constructionism as a research approach is interpretive and focuses on how individuals make meaning of their experience. It assumes that language creates reality, and proposes that language itself should therefore be the object of study. Language is not seen as neutral and transparent, and not as a map of an underlying reality (as quantitative

research methods assume). Rather than being regarded as a symbol of “real” objects beyond language, language is instead seen as a tool that constructs reality.

According to Terreblanche and Durrheim (2002), social constructionism assumes that language acts as a code for “broader patterns of social meaning” (p. 149). They explain that “constructionist research is not in the first place about language *per se*, but about interpreting the social world as a kind of language, that is, as a system of meanings and practices that construct reality” (p. 151). Social constructionist researchers aim to reveal how individual experiences and understandings are informed by, and in turn, inform, larger societal discourses. People’s “thoughts, feelings and experiences (are) the products of systems of meanings that exist at a social rather than an individual level” (Terreblanche & Durrheim, 2002, p. 148).

Social constructionist assumptions therefore enable an understanding of how reality is relative and context-dependent. It assumes that meaning is constructed by an observer through language, and that this meaning in language is derived from larger societal discourses.

This social constructionist framework is consistent with my assumptions regarding reality, and how it can be researched. In my role as a social constructionist researcher, I was aware of how social discourses influenced the way I engaged in conversation, as the researcher, with participants, and how I interpreted the data I gathered. I was aware of how I was a co-participant in the process of meaning-making through discussion in the interviews and in my analysis of the transcripts. I chose specific questions to ask the participants, in a semi-structured interview. These questions set a context for the answers given by participants, and pointed these answers in particular

directions. I was aware of how co-constructed meanings during the interviews would facilitate a recreation of meaning for me, and for the participants. In analysing the text of the transcribed interviews, I was aware that I was reconstructing meanings through the extraction of themes and discourses, by the particular themes I chose to extract, and not others, and the words I chose to form those themes. I was aware that new meaning would be created when the text of my dissertation was read by other readers, and that they would attach their own meanings to this text. Within the context of this social constructionist research paradigm, I chose to follow the qualitative research tradition for this research project.

According to Richardson (1997), strict adherence to qualitative and social constructionist research paradigms could paradoxically result in the rigid kind of thinking that these forms of research aim to avoid. For example, in this text, a stance could easily be taken that qualitative constructionist methods are “better than” quantitative methods of research, thereby favouring qualitative research and criticising quantitative research. So although a qualitative constructionist approach was chosen for this research endeavour, it is because it is consistent with the epistemological underpinnings of this dissertation, not because it is assumed to be “the best” method to use in general (Oosthuizen, 2002).

### Literature Review

Chapter Three of this paper provided a review of the literature on some topics that related to the focus of this study: explicit and implicit contexts of training; the double bind hypothesis; and experiences of trainees in training and supervision.

The review began with Auerswald's (1990) ideas of mechologic (hierarchical) and ecologic (ecosystemic) realities, and outlined Auerswald's notions of the explicate and implicate family, and how this is synonymous with the ideas of explicit and implicit contexts of learning that are proposed and explored in this dissertation. Although Auerswald refers to the explicate family as occurring in mechologic reality, and the implicate family as occurring in an ecologic reality, a tenet of this dissertation is that in the Unisa training system, the explicit context is presented as ecosystemic and ecologic and the implicit context is experienced as hierarchical and mechologic by trainees.

Coale (1994) suggests that discourses can inform contexts, and that non-dominant (implicit) discourses can be more powerful than dominant (explicit) discourses. In addition, Coale maintains that dominant discourses can pathologise non-dominant discourses. In this case, the dominant ecosystemic discourse that informs the explicit context of training at Unisa pathologises the non-dominant (implicit) discourse, which is hierarchical in nature.

Bateson et al. (1963) emphasise that communication is complex, and that there are different levels at which messages are exchanged. These levels of messages may be incongruent and conflicting, which may create confusion for the recipient. According to Arden (1984), Russell's theory of logical types elucidates this point, and refers to the difference between a class and members of that class. A member of a subset of a class can't represent the class because the subset and the class belong to different logical categories.

Arden (1984) states that Bateson applied this theory of logical types to human relationships. In order to explain the confusion that occurs when one cannot decide which



level a message belongs to, Bateson (cited in Becvar & Becvar, 2000) developed the concept of the double bind, which was reviewed in Chapter Three.

It is the main hypothesis of this dissertation that a double bind situation occurs for trainees when explicit and implicit contexts of learning in psychotherapy are contradictory, and that this leads to an experience of confusion and powerlessness for trainees.

It was found that there is a dearth of literature on trainees' experiences of the double bind. An exception is the work of Prentice (2001), who reflected on his own experience of training in clinical psychology and researched other trainees' experiences. Both Prentice and his participants experienced double bind situations and inconsistency between explicit and implicit contexts of learning.

Prentice's (2001) research highlights the importance of the relationship between trainer and trainee, which is referred to in this dissertation as the supervisory relationship. In the literature, supervision is assumed to be a central aspect of training. There are many different models of supervision, and some of these are reviewed, such as the sequential, stage, traditional linear models and the newer systemic models (Muratori, 2001; O'Byrne & Rosenberg, 1998). It is a tenet of this dissertation, and of other works (Haley, 1976; Muratori, 2001), that a power differential exists between supervisor and trainee, regardless of theoretical orientation.

According to Rice and Fey (cited in Greben & Ruskin, 1994), there are some variables that make the supervisory experience positive and satisfactory for the trainee. There is the importance of the "fit" between supervisor and trainee. There are also three qualities that influence this "fit" and affect the trainee's experience of supervision. These

qualities are: the personal characteristics of the supervisor (“who is the supervisor?”); the content of supervision (“what does the supervisor do?”); and the process of supervision (“how does the supervisor do it?”) (Rice & Fey, cited in Greben & Ruskin, 1994, p. 85). These three qualities are reviewed in Chapter Three.

Polson and Piercy (1993) found that training stress (perhaps in part created by an experience of double bind) is not experienced only by trainees, but also impacts on their families. They comment that trainers should evaluate their training programmes as a matter of ethics. This evaluation could involve eliciting feedback on the programme from trainees.

#### Collection of Data

As this research is qualitative in nature, the data was collected in spoken and written form. Consent was given by interviewees for the interviews to be audiotaped, and for the written analysis of the text to be published. I told each participant that the interview would take between twenty and thirty minutes. Some interviews took longer, and some were shorter. I asked four initial questions in each interview, the answers to which sometimes led me to ask further questions, which helped me to clarify the answers. The four initial questions were:

1. Could you tell me the story of your experience of training? You may use metaphor, third person description, or any method you like, to tell me your story.
2. In what way did your training impact on your life and your relationships?
3. What was useful for you in training, and what was not useful?

4. In what ways did you feel powerless or disempowered in the training, and in what ways did you feel powerful or empowered?

Once the interviews had been conducted, they were transcribed. The transcript of each interview was read once while listening to the audiotape of the interview. Each transcript was then read twice more. An analysis of the text was constructed, and extracts from the transcripts were included to support this analysis.

The “first years” were the first participants to be interviewed, and are identified as Group One. The “second years” were the second group to be interviewed, and are identified as Group Two. Participants from Group One and Group Two were interviewed individually at Unisa, in a private lecture room. Interviews for Group One and Group Two were conducted first, as my second year of training was drawing to a close and it was convenient for me to interview these participants while I was still attending classes at Unisa. The interviews for Group Three were conducted in private rooms at various hospitals in Johannesburg and Pretoria, where the interns were working at the time.

### Epistemology for the Analysis

According to Maione (1997), an “epistemological stance refers to a set of assumptions about the world, knowledge and human behaviour” (p. 3). An epistemology forms the basis for a research paradigm. Different epistemological assumptions guide different types of research, and these assumptions form the basis for how a researcher interacts with her or his data (Maione, 1997).

Maione (1997) maintains that there are various epistemological stances, which can be seen to lie along a continuum. At one end of this continuum, the researcher is

completely separate from his or her data, and it is assumed that the data can be objectively observed. Truth is regarded as absolute, and is seen in terms of linear cause and effect relationships. At the other end of the continuum, researchers and their data cannot be so clearly divided. This is known as the constructivist, or extremely relativist, stance, where reality is regarded as constructed by the observer (in this case, the researcher) and dependent on context. All observers' constructions of reality are seen as equal, and the researcher focuses on the interaction between herself or himself and the data. Constructivist researchers look for what they can discover about the data, using themselves as the research instrument.

The stance adopted in this text is that of social constructionism, which lies towards the constructivist end of the continuum. It adopts many of the constructivist assumptions pointed out above, but differs in one respect, namely that it takes a less extreme relativist view of reality. Social constructionists believe that reality is socially, not individually, constructed, and that some views are made dominant and some are subjugated by that social construction of reality. These social constructions take the form of social discourses, which exist independently of the individual observer, and inform the view of reality that that observer takes.

### Method of Analysis

“There are many forms of constructionist analysis, but all share the aim of revealing the cultural materials from which particular utterances, texts or events have been constructed. One of the most popular approaches is discourse analysis” (Terreblanche & Durrheim, 2002, p. 154). Discourse analysis is the social constructionist approach used in this research study.

The word “discourse” can be conceptualised as a shared understanding, belief and knowledge about something within a group of people, say a community or society (Oosthuizen, 2002). According to Terreblanche and Durrheim (2002), discourses are “broad patterns of talk – systems of statements – that are taken up in particular speeches and conversations, not the speeches or conversations themselves” (p. 156).

Discourse analysis asks us to question how prevailing societal discourses inform and are informed by our knowledge and understanding of the world. Thus discourse analysis, in some ways similar to postmodernism and social constructionism, also subverts traditional views of the world. It looks at the meanings in text that remain implicit or unspoken, but that nevertheless influence our understanding and experience (Oosthuizen, 2002).

Discourse analysis does not refer to one method of research or way of thinking (Burman & Parker, 1993), but rather to many different views, for each of which there is a different method of analysis and a different philosophical underpinning. Discourse analysis has many ways of examining language and the term “discourse”. According to Terreblanche and Durrheim (2002), discourse analysis can be divided into two broad camps: “one that contextualises the text in a micro-context of conversation and debate ... and another that contextualises text in a macro-context of institutions and ideologies” (p. 164).

The first category represents those analysts who emphasise “micro-level”, moment-to-moment interchanges within a context of conversation. The work of Wetherell and Potter (1992) serves as an example of this approach. Potter and Wetherell (cited in Breakwell et al, 1997) use the term “interpretative repertoires” (p. 245) to

describe “linguistic phenomena which have a certain coherence in terms of their content and style and may be arranged around one or more central metaphors” (p. 245).

The second category of discourse analysis reveals the influence of the work of Foucault and the post-structuralists. Burman and Parker (1993) follow in this vein, and focus on experience at a macro-level. The emphasis is on how the broader contexts of politics, power relations and ideology within a society inform the participants’ discourse and experience of self.

Foucault (cited in Oosthuizen, 2002) paid attention to the relationship between social institutions, the notion of subjectivity and the notion of power. He was interested in how an experience of self (as subject) is constructed through the use of language. He examined how power processes in a society combine with social systems (such as training systems) and language to create selves and experiences that concur with the current social order. A training system would be an example of a “discursive field” (Oosthuizen, 2002, p. 25), which contains many explicit and implicit discourses that compete with each other for dominance. Each discourse in this field will, according to Foucault (cited in Oosthuizen, 2002), have differing amounts of power to influence the meaning, process and organisation of the training system. Each discourse will also have differing amounts of power to influence the personal experience and sense of self of members of the training system.

Foucault (cited in Oosthuizen, 2002) explored how particular constructions of self and personal experience were encouraged at different times in history. According to Rabinow (cited in Oosthuizen, 2002):

To this extent, his [Foucault's] writing charts the shift that occurred from a sovereign to a disciplinary form of power and how this influenced the discourses of self that dominated. Thus, sovereign power refers to the top-down form of social control that was common in eras when society was regulated by monarchs and aristocrats. Hence, an external authority ensured that one complied with the social norm. Disciplinary power on the other hand refers to the process whereby the individual begins to survey and police his or her own behaviour (pp. 25-26).

This discourse of disciplinary power positioned people as “reasonable agents” of their own lives. It absolved society of responsibility for people's actions and states of mind. Criminals and mental patients were considered responsible for their own “deviant” positions in society.

Disciplinary power is assumed, in this paper, to be a sense of personal agency and control for the individual over his or her own life. It is this sense of disciplinary power (or personal agency) that is assumed to be lost for trainees when they experience inconsistency between explicit and implicit contexts of training, and when they experience a double bind situation. This sense of powerlessness operates to maintain the prevailing hierarchical relationship between trainers and trainees.

This second type of discourse analysis can be seen as political. According to Levett, Kottler, Burman and Parker (cited in Oosthuizen, 2002), this discourse analysis aims to “expose the macro belief systems that are operating on the micro level of everyday conversations” (p. 7). People are seen as adopting particular positions in relation to each other and, through this, they take on particular beliefs about themselves

and the world. These beliefs and experiences are constructed through the use of language, so it follows that, on this view, language limits the manner in which we think about ourselves and how we relate to each other, so we have particular experiences, and not others (Oosthuizen, 2002).

Language, as a way of constructing realities, can be used to create and maintain the dominant (and subjugated) positions of groups of people in society. The dominant groups then spread certain beliefs through institutional structures such as the media, schools, universities and governments, in the form of “discourses”. These discourses help to maintain certain positions of power and create a certain kind of thinking by people, about themselves and each other (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). In this way, social relations of dominance and oppression are reproduced by discourses. These oppressive discourses are regarded as socially constructed and, by implication, there is then a possibility of constructing, instead, alternative, non-oppressive discourses (Oosthuizen, 2002).

Each focus informs and is informed by the meanings that are extracted from the text by each discourse analyst. Therefore, while the aim of discourse analysis is to expose the “metabelief” that is imbedded in the text, there is no one “metabelief” that can be exposed, as the interpretation made by the discourse analyst is itself informed by the individual belief system of that analyst. Similarly, some analysts’ belief that discourse is the channel of ideology, or something less political, is also informed by a particular belief about how discourses are used (Oosthuizen, 2002).

Those who align themselves with the first view outlined above tend towards a more relativist position, which is constructivist in nature and maintains that nothing exists beyond text. Those who lean towards the second view, however, take a slightly more



realist stance, which suggests that societal discourses exist, and that these discourses inform and are informed by the text of everyday, moment-to-moment conversations between people. Discourse analysts who adopt this second stance therefore reflect on their reasons for choosing to construct reality in a certain way (Burman & Parker; Levett et al.; Parker; cited in Oosthuizen, 2002).

Although there are philosophical differences, the epistemological similarities between different kinds of discourse analysis appear to be more encompassing. “These approaches are united by their common attention to the constructive effects of language and the ways in which language both creates and ‘constrains’ meaning” (Burman & Parker, cited in Oosthuizen, 2002, pp. 71-72).

When a discourse is produced, a choice is made between a range of linguistic resources, and these resources are used to create a particular version of reality. Society takes for granted this generative and constructive use of language, whereas discourse analysis aims to expose this function of language. These ideas apply to the process of writing this dissertation. Certain theories and certain aspects of those theories have been chosen for discussion, rather than others. Particular understandings of those theories have been expressed in a certain way, at a particular time of writing, as opposed to many other possible ways. This expression is influenced by many other aspects of the author’s individual living, including conversations with others in the process of writing this dissertation. The ideas proposed through the title and aims of this paper influence the “reality” that is constructed through the act of writing the paper that has been written, and not any other. The reading of this dissertation, however, also influences and changes its “reality”. The “reality” of this text will be reconstructed every time it is read, as each

reader will attribute meaning to the reading, and this meaning will be informed by her or his own experiences, which are different from those of the writer (Oosthuizen, 2002).

The discourse analytic stance adopted here is influenced primarily by the macro-level approach of Burman and Parker (1993) discussed earlier. The ideas set out in this chapter facilitate an understanding of training in clinical psychology as occurring in a context where participants' experiences are informed by broader societal discourses that inform their own macro-level belief systems, as well as by explicit and implicit models of training that are presented in the training context. Participants are seen to engage in a discursive relationship in the designated positions of trainers and trainees.

A larger societal discourse which serves to maintain trainers in a position of power and trainees in a position of powerlessness, is discerned as implicit in the training context. This discourse of power relations between trainers and trainees is regarded as maintaining the cohesion of the psychological fraternity and supporting the prevailing social order, as trainees are "professionalised" into their profession by trainers. Trainers act as gatekeepers into the profession and decide on what trainees can and cannot do in training.

Another discourse that may be identified in the training system is that of inconsistency between explicit and implicit contexts of training. This discourse also maintains a position of powerlessness for trainees, as they feel they cannot comment on this inconsistency and they cannot leave the field.

The aim of this dissertation is, through discourse analysis, to reflect critically on how trainees' experiences are constructed through the discursive interaction that occurs in the trainee/trainer relationship. It is hypothesised that, by becoming aware of and

analysing trainees' constructions of the world, this could help trainees to change their experience and disempowered position in training. This could perhaps contribute towards an experience of liberation and a sense of personal agency in their lives as therapists and human beings.

As Oosthuizen (2002) observes, we “cannot not be political” (p. 10) in our thinking as trainers and trainees, as the training relationship is like any other in the way it is affected by and in turn impacts on the discourses presented in the training context and which exist in society. These understandings would therefore encourage the inclusion, in a therapist's training, of a reflection on the training context (explicit and implicit), and of the broader socio-political context in which he or she is trained, as ultimately the understandings and experiences of self and the world are influenced by these contexts.

In accordance with the macro-level of discourse analysis outlined above, the following steps were followed for the analysis in this dissertation:

Step 1: Each audiotaped interview was transcribed.

Step 2: Each transcribed text was read a minimum of three times to ensure that I was familiar with the content of the text.

Step 3: Meanings that coincided with the research interest were identified and coded into themes. The content of the themes, and their identifiers (symbols), were sometimes changed on subsequent readings (Oosthuizen, 2002).

Step 4: The transcribed text for each interview was analysed, firstly for themes reflecting an implicit discourse of hierarchy and power relations in the training context,

and secondly for themes reflecting a discourse which comments on a double bind experience in training.

Step 5: As there was a large amount of text from the three groups which reflected the above themes, an in-depth discourse analysis was conducted only with the Group Three (“the interns”) interviews. The Group One and Group Two interviews were used as collateral, to check the emergence of salient themes. The texts from Group Three were chosen for the in-depth analysis because this was the group that had been through the entire training process. An analysis of the text from these interviews revealed to me that these participants were better able to give a meta-perspective, when asked to comment on their training, as they had more distance from the training than the other two groups.

Step 6: As the themes and discourses were identified in the text, the following questions were asked of the text: “‘Why was this said, and not that?’; ‘What functions are being fulfilled by saying it that way?’; and ‘What effects are achieved?’” (Oosthuizen, 2002, p. 75).

Step 7: Parker’s criteria (cited in Oosthuizen, 2002) for discourse analysis were kept in mind in the process of this inquiry. The question, “what institutions are supported or subverted by what is said?” derives from these criteria. In the context of a particular discourse, it was kept in mind what power relations were being reproduced, in terms of who gained and who lost by what was being said.

### Credibility of the Study

All forms of research are expected to be credible. The epistemological assumptions of each researcher provide the basis for how credibility will be established in

a particular study. When quantitative research methods are used, positivist assumptions lead to the use of concepts such as validity and reliability to verify research (Salner, cited in Maione, 1997). Qualitative studies use different concepts, such as transferability, dependability, confirmability, authenticity criteria and trustworthiness (Maione, 1997, p. 4).

I gave some consideration to the possibility of presenting a fuller picture of what is experienced in training by including interviews on trainers' experiences. Trainers' perspectives would give a more complex understanding of what is being studied, but this does not mean that the inclusion of only trainees' experiences renders the study invalid (Nelson et al, 2001). In quantitative research, to leave out the trainers' perspective would be to leave out an important moderating variable, which would be regarded as significantly confounding the study. In qualitative research, however, emphasis is placed on the meaning that people give to events and situations, so the meaning that trainees give to their experience of training is credible as a topic of qualitative research. Furthermore, in quantitative research, there is a focus on randomness of sampling, whereas qualitative studies emphasise "the isolation of a type of individual so as to examine a distinct type of experience" (Creswell, cited in Nelson et al, 2001, p. 407).

Traditionally it has been the responsibility of the researcher to prove the credibility of the study. In qualitative studies, however, both the researcher and the consumers of the research are considered responsible for credibility, and the researcher may often provide ways in which consumers can assess for themselves the credibility of the study and findings (Maione, 1997).

Researcher bias is an issue linked to credibility. In qualitative research, researcher bias is considered inevitable as the qualitative researcher regards himself or herself as the research instrument. Thus observer bias cannot be avoided by using the instrument of research to cut the object of research off from the assumptions of the researcher, as is done in more traditional approaches. Qualitative researchers therefore tend to disclose their biases, preconceptions and assumptions, as these are an inherent part of the research process, as it aims towards the co-construction of meaning (Brody, cited in Maione, 1997).

It follows that it is useful to reveal my assumptions and preconceptions, as the researcher in this study. I take the view that reality is socially constructed through language and discourse, and through interaction with contexts made up of people, community and society at large. Thus the reality and experience of trainee psychotherapists is constructed through an interchange with the training context, which includes the voices of the trainers. Discourses of training are assumed to inform trainees' experiences, and these discourses operate at both explicit and implicit levels. Sometimes the explicit discourse may be inconsistent with the implicit discourse, which may create an experience or reality of confusion and powerlessness for trainees. This confusion may be termed a double bind experience.

The credibility of this study is enhanced by the visibility of the data used. Extracts from transcribed interviews are quoted throughout the analysis, to support the interpretations of the data. By reading the original quotes, readers can therefore assess the accuracy of the claims and distinctions I make as researcher, and can also co-construct their own realities through interacting with the text.

The audiotapes and transcriptions of the interviews are in safekeeping. The transcripts have not been attached to the dissertation, firstly, to protect the anonymity of participants, as some participants were concerned about being identified by what they said, and secondly, because the transcripts are very lengthy and bulky.

The following chapter presents an analysis of the data.